

## Covid 19 Update for Umpires

This update comes at a time when we all should be doing the things we particularly love at this time of year, baseball! That being said, sports as we know it has changed and it is going to be that way for a significant amount of time, and years before it gets back to normal if it does. There are so many ways that this has affected us, financially, socially, physically and mentally. I will try to touch on the high points as I see them. First, if you think you are tougher than this virus you may be dead wrong, and for some of you at high risk, avoidance of participation may be in your best interest for the time being. This is a highly contagious virus, that in young people are often asymptomatic or mildly symptomatic, and thus they spread the virus most when they don't have symptoms, or before any symptoms develop. That is one thing that makes the spread of this so prevalent in some situations. To some degree the public has become cynical because the recommendations from experts have frequently changed. Keep in mind that we are all learning as we go so information is put out before it is vetted and reviewed by the medical community as a whole, so you need to understand it and be receptive when recommendations change. The approach we all need to take is that every person we meet could be the source of the virus. The measures we take to protect against the virus are like layers of Swiss cheese that is the more small steps we take, the more the holes are plugged up. That is if you wear a mask, then add good hand hygiene, then use physical distancing and use social restraint and avoid large gatherings, you can make a big impact on your safety. There is no protective knowledge gained from antibody tests at this time and a viral test at this time really only points to that point in time, 72 hours later an individual may be infected and contagious and that has played out exactly in that scenario in several football programs that tested on a Friday, athlete attends event on the weekend and gets infected, and by the following Tuesday has spread the infection.

In regards to mental health we will lose as many people to substance abuse and suicide as we will to the virus, at least that is the predicted statistic now. If you need HELP please reach out. One of the things that is necessary for all of us is communication; it is the lifeline of our human well being. Loneliness in and of itself is prevalent but is not as dangerous as not having a sense of purpose. To not have this sport involvement, which gives so many of us a sense of purpose, does add significantly to our emotional stress, on top of other social and financial stresses. If this is you remember, you are not weak, you are human, and we are all vulnerable and will experience fluctuating emotional states from day to day. This may be a good time in all of our lives to examine who we are, what we do, why we are doing it and change the things about ourselves that we need to.

In regards to this virus and where we are I like to quote a phrase from Winston Churchill, It goes: *"This is not the end, nor is it the beginning of the end, but perhaps it is the end of the beginning"*. My friends, we are in the longest rain delay of our lives and as the Dali Lama says *"there are times when we have to do more than pray"*. We must take precautions; get your advice from responsible people, not politicians or local governments swayed by finances and political pressure. Be more cautious than what you think you need to be, and practice the key mitigation measures of hand hygiene, masks, distancing and avoidance of large gatherings. If

exposed you must quarantine to protect everyone. I will just relay my own personal management of this situation and I am nowhere close to going to a restaurant, bar or church. I know we have talked about this before in some of my messages, but use this time to stay in shape or get in shape. Be hopeful, be helpful to others and let's enjoy what we do even more when it returns.

Warmest regards to all,

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