



COVID-19 RETURN TO PLAY PROTOCOLS & GUIDELINES

- We're committed to providing the highest levels of safety for our community. To ensure player and staff safety, we have implemented mandatory **'Safe Return to Play Guidelines'** for all Club Activities. In order to play with FCSSC and stay in good standing, the following guidelines **MUST** be followed.
- To ensure a successful season, please remember to practice safe physical distancing and a positive attitude!
- All players are required to read, understand, and adhere to the following:
 1. Safe Return to Play Guidelines
 2. COVID-19 League Changes
 3. Self Screening Tool (done before each game).
 4. Sport-Specific Rule Modifications outlined below PLUS,
 5. Facility specific COVID-19 Protocols (you can find these protocols in the facility link in your schedule once live).

TEAM HEALTH AMBASSADOR (THA)

- **All teams must assign a Team Health Ambassador (THA) for the season.**
- The THA must be a registered player and identified using the "THA" label in your online roster.
- **THA Role:**
 - Keep a record of attendance at each game. This record may be called upon for contact tracing.
 - Ensure individual wellness checks "COVID-19 Self Screening" are completed by each player prior to each game.
 - Ask players to leave the game if they arrive showing symptoms of cold or flu.
 - Ensure physical distancing measures are enforced by your team. Physical distancing of two meters is mandatory when players are arriving on-site, playing the sport, resting/sitting on the sidelines, and departing the game.
 - Sport-specific rules may adjust physical distancing measures taken on the playing surface.
 - Players must always stay within their designated bench or standing area while not on the playing surface.
 - Ensure your team follows posted ENTER / EXIT signage at facilities (controlled traffic flow).
 - Remind all players to arrive on time and leave immediately after the game is over.
 - Ensure your team is following the equipment sanitization requirements for your sport.
 - Ensure all players have read and understand mandatory Club COVID-19 Protocols.

LEAGUE MODIFICATIONS DUE TO COVID-19

- **As part of our "Safe Return to Play" format, we are focusing on the safety of our staff and players and leaning into the FUN and SOCIAL aspects of our leagues!**
- **League Guidelines**
 - There are no playoff games, trophies or prizing this season, however, scores and standings will still appear on our website.
 - Leagues will be played in smaller pools to ensure limited contact with opponents throughout the season. Pools will be determined based on skill rankings (at registration) and past league results.
 - Each pool will be confined to a limited number of facilities. You will play at consistent location(s) throughout the season.

- All leagues will have an even number of teams to avoid double-header play.
- FCSSC may stagger game times by ~10 minutes if necessary, depending on the facility, to ensure safe traffic flow.
- Players are asked to compete with a “For-Fun, Safety-First, Kindness Always” approach. Please play with the highest levels of sportsmanship, and prioritize respect for others, over competition, at all times.

PLAYER ELIGIBILITY

- All players must be added to the team roster by the team captain. This process confirms that all players have electronically agreed (checked the box) to our policies and online waiver. **Teams are not permitted to exceed the maximum roster size. See Mandatory Roster Requirements in the sport specific rules.**
- **Substitute players are not permitted unless the substitute player is a player from another team’s official roster in the same league and pool.**

**FCSSC Official Coed Softball Rules
COVID-19 MODIFICATIONS**

OBJECTIVE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Softball is played between two teams on a diamond, with 9 players from one team on the playing surface at a time. The object of the game is to score more runs (points) than the other team by batting (hitting) a ball into play and running around the bases, touching each one in succession.
GAME LENGTH, FOUL WEATHER GUIDELINES AND PHYSICAL DISTANCING REQUIREMENTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Games are seven (7) innings in length with a time limit of 75 minutes (unless otherwise indicated in your schedule). ● Games start and end according to your online SSC schedule. ● If games start late, games must finish at the scheduled time. ● No new inning can start with 5 minutes left before the formal end time. If a new inning is started and is not completed (both teams receive their at bat), the score will revert to that of the last completed inning. ● Games are played rain or shine. If a game is stopped due to lightning, four (4) innings will constitute a complete game. If three (3) innings or less are played, it will constitute as a tie game. ● If one team shows up during foul weather to play and the other team is missing, or if one team leaves mid-game and there is an opportunity to continue play - it is an automatic win for the present team. ● Players are required to arrive and depart directly before and after their games. ● Do not enter a playing space until the game before yours has cleared the area or until the FCSSC Game Coordinator has signaled for your team to enter. ● Physical distancing of two meters is mandatory when players are arriving on-site, resting/sitting on the sidelines, and departing the game. ● All players are asked wear a mask during your arrival/departure from the facility, whenever not playing, and any time that 6 feet distance between yourself and others is difficult or impossible to maintain. Though encouraged when playing the infield especially, you’re not required to wear a mask while playing sport outdoors. ● Directional signage will be posted onsite when possible to ensure physical distancing is followed. ● During gameplay, all efforts should be made to avoid contact and provide sufficient spacing with your opponents and teammates. Players must expect that there may be some contact when playing sport. Due to the contact, please avoid touching your face at any time and please sanitize your hands before, during and after games.
EQUIPMENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Teams are responsible for bringing to each game; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Batting helmets

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Catcher's mask ○ Bats ○ A line up card and scoresheet ● FCSSC Game Coordinator will provide the bases and balls. All FCSSC-provided equipment will be sanitized before, during & after every game. <p><i>Do not share your equipment with other teams.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Batters and Base Runners are required to wear a helmet. Helmets are the responsibility of each team to provide. Players are encouraged to each have their own Helmet. Helmets must be cleaned and sanitized after each use. ● Catchers are required to wear a mask. Masks must be cleaned and sanitized after each use. It is strongly advised Catcher masks are used by ONLY 1 PERSON on the team for the duration of the season. Please contact FCSSC is you would like to borrow a catcher's mask for your team to use for the duration of the season. Deposit required. ● Players are required to provide their own gloves, helmet, bats, and appropriate footwear (players are not permitted to use metal cleats or wooden bats). Teams are required to wash/sanitize equipment before and after the game. ● Bats can only be used from the NSA Canada Approved Bat List, with logo certification from either the United States Specialty Sports Association (USSSA 1.20bpf), National Softball Association (NSA) or American Softball Association (ASA). Bats on the Non-Approved ASA/NSA list are not permitted. It is recommended each player uses their own bat. If players are sharing a bat, it must be sanitized between each user. ● Softballs: Games should be played using the provided FCSSC league softballs. ● Scorebooks: FCSSC softball scorebooks are included in your team registration and handed out with the equipment, if available. Scorebooks are not available this season. ● A default will occur if a team does not adhere to the equipment regulations. However, captains may agree to waive specific equipment rules, as long as it is agreed upon before the game begins. In the event there is a default dispute and the game was played, the FCSSC ruling is that the game counts. Rules surrounding cleaning and sanitization cannot be waived under any circumstance.
<p>PLAYERS ON FIELD AND GENDER RATIO</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Mandatory Roster Requirements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Teams are comprised of 9 players on the field and a maximum roster of 12 players. ○ No spectators allowed under any circumstance (this includes partners, children, friends, etc) to ensure maximum gathering size is respected and contact tracing is simplified, if needed. ○ No substitute players allowed outside of your 12-player roster maximum (unless from the same league and pool). ● Teams are comprised of nine (9) players (1 rover) on the field with a minimum of three (3) of each gender. ● A team can play with a minimum of 7 people as long as there are two (2) of each gender (i.e. 2 women) and as long as the batting order stays the same (see the section below about batting). In this scenario, on defense, teams must then play with fewer players on the field (i.e. if you play with 2 players below the minimum requirement, you must be short 2 players on defense). ● The rover may play anywhere on the field with the exception of the catcher's position. The rover cannot stand within the baselines before the ball is hit.
<p>GAME & FIELD SET-UP</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Captains should meet before the start of the game and confirm / agree upon ground rules with regards to boundaries, base set-up and home run line. Captains must maintain a 2-meter distance.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the absence of an FCSSC Game Coordinator, teams are responsible for setting up the bases at 60 feet (approximately 20-25 paces) apart. • First base and home plate require "safety bases". <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ First – safety base: There should be a base for the first base fielder to touch and a separate base for the runner to step on (with a distance of 6 inches between the bases). ○ Home – safety base: There should be an extra base laid out parallel to the existing home plate (at least 24 inches away from it). A line is to be drawn in the dirt between the two to enable the runner to touch the safety bag or cross the line in a safe manner, in order to score a run. ○ Commitment Line: Because there is no tagging allowed and there will be a forced-out at every base, the commitment line is half the distance between bases. This applies for all bases and can be marked by drawing a line in the dirt across the base path. This marks the no-return point of a base runner going towards home plate. ○ Other Bases: For the other bases, fielders should be touching only one side of the base, allowing a base runner to touch the base without interference. • If a field does not have a home run fence, teams are responsible for setting up the home run line, using the 4 pylons at 210-250ft (approximately 70-83 paces) from home base. Some fields may require different lengths. Please ensure both teams agree with the home run line location before the start of the game. • Batting teams are responsible for providing base coaches at first and third base. These are typically players on your team that are batting further down the lineup at the start of each inning. Base coaches (who must be members of roster) must maintain a 2-meter distance. • No handshakes or high fives between teams – All greetings and congratulations should be vocal.
<p>GAME START & INNING STRUCTURE</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rock-paper-scissors will determine the home team (bats in the bottom of the inning). • Each inning is played with three (3) outs or when a team scores a maximum of eight (8) runs. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Exception: teams do not have a run limit in the final inning of the game. • If the home team is winning after the completion of the top of the 7th inning, the game is over and the home team does not bat.
<p>PITCHING</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The team at bat provides their own pitcher. • The pitcher can pitch from wherever they choose (for safety we recommend at least 30ft from the batter). • If a ball that is hit touches the pitcher, then the: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ ball is declared dead. ○ pitch is redone. ○ base runners return to their previous bases. ○ pitch count is then restored.
<p>PITCHING SCREEN (OPTIONAL IF TEAMS WISH TO BRING THEIR OWN)</p>	<p>If teams wish to use a pitching screen, the following rules apply;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Once screen is set in an agreed upon position by both team captains, it cannot be touched by any player and must remain upright (the screen becomes part of the field). • Left handed pitchers pitch on the left side, right handed pitchers pitch on the right. • If a batted ball hits the screen (either ground ball or direct) then the: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ ball is declared dead. ○ pitch is redone. ○ base runners return to their previous bases. ○ pitch count is then restored. • If a fielder throws a ball to home but hits the screen, the ball is still live as the pitching screen is considered part of the field. • The pitching screen must be cleaned and sanitized after it is put into place.

<p>FIELDING</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is no infield fly rule in effect. However, it is poor sportsmanship to purposely drop a ball to induce a double play. • Players in the field are not allowed to stand inside the baselines before a player attempts to hit a ball (e.g. the shortstop cannot stand beside the pitcher before the batter has hit the ball). • A fielder cannot obstruct a base runner without the ball, or the runner is awarded an automatic base. • Once the pitcher collects the ball from a fielder, play is dead. Therefore, if a runner is less than halfway to the next base, they must return to their previous base. If they are past halfway, they may advance to the base. All close calls should be made by the pitcher. The pitcher should make their best effort to catch the ball from the fielding team. • The catcher must stand a minimum of 2 meters behind the plate to allow physical distancing. • All infield players must position themselves a minimum of 2 meters behind the base runner (into the outfield), to obtain physical distancing. • Base runners will have the right-of-way and must always have a clear path to the base. • In the event of a tie at a base the benefit goes to the base runner. If teams are unsure of the call due to distance, the play should be re-played. • There will be a forced-out at every base, fielding players are not permitted to tag a base runner at any time. Once a force out has been made, fielders should step away from the base to ensure physical distancing between themselves and the base runner. • The commitment line is half the distance between bases.
<p>BATTING</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One run shall be scored each time a runner legally advances to and touches first, second, third and crosses the home base line before three players are determined 'out' to end the inning. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Exception: a run is not scored if the runner advances to home base during a 'force' play in which the third out is made. ○ A runner can score on a 'non-forced' third out, as long as they cross the home base line before the 'non-force' play is made. • Every batter can receive a maximum of three (3) pitches. • All foul balls, wild pitches, strikes and balls count as one of the three (3) pitches. The only exception is a ball that hits the pitcher (see pitching). • Batting Order: No more than 2 males/females can bat consecutively in the batting order, including when the bottom of the order meets the top of the order. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Players must line up in a batting order along the fence, outside the diamond, spread out at a minimum of 2 meters apart from each other and those on the bench. ○ A team must use their full roster for batting (e.g. players cannot only play defense) and all players must bat before a male player can bat for the second time (this may change the male/female order from inning to inning). <i>Example: If a team only has two women present, the batting order will be male 1, male 2, female A, male 3, male 4, female B, male 5, male 6, female A, etc. The spot where female C should have been will not be an automatic out.</i> ○ The batting order should remain intact from inning to inning. This means the last batter out in an inning is followed by the next subsequent gender at the start of a new inning. ○ Any players arriving after their team has batted in the first inning, will be inserted into the bottom of the gender batting order. • There is no bunting or faking a bunt. Any ball, whether hit at full swing or not, that does not go past the pitcher IS a dead ball.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A 'foul ball' pop-up behind home plate can only be caught for an out if it goes higher than 10 feet. A ball not exceeding this height is considered a 'strike'. • If a fielder attempts to catch a ball in foul territory and misses, the result is a dead ball (strike against batter). The same applies if a foul ball comes in contact with a fielder in foul territory, but lands in fair territory (remains dead ball, strike against batter). • Players are considered out by the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Striking out. ○ Fly ball caught by the defense. ○ Foul out. ○ Force out at any base. • If a player hits the ball and gets out, they must retrieve their own bat. Otherwise, the on-deck batter must pick up the bat by the barrel and place it in the dugout.
<p>BASE RUNNING</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Base runners can: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Overrun first base without being tagged out as long as they continue to follow the foul line or stay to the right of it. ○ Advance one base if a ball is overthrown at first or third base and goes 'out of play' (e.g. over the fence, into the dugout, beyond the extended backstop, etc.). If the ball stays in play (i.e. hits the fence) then the ball is live and runners may advance at their own risk. ○ Be hit by a batted ball - in this circumstance the ball is live and playable although base runners must make every effort to avoid a batted ball. ○ Courtesy runners are permitted for a hitter or injured base runner; however, the courtesy runner must be the last out of the same gender. If a courtesy runner is being used for a batter, please notify the opponents team captain before the start of the game. The courtesy runner must start to the right side of the catcher (facing towards the pitcher) in line with the 3rd base foul line and can only run when contact has been made with the ball (see the downloadable pdf Softball Diagram for specific start location). The courtesy runner is required to keep physical distancing. • Base runners cannot (automatic out): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Slide into any base. ○ Steal a base or leadoff to gain a competitive advantage (base runners must wait until the batter makes contact with the ball before leaving the base). ○ Cause interference to a defending fielder who is attempting to make a play on the ball. ○ Touch home plate. Runners can only touch safety base or cross 'line'. • Tag Up: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ If pop fly ball is caught, base runners must retouch (or 'tag-up') the base they were on at the time of the pitch, before attempting to advance. If a pop fly ball is not caught, a tag-up is not required and base runners may try to advance. • Commitment Line: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Players cannot return to any base if they have crossed the 'commitment line' (a base runner that does is automatically out).
<p>MERCY & HOME RUN RULE</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mercy Rule: If a team is up by 15 runs or more after the 5th inning of play, the losing team has the option of calling the game or choosing to continue. • Recreation leagues will follow a +3 home run rule. This includes leagues that are combined int/rec. A team can only hit +3 home runs more than their opponents. Example: If team A has hit 3 home runs, they must wait for Team B to hit a home run before Team

	<p>A can hit another. If a team hits a + 4 home run, the batter is awarded a single base (not a home run) and base runners only advance if they are forced (same as a 'walk' scenario).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intermediate leagues will follow a +5 home run rule. A team can only hit +5 home runs more than their opponents. Example: If team A has hit 5 home runs, they must wait for Team B to hit a home run before Team A can hit another. If a team hits a + 6 home run, the batter is awarded a single base (not a home run) and base runners only advance if they are forced (same as a 'walk' scenario). • Clarification of the home run rule: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A home run is defined as hitting the ball beyond the outfield (between the foul lines). ○ If the field has a home run fence, the ball must go over the fence. ○ When using an unfenced ball diamond, the following scenario applies; To be deemed a home run, the ball must carry in the air and land outside of the home run line (see rules for pylon set-up). If the ball rolls through the home run line, it is an automatic ground rule double. ○ A fielder can stand before the line and jump in an attempt to catch the ball. However, if a fielder catches the ball and is standing outside of the line, it is deemed a home run. Please use your best judgement. ○ The home run rule does not apply to 'in the park home runs' or fielding errors (the ball does not leave the playing field).
MAKING CALLS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Foul ball calls should be made by the catcher (balls that are hit outside of the base lines). • Base calls are the responsibility of the base coaches (first and third base) and pitcher (second and home base) to make impartial calls. If base coaches are not present, close calls should be made by the pitcher. • Home run calls should be made by the closest fielder with support from the base coaches. • Calls should be made as neutral and impartial as possible. • Captain meetings regarding rules, scores, etc. must be conducted on the diamond at a minimum 2 meters distance.
PLAYOFFS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are no playoff games, trophies or prizing this season, however, scores and standings will still appear on our website.

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