

# This Week in Baseball

Varsity B Issue | December 6, 2019



With the growing popularity and discussion of Varsity B teams, I wanted to put together a document for you to reference that is aimed at addressing any questions you may have on the topic. This is also to provide clarity on the potential misuse of a Varsity B team—Varsity B teams *should not* be a tool to enhance your Varsity team standing, to improve your tournament seed and/or draw or to add games onto your schedule beyond the 27 games that are permitted.

## Varsity B Teams – What are they?

A Varsity B team would be an additional Varsity team at a school. As stated in the second paragraph of **General Sport Regulation (GSR) 7.1.2**, “member schools may sponsor more than one varsity or sub-varsity team for interscholastic competition, but each team must have its own schedule and may not exceed the contest limitations for that sport”. This GSR permits a school to sponsor as many teams in a sport as they choose to do so, as long as they have their own schedule and meet the contest limitations. This regulation allows schools to have a [more] typical squad line-up like Freshman, JV and Varsity baseball teams all at one school. We have also seen some sports develop JV A & B teams, due to lack of Freshmen or other players. Now, particularly in the sport of baseball, having a Varsity B team has increased in popularity. Varsity B teams *are* allowed via General Sport Regulation 7, just like any other squad a school may choose to have. It would just be an additional team at a higher level of play. *However, with a Varsity B team, please remember that only ONE Varsity team from a school may enter the OHSAA Tournament.*

## Varsity B Roster

Nearly all OHSAA Sport Regulations permit *individual players* to play more than the allotted number of games. This is true for baseball, as school teams may play a maximum of 27 games on 27 playing dates per season, and an individual player may play on 32 playing dates per season. Any time a player enters the contest, that counts as one of their 32 permitted dates—whether they play 1 inning or 5 innings, any time spent participating in a contest counts towards their 32-date limitation. This provides more participation opportunities for the individual player, along with the fact that we do not restrict which squads’ players play on—12<sup>th</sup> graders may play on Freshman teams, 9<sup>th</sup> graders may play on Varsity and JV teams, etc. So, any student-athlete in grades 9-12 may play on your Varsity B team (and any of your other squads) as long as they do not participate in more than two games per day and only play on 32 dates per season.

Your Varsity B team is required to have its own roster, comprised of whichever eligible student-athletes in grades 9-12 you choose. Your Varsity B team is required to have a roster, just like your Varsity and JV teams have a roster. These individuals can be on multiple rosters.

*With the individual player not being able to play in more than two games per day and on more than 32 playing dates, these limitations should limit any type of overuse of the player if they play on both the Varsity (or JV) and Varsity B teams.*

## Baseball Team/Player Limitations

Things to remember when thinking about implementing a Varsity B team—these regulations must be applied:

- No team may participate in more than 27 regular season games on 27 playing dates;
- No individual player may play on more than 32 playing dates;
- No team or individual may play more than two games per day;
- The team must have its own roster;
- The team must have its own schedule.

**PENALTIES SHALL BE APPLIED IF ANY OF THE ABOVE ARE VIOLATED.**

## Varsity B – It’s Purpose

The purpose of creating a Varsity B team is **not** to add 5 games to your Varsity schedule, even if the intent is to allow more playing time for some of the non-starters. While the OHSAA does not have a specific number of games required to create a team schedule, if a Varsity B team is implemented, it is **required that they have their own schedule**, as stated in GSR 7.1.2. Would you create a 5-game schedule for your Varsity team? NO. Would you create a 5-game schedule for your JV team? NO. Think of it like any of your established school teams—they all have their own schedule. A Varsity B team is no different.

***The penalty for exceeding the regular season limitation of 27 games on 27 playing dates is no participation in the OHSAA tournament. Additional penalties may apply, as written in Bylaw 11.***

## **Varsity B – Schedules, Records & Tournament Seeding**

As previously stated, a Varsity B team must have its own schedule and consist of any eligible student-athletes in grades 9-12. Varsity B teams may compete against any level of team, as the OHSAA does not have a regulation on who teams compete against. It is ultimately up to your league/conference and District Athletic Board to choose how they want to apply Varsity B schedules. Overall, only one team from each school may enter the OHSAA tournament, so there should be no questions which team enters the tournament—the school may decide this. While all six District Athletic Boards may seed differently, I do not believe any of them have anywhere to list that an opponent was a Varsity B team. This could become somewhat confusing during tournament time. The largest question might come into play when scheduling Varsity B games and the record that results from the game.

**Scenario #1:** Ohio High School's baseball team is in Division II. OHS' DII Varsity team has a 27-game schedule and 18 of their scheduled games are against DI Varsity B teams. OHS wins those 18 games against the DI Varsity B teams. Their record is going to appear that a DII team went 18-0 against DI teams, but they were playing the Varsity B teams at those schools, which more than likely consisted of Varsity non-starters.

A scenario like the one above is something to consider when creating a Varsity B schedule or scheduling Varsity B teams as your opponents. When scheduling these games, it is important that all parties know they are playing against a Varsity B team.

Please also keep in mind how Varsity B games/opponents apply to tournament seeding—while all six District Athletic Boards may seed differently, I do not believe any of them have anywhere to list that an opponent was a Varsity B team. This could become somewhat confusing during tournament time.

*With all of that said, if a school is utilizing a Varsity B schedule, I recommend making sure all of your opponents are aware they are competing against a Varsity B team and not the main Varsity team.*

## **To Simplify...**

We realize the idea of a Varsity B team is a newer term, but no matter what scenarios, questions, etc. come up, try to remember that a Varsity B team is just like a Freshman, JV or Varsity team implementation, just at the Varsity level. So, when you think of it that way, it really isn't a new concept—just a different team distinction. Here are some bullet points to reference in hopes to summarize everything covered:

- Varsity B teams may only be implemented if the team can sustain its own schedule.
- Varsity B teams may only be implemented if the team establishes a roster, just like any other school team.
- If you would like to provide more playing time for Varsity non-starters and do not want to implement an entire schedule for a Varsity B team, they should play on the JV or another sub-varsity team.
- If you would like to provide more playing time for Varsity non-starters and do not want to implement an entire schedule for a Varsity B team, you could implement an additional JV squad, but that additional JV squad would need its own schedule.
- As with any other squad, Varsity B teams may be comprised of any mix of eligible student athletes in grades 9-12.
- As with any other squad, Varsity B teams may compete against any team they wish to compete against—the OHSAA does not have a regulation stating who teams may or may not compete against.

***IF YOU DO NOT HAVE A SCHEDULE AND ROSTER FOR A VARSITY B TEAM, YOU DO NOT HAVE A VARSITY B TEAM.***

## **Varsity B Scenarios/FAQs**

***Q: Can we schedule 27 games and then schedule an additional 5 games (32 total) that we would declare Varsity B games?***

**A:** No. This scenario is stating that a school will play 27 games and an additional 5 games beyond the 27 permitted. This would exceed the 27-game maximum allowed and *penalties would apply.*

**Option 1:** If you would like more participation opportunities for your Varsity players, they need to play on a Varsity B team that has a schedule and roster, or on one of your sub-varsity teams. This participation opportunity cannot come from adding a few extra games beyond the 27 permitted and declaring them Varsity B games.

**Option 2:** If you do not prefer to create a full Varsity B team with its own schedule, these few games where you would choose to play some of your non-starters would need to count in your 27-game limitation. Or, they would need to be on your JV (or other sub-varsity) team to increase their playing opportunities.

***Q: We play 3 games out of state this year. Could out-of-state competition be considered Varsity B games?***

**A:** The same options from the question/answer above would apply—you cannot pick and choose a few games to declare Varsity B games. Varsity B teams should have their own schedule, or these 3 out-of-state games would need to fit in your 27-game schedule for your Varsity team.

**Q: Our Varsity team has advanced to the OHSAA Postseason Tournament, but we completed our 27-game schedule. Could I schedule a few games during tournament time and declare them Varsity B games?**

**A:** No. You may not exceed the 27-game limitation and doing so would be in violation of the Regulation and a penalty would be applied. Doing this would appear that you are trying to create an advantage for your Varsity team, allowing them extra games—again, this is in violation and a penalty would apply. Your Varsity B team should have its own schedule. Please also remember this is not typically a time schools will schedule games at the JV or Freshmen levels, so it wouldn't be any different at the Varsity B level.

**Q: Some schools may need to find an opponent to makeup a rainout. To help out a team in need, if High School A has a full 27-game schedule, to help High School B find an opponent, could High School A play a 28th game and declare it a Varsity B game?**

**A:** No. The Varsity team is only allowed a maximum of 27 games and could not add a 28<sup>th</sup> game and declare it a Varsity B game. If a Varsity B team plays a game, it must fit in their 27-game schedule. In the same note, a Varsity team cannot declare certain games "Varsity B" to allow them more than 27 games.

**Q: Can my Varsity team play a Varsity B team?**

**A:** Yes. The OHSAA does not have a regulation prohibiting *who* you compete against. When scheduling, I do think it is important for the opponent to know that they are competing against a B team and not the main Varsity team.

**Q: Can my JV team play a Varsity B team?**

**A:** Yes. The OHSAA does not have a regulation prohibiting *who* you compete against.

**Q: Can a Varsity starter play on the Varsity B team?**

**A:** Yes, as long as they remain in their 32 playing date limitation and play in no more than two games per day.

**Q: Can a JV player play on the Varsity B team?**

**A:** Yes, as long as they remain in the 32 playing date limitation and play in no more than two games per day.

Please remember that leagues, conferences and/or schools may choose to not allow Varsity B teams to be established or be an opponent, may choose to not schedule cross-Division games (i.e., Division II team playing DI Varsity B team), etc., but wanted all coaches and Athletic Directors to have the information necessary in understanding this topic further.

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