

2020 BASEBALL & SOFTBALL SURVEY RESULTS



IOWA CITY ATHLETIC
OFFICIALS ASSOCIATION

MAY, 2020

INTRODUCTION

The challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic are unprecedented in the modern history of American sports, and as the state of Iowa and the nation begin to develop policies to reopen, Iowa high school baseball and softball are two of the first sports in the country to face the decision of whether or not to restart in 2020.

As the largest officials' association in the state of Iowa, the ICAOA recognizes its role in representing the state's officials, as well as the schools and youth we serve. To further gain the perspective of our member officials, the ICAOA Executive Board commissioned a survey of its members in May, 2020 to learn of their attitudes towards the potential of a summer season.





METHODOLOGY

A Google Form survey was developed and sent via email to all dues paying officials for baseball and softball for the 2019 and the 2020 seasons on May 12, 2020 (<https://forms.gle/aiSBjAdPHkQvZLox9>). Respondents could provide input until 5:00 p.m. on May 14, 2020 to respond, at which time the survey closed. This survey was sent to 172 officials, and was completed by 122 of those officials (70.9% response rate). Questions with pre-determined responses were required, while those where members could provide open-ended responses were optional.



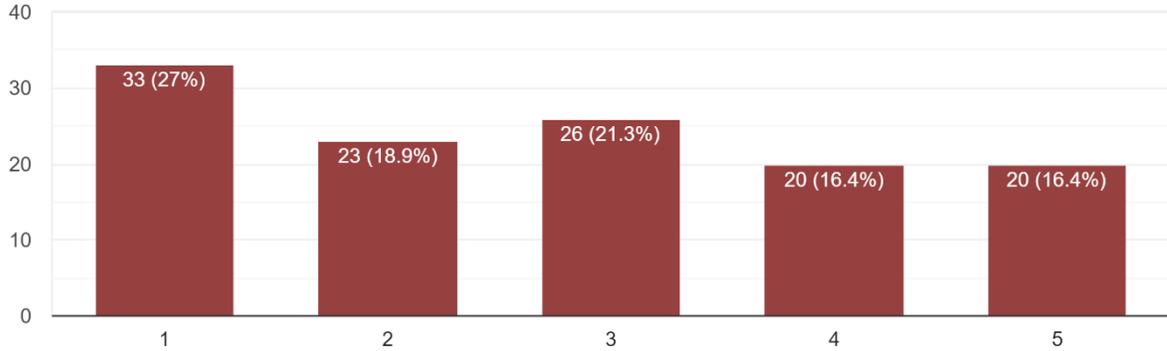


SURVEY RESULTS

QUESTION #1:

How concerned are you for your personal health by working the 2020 season?

122 responses

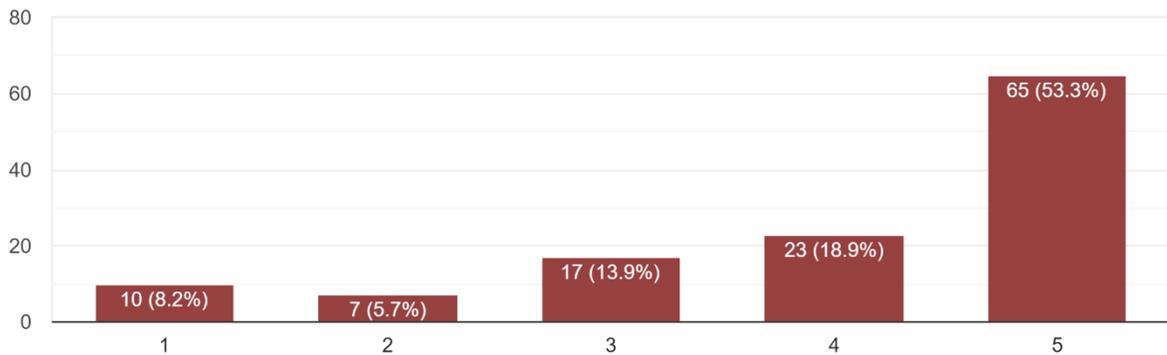


The linear scale of possible responses was from 1 (not very concerned) to 5 (very much concerned).

QUESTION #2:

How important is it for you to have clear guidelines from the IHSAA and IGHSAU on health and safety?

122 responses



The linear scale of possible responses was from 1 (not very concerned) to 5 (very much concerned).

QUESTION #3:

Do you plan on making any changes to how you work for this season?

120 responses

40 respondents indicated simply they would make no changes.

6 respondents indicated simply they would make changes.

15 respondents indicated they were unsure of any changes they would make.

2 respondents indicated answers which were irrespective of COVID-19.

The following are the remainder of the responses:

Just having sanitizer with me, and i may wear a mask under my face mask, not sure about that, yet

mask, hopefully no pregame conference, travel in front and back seat of car, work farther back from catcher,

A few. Staying closer to home.

A month ago, I wasn't planning on working but I could see working as I think we're going to need the help. My son, Forrest, who is a much better umpire, wants to work a lot. I've told our AD that we may have to play varsity games in the AM in order to get umpires.

Better have a strong site manager

Certainly distancing as much as possible. I have a surgery in the near future and do not wish to have an illness delay my surgery. Therefore, I do not plan to umpire this summer irregardless of what directives we receive from the IHSAA.

Follow mandated safety covid 19 protocol.

Follow whatever guidelines that are put in place by the state, schools or associations

For the first time in 7 seasons, I am not working under any circumstances

Give the players a lot of room, but I try to do that anyway.

I ASSUME NO PLATE UMPIRE BECAUSE OF DISTANCING SO 3 UMPIRES PER GAM WILL CHANGE SOME COVERAGE

I can't wear a mask while behind the plate

I have a mask to wear for both plate and bases

I might wear a mask wile working the bases.

I plan on following any guidelines set out by the IHSAA as well as eliminating handshakes during coach and captain meetings.

I will do what is recommended by IHSAA.

I will likely wear a mask myself when working behind the plate.

I will maintain social distancing. For the plate umpire, there is a lot of "touching" of items. Can these be eliminated, reduced or sanitized?

I would implement any & ALL measures that will make everyone comfortable

I would like to only work in counties where the number of cases aren't very high.

I would likely avoid shaking hands and try to maintain some distance.

I would likely try to work under the same circumstances that state and federal guidelines are recommending. I would also likely be in contact with the A.D. prior to the game and see what guidelines and policies they have set up. I would prefer a

limited number of games and a shortened season. If I could have my choice I would prefer 1 game per night, instead of a 25 to 30 game season, I would say 12 to 15 games or some kind of a schedule where just conf games are played. I think we are going to have to consider more than just baseball. It obviously may be too early but football and basketball may also have to be considered?

I would prefer the ability to work from behind the pitcher. The contact is to close between catcher and umpire with current CDC guidelines.

I would still like to work as many games as possible. I will likely wear some sort of (extra) mask while umpiring.

I'm willing to do whatever is necessary to umpire.

I've been thinking about how the plate umpire, catcher, and batter are all within a couple feet of one another. Even if we moved the umpire out behind the pitching rubber, we do nothing for the batter and catcher. I don't have answers, just been thinking about the what ifs. The pre game conference will take a larger space! I don't think I'd even consider sharing umpire equipment this year.

Just be very cautious around coaches and players

Just maintain social distancing when talking with coaches

Just maintain social distancing when talking with coaches

Just maintain some social distancing

Just not shaking hands. I have concerns of touching a ball after players do.

Less games

Limit games umpired or not umpire at all this season.

Minimal to no hand shaking with coaches and players

No changes aside from using hand sanitizer as needed.

No changes but at the end of the day we should not be having this season due to health concerns.

no hand shakes, particle mask, more distance between when talking to coaches and players, using different entrance onto ball field to prevent contact with spectators

No handshakes. Try to avoid putting my hand on the catchers back.

No just be alert to surroundings

No pregame handshakes, that's it, lets play ball

No, if allowed, I will work my schedule. I would not shake hands with anyone and keep my contact to a minimum but would work my games just as I would normally.

No, unless mandated by law or executive order.

No. I generally stay away from the players and coaches

None unless required to have game I'm flexible and willing to accommodate any requests

Not able to work this season due to knee replacement

Not sure yet.

Not sure. Wearing a mask behind the plate won't be easy during a baseball game on a very hot summer day.

Possibly wear a mask and batting gloves

Slight changes.

Social distance

Social distance as much as possible

Unless there is a vaccine I will not be working

Wearing a cloth mask behind the plate and keeping hand sanitizer in ditty bag. If Iowa's numbers don't go down dramatically in the next few weeks I don't see how we can have a season

Will be first high school season. 9th overall. So no.

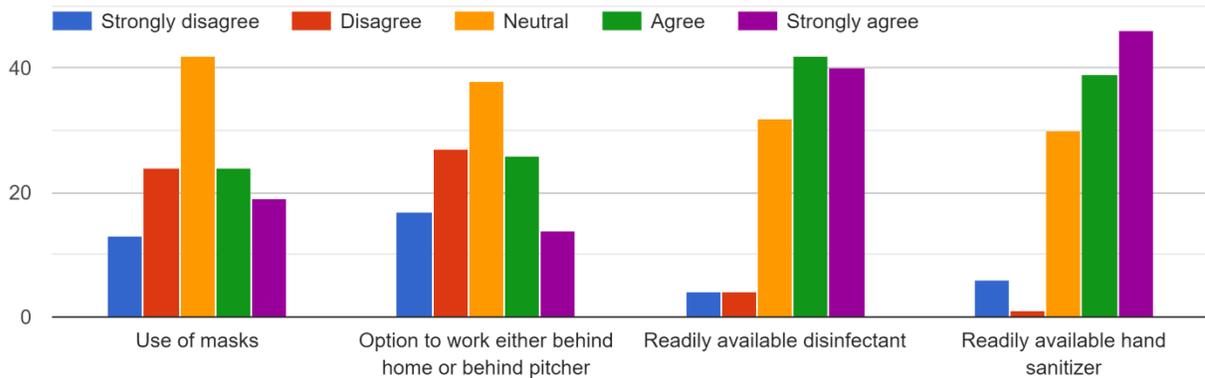
Yes, a mask under my mask.

Yes, any and all precautions given by the medical community as we return to play.

Yes, if we are put to work, distancing when possible, less interaction with players and coaches. Hand sanitizer use. The fact that baseball especially is know for spitting all the time, licking fingers for pitchers, even with distancing efforts, risk will be immense for transmission. Traveling to areas with more cases is also concerning

QUESTION #4:

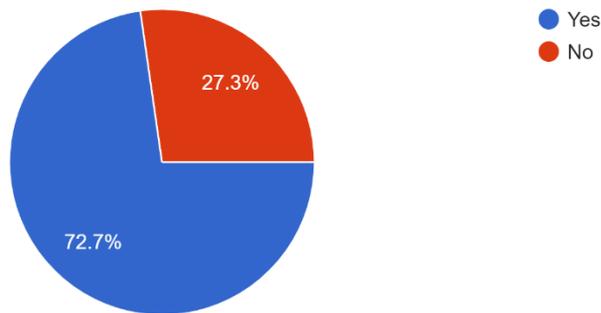
What areas do you want to see as mandatory for the 2020 season?



QUESTION #5:

Will you work tripleheaders or tournaments if they are offered?

121 responses



QUESTION #6:

Are there any other precautions you would recommend to participants, coaches and umpires?

91 responses

15 respondents indicated simply they would not recommend any other precautions.
2 respondents indicated simply they would recommend other precautions.

The following are the remainder of the responses:

wear masks at all times

Masks mandatory, keep extra balls in dugout (no bag) 6 feet between players...
they can be outside dugout along fence.

IF the curve flattens and new cases are significantly lower

Testing (which next to a vaccine is the only answer but I assume we won't have it)

Clear site plan in writing.

Severely limited numbers in the dugout. No entering dugouts except by participants.

I'm not so much worried about me. The kids that are standing on base, in the batters box, trying to tag out opponents, and in dugouts. I worry for their safety. This is an unprecedented time and I would rather error on the side of caution.

Possibly that ump's wear at least one plastic glove on hand for handling baseballs.

Anyone showing ill health should not participate.

Just to follow the guidelines put in place

Cancel the season.

You might suggest wiping the bats and helmets by bench personnel between innings

Also, if we work 3 game sets, we might consider 3 man crews

Umpires not in charge of baseball. Someone from the dug out Lt would be responsible for sanitizing them and returning them to play from the dugout

JUST WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR KEEPING SOCIAL DISTANCING OF THE PLAYERS?

FANS? COACHES? TRAINER? PRESS?

If the social distance ban is lifted I see no reason to have any precautions but my number one concern would always be players and fans.

No handshakes pre or postgame

No huddles on defense. Limiting conferences to the coach, pitcher and catcher.

After game handshakes could be eliminated by each team standing on the first and third baseline and waving to each other.

Wash hands and probably make an agreement that everyone does a non-contact show of respect instead of shaking hands such as a nod or a wave.

Just because we are back to sports it doesn't mean we should be lax and proceed as if things are normal. It will be different times and we should avoid contact when possible. This likely means no hand shakes at the beginning of the game, and will probably also mean we social distance ourselves as well during the game when possible.

- 1) Pre-game coach meeting with social distancing.
- 2) No lineup card management exchange, or umpire management of lineup during game.
(Or I write my own cards with their instruction.)
- 3) Coaches maintain all softballs, before and foul ball retrieval.
- 4) No handshakes.

If individuals are concerned I am willing to implement any safe measures deemed appropriate. Avoid the pregame conference at home plate. Make all substitutions open so less coach and umpire interactions occur.

no contact, minimum 6' distance not sure if I will work this season. I have been off work from the University because of personal health and age. My family practice Dr. issued a no work until state authorizes people with my circumstances go back to work. At this point I am NOT supposed to work any kind of sports officiating under the Doc's order.

I am hopeful to be able to work but it remains to be seen

No plate meetings, no coming out of the dugout to argue a call. If a coach has a question on a call, he or she should call time and make a motion for the calling umpire to meet the coach six feet away to discuss the call and this conversation should be brief. All forms should be electronic to avoid interaction and change the need of paper signatures when arriving for games. Being conscientious about what they're touching not on their person, and then touching areas putting them at highest risk (face, eyes, etc.)

Practice all distancing guidelines.

since social distance or a mask is an ongoing practice by Governor Reynolds, softball might be canceled for the season.

It has been a challenge to get excited for the season knowing what the health trade offs might be for everyone involved. Kids should not share their bats and gloves. Will all people arriving at the park have their temperature taken? Will local ADs or the named supervisor on sight ensure safety precautions are taken for all at the ball field?

Everyone be respectful of each other.

Follow the CDC guidelines

Follow the CDC guidelines

players & coaches & umpires tested prior to playing

Cancel the 2020 season!!!

Disposable sterile gloves

Limit players in dugout to max 12 and max 3 coaches - so only 15 total in dugout

Not really just play ball

No meetings or fans to prevent spread

just the obvious ones like not shaking hands, etc.

Keep the kids safe. If someone is feeling sick, stay home.

6 ft distance from coaches and players other than the catcher (which also sounds ridiculous now that I've typed it since even the catcher is interacting with his teammates in the dugout); no shaking hands

Not shaking hands with coaches/players.

Just recommend we keep 6 ft apart if all possible.

No shaking hands among players, coaches and umpires.

Just take as many precautions as possible to assure safety two players umpires and spectators I would like all of us to keep in mind the Covid guidelines and apply them as much as we can in the games of baseball and softball are played.

Being honest about how they feel. If you're sick no need to be there.

Consider not shaking hands after games? Or at least have hand sanitizer readily available.

Season should not happen due to safety concerns. Too much risk for all involved.

ensure health and safety, follow CDC guidelines, no physical contact, sanitize balls

Make varsity doubleheaders in both less changing of teams

Strict 'self-quarantine' if any contact for 7-10 days. Loosen reentry guidelines for teams with lineup impacted by 'self quarantine'. Thus, Reward them for following guidelines.

No hand shakes...fist bumps and hand sanitizer

If sick or have underlying health conditions, take care of yourself and perhaps make decisions to keep you out of possible unhealthy situations...be responsible for yourself.

If you don't feel well stay home. Not the worth the risk. If you are an at-risk candidate, stay home. Not worth the risk. If you feel strongly about wearing a mask, then wear a mask.

Don't force those that are not comfortable to do what you want done.

Be smart about sanitation, no seed spitting and whatever State asks follow so we can play games.

Having a newborn at home does make me nervous about being around multiple groups of people and being potentially exposed to the virus.

just be smart, distance and wash and sanitize

Guarantee that there's water available for umpires and that there are towels designated for umpire use only for wiping down either equipment or perspiration.

Baseball coaches should not be able to cross the foul line if they come out for an explanation or to argue a call. Then at least umpires can still do some "social distancing." I feel strongly enough about it, that if they do violate that reasonable guideline, the umpires should be enabled to immediately confine them to the dugout. This public health issue is serious, and it must be treated seriously.

No handshakes pregame or after game.

Pregame conference is modified, no post game hand shakes,

no kids for pre game stuff

Temperature taking

Softball & baseball cannot be played by following Social Distancing

Social distance in pre-game meetings and in conferences with umpires.

Still Iowa's numbers need to go down dramatically if everyone is going to be somewhat safe.

I personally don't think it is safe to play baseball or softball currently with the state of the world

No hand shaking, regular cleaning of ball, time called during a dead ball so kids can clean off if contact is made (ie collision, close plays, OBS/INT)

All umpires, coaches, players & facility staff that access the field on game day should be screened
laundry practices need to include disinfection

If sick, stay home!

Discourage licking fingers, spitting, hand shaking, either way it will be risky to have a season.

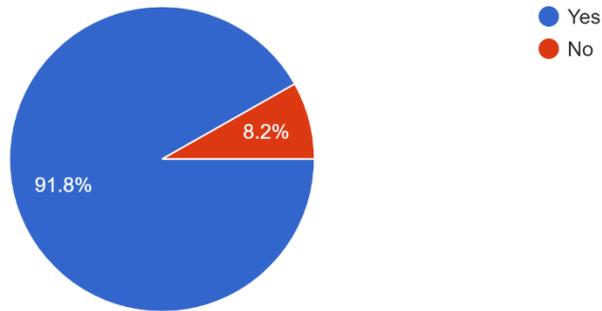
I have made commitments to umpire otherwise i would take the year off and lessen risk to my family.

Considering that cases in Muscatine County, and I'm sure other areas as well, are still rising, I would support not playing the 2020 season. Many of our umpires I'm sure in the high risk group because of their ages alone. If even one person contracts this virus and has to spend time in a hospital, or heaven forbid, dies, it's not worth the risk of playing games this summer.

QUESTION #7:

Do you plan on working the 2020 season?

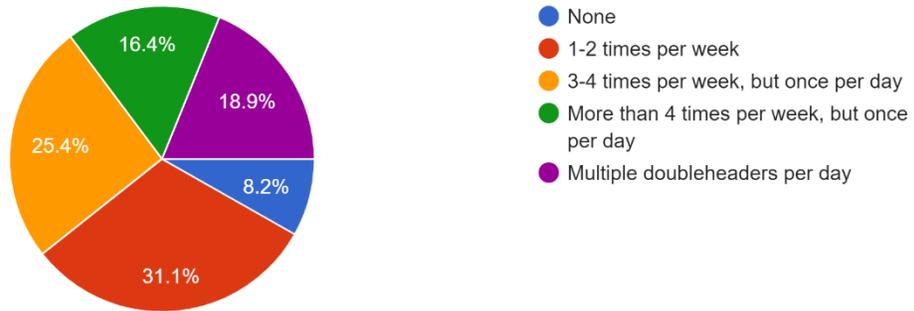
122 responses



QUESTION #8:

How many doubleheaders would you like to work this season?

122 responses



Respectfully submitted to the Iowa High School Athletic Association and the Iowa Girls' High School Athletic Union on Friday, May 15, 2020.

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