



2020-2021 MINNESOTA STATE HIGH SCHOOL LEAGUE

Softball, Girls

Guidance and information is subject to change based on the most current information, directives from state government and health department officials and member school feedback.

Softball, Girls

- Start Date: Monday, March 29, 2021
- First Competition Date: Thursday, April 8, 2021
- Last Day of Regular Season Competition: Saturday, May 29, 2021
- Postseason Begins: Monday, May 31, 2021
- Season End Date: Saturday, June 19, 2021
- Total Weeks Including Postseason: 12
- Maximum number of regular season contests: 20

- Contests per week as per bylaw and policy.
- Maximum of 4 teams per level per event.

- Not permitted:
 - Tournaments
 - Interscholastic scrimmages
 - Jamborees

- Recommended:
 - Double headers (same opponent) allowed and recommended. Scheduling on non-school days preferred.
 - Opponents: Conference, Section, Regional or local teams as defined by the school.
 - Avoid contests scheduled on back-to-back days.

- Competitions with opponents from bordering states are allowed when less than 50 miles one way and when determined as local. Competitions of greater distances may be approved by the MSHSL with supporting rationale. Any out of state competition must follow MSHSL guidelines for competition types.

Softball Guidance and Information

General Guidelines

Required	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All student-athletes must be provided with a copy of the MSHSL COVID-19 Notice. • Athletic programs must follow the identified protocols for student-athletes or coaches who have tested positive, are experiencing symptoms consistent with a COVID-19 diagnosis or have had exposure to (close contact with) an individual who has been diagnosed with COVID-19. • Educate student-athletes about mask use, physical distancing, handwashing and sanitizer use, and other immune system protocols. • Any person who has had a fever or cold symptoms in the previous 24 hours must not be allowed to take part in workouts and should contact his or her primary care provider or other appropriate healthcare professional.
Recommendations and Considerations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical distancing is recommended when possible. • Teams are encouraged to find appropriate methods of demonstrating good sportsmanship and respect towards others while physical distancing. • Additional care should be taken when addressing contest officials with questions or seeking interpretations. At no time, other than in the natural course of competition, should a coach or student-athlete violate the required physical distance with an official. Any coach or student-athlete who verbally interacts with an official must do so with a mask on and at a safe distance.

Locker Room Use

- Whenever possible it is recommended that locker rooms not be used.
- If locker rooms are to be used:
 - Student-athletes must only enter the locker room with their designated pod (Varsity, JV, B-Squad, etc.)
 - The locker room must be completely empty prior to it being utilized by a new pod.
 - Student-athletes must maintain social distancing of 6 feet.
 - Student-athletes must wear an appropriate mask/face covering.
 - If the locker room is not large enough to provide appropriate social distancing of 6 feet for the entire pod, then the pod must be divided into smaller groups that allow proper social distancing.
 - The locker room must be sanitized after the complete pod has exited.
- If student-athletes are in distance learning they should arrive at the venue for practice dressed for practice.
- If student-athletes are in distance learning they should arrive at the venue dressed in uniform ready for competition.
- It is recommended that student-athletes shower at home after practice or competition. However, if school showers are to be used:
 - Student-athletes must maintain social distancing of 6 feet.

- If the locker room is not large enough to provide appropriate social distancing of 6 feet for the entire pod then the pod must be divided into smaller groups that allow proper social distancing.

Masks/Face Coverings

Outdoor Masks/Face Coverings for Student-Athletes, Coaches, Officials, Spectators:

Not Required:

- Masks/face coverings **are not required** for student-athletes, coaches, officials or spectators in outdoor contests and practices.

Recommended:

- Masks/face coverings are recommended for participants who are not actively participating.

Indoor Masks/Face Coverings for Student-Athletes, Coaches, Officials, Spectators:

Required:

- Masks/face coverings are required for student-athletes, coaches, officials and spectators in any sports practices or competitions that are held in school buildings.
- Masks/face coverings are required for any outdoor sports for student-athletes, coaches, officials or spectators when practicing or competing indoors in school buildings.

Practice

Practice: Preparation

Required	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student-athletes, coaches, and team personnel must confirm that they are symptom free. These confirmations must be aligned with the CDC's "Coronavirus Self-Checker" or current recommendations. • A record must be kept of all student-athletes and team personnel at each practice session to allow for contact tracing.
Recommendations and Considerations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cleaning and sanitization of spaces and equipment should be completed frequently. • Student-athletes should provide their own pre-filled, labeled water bottles.

Practice: Equipment

Required	
Recommendations and Considerations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No touch distribution and collection methods of equipment are encouraged. • Equipment should not be shared to the extent that it is possible.

Practice	
Required	
Recommendations and Considerations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Student-athletes should shower immediately when they arrive at home.
Competition	
Competition: Site Set Up	
Required	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> See MSHSL Event and Facility Management Guidance and Information for additional requirements.
Recommendations and Considerations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluate the needs of game personnel and reduce the number whenever possible. When possible, spectators should be separated from student-athletes and restricted to areas outside of the competition area.
Competition: Pre-Contest	
Required	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A record must be kept of all participants at each contest. Communicate information with the visiting team prior to the competition, including entry and exit information, area to store items, etc. Student-athletes, coaches and other team personnel must be screened daily. Each team is responsible for their own screening. The home team must communicate information to the visiting team ahead of time. This includes entrance information, areas to store items etc.
Recommendations and Considerations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Areas for video, web-streaming or televising should be designated prior to the contest and sanitized. Additional signage may be necessary to identify restricted spectator areas. See Signage for Facilities and Events.
Competition: Contest	
Required	
Recommendations and Considerations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Before, during, and after competition, student-athletes, coaches, umpires, and personnel should wash their hands as frequently as possible. Play doubleheaders (same team) when possible on non-school days
Competition: Post-Contest	

Required	
Recommendations and Considerations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teams and coaches should consider ways to show physically distanced post-game appreciation for opponents and officials (i.e. A tip of the cap).

Competition: Playing Rules Adjustments

Required	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Infractions By the Pitcher (6-2-2): Prohibit licking of fingers and wiping them off. Pitchers are not allowed to put their hands to their mouths or blow into their hands prior to pitching the ball. This will be a "no pitch." Ball goes into the dugout for sanitizing pitcher sanitizes hands before play continues. Exchange of Lineups (4-2-1B): Lineup should be handed to the umpire, and the umpire will verbally approve or ask any questions about the lineup. Substitutions: (3-3-3): The verbal exchange should occur 6 feet from the coach to scorer and opposing team when making lineup changes. Charged Conference (3-7-1, 3-7-2, 3-7-5): Coaches holding defensive conferences must stay on the home plate side of the pitcher's circle and the player or players must be on the opposite of the pitcher's circle maintaining the 6 feet distance. No more than 2 players plus the pitcher are allowed. Only one coach is permitted during the conference. If a coach visits the pitcher, all other players should stay outside the pitching circle. Defensive players are permitted to hang a damp towel from their pants while on the field. This damp towel may be used to prevent or discourage a pitcher from going to the mouth or blowing on their hand before delivering a pitch. The pitcher must wipe the hand before touching the ball. Plate Umpire (10-2-1): Plate umpire should stand deeper than normal to call balls and strikes.
Recommendations and Considerations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5 inning double headers are an approved option to be considered.

Officials

Officials: Uniform and Equipment

Required	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Officials should bring their own equipment and come dressed in uniform. Mask/Face Covering information for Officials Home team must communicate with officials if locker rooms will be available. Whenever possible it is recommended that locker rooms not be used by officials. If locker rooms are to be used: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Officials must maintain proper social distancing of 6 feet. Officials must wear an appropriate mask/face covering The locker room must be sanitized after the officials exit The host site shall provide an area for officials to store their belongings.
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Recommendations and Considerations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Officials may wear a face shield in addition to a mask/face covering.• Officials may wear gloves – including medical latex gloves, work gloves or gloves designed specifically for officiating.
Officials: Pre-Contest, Contest and Post-Contest	
Required	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Officials must leave the venue as soon as possible following the contest• Schools must have officials' information to do contact tracing if necessary. Officials shall provide a copy of their profile page from Arbiter with contact information and the eligibility badge visible.
Recommendations and Considerations	

Resources:

- [COVID-19 Sports Practice Guidance for Youth and Adults](#)-Minnesota Department of Health
- [COVID-19 Youth and Adult Sports Guidance](#) Minnesota Department of Health
- [CDC Sports Guidance](#)



Minnesota State High School League

COVID-19 NOTICE: PLEASE READ CAREFULLY

In accordance with governmental directives, the MSHSL will offer certain activities subject to compliance with local, state, and federal laws, regulations, and guidelines. The Minnesota Department of Health, Minnesota Department of Education and the MSHSL have developed guidance and requirements related to youth sports, use of school facilities and modifications of MSHSL activities designed to keep participants safe and reduce the spread of COVID-19. Even with these measures, the MSHSL cannot guarantee that student-athletes or other individuals participating in organized athletic activities ("Participants") will not be exposed to COVID-19. Participants and their parents/legal guardians should consider the risks before participating in any MSHSL activities. It is a shared responsibility to protect everyone from COVID-19 and Participants should follow State/CDC guidelines to reduce the risk of exposure, including but not limited to the following:

- Stay home as much as possible;
- Stay at least 6 feet from other people if you are in public places;
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick;
- Wash your hands often, with soap and water. Wash for at least 20 seconds;
 - Always wash your hands after being in a public place;
 - Always wash your hands after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing;
 - If soap and water are not available, use hand sanitizer that is at least 60% alcohol;
- Cover your mouth and nose when you cough or sneeze. Cough or sneeze into your elbow or a tissue. Throw used tissues in the trash;
- Wear masks/face coverings that cover your nose and mouth and fit snugly against the sides of your face.

In recognizing the serious nature of the COVID-19 pandemic and the positive impact that participation in MSHSL fine arts activities and athletics has on student-athletes participants, it is imperative that student-athletes and families know and understand the following:

1. Participating in MSHSL activities is **voluntary**.
2. While participating in MSHSL activities, all laws as well as MSHSL and school rules, guidelines, and protocols related to COVID-19 must be followed.
3. Participant acknowledges the contagious nature of COVID-19, and the Participant understands that there is risk of injury and/or illness from participating in MSHSL activities, including the risk to have direct or indirect contact with individuals who have been exposed to and/or diagnosed with COVID-19.
4. Participant agrees that if he/she is exposed to, or infected by, COVID-19 during the period of participation, they will immediately cease participation and follow Minnesota Department of Health protocols for schools and activities. The MSHSL Graduated Return to Sport protocol is recommended following a diagnosis.
5. Participant has signed a separate Eligibility Statement connected to general participation in MSHSL athletics/activities and agrees that the terms of that statement are wholly incorporated into this document and that the terms of this document are incorporated into the Eligibility Statement.

Additional information regarding Activity Participation and COVID can be found at:

- health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/sportsguide.pdf,
- health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/schools/k12planguide.pdf
- www.mshsl.org
- www.nfhs.org