

**GHSA SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS AND SOFTBALL RULES MODIFICATIONS**

**The considerations outlined in this document are meant to decrease potential exposure to respiratory droplets by encouraging social distancing, limiting participation in administrative tasks to essential personnel and allowing for appropriate protective equipment during practice and competition.**

1. **Host School Responsibility (Considerations)**
* **Public concession stands are prohibited.**
* **Host schools shall provide hand sanitizer for both schools.**
* **Host schools shall enforce social distancing requirements in spectator areas, and facility entrances.**
* **~~Host schools shall provide a sufficient number of balls that allow for sanitation of the game balls after the third out of each inning.~~**
1. **Player Equipment (Modifications)**
* **Face Shields are permitted to be plastic shields if they are integrated into the fielding face mask, catching helmet, or batting helmet. The face shield shall be clear without tint.**
* **Cloth facial masks are recommended, but not mandatory. If worn they must be of a single color, without insignias or lettering. Pitchers shall not wear a facial mask that is any tint of yellow.**
* **Players shall use their own gloves, helmets, and bats as much as possible.**
* **Players shall use their own water/beverage bottles (sharing these items is prohibited).**
* **Sunflower seeds are prohibited in the dugout and on the field.**
* **Player/team equipment shall be sanitized before and after each practice/game.**
* **Each team shall be responsible for supplying their own game balls (NFHS Approved).**
1. **At the conclusion of each half inning the pitcher shall take the game ball with her to the dugout.**
2. **In the event that a game ball goes out of play, the defensive team is responsible to retrieve the ball and provide another ball.**
3. **In the event that weather conditions or damage creates a need to change the ball out, the defensive team is responsible to retrieve the ball and provide another game ball.**
4. **This “modification” should provide a balance in the matter of providing game balls home and away, the elimination of umpires handling game balls, and providing another layer of safety precaution for the players.**
5. **Bench and Field Precautions (Modifications)**
* **Players are not allowed to exit the dugout to congratulate teammates after a home run.**
* **Team huddles without physical distancing are prohibited.**
* **A charged defensive conference shall be conducted on the outer edge of the pitching circle maintaining physical distancing.**
* **Physical distancing (6 ft.) requirements shall be maintained in both dugouts, and may extend the dugout into a clearly marked “out of play” area.**
* **Pitchers are prohibited from licking fingers, touching any part of their hands to the mouth, or blowing into their hands prior to delivering a pitch. NOTE: Any violation of this policy shall be called a “dead ball” immediately, the ball shall be ~~sanitized~~ removed from play, another game ball provided by the defensive team, and the pitcher’s hand shall be sanitized before play resumes.**
1. **Coaches & Umpires**
* **The pregame conference is limited to one coach from each team and the umpires. Coaches shall remain outside the batter’s box nearest their dugout, and umpires shall be behind the catcher’s box to exchange lineup cards.**
* **Substitutions shall be made with physical distancing to umpires and scorekeepers.**
* **Umpires are encouraged to wear face shields and sanitation gloves.**
* **Coaches who request a timeout to discuss a ruling on the field, or to make a substitution, shall maintain physical distancing from the umpire(s).**
* **Base coaches shall maintain physical distancing to base runners at all times.**
* **The plate umpire shall be positioned deeper than normal to call balls and strikes.**
* **Base umpires shall maintain physical distancing from any players in the starting positions and during rotations.**
* **The catcher and batter shall maintain physical distancing while the umpire dusts off home plate.**