

Tomball Little League

COVID-19 Return to Play Guide



While Tomball Little League is returning to play our Spring 2020 season, the health and safety of our players and families remains our top priority. Outlined below are the procedures and guidelines which should be followed when attending a game or practice at the Tomball Little League fields.

****The below guidelines, procedures, and recommendations do not replace or supersede any protocols or restrictions outlined by our state and local authorities for both Texas and Harris County. It is imperative that state and local guidelines are followed at all times.****

This document is available at www.tomballlittleleague.com. All parents/guardians should fully review this document. In addition, parents should review with their children to help them understand in which the extent they are able to. At the first practice back, Managers should also review guidelines with their teams as appropriate depending on age. It will be important that coaches help kids during practices and games to remind them of the processes and procedures.

Tomball Little League (TLL) Safety Procedures as related to COVID-19:

General guidelines:

- Follow all state and local guidelines
- If a player or spectator comes in contact with someone who is diagnosed with COVID-19 and they have been to the Tomball Little League fields, an e-mail should immediately be sent to president@tomballlittleleague.com and safetymanager@tomballlittleleague.com so that teams who have come in contact with that person can be notified
- If a player or spectator comes in contact with someone who is diagnosed with COVID-19 they will not be permitted to return for two weeks from the last contact with that person
- Tomball Little League will work with the Harris County Health Department to ensure proper protocol is followed

General TLL complex guidelines

- Restrooms will be disinfected daily
- Social distancing should be practiced when standing in line at the concession stand. There will be markings to ensure the proper distance is maintained
- Batting cages are not to be used prior to practices or games to limit the congregation of crowds. They can be used for practices but only during your allotted practice time. No teams may use the batting cages prior to their practice start time.
- The playground by field 5 and 6 will temporarily be closed. We will have a fence around the playground area
- Disinfectant spray or disinfectant wipes will be in all press boxes (guidelines below for wiping down pitching machines)

General spectator guidelines:

- Any spectator or attendee experiencing symptoms of sickness should not attend any event at TLL. A list of symptoms can be found [HERE](#)
- As best as you can, please limit the number of attendees to the TLL fields. While we enjoy having extended family come watch the kids play ball, it is important that we limit crowd size as much as possible
- All event attendees should practice social distancing. Guidelines can be found [HERE](#)
- The bleachers will be closed for spectators during games. All parents should provide their own chairs and sit outside of the outfield fence or down the base lines towards the outfield. No spectators will be allowed to sit behind the home plate fence either. Bleachers may be used during practices but we would encourage you to bring your own chair instead. Social distancing should be practiced among those who do not reside in the same residence at both practice and games
 - The exception to the above guideline for games is as follows:
 - A team may have their own team scorebook keeper sitting behind home plate should they choose to do so
 - A team is required to have an adult volunteer near the bleachers to supervise the players
 - Spectators may sit in the grass area between the bleachers and press box on field 1. Spectators may sit behind home plate on field 4 and 5 as those areas do not contain players
- Protective masks for spectators are encouraged, but not required, as to align with the state of Texas
- Unless using the restroom or going to the concession stand, spectators should remain at the field in which their family member is playing. Some like to exercise (walk) during their child's practice. That is ok as long as it is on the outside of the premises and not near the fields and social distance guidelines are still followed
- During games parents should not approach the dugout, bleachers, or wherever your child is located. Please ensure your player has everything he/she needs prior to the game or practice
- Parents are encouraged to supply their players with wipes or hand sanitizer to use between innings

General player guidelines:

- Any player or attendee experiencing symptoms of sickness should not attend any event at TLL. A list of symptoms can be found [HERE](#). Coaches should monitor this and alert parents if they see any symptoms
- Players should avoid handshakes/high fives, etc. Coaches will need to continually monitor this and remind kids, especially the younger players
- Players can wear masks if they choose to do so, but are not required to
- No sunflower seeds or gum should be brought to a game/practice. Kids should also refrain from spitting
- All players must use their own equipment. This includes gloves, bats, helmets, etc. Sharing of catchers equipment is explained in the general coach guidelines section
- If a player contracts COVID-19 he/she will not be permitted to return without a doctor's note

General coach guidelines:

- At the end of a game coaches must ensure all trash is removed from the dugout
- Coaches must sanitize shared equipment (ex – catchers gear) after each practice/game prior to their next practice/game
 - Catchers are encouraged to use their own equipment if at all possible
 - In the scenario in which multiple kids will be using the same league provided catchers gear: if multiple players will be using the team catchers gear, the equipment must be wiped down and disinfected prior to additional kids using the gear. For any parents who do not want their child to use shared catchers equipment, please discuss with your teams Manager
- No post-game meetings should be held at the park after practice or games. Teams should leave the park immediately following their practice or game. We encourage coaches to send your team a short video post game “speech” after games via a form of electronic communication
- It will be required to have a coach/parent near the stands during a game to help guide the kids when they go to the dugout and helping the kids remember to keep social distancing. For t-ball it will be required to have two adults with the kids near the outfield fence when their team is batting (further explained in the games section)

Practices:

- **All spectators/players should remain in their cars until the previous game is finished and crowds have cleared out**
- Dugouts should not be used under any circumstance during practices
- Player bags should be spread out on in foul territory at least 6 feet apart to allow players to practice social distancing when they are taking out or putting away equipment
- Spectators should follow social distancing guidelines
- As much as possible, players and coaches should practice social distancing during practice
- Coaches for machine pitch teams should wipe down the machine after every practice. Disinfectant spray or disinfectant wipes will be provided in the press box. The machine should be returned to the press box after the last practice
- Bases should be left on the field
- Practices will vary by age group and a specific schedule will be sent out in the near future. Generally speaking, there will be gaps between practices to avoid larger crowds. As an example, we may have the first practice of an evening go from 5:45-6:45. Teams will need to clear out immediately. The next practice would be from 7-8. Teams will need to clear out immediately. The final practice would be from 8:15-9:15. Note: these times will be confirmed when schedules are complete. Younger age groups such as T-ball and Coach Pitch will have shorter practices and will not practice as late into the evening as the older kids

Games

- No team water coolers should be provided in the dugout or in the stands. Parents should provide their kids with their own drinks
- Umpire/Coach pre-game meeting will be limited to the umpires and one coach from each team. Social distancing during this meeting should be followed. No shaking of hands, fist bumps, etc should occur

- The “home plate” umpire will be positioned behind pitchers mound
- End of game handshakes will be eliminated. Instead, teams can tip their caps from the other side of the field to the other team. We still want to encourage good sportsmanship
- Coaches for machine pitch teams should wipe down the machine after every game. Disinfectant spray or disinfectant wipes will be provided in the press box. The machine should be returned to the press box after the last game
- Bases should be left on the field
- Teams should not share in any team post game snacks or drinks
- Player locations when not playing in the field will be as follows. Please note that a coach or team mom will be required to help ensure kids remain where they should be.
 - When your team is up to bat:
 - One player will be at the plate
 - The on-deck batter will be in the dugout on the side closest to the door to the field
 - The batter in the hole will be in the middle of the dugout
 - At the side of the dugout furthest from the door to the field will be the catcher. If the catcher is batting or on base, this space will not be occupied. We always want the catcher in the dugout so that they can have their equipment handy and close to the field of play. Besides everyone’s bats, the catcher is the only one who may have equipment in the dugout for machine pitch and older
 - The remaining players will be in the stands. We will have markings on the bleachers of where they can sit.
 - On fields 1, 2, 3, 6, 7, and 8 no more than 9 kids will be in the stands at any given time.
 - On field 4 the on-deck batter will be in the dugout closest to the door to the fields. The batter in the hole will be on in the middle of the dugout. The following batter will be at the far end of the dugout. A coach should be nearby to help the kids stay in their places and to direct incoming batters where to be. For the remaining players, we will have a section of the outfield marked off along the fence. The remaining players will line up along the outfield fence (on the inside) spread out 6 feet apart. We will have markings to provide social distancing guidelines. We wanted to keep kids on the inside of the field vs them being on the outside and having them run off. There should be 2 adult volunteers (team mom and a coach, 2 coaches, etc) with these kids to ensure they remain in their spots until they move to the dugout as one of the next three batters
 - On field 5 the on-deck batter will be in the dugout closest to the door to the fields. The batter in the hole will be in the middle of the dugout. The following batter will be on the furthest side of the dugout away from the door. Six players can fit in the bleachers and we will have markings on the bleachers where they can sit. For additional players we will utilize the space in between the bleachers and dugouts. There will be markings to provide social distancing guidelines. Team Mom’s, Coaches, etc should be both near the

dugout and near the stands to ensure kids remain in their spots until they move to the dugout as one of the next three batters

- Players will remain in their spot on the bleachers or next to the bleachers until they move to the dugout
- When your team is in the field
 - Subs may be in the dugout but must practice social distancing
- For fields 1, 2, 3, 6, 7, and 8: all player equipment should be placed by the fence in front of the stands. Bags should be spread out as much as possible. Bats can be hung in the dugout. The only exception to this policy is for the current catcher in the game. He/She should place their equipment in the dugout at the far end from the door opening. The catcher and his/her gear will always be stationed in this spot unless they are batting
- For fields 4 and 5, all player equipment should be placed in the dugout. Coaches and team mom's should get the equipment for the kids between innings and pass out to the kids so that we do not have all of the kids in the dugout at the same time
- For coach pitch, there will be no catcher. Coaches can remain behind the plate to fetch balls and set up the tee if a batter does not hit within 3 pitchers
- For all fields, only players from the teams involved in the current game should retrieve foul balls, as to limit the amount of people touching the ball
- There will be a hard stop to all games.
 - For T-ball and coach pitch, all games will have a hard stop of 45 minutes. The current batter will finish his/her at bat and the game will end. Umpires will be responsible for managing this time for coach pitch and Managers will be responsible for managing this time for T-ball
 - For machine pitch and older, no inning shall start after 1 hr and 30 minutes all games will have a hard stop of 1 hr and 45 minutes. The current batter will finish his/her at bat and the game will end
 - If a game ends in the middle of an inning and the home team is winning, they will be declared the winner
 - If a game ends in the middle of an inning and the visiting team is winning, the final score will revert back to the previous inning
 - Please keep in mind that we will be focusing on the kids having fun and enjoying the game of baseball and not wins and losses
 - **All spectators/players should remain in their cars until the previous game is finished and crowds have cleared out**
 - Here is an example of what this will look like:
 - Team A and Team B in machine pitch and older starts a game at 6 pm. This game will end no later than 7:45 pm. The players and spectators will have 15 minutes to clean up, gather their belongings, and return to their cars. At 8:00 pm the spectators and players for the next game can exit their cars and will have 15 minutes to warm up prior to the start of their game. That game will start at 8:15 and end no later than 10 pm (no later than we normally go)
- Only one person can be in the press box at a time. This will be a parent from the visiting team who will run the scoreboard and keep pitch count for Double A and older. At the end of the game the scoreboard panel and counter must be wiped down with provided wipes or disinfectant spray. Teams will be responsible for keeping their own scorebook.

Further guidance

- Little League Coronavirus FAQ can be found [HERE](#)
- Little League Coronavirus updates can be found [HERE](#)
- Little League on field guidance can be found [HERE](#)
- Specific Texas guidelines can be found [HERE](#) and [HERE](#)

Should you have any questions please contact president@tomballlittleleague.com or safetymanager@tomballlittleleague.com