



THIS WEEK IN BASEBALL

PRE-SEASON ISSUE | FEBRUARY 13, 2025

2025 SEASON DATES

February 24	Coaching/Tryouts Begin
March 28	Contests Begin
May 11	Tournament Draw Mtg.
May 19 – 24	Sectional Tournament
May 26 – 31	District Tournament
June 3 – 6	Regional Tournament
June 13 – 15	State Tournament
June 21	Season Ends

2025 BASEBALL SEASON MEMO

Last May 15, the OHSAA sent out a memo to all head baseball coaches, that listed the anticipated start dates and tournament dates for the 2025 baseball season. The 2025 baseball season start date is scheduled for Friday, March 28*. **As a note, there is an asterisk next to the March 28/29 start date in the memo when this was sent, as the change to start the season on Friday instead of Saturday, was still an agenda item proposed by the OHSBCA, to our Board of Directors—this has been passed, since this memo was created.*

Please review the full memo [HERE](#).

I realize this is an older memo, but I have received questions about the start dates for coaching, tryouts and contests, so I wanted to share this again!

VARSITY B TEAMS

Have questions about Varsity B teams? Please reference a memo that details all things Varsity B teams! There is plenty of information, FAQ's and specific examples, that might help you navigate the topic.

Please review the document [HERE](#).

QUESTIONS ABOUT NFHS PLAYING RULES?

Frank Grubb serves as our Baseball Director of Officiating Development and rules interpreter. While Frank will mostly work with umpires, if you have any questions regarding NFHS playing rules, including equipment, uniforms, field dimensions, etc., or general issues or questions regarding umpires and/or officiating for the sport of baseball, please contact Frank at fgrubb@ohsaa.org.

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COACHING & TRYOUTS | FEBRUARY 24

Coaching, instruction and tryouts may begin on **Monday, February 24**. **NO tryouts may take place prior to February 24**. Scrimmages and previews may now take place starting on February 24 as well, but a reminder that games are not permitted to begin until Friday, March 28.

Per OHSAA *Bylaw 4-1-4*, a student-athlete is not recognized as an official member of the school team until they participate in a scrimmage, preview or contest for the school team, whichever comes first. With that said, student-athletes may continue participating with a non-interscholastic baseball program or team, up until they participate in a scrimmage, preview or contest for the school team, even if they have started practicing with the school team.

NOTE: If a school would like to enforce a stricter policy and not permit a student-athlete to participate with their non-interscholastic team/program once they have made the school team and have started practicing, they are permitted to enforce a stricter policy. However, by OHSAA policies, we do not classify a student-athlete as an official member of the school team until they participate in a scrimmage, preview or contest for the school team, whichever comes first.

SEASON BEGINS | MARCH 28

Contests may not take place until **Friday, March 28**. Any event taking place prior to March 28, must be a scrimmage or preview and must be considered a scrimmage or preview for BOTH teams participating.

FREE SUBSTITUTION RULE | OHIO EXCEPTION TO NFHS RULE 3-1-1

In efforts made by the OHSAA and the OHSBCA, a proposal was presented to the OHSAA Board of Directors to permit unlimited substitutions during sub-Varsity baseball games only, creating an exception to *NFHS Rule 3-1-1*. The rationale was to provide more playing opportunities for athletes at sub-Varsity levels. This was approved at the October 2024 Board of Directors Meeting.

The NFHS playing rule states the following for Varsity contests:

NFHS Rule 3-1-1: Any of the starting players may be withdrawn and re-entered once, including a player who was the designated hitter, provided such player occupies the same batting position whenever he is in the lineup ... **A substitute who is withdrawn may not re-enter.**

With the approval by the Board of Directors, Ohio has added the following administrative exception to *NFHS Rule 3-1-1*, for sub-Varsity contests only:

EXCEPTION: In games that are not counted as Varsity contests (i.e., sub-Varsity), re-entry may occur an unlimited number of times, given that such player(s) occupies the same batting position when they are in the lineup.

A few items to keep in mind:

1. This is permitted for sub-Varsity contests only.
2. This is only permitted at the sub-Varsity level in **Ohio only**, as permitted by the Ohio administrative rule change. *If you play a scrimmage or contest in a different state, they probably will not allow this.*
3. You are not required to use this at the sub-Varsity levels; it simply allows the opportunity to do so.
4. The exception allows for re-entry of players in a spot in the batting order lineup and a player needs to stay in the same spot in the lineup. Two players in the game on defense at the same time that occupy the same spot in the lineup would result in an illegal substitution.
5. **Coaches should continue to announce substitutions to the umpire and the opposing team.**

FAQS

Q: Do I have to use the free substitution rule during a JV game?

A: No, this simply permits a school to use the free substitution rule, if they choose to do so. It is not required.

Q: I use the free substitution rule for my JV baseball games and we think it is working great for our program.

Can we use the free substitution rule at the Varsity level as well?

A: No. The free substitution rule is only permitted in Ohio at the sub-Varsity level.

Q: Our JV team is playing a contest in Kentucky—can we use the free substitution rule in Kentucky?

A: No. The exception to *NFHS Rule 3-1-1* for sub-Varsity contests is only permitted for contests played in the state of Ohio.

Q: Our JV team is playing a contest against a Kentucky team, but the contest is in Ohio—can we use the free substitution rule?

A: Yes, since the exception to *NFHS Rule 3-1-1* for sub-Varsity contests is only permitted for contests played in the state of Ohio, you could use this for your sub-Varsity contests, even if playing against an out-of-state team.