

## **Highlights Of NCBL Return to Play 2021 Summary of Changes from 2020**

### **Items removed for 2021**

- It is no longer required that players in Senior Divisions be at least 18 years old.
- It is no longer required that the ball/strike umpire stands behind the mound.
- Defensive teams are longer required to maintain control of game balls while they are on defense.
- If a batter is unable to retrieve his own bat, it is no longer necessary to apply hand sanitizer to the bat.
- Home plate meeting is no longer limited to 1 coach per team and 1 umpire although 2 metre distancing must be maintained.

### **New items added for 2021**

- Ball/strike umpires may work from behind the catcher as long as he/she is wearing a face covering and hand sanitizer is applied every half inning.
- Umpires are allowed to maintain control of game balls.
- Players and coaches must wear face coverings while off the field of play including while on the bench – base coaching is considered being “on the field”.
- When first base is occupied and the defensive player at first base is holding the runner on, the defensive player must wear a face covering.
- Coaches must wear face coverings when approaching a player, other coach or umpire.
- If a pitcher goes to their mouth with their fingers, the pitcher is required to sanitize his/her hands and the game ball replaced.

### **Items changed for 2021**

- Minimum time required between games changed from 45 minutes to 30 minutes. Thus, we can now go to "no new innings after" time limits of 2 hours for all games and "drop dead" times of 2 hours & 10 minutes for early games of double slots by having start times of 6:10 pm and 8:50 pm.
- Attendance tracker in the form of our electronic line-ups must be submitted within 48 hours rather than 24 hours if this tracker is done in written form. This is required in case a positive test arises and Public Health needs to trace contacts.

### **Full Document Follows**

# Highlights for NCBL Return to Play - **March 26, 2021**

Based on Baseball Ontario Return to Sport Guidelines updated March 18, 2021

*Changes from 2020 noted in red or by cross-outs.*

## **Numbers**

At no point will a baseball event exceed the number of attendees noted as the maximum number by the Province of Ontario, or any relevant municipality or public health authority.

Each team must track attendance by attendees and submit to the league through the electronic NCBL Line-ups portal listing all game participants, although the deadline for submitting now needs to be ~~24 hours~~ **48 hours** rather than 10 days. Any fans associated with the team also need to be kept track of (use the scorecard to record those fans as non participants and this information must be retained).

## **Screening/Diagnosed with Covid-19/Return from Covid-19**

Self screening is required by all who attend any game, practice, meeting or other in-person team activity. Any individual shall not attend if they fail the screening protocol. Baseball Ontario Self Assessment tool can be found at:

<https://covid-19.ontario.ca/self-assessment/travel>

Alternatively, the NCBL self assessment questionnaire posted on the NCBL website can be used.

Anyone who has been in contact with any person having Covid-19 must notify their local public health authority.

Anyone diagnosed with Covid-19 must be cleared by appropriate medical authorities prior to attending any in-person baseball activity. Evidence of the clearance needs to be provided to the NCBL registrar.

## **Cleaning/Sanitization**

Teams must have 70% alcohol based hand sanitizer and disinfectant wipes readily available at all times. Teams must clean/disinfect common spaces and high touch areas before and after each activity. Home teams are responsible for placing hand sanitizer at the entrances of the facility for an event.

## **Implementation of Safe Physical Distance**

All attendees at baseball activities must maintain minimum distancing of 2 meters whenever possible. As much space as necessary outside the dugouts can be used to maintain adequate physical distancing while teams are at bat.

## **Use of Face Masks / Face Coverings**

**Players and coaches are required to wear non-medical face masks or face coverings while off the field of play including while on the bench during the game. If coaches approach a player, other coach or umpire, they must wear a non-medical mask or face covering.**

## Venues/Time Limits

Scheduling of diamonds must allow a minimum of ~~45 minutes~~ **30 minutes** between the conclusion of the prior event and the start of the subsequent event to enable teams entering and exiting the facility to maintain adequate physical distancing during the cross-over. **Therefore, game times will 6:10 pm and 8:50 pm.**

For this year, our “no new inning after” time limits are adjusted to ~~1 hour and 50 minutes and time slots which don’t end at 11:00 pm will have a 2-hour drop-dead time~~ **2 hours for all games and early games of double slots will have a drop-dead-time of 2 hours and 10 minutes.** Infield practices will be suspended to allow the maximum time available for our games.

## Equipment

Participants should have their own equipment which should not be shared. Where equipment needs to be shared, it must be cleaned/sanitized before being used by a different player.

## Participants

Participants will abide the following:

- No spitting, including tobacco and other products.
- No sunflower seeds or chewing gum.
- No sharing of drink bottles or food.
- No shared water jugs or drink dispensers.
- No handshakes, fist or chest bumps, high fives, hugs etc.

## Competition

No infield or batting practice is allowed to maximize the time available for games.

~~Home plate meeting is limited to 1 coach per team and 1 umpire.~~ **Those participating in home plate meetings must maintain physical distancing of 2 meters.** Line-up cards must be prepared but will not be physically shared. The card must be made available to show the umpire when requested.

~~The defensive team will maintain control of the game balls used while they are on defense including chasing all foul balls. Members of the offensive team are not to touch the baseballs of the defensive team.~~ **Umpires may handle and maintain control of baseballs for the game.**

~~If a batter is not able to retrieve his own bat, a team representative shall do the retrieval but apply hand sanitizer before and after the retrieval.~~

No bat boys/girls are allowed. No sharing of catcher’s masks in warming up pitchers or in the bullpen.

~~Balls and strikes are to be called by an umpire standing at least 2 meters behind the pitcher. Umpires will not hold game balls~~ **Ball/strike umpire may work from behind the catcher as long as he/she is wearing a PPE mask or face covering. The use of hand sanitizer every half inning is required.**

Sharing of paper score cards should be avoided so only one person should be designated as the scorer.

**Players shall not lick their fingers, blow on their hands or otherwise go to their mouth. When a pitcher violates this rule, the umpire will stop the game and the pitcher will be required to sanitize his/her hands and the game ball will be replaced.**

**When first base is occupied, the defensive player at first base must wear a PPE mask or face covering if the runner is being held at the base.**

~~All players must be 18 years of age or older for all adult Senior Division leagues, including the NCBL.~~

If a coach must approach an umpire, at least 2 meters distancing must be maintained with failure to do so subject to possible ejection. Any discussions between base coaches and players must maintain at least 2 meters distancing.

Member organizations not following these protocols may result in discipline for the member organization from Baseball Ontario.