

USA Softball South Dakota in an effort to help with the restoration of play for leagues and tournaments have created the following recommendations and guidelines for youth and adult softball in South Dakota. These recommendations were discussed while in conversation with various state board and league reps while considering other state organizations and governing bodies of amateur sports public postings.

Watertown JO softball has adopted the following rules to start the season and may/will make adjustments as the season progresses.

- All players, coaches and umpires are encouraged to observe social distancing guidelines while at the ball parks and complexes in South Dakota.
- Teams will play back to back games and when possible staggered start times to help stay within gathering limitations.
- No sunflower seeds are allowed in the complex.
- Please refrain from spitting.
- Parents and spectators should view the game from the outfield areas past first and third base. Only immediate families and households are allowed to be seated together. Non-family household members must remain 6 feet apart from other spectators
- Only players, up to three coaches, umpires, and emergency personal will be allowed on the field during warm-up and games. Teams would be discouraged to be on the infield area until official grounds crews have left the infield.
- Pre-game coin flips will be held with one coach per team and 1 umpire. Coaches and umpires should not shake hands or have any physical contact.
- Team dugouts will be extended from the dugout to the backstop and include a minimum distance of 6 feet from the fence back. Teams would practice proper social distancing with no more than three to five individuals in the actual dugout at any given time.
- Hand and equipment sanitizing should be available and encouraged to take place when individuals comes into contact with bases and metal items, not limited to benches, fence and post. Teams are responsible for sanitizing of their equipment and players.
- Sanitizing gels are not allowed to be applied directly to the ball or bats for safety reasons; only rapidly drying wipes or approved disinfectant sprays. Rapid drying gels may be used for personal use and encouraged to be used before, during and after the game.
- It would be recommended players, spectators, umpires and coaches wear an approved face mask, gaiter, or face bandana according to community standards.
- Game balls, will be switched out each half inning and sanitized with spray or wipe between innings. Balls should remain in original packaging until introduced into the game. Umpires will not be required to carry game balls. Umpires would be recommended to wear gloves or use a sanitized wipe/towel to handle balls.

- In the youth games, every player is recommended to have their own batting helmet. If found to be necessary to share youth catchers equipment, it must be sanitized sprayed before use.
- All players, should refrain from sharing other equipment, including bats, batting and fielder's gloves, protective wear such as fielders mask, etc. Players would be encouraged to wear batting gloves as much as possible, especially while on offense.
- Teams will no longer shake hands at the end of the game. Instead use other gestured such as tip their caps, a wave or other non-contact gestures to the opponent and officials. Players and coaches will need to refrain from high five or other physical gestures of celebration during the contest.
  - Teams will be required to clean their dugout areas upon arrival and departure.
  - The use of team coolers is discouraged. Players should not share their drinks or food while in the dugout or complex areas.
  - As much as possible, umpires and catchers shall position themselves during a player's at bat to allow for some distancing.
  - Follow safe distancing guidelines at the concession area, bathroom, tournament and league headquarters, umpire areas. Encourage fans to bring and use hand sanitizers and disinfectants as well as having available for public usage at the parks.
  - Leagues and tournaments may consider adjusting rules, to allow for the safety of participants and umpires.

Watertown JO Softball understand that we may be asked to cap numbers for various events if deemed necessary by community or state guidelines. We also understand that we may be asked to suspend play once started if directed by emergency order.

Enforcement of those guidelines will be the responsibility of the coaches and players on the teams entered. Our umpires are hired to officiate, not to police. Teams and players may be invited to vacate if not following the guidelines set by the community or event organizers.

**\* Thanks to those who contributed:**

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