

**Return to Sport Plan
Softball Newfoundland Labrador (Softball NL)**



The Softball Newfoundland Labrador (Softball NL) Return to Sport Plan is in addition to and in full compliance with the revised Sport Guidance and other relevant Guidance Documents.

Softball NL have been following the public health measures set by the Provincial Government from Day 1 and will continue to rely on the information provided moving forward.

Softball NL's main objective is the health and safety of its entire membership and that has been established since Day 1 and will continue to be the main focus moving forward. With that said, Softball NL went ahead with an abbreviated season in 2020 (without incident) and have learned a lot that will benefit the entire membership in preparation for the 2021 season.

Softball NL will adhere to ALL Provincial COVID-19 revised Guidance, including COVID-19 protocols that were initiated in 2020 and including Sport Guidance for any issues that may arise including complying with a Return to Softball in the context of COVID-19 variants (B117, etc.) requiring a modified and phased in approach provided below.

Government of Newfoundland and Labrador COVID-19 Link:

<https://www.gov.nl.ca/covid-19/information-sheets-for-businesses-and-workplaces/sport-guidance/>

Alert level 2

Individual athlete skill development and team practice/training sessions are permitted. Return to Sport Plans are not required for activities in Alert Level 2, Phase 1.

Phase 1

Individual Athlete Skill Development (March 26 – August 31, 2021)

Individual athlete skill development sessions are permitted. Including coaches and athletes, the maximum number of individuals for athlete skill development sessions is 50. Refer to Sport Guidelines for the recommended public health measures for these sessions.

Skill Development Clinics

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Softball NL will work with our Associations throughout the Province to provide Pitching and Skill Development Clinics to youth from U8 to U16 years of age. We anticipate providing approximately 6 Clinics on an as needed basis. At each clinic, there will be approximately 15 participants, all of whom will be from the specific Regional Health Authority where the clinic will be taking place.

Team Practice/Team Training Sessions (March 26 – May 31, 2021)

- Softball NL's Canada Games and High Performance Teams will be training once per week in St. John's and area at the following locations including:
 - Techniplex, St. John's.
 - Premier Sports Academy, Paradise.
 - Torbay Commons, Torbay.
- Teams include: 2022 Canada Games Men's and Women's Teams, Under 14 Boy's and Girl's Teams, Under 16 Boy's and Girl's Teams, U19 Men's and Women's Teams and the U23 Men's Team.
- All players and coaches are from the Eastern Regional Health Authority.
- There will be approximately 20 individuals at each practice including players and coaches.

Phase 2

Competition for Teams within Associations (House League) (April 10 – May 14)

During Phase 2, Softball NL teams within Associations will begin to play intra-association competitive games. For example, if an Association has 3 teams in the U14 boys group, then those three teams can play against one another. Teams are not permitted to play against teams from Other Associations in this phase. The following is a table outlining the minor associations with potential divisions and approximate number of participants.

Local House League Programs Associations	Divisions (varies across Associations)	Approximate Number of Participants
Southern Shore	U8 – U19 Female and Male	273
Goulds	U8 – U19 Female and Male	187
Outer Cove	U8 – U19 Female and Male	169
Torbay	U8 – U19 Female and Male	174
Cape St. Francis	U8 – U19 Female and Male	129
Portugal Cove St. Philips	U8 – U19 Female and Male	48
Conception Bay South	U8 – U19 Female and Male	341
Conception Bay Central	U8 – U19 Female and Male	204
Butlerville	U8 – U19 Female and Male	74
Bay Roberts	U8 – U19 Female and Male	175
Carbonear	U8 – U19 Female and Male	122
North Shore	U8 – U19 Female and Male	18
Whiteway	U8 – U19 Female and Male	87
Clareville	U8 – U19 Female and Male	309

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Marystown	U8 – U19 Female and Male	37
Burin	U8 – U19 Female and Male	42
Placentia	U8 – U19 Female and Male	188
Blake Town, Old Shop, South Dildo	U8 – U19 Female and Male	92
Bay d’Espoir	U8 – U19 Female and Male	37
Port aux Basques	U8 – U19 Female and Male	28
Twillingate	U8 – U19 Female and Male	15
Gillams	U8 – U19 Female and Male	65
Stephenville	U8 – U19 Female and Male	53
Waterford Valley	U8 – U19 Female and Male	262
New-Wes-Valley	U8 – U19 Female and Male	15
Grand Falls-Windsor	U8 – U19 Female and Male	65
Gander	U8 – U19 Female and Male	47
Winterton	U8 – U19 Female and Male	18
St. Anthony	U8 – U19 Female and Male	27
Shea Heights	U8 – U19 Female and Male	44
Western Bay	U8 – U19 Female and Male	47

In this phase, coaches and organizers are encouraged to use non-medical masks during this time. Coaches, instructors, leaders and officials who are not engaged in the activity are required to wear non-medical masks. Spectators (parents and fans) are permitted, but have to follow all public health measures from the Provincial Government, as well as any additional public health measures within facilities and/or municipalities. All individuals should maintain physical distance, wear non-medical masks when possible and limit close contact as much as possible to those within their household “steady 20”. Refer to [Sport Guidance](#) for the recommended public health measures for these sessions.

Competition for Teams against other Associations (May 15 – September 15)

During this section, Softball NL Association teams can play against teams from other Associations. Softball NL currently has 31 Minor Associations and various leagues, including U8 to Adult Male and Female and both the 2022 Canada Games Male and Female Teams.

Coaches and organizers are encouraged to use non-medical masks during this time. Coaches, instructors, leaders and officials who are not engaged in the activity are required to wear non-medical masks. Spectators (parents and fans) are permitted, but have to follow all public health measures from the Provincial Government, as well as any additional public health measures within municipalities. All individuals should

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maintain physical distance, wear non-medical masks when possible and limit close contact as much as possible to those within their household “steady 20”.

Pre-Game Protocols

- Venue or facility space is scheduled through the local organizer as per the Provincial Guidelines on gathering size restrictions.
- Assigned volunteers arrive at the facility prior to athlete arrival time to physically check the area to ensure it is safe, free of obstacles and dangerous obstructions. Municipalities/volunteers prepare the infield with bases and lime, and dugouts. They ensure the bases are sanitized and dugouts are clean. Once that has been completed, sanitize the field equipment and self-sanitize.
- Participants arrive at a pre-set time by household only, no car-pooling. The coaches/volunteers are present to guide the participants to designated areas where they ensure physical distance is maintained and each athlete maintains their own equipment bag and water bottle. Participants may use dugouts, assuming physical distance can be maintained.
- Every athlete will report first to the coach/volunteer (in the case of the officials, to the home team’s organizers) to be pre-screened before they are permitted on the softball diamond.
- Each participant is required to have their own water bottle, equipment bag, glove, batting glove/ball, bat, shoes and catcher’s gear. Participants must come to the field dressed and ready to take part. This includes umpires, coaches and participants. Each participant is also required to have their own hand sanitizer, unless a sanitizing station has been set up beside each team’s dugout.
- Spectators are directed to the bleachers and field where they are advised to maintain physical distance.
- A designated team member records the first and last names, as well as phone numbers of all participants including coaches, and officials, and submits that information electronically to their club contact who maintains a data spreadsheet of attendees should an outbreak occur.
- Coaches prepare a controlled pre-game warm-up, minimize shared use of equipment and ensuring physical distance is maintained.

Pre-Game Protocols Continued...

- One representative from each team will meet with the umpire, maintaining physical distance between all participants. The team representative will hand over a copy of their team line-up sheet, filled out completely.
- No pre-game team huddle.

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Game Protocols

- ✓ It is highly recommended all participants, all ages wear a non-medical mask, which covers their nose and mouth when not on the playing field.
- ✓ Unless unavailable, dugouts will be used with all individuals required to maintain physical distance. All other members of the team on offense are to remain outside the dugout in an area designated by the coaches/volunteers and marked for the team members.
- ✓ Prior to each team going on defense, and when they come off the field after being on defense, all team members must use hand sanitizer.
- ✓ Umpires to sanitize their hands after every half inning.
- ✓ Method of sanitation recommended is a spray sanitizer with a minimum of 60% alcohol content.
- ✓ Participants are encouraged to carry hand sanitizers with them on the field and apply as needed.
- ✓ Between each pitch, the umpire will physically move away from the catcher to maintain distance.
- ✓ Between each pitch the batter will move out of the batter's box to maintain physical distancing. They can return to the batter's box when the pitcher and catcher have resumed their positions. The umpire will signal play ball before the pitch is made.
- ✓ Umpires will not touch any equipment, other than returning a ball into play.

Game Protocols Continued...

- ✓ On field coaches will be permitted to stand outside the coach's box to maintain physical distance as necessary, but safety of the coach and participants must be a priority.
- ✓ No infield meetings or huddles at pitcher's circle while teams are on defense.
- ✓ Coaches may call time for a meeting with their team while on defense, but must maintain physical distancing.
- ✓ Coach/umpire conversations will be done while respecting the physical distancing protocol in all cases.
- ✓ No high fives, handshakes or intentional contact.

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- ✓ Participants will acknowledge their teammates, competitors and officials with a wave or a cheer, while maintaining physical distancing among themselves and their opponents.
- ✓ No sunflower seeds, gum or spitting.
- ✓ Participants should not touch their mouth or nose, do not lick your fingers prior to, immediately after or while you are touching the ball or bat.
- ✓ In the event of a minor injury to an athlete or official, only one representative from the team will tend to them. The teams will remain away from the injured participant, respecting the physical distancing protocol.
- ✓ In the event of a serious or major injury, the team emergency preparation protocol will be observed with team officials assuming their roles to ensure the safety and well-being of all participants.

Other PSO Activities / Initiatives (May 15 – September 30)

Coaching Clinics

Softball NL will be providing various NCCP Coach Education Courses on a regular basis and mainly throughout the Avalon Region. We anticipate approximately offering 8 Coaching Courses in communities such as Bay Bulls, Bay Roberts, Carbonear, CBC, CBS, Clarenville, Outer Cove and Placentia. Courses will take place in Municipal Buildings, along with adjacent Softball Fields. At each course, we anticipate approximately 15 participants including coaches and Learning Facilitators to participate, all from the Eastern Regional Health Authority.

Umpire Clinics

Softball NL, in conjunction with the NL Umpires Association will endeavour to provide several Umpire Clinics throughout the Avalon Region on an as needed basis. We anticipate offering approximately 8 Umpire Clinics in communities such as Bay Bulls, Bay Roberts, Carbonear, CBC, CBS, Clarenville, Outer Cove and Placentia. Courses will take place in Municipal Buildings, along with adjacent Softball Fields. At each course, we anticipate approximately 15 participants including umpires and Course Facilitators to participate, all from the Eastern Regional Health Authority. As well, should the Provincial Tournaments be permitted for this coming summer, there is a possibility that one Umpire Clinic will need to take place in Corner Brook, with approximately 15 participants from the Western Regional Health Authority.

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Phase 3

Regional and Local League Play (May 30 – September 30)

As part of regular and ongoing competitive opportunities, Softball NL members will be participating in various leagues in 2021 from May 30 – September 30. Participation in the leagues will be those within specific regions/boundaries, including Avalon and Western.

For the minor divisions including U10 – U19 (Female and Male), Association representation will vary, based on upcoming registrations. Potential participating Associations include Outer Cove, Cape St. Francis, Portugal Cove St. Philips, Goulds, Southern Shore, CBS, CBC, Bay Roberts, Butlerville, Carbonear, Clarenville, Placentia and Torbay.

Who	What	When	Where	Why
U10 Female – approximately 8 teams	Inter-town/ Association League Play	May 30 - September 30	Avalon Region	Participation and to Increase Competitive Opportunities
U10 Male – approximately 8 teams	Inter-town/Association League Play	May 30 - September 30	Avalon Region	Participation and to Increase Competitive Opportunities
U12 Female – Approximately 6 teams	Inter-town/Association League Play	May 30 - September 30	Avalon Region	Participation and to Increase Competitive Opportunities
U12 Male – Approximately 8 teams	Inter-town/Association League Play	May 30 - September 30	Avalon Region	Participation and to Increase Competitive Opportunities
U14 Female – approximately 6 teams	Inter-town/Association League Play	May 30 - September 30	Avalon Region	Participation and to Increase Competitive Opportunities
U14 Male – approximately 8 teams	Inter-town/Association League Play	May 30 - September 30	Avalon Region	Participation and to Increase Competitive Opportunities

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U16 Female – approximately 6 teams	Inter-town/Association League Play	May 30 - September 30	Avalon Region	Participation and to Increase Competitive Opportunities
U16 Male – Approximately 8 teams	Inter-town/Association League Play	May 30 - September 30	Avalon Region	Participation and to Increase Competitive Opportunities
U19 Female – approximately 5 teams	Inter-town/Association League Play	May 30 - September 30	Avalon Region	Participation and to Increase Competitive Opportunities
U19 Male – approximately 7 teams	Inter-town/Association League Play	May 30 - September 30	Avalon Region	Participation and to Increase Competitive Opportunities
Corner Brook Women’s League - 5 teams all within the Western Regional Health Authority	Regular and Ongoing League Play	May 30 - September 30	Western Region	Participation Competitive Play
Senior Men’s League - 4 teams all within the Eastern Regional Health Authority	Regular and Ongoing League Play	May 30 - September 30	Avalon Region	Participation Competitive Play
Intermediate Men’s League - 5 teams all within the Eastern Regional Health Authority	Regular and Ongoing League Play	May 30 - September 30	Avalon Region	Participation Competitive Play

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Phase 3: Provincial and Competitive Tournaments (June 11 – September 30)

Softball NL will provide a full slate of Provincial Tournaments and Events for 2021. There are 25 tournaments and events on the schedule and the majority will take place in the Avalon Region/Health Authority. All Tournaments will be structured to follow Public Health measures and Softball NL will liaise with Tournament Hosts to ensure proper protocols are put in place.

Softball NL will ensure COVID screening is in place for each tournament.

Softball NL will provide Tournament Hosts with Official Signage which will demonstrate Public Health Protocols for athletes and spectators while at the field.

Softball NL will work with the Tournament Host(s) to ensure hand sanitizers are provided for both dugouts.

Tournament games will be structured to provide a 30-minute break between games so that proper cleaning and sanitizing can be done in between games.

When games are completed, the teams that just finished will be required to leave the ball field before the next groups arrive.

Please Note: Softball NL is currently in the process of determining tournament host(s) as noted with TBD in the table. We anticipate finalizing tournament host(s) soon.

The following is the 2021 Tournament Schedule for Softball NL for this summer:

Softball NL 2021 Provincial Championships and Events

<u>Divisions</u>	<u>2021 Tournament Dates</u>	<u>Locations</u>
Senior Men's St. John's Day Tournament	June 18 - 20	Lion's Park, St. John's
Intermediate Men's Swing Into Summer Tournament	June 25 - 27	Lion's Park, St. John's
U8 and U10 Timbits Jamboree	July 2 - 4	TBD
U8 Timbits Jamboree #1	July 9 - 11	TBD
U14 Girl's Fastpitch Provincial (Eastern Canadian Qualifier)	July 16 - 18	TBD
U14 Boy's Fastpitch Provincial (Eastern Canadian Qualifier)	July 16 - 18	TBD
Women's Fastpitch Provincial	July 16 - 18	Corner Brook
Senior Men's Fastpitch Provincial	July 15 - 18	Lion's Park, St. John's

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U12 Boy's Slo-Pitch Provincial	July 23 - 25	TBD
U16 Boy's Slo-Pitch Provincial	July 23 - 25	TBD
Intermediate Men's Fastpitch Provincial	July 23 - 25	Lion's Park, St. John's
U16 Girl's Fastpitch Provincial	July 30 - August 1	TBD
U16 Boy's Fastpitch Provincial	July 30 - August 1	TBD
U14 Girl's Slo-Pitch Provincial	July 30 - August 1	TBD
U14 Boy's Slo-Pitch Provincial	July 30 - August 1	TBD
U16 Girl's Slo-Pitch Provincial	August 6 - 8	TBD
U8 Timbit #2	August 13 - 15	TBD
U12 Girl's Slo-Pitch Provincial	August 20 - 22	TBD
U10 Timbit Jamboree #2	August 27 - 29	TBD
U19 Men's Slo-Pitch Provincial	September 3 - 5	TBD
U19 Women's SP Provincial	September 3 - 5	TBD
U12 Girl's Fastpitch Provincial	September 10 - 12	TBD
U12 Boy's Fastpitch Provincial	September 10 - 12	TBD
U19 Men's Fastpitch Provincial	September 10 - 12	TBD
U19 Women's FP Provincial	September 10 - 12	TBD

Softball NL 2021 U19 Men's League Tournaments

<u>Location</u>	<u>Dates</u>	<u>Participating Teams</u>
Placentia	July 2 - 4	CBC, Placentia, Bay Roberts, Carbonear, Goulds, Team Avalon, U16 Selects
Bay Roberts	July 16 - 18	CBC, Placentia, Bay Roberts, Carbonear, Goulds, Team Avalon, U16 Selects

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Bay Roberts	August 27 - 29	CBC, Placentia, Bay Roberts, Carbonear, Goulds, Team Avalon, U16 Selects
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Eastern Canadian Softball Championships (August 13 – September 12)

The Eastern Canadian Softball Championships are held every year with participation from six provinces including Newfoundland Labrador, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, Ontario and Quebec and it includes 10 different tournaments. Participation in the Eastern Canadian Softball Championships is primarily made up of Club Teams.

Travelling teams will follow all Public Health protocols to ensure that physical distance is maintained in all areas including hotel, dining and field of play.

The following is the schedule for the 2021 Eastern Canadian Softball Championships:



2021 Championship Dates

- *U12 Girls, PEI - Aug 26-29th*
- *U12 Boys, NB - Aug 26-29th*
- *U14 Girls, PEI - Aug 19-22nd*
- *U14 Boys, NB - Aug 19-22nd*
- *U16 Girls, NL - Aug 19-22nd*
- *U16 Boys, NB - Aug 12-15th*
- *U19 Women's, PEI - Aug 26-29th*
- *U19 Men's, NB - Aug 19-22nd*
- *Int. Women's, PEI - Aug 12-15th*
- *Int. Men's, NB - Sept 9-12th*



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High Performance Tournaments

1. The Provincial U14 Girls team will be participating in an Invitational Tournament in Richmond, PEI from July 23 – July 25. Teams participating include Newfoundland and Labrador, PEI, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick High Performance Teams.
2. The Men's U23 team will be participating in the Softball Canada Grand Slam event in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, September 2–5, 2021. Participating teams include Saskatchewan, Ontario, Manitoba.

Individuals returning to NL would be subject to any travel requirements that may be in place at that time, based on their vaccination status.

Teams participating in the Eastern Canadian Championships and High Performance Tournaments should comply with the following travel considerations:

- Coaches and/or team chaperones are responsible for ensuring players do not gather in hotel rooms.
- Ensure players wear non-medical masks when not in their hotel rooms.
- Ensure players and coaches complete the COVID-19 pre-screening template before they travel.
- Coordinate arrival and departure protocol at the hotel.
- Up to 4 individuals are permitted to share a room, however individuals/players are encouraged to get vaccinated as soon as possible. Beds should be at least 6' apart, with head to toe orientation if possible, particularly if travelling with people not in an individual's 'steady 20'. Teams should pair individuals that are in the same 'steady 20' together in determining accommodation arrangements for team members.
- Plan team functions at the hotel using a private meeting room for off-field activities. Team functions are only permitted if all individuals can maintain physical distance.
- Plan team meals at the hotel, if available. Otherwise, coordinate with a local restaurant. It is important to note that sharing a meal in a hotel or restaurant does not equal permission to sit together. While eating, physical distance should be maintained between all individuals, unless individuals are part of each other's 'steady 20'.