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House of Representatives  
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania  
Harrisburg

COMMITTEES  
CHILDREN AND YOUTH  
HEALTH  
STATE GOVERNMENT  
TOURISM & RECREATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The Honorable Tom Wolf  
Governor of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania  
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR  
225 Main Capitol Building  
Harrisburg, PA 17120

May 29, 2020

Dear Governor Wolf:

Thank you for your continued efforts to lead the Commonwealth through the COVID-19 pandemic. Over the last 11 weeks, the people of Pennsylvania have heeded the calls from medical and public health experts in your administration to stay home, stop the spread of COVID-19, and thereby, save countless lives. Through our collective action, the curve is flattening, and hospitals have not been overrun here as they were in New York City and other COVID-19 hotspots around the world.

We are now heading into June, and by the end of this week, 17 counties in Pennsylvania will have been moved from the yellow phase of pandemic mitigation to green. Once the June 5 transition to yellow takes place in our county, day care providers will be able to safely provide much needed care for all working families, and summer camps will be able to provide healthy and safe opportunities for children's organized recreation and social interaction.

Healthy outdoor recreation is immensely important for the physical, mental and social wellbeing of children. Just as safety protocols have been developed to allow day care providers, summer camps, and other child-based businesses to provide needed recreation and enhanced play support for our children, so can these protocols be adapted for organized youth sports, especially sports that have only minimal levels of direct contact, such as baseball and softball. Children's organized baseball and softball have long been cherished summer pastimes, and with appropriate safety protocols in place, they can once again be safely played all across the commonwealth.

A local coalition of youth baseball and softball associations representing more than 13,000 families has asked us to present you with their detailed proposal to safely provide a healthy, safe environment to enable team play to maintain physical and mental wellbeing of the

children while protecting them and the greater community from the spread of COVID-19. Their detailed proposal follows this letter.

Therefore, on behalf of these youth sports associations and their families, we respectfully request that you consider issuing an executive order issuing guidance on safety protocols and allowing resumption of youth baseball and softball in counties which are in the yellow or green phase.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Respectfully submitted,



Representative Wendy Ullman, 143<sup>rd</sup> District



Senator Steve Santarsiero, 10<sup>th</sup> District



Representative Tina Davis, 141<sup>st</sup> District



Representative John Galloway, 140<sup>th</sup> District



Representative Perry Warren, 31<sup>st</sup> District

## **Bucks County and Southeast PA Youth Baseball/Softball Coalition COVID-19 Resolution**

Drafted May 22, 2020 (Updated as of 5:00 pm, Wednesday, 5/27/2020)

**Whereas**, the Warrington A's Connie Mack, Warrington Youth Baseball, Deep Run Connie Mack, Plumstead Baseball Association, Centennial Baseball Club, All Star Baseball Academies,

Lower Perkiomen Valley Little League, Audubon Recreation Association, Pennridge Little League, Hatfield-Towamencin Youth Baseball, Boyertown Midget Baseball League, Northampton Baseball, Montgomery Township Baseball, Huntingdon Valley Athletic Association, East Coast Power Baseball, Northampton Girls Softball Association, Upper Moreland Connie Mack Baseball, Reapers Baseball Club, Neshaminy Wildcats, Zoom Baseball Academy, Fairless Hills Athletic Association, Lower South Baseball, Glenside Youth Athletic Club, Roslyn Boys and Girls Club, United States Amateur Baseball League, other youth baseball leagues, independent youth baseball teams and their representatives listed below- all located in Bucks County and SouthEastern Pennsylvania; and

All groups have agreed to join the **Bucks County & Southeast PA Youth Baseball/Softball COVID Coalition**, in order to collectively address the balanced need to provide a healthy and safe environment where youth ages 8-16 can play baseball to [maintain their health and mental well-being](#), while protecting the greater community from the spread of COVID-19; and

The groups wish to implement standard procedures and protocols to operate baseball activities while respecting all known PA State and CDC rules and guidelines concerning the current COVID-19 crisis; and

The groups have approached local and state representatives and gained agreement to represent this resolution, including **The Honorable Representatives Wendy Ullman (D-Doylestown) and Todd Polinchock (R-Warrington)** (Both serve on the [PA House Children and Youth Committee](#)), **State Senator Steve Santarsiero**, as well as **Bucks County Commissioners Diane Ellis-Marseglia (Chair), Robert Harvie, and Gene DiGirolamo**, to solicit on our behalf to restart baseball as reasonably as possible; and

The groups have discussed these protocols with **Dr. David Damsker, Bucks County Health Department Director**, whose office has approved and endorsed these protocols; and

The groups represent more than  
**13,027 families from 32 Youth Baseball/Softball Organizations in Southeastern PA,**  
their players, businesses, and interested 3rd parties.

**Now Therefore be it resolved**, the groups have agreed to abide to their best abilities the following procedures to protect the health of all participants and the community:

To re-start youth baseball safely by June 2020, (during the PA COVID “Yellow Phase”) and with official guidance provided by and endorsed by **Dr. David Damsker, Bucks County Health Department Director**, the coalition will

- Ensure no more than 25 participants can gather on the field of play while respecting a 6 foot distance.

- Ensure that physical distance of 6 feet or more be kept at all times during any gathering, practice, or game.
- Ensure that dugouts will be used sparingly and never more than 4 players or coaches (dependent on the size of the dugout to keep 6 feet apart) to store equipment
- Stands or other areas of the field will be utilized to ensure 6 feet distancing when the players are not playing.
- Any additional people who are watching the game will be kept no less than 50 feet away from all players or coaches, and within their own group, at least 6 feet apart and with no more than 25 people. These areas will be clearly marked via marked lines/signage using commonly available foul line spray paint.
- Catchers will not be used for live batting practice during the “Yellow” phase.
- Umpires, if required, will stand more than 6 feet behind the pitcher.
- When not involved in practice or a game, all participants will use face masks.
- Rules will be amended to prevent the occasion of accidental collisions or close proximity of players including:
  - No steals of home on a passed or wild pitch. This prevents the majority of collisions/close plays within the game at these age groups.
  - Steals are only allowed once the pitcher releases the ball. This will deter steals.
- There will be NO sharing of equipment- all players/coaches will use their own personal baseball and protective equipment.
- There will be enough baseballs in use to guarantee that each baseball is either disinfected between plays or used only in contact with one person.
  - A coach throwing batting practice in a batting cage would be the only one allowed to touch or retrieve the balls during the length of the practice.
  - After a play is made, the baseball is either unused for the rest of the practice/game, or disinfected for reuse with an approved disinfectant.
  - Each team will bring their own baseballs to use on the field when on defense, and will be disinfected each half inning if necessary.
- There would be no “high-5’s”, handshakes, or other displays of sportsmanship. Instead, sportsmanship will be encouraged with a tip of the hat from a safe distance.
- No carpools- players will arrive with their immediate family.
- Shared drinking stations, team water coolers, spitting, eating sunflower seeds and gum chewing is prohibited.
- All players/Coaches will make sure that
  - Everyone washes their hands or used alcohol-based hand rub before playing
  - A symptom-screen on each player will be performed prior to each practice using the following: cough, shortness of breath, runny nose, headaches, fatigue, muscle aches, and altered taste or smell. If any of those are present, they should not practice. The only exception would be a runny nose from allergies, which should improve with usage of allergy medications.
  - Temperatures are checked prior to any activity and no one with a fever (temperature reading above 100.4) is allowed to participate per PA screening guidelines and will not be allowed to participate.
- *(Coalition Note: Added 5/27/2020 at request of Dr. David Damsker, Director of the Bucks County Health Department.)* If a player later tests positive and this information is shared with the team, the team will notify all families and players who attended the same practice as a precaution and individual testing is encouraged if a player is symptomatic.

The parties listed below agree to abide, to the best of their ability, the guidelines as listed above to ensure the safe return of youth baseball to Bucks County:

1. [Warrington A's Connie Mack](#) (Warrington/Warwick Township, Kevin Spadaccino)
2. [Warrington Youth Baseball](#) (Dan Merz)
3. [Centennial Baseball Club](#) (Southampton & Warminster Townships, Scott Barkus)
4. [Plumstead Baseball Association](#) (Mike Harte)
5. [Deep Run Connie Mack](#) (John Finley)
6. [Doylestown Athletic Association Teams](#)  
(*Mark Tierney. to review/approve language and let Jon B know*)
7. [All Star Baseball Academies](#)  
(representing 1,500 families across Bucks County and SE PA - John Bellis)
8. [Lower Perkiomen Valley Little League](#) (Jason Saylor)
9. [Central Perk Youth Association](#) (430 Families, 550 players, Rob deHaan)
10. [Audubon Recreation Association](#) (Montgomery County, Pete DePiano)
11. [Pennridge Little League](#) (Frank Sica)
12. [Hatfield-Towamencin Youth Association](#) (Doug Kile & Bryan Schurmann)
13. [Bovertown Midget Baseball League](#) (Scott Rath)
14. [Northampton Baseball](#) (Jim Gallagher)
15. [Montgomery Township Baseball](#) (Tracy DiLorenzo)
16. [Huntingdon Valley Athletic Association](#) (Kegan Smith)
17. [East Coast Power Baseball](#) (Kegan Smith)
18. [Kimberton Youth Athletic League](#) (Chester Cty, Scott Grillo, Kevin O'Connor)

19. [Northampton Girls Softball Association](#) (Ed Salamon)
20. [Upper Moreland Connie Mack Baseball](#) (Andy Ogilvie)
21. [Rake Baseball Academy](#) (Andrew Lihotz)
22. [Reapers Baseball Club](#) (Robert Mark)
23. [Neshaminy Wildcats Athletic Association](#) (Andrew Hart)
24. [Flourtown Erdenheim Little League](#) (Kevin Dougher)
25. [Zoom Baseball Academy](#) (Michael Zolk)
26. [Fairless Hills Athletic Association](#) (Steve Martin)
27. [Lower South Baseball](#) (Mark Arnold)
28. [Glenside Youth Athletic Club](#) (Baseball/Softball, Steve Winning)
29. [Pennridge Connie Mack](#) (Joe Santora)
30. [Roslyn Boys and Girls Club](#) (William Shreiner)
31. [USABL](#) (United States Amateur Baseball League, Brian Delahant)
32. ITBL (Independent Travel Baseball League, Herb Kaminsky)

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*Please pass this resolution onto any PA baseball organization who is interested in joining. Interested in joining the coalition or have questions? Just email Jon Biedermann at*

[jon@biedermanngroup.com](mailto:jon@biedermanngroup.com) or call/text me at 215-896-2768. I'm just a long time coach and former summer camp director who knows we can change baseball/softball rules, play the game with minimal contact, and respect the state and CDC guidelines.

Together we can have a reasonable discussion and influence policy for the sake and well-being of our children and community.

## **FAQ: Updated as of 5/27/2020**

### **Q: How do I sign up my organization?**

A: Make sure you have buy-in from your leadership and then just email me your organization name, your name, and the number of families that you serve to [jon@biedermanngroup.com](mailto:jon@biedermanngroup.com), and your organization name will be added to this resolution. Please note that signing up for this resolution is not a contractual agreement. It just means that the organizations listed agree with the principles as outlined should PA allow organized baseball. If (hopefully when) they do, your organization can then make a final decision based on the guidelines as issued at that time.

### **Q: My organization is very concerned about liability. How do I address this?**

A: I'm not a lawyer though I have directed legal counsel for many years. One suggestion is that your organization consider adding a disclaimer to any policies that you have. Example:

*"An inherent risk of exposure to COVID-19 exists in any public place where people are present. COVID-19 is an extremely contagious disease that can lead to severe illness and death. By having yourself or children participate either as a player or spectator in our programs, you voluntarily assume all risks related to exposure to COVID-19."*

Unfortunately, baseball itself is a 'risky' sport, but with certain precautions a group can make it manageable. If in doubt, always check with your legal advisor.

### **Q: I'm not part of the leadership for my organization or I'm not involved in an organization. Can I still sign a petition?**

A: Yes. Dan Kawash started an online petition for individuals to sign. Just [click here](#). We will be both presenting both the petition and this resolution document to PA State legislators early this week.

Likewise, we are getting increased attention from our baseball friends in New Jersey. Brian Delahant, President of USABL, started a petition and also created guidelines to resume safe baseball. Click here to see and [sign his petition](#).

**Q: Is there any other help that you need?**

A: Yes! The best way to help is to spread the word to your own constituents, other baseball/softball groups, and PA Legislators.

Your own baseball/softball families will appreciate the constant communication, and if you are one of the many organizations who can't afford to give 100% refunds, then this is another way to let them show you are doing your best to still hold a season..

Also contact YOUR local PA representative. In my experience, your local representative will always respond to you, but you do need to let them know it is urgent, and to follow-up more than once. You can find your PA House legislators by visiting here: <https://www.legis.state.pa.us/cfdocs/legis/home/findyourlegislator/> .

Nearly all of them have a website which you can then use to contact them either through email or phone. For email PA House representatives, it's typically [first\\_initial.lastname@pahouse.net](mailto:first_initial.lastname@pahouse.net), and I would email, also call, and also use their website's "Contact Us" page. Yes- all three.

It's hard to know how fast they respond- some are very quick and some are not- so make sure to follow-up. If you contact them, just include your own story, the link to this resolution:

<https://bit.ly/BUCKSCTYSEPA BASEBALL COVID>

and what we are trying to do, as I have found a personal message will always get their attention vs. a bulk, "copy-cat" chain email/letter.