



**FOREST FALCONS
2021 BASEBALL
SEASON**

COVID PLAN

APPROVED BY FMBA BOARD ON JUNE 10, 2021

Who Should Read This?

- All participants (including players, coaches, umpires, association officials, volunteers, parents/guardians and guests) so everyone is familiar with the requirements and recommendations contained in this document prior to the return to ball (practice/games).

Numbers

- At no point will a baseball event exceed the number of attendees (including players, coaches, umpires, association officials, volunteers, parents/guardians and guests) noted as the maximum number by the Province of Ontario, or any relevant municipality or public health authority.
- The number of participants involved should be reviewed and kept down to the absolute essential (Team members, Officials, Umpires, Event staff, Volunteers, etc.)
- Coaching Staff will have access to the COVID Screening results to ensure that the players/guardians/guests have completed the COVID Screening on the Sportsheadz App prior to attending the game/practice. This form acts as an attendance sheet and provides the information available to Lambton Public Health if required for contact tracing and numbers at the park.
- Parent/Guardian can appoint one person to act on their behalf for their player(s) to attend games/practices should the parent/guardian not be available.

Screening/Diagnosed with COVID-19/Return from COVID-19

- Screening is required for all players, coaches, umpires, association officials, volunteers, parents/guardians and guests. Screening will be completed by using the Sportsheadz App and everyone coming to the park for a game/practice are required to complete the screening within 24 hours of arriving.
- On the Sportsheadz App, Guardians can add “bring a guest”. This application is used for a person who needs to bring a player to the field when the Guardian is not available. The Guardian adds the guest on the app and completes the COVID Screening for them. The guest will then be accounted for on the team attendance list.
- Should any individual fail the screening protocol, they are **NOT ALLOWED AT THE PARK.**
- A person, who is identified as part of an at-risk group, but otherwise passes the screening questions is strongly discouraged from participating in ball or attending the park.
- Any participant, volunteer or spectator diagnosed with COVID-19 or who has been in contact with any person having COVID-19 in the previous 14 days **MUST** not attend any game, practice, meeting or other in-person team activity and **MUST** notify Lambton Public Health.
- Any participant, volunteer or spectator diagnosed with COVID-19 must be cleared by appropriate medical authorities prior to attending any in-person baseball activity. Evidence of the clearance needs to be provided to Team COVID Rep 2 hours prior to scheduled diamond time.

Cleaning/Sanitization

- Teams will be provided with hand sanitizer at the dugouts and throughout the park.
- Each team will have 2 Sanitation Volunteers. They will be provided all PPE and sanitation supplies in accordance with Lambton Public Health standards.
- All sanitation practices will be done by adults and those not involved in sanitizing will remain 2 meters away from all sanitizing activities.
- Sanitation/cleaning supplies will be stored in the equipment room and distributed by FMBA, Team COVID Rep.
- At the end of each game/practice, sanitation personnel will drop used PPE and microfiber clothes at the equipment room for proper disposal. Supplies can be replenished at this time.
- Each team will have a kit containing gloves, spray cleaner, microfiber clothes and alcohol wipes to clean all bats, balls and equipment as required. Each team will have a small supply of disposable masks (should players not have one), hand sanitizer and first aid kits will contain PPE (masks/gloves) as required.
- Anyone cleaning general areas will be provided with PPE.
- General cleaning shall be done with microfiber cloths and appropriate cleaning products supplied.
- Balls will be wiped prior to the game/practice, bats will be wiped between use, general area surfaces will be wiped after use and any equipment shared in practices will be sanitized between players.
- A detailed sanitation practice sheet will be provided for all Sanitation Volunteers, so everyone is clear on the sanitation practices prior, during and at the end of each game/practice.
- Bleachers at this time will be open but spectators are required to stay at least 2 meters from other spectators.
- We ask parents to bring their own chairs and are required to sit at least 2 metres from other parents. At this point we are limiting the number of spectators to 1 parent per player. If there are siblings on the same team parents from the same household will be allowed to sit together.
- Dugouts will be sanitized before and after each team use by each team's sanitization parent/rep.
- We ask that safe physical distancing rules of at least 2 meters are followed. If rules not followed you may be asked to sit in your vehicle.

Implementation of Safe Physical Distance

- The Municipality of Lambton Shores will post signs indicating social distancing practices at all three diamonds, washrooms, equipment room and pavilion at Rick Goodhand Memorial Park (Forest) and diamond, washroom and equipment room at McCrae Park (Forest). Diamond, washroom and equipment room at Utter Park (Arkona)
- Spectators will have a designated area and when arriving at the park, they will go directly to the designated area.
- Social distancing is required by spectators and movement around the park is discouraged.
- Players/Coaches will maintain minimum of 2 meters distancing during physical activity, including warmups, pre-game and post-game activities and wherever possible.
- Social distancing will be practiced at the diamonds with dugouts and bleachers marked accordingly, 2 meters apart.
- Designated areas will be laid out at each diamond with areas for scorekeeper, players

and coaches.

- A detailed plan will be drawn up for each diamond indicating how game play will happen to help avoid congestion at points of entry to the diamond (gates, dugout doors, etc.) to allow maintenance of 2 meters distancing among participants.

Use of Face Masks / Face Coverings

- Players and coaches are required to wear non-medical face masks or face coverings while off the field of play including while on the bench during the game.
- Players are encouraged to wear non-medical face masks or face coverings during play.
- Coaches in the field of play must wear non-medical face masks or face coverings when they approach a player, other coach or umpire. Coaches are encouraged to wear non-medical face masks or face coverings in other situations.

Establishment of Hygiene Standards

- Clean hands at least every inning for games or every 30 minutes or after handling shared equipment at practices.
- Avoid touching eyes, nose and mouth with your hands.
- Sneeze and/or cough in a tissue or the internal crease of the elbow. Avoid contact of hands with personal respiratory points.
- All potentially infected waste (disposable tissues, masks, protective gloves, etc.) will be dropped in the waste bins provided by Lambton Shores and will be collected by Lambton Shores daily.
- General areas of the park – door handles, surfaces etc. outside of the diamonds will be wiped regularly.
- Maintenance equipment will be wiped prior and after each use.

Venues

- Scheduling of diamonds must allow for a minimum of 30 minutes between the conclusion of the prior event and the start of the subsequent event to allow for: (1) the team(s) involved in the prior event to clean/sanitize equipment, dispose of garbage from common areas, and have all team members vacate the facility BEFORE (2) the team(s) involved in the subsequent event enter the facility and clean/sanitize common areas; without crossover between the teams participating in the two events. In the case of games, this may require Member Organizations to establish appropriate "drop dead" or "no new inning" rules to allow for safe crossover between events.
- Participants, volunteers and spectators for a subsequent event shall remain in their motor vehicle in the parking lot until participants, volunteers and spectators from the prior event have returned to their motor vehicles
- Member Organizations should designate appropriate waiting areas for any participants, volunteers and spectators not arriving in motor vehicles. For games, the home team is responsible for cleaning/sanitizing the dugouts before games.
- Coaches will organize a drop off area for players to meet.
- The equipment storage rooms will only be used by FMBA board, Admin and Umpires so they can get their equipment etc.
- Masks will be worn by everyone in the clubhouse and physical distancing requirements shall be observed.

- The equipment storage rooms will be sanitized at common touch points after each use.

Spectators

- The number of spectators allowed will be determined by the Provincial guidelines.
- Spectators **MUST** follow all guidelines at the park. Failure to do so, could result in them being asked to leave the park.
- Designated areas will be determined and posted at each diamond for Spectators.
- Spectators are encouraged to wear masks and must follow social distancing protocol and remain 2 meters apart.
- Spectators can use designated seating on the bleachers and are strongly encouraged to bring their own chair.
- Bleacher areas will be considered an outdoor equipment and will **NOT** be sanitized before each game/practice. (It is recommended to bring your own chair or remain in your vehicle during game/practices.
- Spectators are encouraged not to wander to other areas of the park.

Thunderstorms

- If a baseball event is interrupted by thunder, participants, volunteers and spectators are to return to their motor vehicles until the baseball event is cancelled or able to resume.
- If someone does not have a motor vehicle, they may shelter in a safe location but must maintain a minimum of 2 meters distancing from others, if possible.

Practice/Training Clinics

- Practices and Clinics will happen when we are in the appropriate Stage to do so according to the Provincial guideline.
- Coaches will plan their practice and work with the same players for their designated time.
- Equipment will need to be cleaned between players if it is shared.

Equipment

- There will be no sharing of equipment.
FMBA will provide team bats that will be sanitized between players.
- FMBA will provide a set of back catching equipment for each team. If this needs to be shared during a game or practice, the Sanitation Volunteer will wipe all the equipment with supplies provided.
- Players will need their own glove, helmet, water bottle, hat and bag for their equipment. Players are encouraged to supply their own bat and batting gloves.
- Players will be given a designated spot that they must stay at during the game and their equipment will be in that location. It is required that each player has their own chair.
- All clothing and personal items must be kept in their ball bag at their spot.
- All coaches/players/score keepers/sanitation volunteers, umpires and admin **MUST** have masks and practice social distancing.

Participants

- Participation by those in high-risk demographics (elderly and those with chronic conditions or who are immune compromised) is discouraged.
- Parent/Guardians are discouraged from visiting their player during the game/practice.
- No spitting, including tobacco and other products.
- No sunflower seeds or chewing gum.
- No sharing of water/energy drink bottles or food.
- No shared water jugs, coolers or drink dispensers.
- No handshakes, fist or chest bumps, high fives, hugs, kisses, etc.

Indoor Practices

- FMBA will not have any indoor practices for 2021.

Competition (Games)

- Sports activity and life in general have been significantly affected by COVID-19 prevention measures in place across the globe. Although baseball is moderate in contact, there are several factors that each Member Organization will need to evaluate. Our traditional ways of competing will need to be altered in many instances to allow us to be back on the field of play while minimizing the risk of infection. The protocols listed under General and Practice also apply to Competition. Below are some competition specific protocols to be implemented by all Member Organizations.

Pre-game

- Once allowed under the regulations provided by provincial and local health units.
- Two teams may share the field for pre-game warm up provided physical distancing is maintained. Each team shall stay in the outfield area on its side of the field.
- Only one team shall be on the field at a time for BP (on the diamond), and Infield or infield/outfield practice.
- Minimum physical distance of 2 meters at Home Plate meeting wearing non-medical mask or face covering.

Baseballs

- All balls will be sanitized prior to the game/practice.
- Should the pitcher touch his mouth and then the ball, the Umpire will stop the game and the ball will be replaced or sanitized.
- At the end of every half inning, all balls used in that inning will be sanitized by the home team sanitizer.

Bats

- FMBA** will provide bats for each team. The Sanitation Volunteer will wipe down bats between players. If a player has their own bat, they will pick it up when they come back off the field and return to their chair with their bat. Players are encouraged to bring their own bats.

Other Equipment

- Masks worn by pitchers, when they so choose, will be assessed as per existing rules regarding distracting colours, etc. (recommended that it not be white or grey). Rules of acceptable behaviour cannot be contravened.
- No sharing of catcher's masks in warming up pitchers. If no catcher's mask is readily available, warm up pitches may be thrown to a player/coach who is standing, but not squatting.
- A safety base may be used at first base. This will be discussed and decided at League meetings.
- At 8U/9U, the circle to be used around the pitching machine shall be a circle with 12' diameter instead of the 8' diameter circle specified in the 8U/9U rules.
- At 8U/9U, the offensive team coach feeding the pitching machine shall sanitize/clean their hands after every offensive inning.

Umpires

- Plate Umpires will be behind the catcher and will wear a mask.
- Base Umpires are required to wear a mask if they need to talk to coaches/players/umpires. Otherwise, it is at their own discretion during play.
- Umpires will use hand sanitizer every half inning as required.

Score Keepers/Pitch Counters

- Scorekeepers will organize players with the opposing team, will wear a mask and maintain 2-meter distance.
- One designated Scorekeepers will be determined at the beginning of the year and will be situated on the bench inside the dugout 2 meters away from players, coaches and sanitation volunteers.

In-Game

- Players shall not lick their fingers, blow on their hands or otherwise go to their mouth. When a pitcher violates this rule the umpire will stop the game, the pitcher will be required to sanitize his/her hands and the game ball will be replaced.
- Tag plays are allowed, but the defensive player should vacate the area as soon as reasonably practicable following the tag.
- When first base is occupied, the defensive player at first base must wear a PPE mask if the runner is being closely guarded / held at the base.

Coaches

- Team meetings, including pitching visits, shall maintain physical distance of minimum 2 meters. A maximum of 1 person (coach or player) and the pitcher may be included in a pitching visit.
- All Personnel must wear PPE when dealing with an injury. First Aid kits will have PPE as required - gloves, masks and hand sanitizer.
- If a coach must approach an umpire, physical distancing of at least 2 meters must be maintained. Failure to do so may result in ejection.
- While on offence, base coaches must always stay within their box, except to avoid a play being made in the coach's box. Any discussions between coaches and players (e.g. batter visiting 3rd base coach; coach talking to runners, etc.) must maintain physical distancing of at least 2 meters. The coach must wear a non-medical mask or face covering.
- Each Coach will be provided an outline of game/practice procedures.

Travel

- Travel will be restricted to comply with current regulations, outlined by the Province and Local Authorities.

Tournaments

- It is unknown at this time if tournaments will be allowed in 2021.

Requirements to Play

- All Parents/Guardians will be required to register as a Guardian for their players. Two Guardians can sign up for each player. The Guardian is then responsible to complete the COVID screening for their player (s) and they can also complete their own COVID screening once registered.
- Each Team will have a COVID REP. to monitor and assist with screening, submittal of documents.
- Parents/Guardians will be completing COVID screening through the Sportsheadz app.
- Instructions will be given on how to register as a Guardian and how to complete COVID screening once we are closer to the start of practicing/games.
- All players (youth and adult), coaches, umpires, volunteers and admin will be required to complete the OBA COVID waivers. Without a completed waiver on file, you will not be allowed to participate in baseball.

Enforcement

- It is the expectation of **FMBA** that all players, coaches, volunteers, admin, parents/guardians, spectators will respect these protocols and adhere to them not only for their own safety, but for the safety of all participants.
- **FMBA** will enforce these rules to the best of their ability, following guidelines from Lambton Public Health, OBA, Provincial, and the Municipality of Lambton Shores' guidelines.
- Failure to abide by these rules will come with repercussions. A warning will be given and should there be further issues, expulsion from the park or the team could happen.

