## OPCSSL – 2021 Season – Proposed Rule Amendments & COVID-19 Protocol

It is proposed that the following section be added to the Ontario Public Civil Servants Softball League (OPCSSL) rules for the 2021 season.

1. **COVID-19 Protocols.** For the purposes of O. Reg. 263/20: Rules for Areas in Step 2, the below protocols shall constitute the safety plan required under in accordance with Section 3.3 of Schedule 1 of O.Reg 262/20.

General

* Precedence. The laws, regulations and ordinances of the federal, provincial or municipal governments in relation to COVID-19, as amended from time to time, take precedence over these OPCSSL rules. Similarly, if there is a conflict between this Section 47 and other aspects of the OPCSSL rules, this Section 47 shall take precedence.
* Commitment to safe play. The OPCSSL is committed to ensuring a safe playing experience for our community of players. The guidance under this Section 47 may be amended from time to time based upon public health guidance and feedback from teams and players.
* Symptoms of COVID-19. Players should not attend any OPCSSL activity if they are exhibiting symptoms of or similar to COVID-19 or have come in contact with someone who is exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19. It is recommended that they get tested and self-isolate.
* Hygiene. Players must practice good hygiene. Wash your hands with soap & water and/or hand sanitizer before, during and after game play. Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth with unwashed hands. Players should bring sanitizer and any additional PPE they deem appropriate for personal use.
* COVID Alert App. It is recommended that all players have the COVID Alert App installed.
* Vaccination. It is highly recommended that all players be vaccinated against COVID-19 when they are eligible.
* Weekly rosters and contact information. Team captains / representatives are responsible for ensuring that records are kept of weekly rosters including current contact information for all players.
* Captains’ agreement. Upon mutual agreement between the captains of two teams playing each other, such teams may propose, modify and enforce more stringent rules in relation to COVID-19 protocols for their game than outlined in this Section 47.
* Sportsmanship. The OPCSSL reminds everyone that this is a recreational league. As an example, all teams are encouraged to use their best judgement and accommodate, to the extent practicable, the opposing team in the event of delayed players etc. given the unique circumstances of this season.

Modifications to Rules

* Force outs. For the 2021 season, to minimize physical contact, all plays on the bases will be force outs (i.e. no tags). Force outs, for plays where tags would otherwise apply, will be based on the reasonably expected intention of the base runner and a honour system. For example, if a base runner is more than half way and running towards a base where the ball was thrown and caught, they are out and cannot go back. In the event of a contested “run-down”, the base runner is out if the ball is thrown to both bases. This rule will be subject to review and feedback during the 2021 season upon request of any Captain and, in any event, will be revisited no later than the 2022 Captains’ Meeting.
* Base coaches are permitted but must stay 2 m away from the base / other players. If base coaches are not employed, the pitcher shall make the call. Face masks are highly recommended for base coaches.

Other Game Day Modifications

* Physical distancing. Players should maintain physical distancing (2 m) when possible to do so including avoiding use of small dugouts where this is not possible. When physical distancing is not possible and players are not in the field of play, masks covering the nose and mouth are encouraged.
* Physical touching like handshaking, high fives, fist/elbow bumps and huddles are not permitted.
* All teams must limit shared equipment. Wipes and disinfection of equipment is recommended. Batting gloves are encouraged.

Protocol In Event of Positive Test

* In the event of a positive test, the team of the player with the positive test and their recent opponents shall follow all applicable public health guidance at the time including testing, self-isolation and cooperation with contact tracing.

Expiry

* This Section 47 will be in force during the 2021 Season and subject to review at the 2022 Captains’ Meeting.

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Other proposals considered:

1. Vaccination policy. Some teams have recommended a vaccination policy (e.g. everyone that participates should be vaccinated).
	1. Commissioner’s comments. Above guidance recommends that all players be vaccinated but stops short of mandating it as verification and enforcement will be challenging. Informal team discussions suggest most players will be vaccinated which is consistent with general population trends for vaccinations.
2. Pitcher makes all calls.
	1. Commissioner’s comments. Given everything going on during any particular play, this may not be practicable to implement. Requirement above is that the base coaches maintain a distance of 2 m away from the base / other players.
3. Batting team provides catcher.
	1. Commissioner’s comments. At this time, the Commissioner does not believe implementation of this change is necessary. However, team captains may mutually agree to this modification for any individual game pursuant to the “Captains’ agreement” clause.