

# PONCA SUMMER REC

## 2020 SOFTBALL/BASEBALL PARENT LETTER

On May 19, 2020, the Ponca Summer Rec Board met to determine the status of this year's Ponca Softball and Baseball Seasons. As everyone is aware, the COVID19 Pandemic has changed the way we all do so many things, and it acted as the focus of our meeting. Keeping the safety of our kids and volunteers the main priority, we chose to cancel this year's softball, baseball, and tee ball for any kids under 10 years of age. With social distancing being strongly encouraged by the Center for Disease Control (CDC) and the Guidelines provided by the State of Nebraska for reopening youth sports, we felt the management of kids younger than 10 was not reasonable. For groups age 10 and up, if they have enough kids to field a team, and coaches willing to participate, they will have a season with practices and games. Below is the full list of Guidelines for Reopening – we ask that you review the list and help inform your child what the expectations are.

Practices can start in Nebraska on June 1st

- No dugouts will be used for practice and parents that are not coaching need to remain in their cars or pick their child up after practice is over
- Players are strongly encouraged to use their own gloves, helmets, and bats. If they do not have a helmet, one will be provided
- Players should each have a designated area for their bags, drink, gloves, not <6 feet from any other player
- Players need to bring their own drink – nothing is to be shared
- Coaches must sanitize shared equipment before and after each practice (i.e. catchers' equipment, balls, bats (if used by more than one player or kept in a team bag))

Games can start June 18th on Nebraska fields (unless the Guidelines change between now and then)

- Same guidelines apply as above
- However, dugouts may be used for games – each player will be given a spot (not <6 feet from each other) extending from inside to outside the dugout. If the dugout is not conducive for this, bleachers behind home plate can be utilized with the same social distancing required. One coach should be designated to monitor this during the game
- Teams warming up prior to games are to work to distance themselves from the playing teams, and work at social distancing for these warmups.
- After the game the team is to sanitize the dugout
- Teams waiting to play next are to stay away until the dugout is sanitized, and all players/coaches have left
- In game group talks will be difficult as social distancing is still required when the players come on and off the field
- No post game talks – players are to head to their cars
- No pregame or postgame handshakes with opposing teams or umpires

## Fan Attendance

- Limited to household members of the players on the team
- No use of bleachers is allowed – bring your own chairs, stand, or watch from car
- Fans should keep 6 feet of Social Distancing between different household units
- No sitting or standing is allowed from the area behind home plate to at least 6 feet past the dugout, or the last player stationed down the line, whichever is further. This allows plenty of room for the coaches to social distance their players
- Concession stands will be open under the governor's guidelines with certain restrictions applied.
- Bathrooms will be open and cleaned periodically – cleaning the bathroom is not the responsibility of the coaches or players
- When arriving for a game, fans are to remain in their cars until their team is in the dugout

The Ponca Summer Rec has provided this list from the State of Nebraska list of guidelines. We can only enforce these guidelines as completely as the parents/guardians are willing to help and take them seriously.

Coaches already have their hands full trying to coach the team, so the parents/guardians commitment to taking this seriously will be vital. Coaches will be asked to maintain social distancing with their players as best as they can, to sanitize dugouts and equipment before and after practices and games, and to do their best to encourage the kids and make this fun during these challenging times.

Coaches will be asked to keep the area behind home plate (as designated in the guidelines) clear of fans, but they are not being asked to monitor who is at the games and who should or shouldn't be in attendance.

All other guidelines need to be followed and enforced by each parent/guardian in respect to their behavior and in respect to their own kid.

Nobody can 100% guarantee the safety of any child participating in a Summer Rec program. Adding to normal risks associated with sports, the uncertainty and fears surrounding COVID19 increase some people's concerns. All we can do is provide the guidelines and ask that they are followed. We realize coaches will have questions as we progress through the season, but if you continue to worry about the safety of your child, despite these guidelines, it is probably best that they do not play this summer. We wish we could wave a wand and then guarantee that everything will be perfect and safe, but obviously we cannot do that.

Attached is a Waiver Form required by USA Softball this year, that Ponca Summer Rec has chosen to adopt for all participants. Please read it over, sign it, and return it to your coach at or before their first practice. Signature must be of the parent/guardian of any participant under age 19.

Thanks for your participation in Ponca Summer Rec activities, and good luck this season!

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