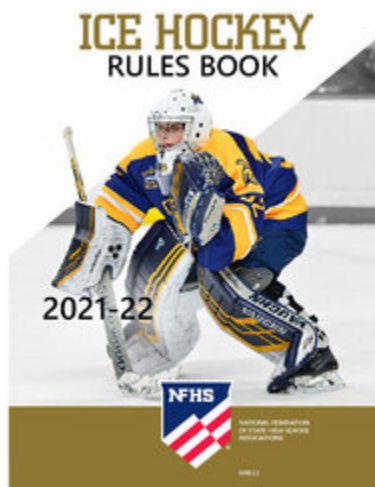


OHSAA

OHIO HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION



2025-26 OHSAA ICE HOCKEY MANUAL



IMPORTANT DATES

***All Dates Tentative**

COACHING BEGINS	October 24, 2025
SEASON BEGINS	November 14, 2025
NON-INTERSCHOLASTIC DATE	December 27, 2025
TOURNAMENT ENTRY/WITHDRAW DATE	January 26, 2026
TOURNAMENT BRACKETS POSTED	February 12, 2026
REGIONAL	February 15 – March 8, 2026
STATE	March 14- March 15, 2026
SEASON ENDS	March 15, 2026
NO CONTACT PERIOD (COACHES)	28 Days after last game
NO CONTACT PERIOD (COACHES)	August 1 – August 24, 2026

CONTACT INFORMATION

Name	Title	Responsibilities	e-mail
John Kronour	Director of Sport Administration & Ice Hockey Administrator	Oversees the sport & coordinates the tournaments	jkronour@ohsaa.org
Beau Rugg	Director of Officiating	Oversees officials' programs & tournament assignments	brugg@ohsaa.org
Gary Wilkins	Ice Hockey Director of Officiating Development & State Rules Interpreter	Rules Interpretations & Officials issues	Gary.Wilkins@mt.com

IMPORTANT LINKS

National Federation of State High School Associations
Ohio High School Athletic Association
myOHSAA
OHSAA Ice Hockey

<https://www.nfhs.org>
<https://www.ohsaa.org>
<https://officials.myohsaa.org>
<https://ohsaa.org/sports/icehockey>

MESSAGE FROM ICE HOCKEY ADMINISTRATOR, Dr. John Kronour

My name is Dr. John Kronour, and I am the Ice Hockey Administrator for the OHSAA. I am excited to have the opportunity to work with each of you during this upcoming Ice Hockey season!

This ice hockey manual provides current OHSAA Regulations as well as NFHS Playing Rules and Points of Emphasis for Ohio Interscholastic hockey coaches and players. As we strive towards maintaining continued growth in the sport, it is critical that ALL coaches– not just head coaches – are knowledgeable of the information found within this manual. This manual will serve as a detailed written version of the online meeting that serves to provide guidance as we kick off another outstanding ice hockey season.

A core foundation of OHSAA membership is that *'coaches voluntarily adhere to the rules and regulations of the OHSAA as a condition of membership and the opportunities such as tournament participation that membership allows.'* It is crucial for OHSAA schools and coaches to continue to embrace and follow the rules and regulations as it not only sets a positive example for the students but helps the continual growth of a strong Ohio hockey community.

Pre-season "Rules Interpretation Meetings" remain **mandatory** for Varsity Head Coaches to provide you with a clear explanation of the rules we expect you to follow. Rules meetings are now ONLINE only, and while we understand the benefits of face-to-face meetings, the need for a consistent message to every coach across the state (in all sports) that not only deal with NFHS playing rules but also the OHSAA administrative rules is a necessity. Directions for access to this meeting as well as available dates are detailed in the early pages of this manual. We hope you'll encourage your assistant coaches (both paid and volunteer) to attend these meetings and provide copies or references to this manual. As mentioned, the purpose of the "Rules Interpretation Meeting" is to give EVERYONE a thorough understanding of the interpretations of OHSAA Regulations as well as the changes and "points of emphasis" to the National playing rules written by the NFHS.

Rules governing OHSAA Ice Hockey stem from the National Federation (NFHS) *and* the OHSAA. NFHS Rules govern all playing rules while OHSAA Sport Regulations govern specific rules to Ohio as well as the various administrative regulations and interpretations. Our elected Board of Directors approve these regulations annually and serve as the basis for ALL schools playing by the same rules.

The 2025-26 season begins with practices permitted on **October 24** - and the season concludes with the state ice hockey tournament at Nationwide Arena during the weekend of **March 14-15**. It is also important to note a mandatory 4-day Acclimation Period is required with further details in this manual.

We continue to encourage coaches to invite local officials to meet with their team during pre-season workouts as it allows the officials to meet the students, discuss new rules, and gives the students and opportunity to ask questions prior to the beginning of the season. We also recommend inviting an official(s) to a pre-season meeting with team parents as it provides a forum for healthy discussions and an opportunity for parents to learn more about interscholastic ice hockey.

Communication is key in the successful administration of any OHSAA sport. We encourage you to ask questions or seek assistance by *first* going through your Athletic Administrator. We encourage YOUR communication with them to help us operate as efficiently as possible.

We know that hockey has a very strong, committed, and closely knit community. We look forward to working with each of you this year and wish you all a successful season. In closing, THANK YOU so much for your efforts and sacrifices to provide an outstanding experience for all students in Ohio!

Sincerely,

Dr. John Kronour

OHSAA Director of Sport Administration & Ice Hockey Administrator



Coaches' Code of Ethics

The function of a coach is to educate students through participation in interscholastic competition. An interscholastic program should be designed to enhance academic achievement and should never interfere with opportunities for academic success. Each student should be treated with the utmost respect, and his or her welfare should be considered in decisions by the coach at all times. Accordingly, the following guidelines for coaches have been adopted by the NFHS Board of Directors.

The coach shall be aware that he or she has a tremendous influence, for either good or ill, on the education of the student and, thus, shall never place the value of winning above the value of instilling the highest ideals of character.

The coach shall uphold the honor and dignity of the profession. In all personal contact with students, officials, athletic directors, school administrators, the state high school athletic association, the media, and the public, the coach shall strive to set an example of the highest ethical and moral conduct.

The coach shall take an active role in the prevention of drug, alcohol and tobacco abuse.

The coach shall avoid the use of alcohol and tobacco products when in contact with players.

The coach shall promote the entire interscholastic program of the school and direct his or her program in harmony with the total school program.

The coach shall master the contest rules and shall teach them to his or her team members. The coach shall not seek an advantage by circumvention of the spirit or letter of the rules.

The coach shall exert his or her influence to enhance sportsmanship by spectators, both directly and by working closely with cheerleaders, pep club sponsors, booster clubs, and administrators.

The coach shall respect and support contest officials. The coach shall not indulge in conduct which would incite players or spectators against the officials. Public criticism of officials or players is unethical.

The coach should meet and exchange cordial greetings with the opposing coach to set the correct tone for the event before and after the contest.

The coach shall not exert pressure on faculty members to give student special consideration.

The coach shall not scout opponents by any means other than those adopted by the league and/or state high school athletic association.

NFHS SPORTSMANSHIP STATEMENT

Good sportsmanship is viewed by the National Federation of State High School Associations as a commitment to fair play, ethical behavior and integrity. In perception and practice, sportsmanship is defined as those qualities which are characterized by generosity and genuine concern for others. The ideals of sportsmanship apply equally to all activity disciplines. Individuals, regardless of their role in activities, are expected to be aware of their influence on the behavior of others and model good sportsmanship.

The Ohio High School Athletic Association Mission Statement

To serve our member schools and enrich interscholastic opportunities for students.

OHSAA SPORTSMANSHIP, ETHICS, AND INTEGRITY

As we prepare for the upcoming seasons, we wish to emphasize to each of you the importance of your leadership role in sportsmanship, ethics and integrity. The professional manner in which officials and coaches conduct themselves prior to, during and following a contest unquestionably impacts the behavior of others involved.

The OHSAA has joined the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) in its quest to improve sportsmanship, ethics and integrity. We are involved in an ongoing campaign in every sport to do just that. Printed below is the mission statement of the NFHS concerning sportsmanship, ethics and integrity. Please take the time to read and digest this statement and then carefully consider your impact upon the players, officials, coaches, and fans. Thank you and have a great season.



2025-26 NFHS ICE HOCKEY RULES CHANGES

3-8: CHANGE:

ART. 8...Electronic devices shall not be used by team personnel or spectators to communicate with on-ice players or goalkeepers during play. No player or goalkeeper shall wear any audio (microphone) or video (camera) device during the game.

RATIONALE: No player participating in the game will be allowed to wear any type of audio or video device to record or transmit audio or video.

9-8-4 NEW: CHANGE:

ART. 4...A puck on the outside of the goal netting below the crossbar shall be considered in play by both teams. A puck resting on top of the goal netting between the crossbar and goal frame shall be considered unplayable, resulting in an immediate stoppage.

*Note – current Rules 9-8-4 and 5 move to Rule 9-8-5 and 6.

RATIONALE: A puck on the goal netting is covered in all other rules books. A puck on top of the netting creates too many problematic scenarios if it is considered playable (high stick, closing hand, goalkeeper contact, player in goal crease, etc.).

2025-26 NFHS POINTS OF EMPHASIS

The NFHS Ice Hockey Rules Committee remains committed to minimizing violent and reckless play — the primary threat to the health and safety of high school hockey. This year's points of emphasis aim to support that goal.

SPORTSMANSHIP

NFHS rules continue to promote respect, integrity and sportsmanship. High school hockey should model positive behavior:

Win with humility. Lose with grace. Compete with dignity.

Upholding sportsmanship requires the daily commitment of everyone involved.

Coaches, players and goalkeepers must be mindful of their language, as inappropriate or abusive language has no place in high school hockey.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

All players and goalkeepers need to be properly equipped, including newly required neck laceration protectors.

Body-checking is intended to gain puck possession — not to punish or intimidate.

Boarding and checking from behind remain two of the most dangerous plays.

Responsibility lies with the player initiating contact.

The following are illegal and must be eliminated:

- Hits to the head
- Fighting
- Blindside hits
- Late hits and unnecessary contact

OFFICIALS: GAME MANAGEMENT

- Faceoffs: Ensure equal opportunity by properly positioning all players and conducting fair drops.
- Icing: Apply the rule correctly — the puck must fully cross the center red line.
- Offsides: Officials must maintain proper positioning. Missing an obvious offsides call can undermine credibility of the game.

Rules Interpretation Meetings Information

Rules Interpretation Meetings are MANDATORY for all head coaches. ALL RULES INTERPRETATION MEETINGS FOR COACHES WILL BE CONDUCTED ONLINE THROUGH THEIR Final Forms PROFILE. The online meeting for is geared exclusively toward both coaches and officials. IF you are a coach and have an OHSAA Officials license, **you will be required to complete both meetings.**

OHSAA Ice Hockey Sports Regulations are covered in detail as well as General Sports Regulations and Bylaws as they pertain to coaches and players. Though the main purpose is to provide knowledge and advice on the various OHSAA regulations, this is the educational mechanism to ensure compliance with the various rules and regulations.

How to Complete the Rules Interpretation Meeting Online

Winter State Rules Meeting Instructions:

Instructions for Coaches

- The coach must log into FinalForms [Click here to access FinalForms](#)
- On the landing page, the coach will see the sports to which they have been assigned
- The coach will click on the “Form” icon on the left side of any sport highlighted in **red** to access the rules meeting for that sport
- The coach will click the play button on the video and watch the entire video
- The coach must enter their name at the bottom and click submit, certifying that they have watched the entire video and that they understand and will be held to the rules and interpretations explained in the video
- Once submitted, the sport will turn **green** as an indication that credit has been provided to the school for that particular sport’s rules meeting

Instructions for Administrators – Completing the Meeting

- The administrator must log into FinalForms [Click here to access FinalForms](#)
- The Administrator will click the "Manage" drop down and select "Sports"
- On the landing page, the administrator will see all sports sponsored by the school
- The administrator will click on the "Form" icon on the left side of any sport highlighted in **red** to access the rules meeting for that sport
- The administrator will click the play button on the video and watch the entire video
- The administrator must enter their name at the bottom and click submit, certifying that they have watched the entire video and that they understand and will be held to the rules and interpretations explained in the video
- Once submitted, the sport will turn **green** as an indication that credit has been provided to the school for that particular sport's rules meeting

Instructions for Administrators – Checking for Credit

- The administrator must log into FinalForms [Click here to access FinalForms](#)
- The administrator will click the "Manage" drop down and select "Sports"
- On the landing page, the administrator will see all sports sponsored by the school
- The administrator can utilize the filters in the upper left corner to sort out which sports have and have not received credit by season
- Any sport highlighted in **red** has not received credit for the state rules meeting
- Coaches or administrators should follow the instructions above to complete the meeting requirement
- Any sport highlighted in **green** has received credit for the state rules meeting
- Any sport with no highlight color does not require a rules meeting or the rules meeting has not yet been made available

Start	Late Fee Begins	End Date
Friday, October 17 th @ 9:00 am	Tuesday, November 25 th #	Monday, January 19 th @11:59 pm ##

= A \$50.00 late fee is charged for access to the online version on or after November 26^h

= The deadline WITH the \$50.00 penalty will be **Monday, January 19th at 11:59 pm**. **If coaches do not complete the rules meeting by this deadline, your school will be removed from the post-season tournament and officials will be ineligible for the 2026 state tournament.**

Pre-Season Parent/Player Meetings

We have encouraged coaches to invite local officials to meet with their team and parents at these meetings. It allows the officials to meet the athletes and discuss new rules. It gives athletes an opportunity to ask questions and have a discussion prior to game days. Since Pre-Season meetings are a requirement for all teams/schools, we also recommended inviting an official to these pre-season meetings. Again, it provides a forum for healthy discussions and an opportunity for parents to learn more about the game.

Pre-season meetings with parents are now **mandatory** and will most likely occur along with other spring sport teams. This is determined by each school's Athletic Administrator. This is the time to cover such things as eligibility requirements, individual school policies, individual sport policies, sportsmanship issues and expectations travel plans for away contests, etc. Also, though mentioned later in this manual, a course titled "The Role of the Parent in Sports" is offered by the NFHS and is FREE.

Coach Certification & Education Requirements

Pupil Activity Permit

Per Ohio Administrative Code, any high school or middle school coach (volunteer or paid) must have a valid Pupil Activity Permit (PAP) issued by the State Department of Education (SDE). Athletic Administrators are responsible for maintaining records of compliance for each of the following courses throughout the term of a coaches' PAP:

1. Completed background checks
2. Completed course from an approved First Aid for Coaches provider
3. Completed course from an approved Concussion provider
4. Completed course from an approved Sudden Cardiac Arrest Training provider, including Lindsay's Law
5. Completed course from an approved Coaching Fundamentals provider
6. Completed training course in CPR from a course approved by your school or District
7. Completed mental health course from an approved provider

The OHSAA has partnered with Coaches' Tool Chest (www.coachestoolchest.com) as a single source, online provider for each of the courses needed to obtain or renew a PAP. CTC helps ensure coaches are compliant with all Ohio requirements as well as provide relevant professional development. This annual course provides a single certificate with a single expiration date for all the coaching requirements in Ohio.

Specific information about alternative single source courses, additional details and application information can be found:
<https://sboe.ohio.gov/educator-licensure/apply-for-a-new-license/pupil-activity-coaching-permits>

Special Note on “Scheduling” Out of State Contests

- You may not play any regular season contest prior to **November 14, 2025**
- If you scrimmage another opponent, it must be part of the other team's allotted scrimmages also. In other words, it cannot be a 'scrimmage' for YOUR team and a regular season contest for the OTHER team. ANY contest in a non-bordering state MUST be counted as a GAME for both schools involved.
- Teams may travel to a **non-bordering** state **ONE TIME ONLY** per season! A non-bordering state travel form is required and is available on the OHSAA ice hockey webpage.

The adopted and approved penalty for violations of the above are INELIGIBILITY FOR THE OHSAA TOURNAMENT

Relative to regular season 'in-state' contests: Teams may schedule games right up until the board adopted "Season Ends" date of **March 15, 2026**. This means that even though you are in tournament or eliminated from tournament, you may still schedule (usually 'make up') a contest up until this date. Keep in mind that playing this late also eliminates any opportunity for a player to play non-interscholastic ice hockey until the school season is complete.

You may also conduct a "scrimmage" at any point in the season, including during tournament play provided you have a scrimmage remaining (as does your opponent). Just keep in mind that if you scrimmage another team, it must be counted as a 'scrimmage' for both teams so that implies that the opponent must have a scrimmage remaining on their schedule as well.

Coach & Player Ejection Protocol

Following a contest in which an ejection takes place, the official shall contact the Athletic Director or Principal of the violator's school to advise the administration of the ejection. Contact shall be made with the offender's principal/athletic director no later than the **first school day** following the ejection. An official failing to follow the ejection protocol and/or failing to file the Officials' Report may be penalized in accordance with Section VIII of the Officiating Handbook.

- **Officials shall file the Electronic Ejection Report with the OHSAA office whenever a coach or player is ejected.**
- **Any ejection due to fight will result in a four-contest suspension as opposed to typical two contests for other ejections.**
- Officials are to submit the electronic Officials' Report Form" located on the Officials' portal of their myOHSAA account. The report shall be filed with the OHSAA within 48 hours of the ejection.
- The report is automatically sent to the Athletic Administrator of the coach's school, however, the official must still make the required phone contact with the school administrator.

- In the event of an ejection of a coach, the coach is ejected/suspended for ALL GAMES for the remainder of the day of the ejection PLUS **all contests until** two games at the level of the ejection are completed. The coach must leave the premises and a board approved assistant coach or administrator must assume coaching duties. In the event there is no assistant coach OR administrator present, the contest shall be considered a forfeit at that point.
- Ejected coaches are not permitted to travel with the team or be in the locker room/bench area any time during a contest while suspended. They may continue to practice with the team.
- Ejected coaches must also pay a \$100.00 fine and complete the National Federation of State High School Association's (NFHS) "Teaching and Modeling Behavior" course within 30 days of the ejection. This information is provided electronically to the school Athletic Director and requires a "school response" from the Athletic Director.
- In the event of an ejection of a PLAYER, the player is ejected/suspended for ALL GAMES for the remainder of the day of the ejection PLUS **all contests until** two games (four for fighting) at the level of the ejection are completed. The player must remain on the bench under supervision for the remainder of the contest.
- During the suspended contests, the suspended player MAY travel with the team, MAY sit on the bench but absolutely cannot be in uniform OR on the ice for ANY participation in warm-up or pre-game events. They may continue to practice with the team.
- In the event an official does NOT contact the school or file the report, the ejection still stands, and all consequences of a coach/player ejection must be adhered to by the school and coach. Failure to do so will result in further suspension, forfeiture of contests and fines.
- **ALL EJECTIONS ARE FINAL AND NOT PERMITTED TO BE APPEALED** per the OHSAA's Board of Directors.

Contest Management Reminder

OHSAA Bylaws REQUIRE a school administrator to be in attendance at all basketball and football contests and STRONGLY ENCOURAGES their attendance at all ice hockey and soccer contests. In the event a school administrator is NOT present at your contest, and individual approved by the school MUST assume the administrative oversight of the contest – before, during and after the contest. This includes, but is not limited to:

- The safety of officials before during and after the game
- The handling of fan issues
- Any medical emergencies
- Any emergencies that may result from weather of catastrophic events

This management person could be YOU, the Coach!

You are encouraged to work closely with your Athletic Director and the rink manager to carefully detail the responsibilities associated with the above.

OHSAA Regulations

All links below are located on the OHSAA.org Ice Hockey Sports Page.

OHSAA Handbook: <https://ohsaaweb.blob.core.windows.net/files/SchoolResources/Handbook.pdf>

OHSAA General Sports Regulations: <https://ohsaaweb.blob.core.windows.net/files/Sports/GeneralSportsRegulations.pdf>

OHSAA Ice Hockey Sports Regulations: <https://ohsaaweb.blob.core.windows.net/files/Sports/Ice-Hockey/IceHockeyRegs.pdf>

The Non-Interscholastic Date

The "Non-Interscholastic Date" is a date in which a member of an interscholastic ice hockey squad sponsored by the Board of Education **cannot participate in a non-interscholastic ice hockey program** (such as club or 'travel'), which includes tryouts, practice and contests as an individual OR a member of a team in the sport of Ice hockey anytime during the school team's season. A student-athlete becomes a member of the school team when he/she participates in a scrimmage, preview OR regular season or tournament game as a substitute OR as a starter. Though participation in ANY form of non-interscholastic Ice Hockey while a member of a school team is prohibited, any participation in a non-interscholastic contest **on or after this date** results in the individual being INELIGIBLE for the OHSAA tournament in addition to any other suspensions issued. For the 2024-25 Ice Hockey season, this date is: **December 27, 2025.**

Please put this date on your calendar and REMIND the players on your team!

Uniforms

NFHS RULE 2, SECTION 1

ART. 2... All players shall wear numbered uniforms. It is required that all players be numbered with at least 10-inch-high Gothic, colored numbers on the back of their jerseys and the same numbers at least 4 inches in height on both sleeves of the jersey. The color of the numbers shall contrast with the color of the jersey.

- A. All members of a team shall wear identical uniforms relative to color of helmets (excluding goalkeepers), jerseys, socks, pants and length of pants.
- B. It is required that the visiting team shall wear dark-colored jerseys; the home team shall wear white/light-colored jerseys.
- C. One manufacturer's logo/trademark 2 ¼ square inches with no dimension more than 2¼ inches and one American flag, not to exceed 2 inches by 3 inches, may be worn or occupy space on each item of uniform apparel.
- D. By state association adoption, to allow for special occasions, commemorative or memorial patches, not to exceed 4 square inches, may be worn on jerseys without compromising the integrity of the uniform.

Questions regarding special uniforms should be sent to John Kronour (jkronour@ohsaa.org) prior to the school wearing the uniform.

2025-26 SEASON REMINDERS

Neck Guards

All players and goalkeepers are required to wear neck laceration protectors. For the health and safety of all participants, all parties need to do their part that this piece of equipment is properly worn.

Acclimation Period

Beginning with the 2017-18 season the OHSAA has implemented a mandatory four-day acclimatization period. The addition of the acclimation period for ice hockey was a result of the coaches' association recommendation to decrease injuries due to body checking. First year players have one or two years of experience body check prior to playing at the high school level. Therefore, their knowledge and experience is somewhat limited.

*Ice Hockey Sports Regulation 1.6 reads: All teams must respect a four-day acclimatization period during the **first four days of practice**. All athletes joining the team for the first time at any point during the season after the first day permitted for coaching also must participate in a four-day acclimatization period prior to competing in a contest. All teams will utilize the first four days of preseason practice to acclimate players to safe body contact in high school hockey. Specific instructions for delivering and receiving a body check in a safe manner to promote safety and minimize injuries are required during this acclimation period.*

It is mandatory that coaches use this four-day period to focus on drills that teach the proper techniques for delivering a body check as well as receiving a body check. Emphasis should be on:

1. The purpose of a body check – removing the player from the puck.
2. Proper angling – avoiding checks from behind.
3. Breaking stride prior to delivering the body check – avoid charging penalties.
4. Shoulder to shoulder checking.
5. Avoiding hits to the head.
6. Avoiding open ice blind side hits.
7. Unnecessary body contact with an opponent.
8. Avoid turning your back to a player that is delivering a check.
9. Avoid boarding penalties – do not check a player when he is going to be thrown into the boards.
10. All other situations that may cause injury or penalties.

It is important to teach these and other checking skills that will provide a safer sport for all our student athletes. It is the committees hope that every coach will use this additional time to focus on checking and safety. Pucks are permitted to be used for this important training.

Sport Regulation 7.5 – Coaching Out of Season

This regulation allows all school coaches to coach non-school (Club/travel hockey for example) outside the season with players from your school teams on it throughout the year.

This is NOT a permission that opens the door to coach your hockey team year-round. There are 2 regulations that are also involved:

1. The No-Contact Period means that during those 2 periods of time you will **NOT** be permitted to coach. 28 days following your last game AND August 1-24 remain as No-Contact periods. No coaching – period. (General Sport Regulation 11)
2. The regulations that limit any non-school team to only 5 players that played for the same school hockey team. This does not allow for students from the same school to rotate in and out of a team. Once a team has reached the limit of 5 players from a single school team, no other players from that school may be added. Do note that graduating seniors and rising freshmen do not count toward the 5. Lastly, this 50% limitation is not in effect from June 1 to July 31. (General Sport Regulation 7.3)

OVERTIME RULES

If a contest is tied after regulation play, the following shall apply: There shall be a maximum of five 8-minute overtimes, with any goal resulting in sudden victory for the team that scores. The first overtime shall consist of all five skaters per team, while overtimes two through five shall consist of four skaters per team. Should the contest remain tied after the fifth overtime, a shootout will take place to determine a winning team.

OFF-SEASON PROGRAMS

The following guidelines should be read carefully and adhered to in all off-season programs prior to the start of practice on Oct. 24, 2025:

- **School coaches** may lead conditioning drills with players using sticks, but a **puck may not be used**
- Players can divide up and scrimmage during open ice but there can be no adults on the ice during this time. Coaches, parents or other adults may observe but **may not provide instruction**, direct the activity, select the teams, etc.
- Players can participate on non-interscholastic teams prior to the school season providing there are **no more than five (5) players** from the same school **on that non-interscholastic team**
- Preseason instructional programs may **not be mandatory, exclusive, or evaluative** (i.e., used to make roster decisions)
- Weightlifting and conditioning are permitted **off-ice** activities
- **No drills** may be conducted **involving team play, power play, penalty kill or offensive or defensive schemes** of any kind

These OHSAA rules must be strictly adhered to in order to protect the fairness and integrity of the sport.

Please review the 2025-2026 OHSAA Constitution, Bylaws and Sports Regulations for any other questions.

Miscellaneous Information

Professionalism

Your professionalism is of the utmost importance. Your athletes and fans will follow your lead. If you are respectful of the game and the officials, your athletes and fans are more likely to do the same. If you are disrespectful of the game and the officials, it will be reflected in the words and actions of your athletes and fans. Officials aren't perfect and mistakes will be made, but it is all part of the learning process for our young student-athletes. So please take those disappointments and turn them into positive learning experiences. What you permit, you promote.

Pre-Season Preparations

As you know, pre-season meetings are **required**. As part of your pre-season preparations, you are encouraged invite a local official(s) to meet with your team during pre-season workouts. It allows the officials to meet your athletes and discuss new rules. It gives your athletes an opportunity to ask questions and have a discussion prior to game days. We would also recommend inviting an official to a pre-season meeting with your parents. Again, it provides a forum for healthy discussions and an opportunity for your parents to learn more about the game.

Scheduling Conflicts

Certainly, scheduling conflicts are going to arise. **PLEASE COORDINATE WITH YOUR ATHLETIC ADMINISTRATOR TO ENSURE THAT OFFICIALS ARE NOTIFIED IN ADVANCE OF ANY CHANGES.** When dates, times, and/or locations are changed it not only affects the officials scheduled for that game, but also other games they are scheduled to work. They will appreciate your help in this area.

Over Scheduling

Scheduling more contests than the sport's regulations permit in any sport is **NOT PERMITTED**. A few short years ago, the weather in Ohio was actually good enough for nearly every regular season game to be completed. There were teams that reportedly had overscheduled and then had to cancel contracts. This led to contract disputes which could not be settled, ultimately reaching the Executive Director's office. Financial penalties apply in cases of contract disputes even if there is no financial clause listed on the contract. Over scheduling is not permitted in any sport.

Importance of Coaches Rating System

The Rating/Voting procedures have changed in recent years; however, the coaches' vote is an important part of the officials' tournament selection process. Ratings are done at the conclusion of each game, allowing you to rate each official you have. Voting is now done at the conclusion of the season by your athletic administrator online with information being sent to him/her electronically. Your involvement is critical to ensuring that we can provide the best officials for our tournament.

Inquiries

Our OHSAA office is here to help as needed but depending on the time of the year it can be difficult to reach us. However, there are other sources of assistance. Our website (www.ohsaa.org) includes a great deal of information that covers many of the inquiries we often receive. The website provides ice hockey regulations, general sport regulations, tournament regulations, uniform regulations, etc.

Coaches' Comments to the News Media – OHSAA Media Regulation

OHSAA Bylaw 8, Section 2, reads, "Great care should be exercised in the selection of officials, well in advance of the contest and agreed upon by schools involved. When the contest begins each school waives all of its rights so far as objecting to the officials." Public criticism of officials is a direct reflection upon those who were responsible for assigning the officials to the game. Officials are trained and expected to make no derogatory comments regarding the players, coaches, or schools. Coaches are expected to follow the same procedure. Failure to follow this request will result in disciplinary action.

MEDICAL & SAFETY

The safety of our student-athletes is of the utmost concern at all times. Information regarding the following important topics can be found at www.ohsaa.org and at www.nfhs.org:

- Stress and Athletic Participation
- Recommendations for Hydration to Prevent Heat Illness
- Suggested Guidelines for Management of Head Trauma in Sports
- Communicable Disease Procedures (also found in the NFHS Rules Book)
- Disordered Eating
- Information on Nutritional Supplements
- Links to the following sites:
 - Joint Advisory Committee on Sports Medicine
 - Ohio Athletic Trainers Association
 - American Medical Society for Sports Medicine
 - Ohio Parents for Drug Free Youth
 - National Athletic Trainers Association (NATA)
 - Gatorade Sports Science Institute NewsHeat

Statement on Medical Hardware:

On the advice of the National Federation of State High School Association's (NFHS) Sports Medicine Advisory Committee, the following guidelines are provided.

Unless the specific rules code stipulates otherwise, athletes in sports of a collision/contact nature should not be permitted to wear devices such as insulin pumps, heart monitoring equipment and/or other diagnostic or therapeutic appliances while participating in interscholastic contests. In its deliberations on this issue, the Sports Medicine Advisory Committee of the NFHS could find no medical reason to authorize the wearing of these appliances during competition.

However, in the event that a physician requires a student-athlete to wear a therapeutic device during competition, such medical necessity shall be specified in writing and signed by the prescribing physician and the device shall be padded and securely attached to the player's body underneath the uniform. The medical statement shall be shown to the head contest official prior to the athlete being permitted to participate.

Concussion Management

Implementation of State Law and NFHS Playing Rules Related to Concussion and Concussed Athletes and Return to Play Protocol

It is important for all individuals involved in interscholastic athletics to recognize the potential for catastrophic injury and even death from concussions. Thus, it is extremely important that each coach, administrator, contest official and medical support personnel review their responsibilities in protecting students. Further both students and parents have responsibilities in this area

as well.

Note: It has always been the ultimate responsibility of the coaching staff, in all sports, to ensure that students are only put into practice or contests if they are physically capable of performing. However, all individuals involved in the conduct of interscholastic competition have responsibilities in this endeavor.

In January 2011, the OHSAA Board of Directors adopted a sports regulation, which incorporated the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) playing rules related to concussion recognition and management. On April 26, 2013, legislation adopted by Ohio's General Assembly on concussion and head injuries in youth sports became effective. On February 14, 2013, the OHSAA Board of Directors mandated that these regulations become effective on April 26, 2013, for the remainder of the spring sports season and thereafter. This OHSAA regulation, as amended to incorporate this recent legislation, now reads:

Any student, while practicing for or competing in an interscholastic contest, who exhibits signs, symptoms or behaviors consistent with having sustained a concussion or head injury (such as loss of consciousness, headache, dizziness, confusion or balance problems) shall be immediately removed from the practice or contest by either of the following:

1. The individual who is serving as the student's coach during that practice or competition.
2. An individual who is serving as a contest official or referee during that practice or competition.

RETURN TO PLAY PROTOCOL

If a student is removed from practice or competition due to a suspected concussion or head injury, the coach or referee who removes the student shall not permit the student, **ON THE SAME DAY THE STUDENT IS REMOVED**, to return to that practice or competition or to participate in any other practice or competition for which the coach or contest official is responsible. Thereafter, which means no earlier than the next day, the coach or contest officials shall not permit the student to return to practice or competition until both of the following conditions are satisfied:

1. The student's condition is assessed by either of the following:
 - a. A physician, who is a person authorized under Chapter 4731 of the Ohio Revised Code (OCR) to practice medicine and surgery or osteopathic medicine or surgery (M.D. or D.O.)
 - b. Any other licensed health care provider that the school district board of education or other governing authority of a chartered or non-chartered nonpublic school, authorizes to assess the student who has been removed from practice or competition.
2. The student receives **written authorization** that it is safe for the student to return to practice or competition from a physician or other licensed health care provider authorized to grant the clearance. Click here <https://ohsaa.org/Portals/0/Sports-Medicine/AuthorizationToReenter.pdf> to retrieve the OHSAA's Medical Authorization to Return To Play (RTP) form.

A school district board of education or governing authority of a chartered or non-chartered nonpublic school may authorize a licensed health care provider who is NOT a PHYSICIAN to make an assessment and grant authorization for a student to return to participation ONLY if the provider is acting in accordance with one of the following as applicable to the provider's authority to practice in Ohio:

1. In consultation with a physician.
2. Pursuant to the referral of a physician.
3. In collaboration with a physician, or
4. Under the supervision of a physician.

Note: A physician or other licensed health care provider who makes an assessment or grants clearance for a student to return to participation may be a volunteer.

COACHES REQUIREMENTS

All coaches, paid and volunteer, must possess a current Department of Education-issued Pupil Activity Program/Coaching Permit. When renewing this permit, the coach will be required to complete an online concussion education course as stipulated in the section entitled **Approved Online Concussion Education Course**. This course is valid for three years and expires at the

time the Pupil Activity Program/Coaching Permit expires.

CONTEST OFFICIALS REQUIREMENTS

New legislation signed into law by the Governor provides that no school “shall permit” an individual to referee interscholastic athletic contests unless the individual holds a Pupil Activity Program/Coaching Permit or has successfully completed within the last three years a training program in concussion recognition. Therefore, all OHSAA licensed officials shall possess either a current Department of Education-issued Pupil Activity Program/Coaching Permit or **show evidence of completing an approved online concussion education course** as stipulated in the section entitled **Approved Online Concussion Education Courses**. This course is valid for three years from the date of completion.

STUDENT AND PARENT REQUIREMENTS

All students and their parents or legal guardians shall review and sign the “Concussion Information Sheet” which has been developed by the Ohio Department of Health and which shall be distributed by OHSAA member schools to all students and their parents prior to each sports season. Students and parents shall review and sign this form each year and should keep a copy of the form. In addition, parents and students are encouraged to complete an approved concussion education course. The Concussion Information Sheet can be found here:

https://odh.ohio.gov/wps/wcm/connect/gov/d7fc1704-1c9a-47d7-9e79-5021bd18e7aa/Attachment-3-ODH-Concussion-Information-SheetFor-Interscholastic-Athletics.pdf?MOD=AJPERES&CONVERT_TO=url&CACHEID=ROOTWORKSPACE.Z18_M1HGGIK0N0JO00QO9DDDDM3000-d7fc1704-1c9a-47d7-9e79-5021bd18e7aa-mrh4OA.

NFHS SUGGESTED MEDICAL CLEARANCE RETURN TO PLAY PROTOCOL

1. No exertional activity until asymptomatic.
2. When the athlete appears clear, begin low-impact activity such as walking, stationary bike, etc.
3. Initiate aerobic activity fundamental to specific sport such as running or skating and may also begin progressive strength training activities.
4. Begin non-contact skill drills specific to sport such as dribbling, fielding, batting, etc.
5. Full contact in practice setting.
6. Game play/competition.
 - i. Athlete must remain asymptomatic to progress to the next level. (It is often suggested that an athlete not be allowed to progress more than one level per day.)
 - ii. If symptoms recur, athlete must return to previous level and should be reevaluated by an appropriate health care professional.
 - iii. Medical check should occur before contact. (Final written clearance from the medical professional shall be obtained before the athlete engages in any unrestricted or full contact activity.)

QUICK LINKS FROM THE OHIO DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

Online Concussion Management Training

<https://odh.ohio.gov/wps/portal/gov/odh/know-our-programs/child-injury-prevention/resources/onlineconcussiontraining>

Ohio's Return to Play Law: Frequently Asked Questions

<https://odh.ohio.gov/wps/portal/gov/odh/know-our-programs/child-injury-prevention/media/ohio-return-to-play-law-frequently%2Basked%2Bquestions>

Ohio's Return to Play Law: What Coaches and Referees Need to Know

<https://odh.ohio.gov/wps/portal/gov/odh/know-our-programs/child-injury-prevention/media/interscholastic-sports-return-to-play-what-coaches-and-referees-need-to-know>

Ohio's Return to Play Law: What Parent/Guardians Need to Know

<https://odh.ohio.gov/wps/portal/gov/odh/know-our-programs/child-injury-prevention/media/return-to-play--what-parentsguardians-need-to-know--interscholastic-athletics>

ADDITIONAL CONCUSSION RESOURCES

Ohio Department of Health, Violence and Injury Prevention Program

<https://odh.ohio.gov/wps/portal/gov/odh/know-our-programs/child-injury-Prevention/vipp/>

CDC Heads Up: Concussion in Youth Sports

<https://www.cdc.gov/headsup/youthsports/index.html>

Nationwide Children's Hospital – Concussion Information Toolkit

<http://www.nationwidechildrens.org/concussion-toolkit>

CDC Materials on Returning to School for Parents, School Nurses and Educators

<http://www.cdc.gov/concussion/HeadsUp/schools.html>

Ohio Legislative Service Commissioner HB 143 Bill Analysis

<http://www.lsc.state.oh.us/analyses129/12-hb143-129.pdf>

Brain Injury Association of Ohio

www.biaoh.org

Return to Play Form for Schools

Ohio High School Athletic Association
4080 Roselea Place, Columbus, Ohio 43214
PH:614-267-2502; FAX:614-267-1677
www.ohsaa.org

MEDICAL AUTHORIZATION TO RETURN TO PLAY WHEN A STUDENT HAS BEEN REMOVED DUE TO A SUSPECTED CONCUSSION

Ohio State Law as well as NFHS rules and OHSAA policy require a student who exhibits signs, symptoms or behaviors associated with concussion to be removed from a practice or contest and **not permitted to reenter practice or competition on the same day as the removal**. Thereafter, **written medical authorization from a physician (M.D. or D.O.)** or another qualified licensed medical provider, who works in consultation with, collaboration with or under the supervision of an M.D. or D.O. or who is working pursuant to the referral by an M.D. or D.O., AND is authorized by the Board of Education or other governing board, **is required to grant clearance for the student to return to participation**. This form shall serve as the authorization that the physician or licensed medical professional has examined the student and has cleared the student to return to participation. The physician or licensed medical professional must complete this form and submit to a school administrator prior to the student's resumption of participation in practice and/or a contest. **To reiterate, this student is not permitted to reenter practice or competition on the same day as the removal.**

I, _____, M.D., D.O. or _____ (other qualified licensed medical provider) have examined the following
(Print name of MD, DO or Other)
student, _____ from _____ High School/7-8th grade school
(Name of Student),
who was removed from a _____ (sport) contest at the _____ level (V, JV, 9th, 7-8th) due to exhibition of signs/symptoms/behaviors consistent with a concussion. I have examined this student and determined that the student is cleared to resume participation upon the completion of the directions provided below.

PLEASE INDICATE YOUR DIRECTIONS BELOW

☐ Return to play protocol for concussion as outlined in Zurich Consensus Statement 2012 or as attached.
☐ Return to play protocol for concussion required under direction of Licensed Athletic Trainer or other qualified Licensed medical provider as approved in above directive
☐ Return to play protocol for concussion not required, and the student may return to participation in practice and competition on this date _____
☐ Other: (explain): _____

VALID ONLY WITH ALL INFORMATION COMPLETED

Signature of Medical Professional _____
(MD, DO or other qualified Licensed Medical Provider as Approved in the Above Directive)

Date: _____

Contact Information:

(Print or Stamp) Address: _____
Phone: _____

Return to play is also subject to clarification of this document, as deemed necessary, by Licensed Athletic Trainer, other qualified Licensed medical providers authorized by Board of Education or other governing body, or school district administration. Return to play decisions are also subject to recognized principles of conditioning, skill development, mental preparedness, etc.

Parent(s)/Guardian and student are reminded that the initial signature document of awareness of signs and symptoms of concussion and need/requirement to report are still in effect. Parent(s)/Guardian and student have a responsibility to report any further signs or symptoms of a concussion or head injury to coaches, administrators and the student- athlete's doctor. Information regarding signs and symptoms are available from school district personnel or OHSAA website.

PRESENT THIS FORM TO THE SCHOOL ADMINISTRATOR

Note: The school must retain this form indefinitely as a part of the student's permanent record. Medical Providers should retain a copy for their own records.

Communicable Disease Procedures

Though most schools have a Certified Athletic Trainer present at Varsity contests and all coaches are required to maintain a valid Pupil Activity Certificate through the Ohio Department of Education that includes a Sports' First Aid component, it is important to keep up to date on the remote risk that blood borne infectious diseases can be transmitted during ice hockey practice and contests. For example, Hepatitis B can be present in blood as well as other bodily fluids. Procedures for reducing the potential transmission of these infectious diseases should include, but should not be limited to the following:

1. The bleeding must be stopped, the open wound covered and if there is an excessive amount of blood on the uniform, it must be changed before the athlete may participate.
2. Routine use of gloves or other precautions to prevent skin and mucous-membrane exposure when contact with blood and other body fluids is anticipated.
3. Immediately wash hands and other skin surfaces if contaminated (in contact) with blood or other body fluids. Wash hands immediately after removing gloves.
4. Clean all contaminated surfaces and equipment with an appropriate disinfectant before competition resumes.
5. Practice proper disposal procedures to prevent injuries caused by needles, scalpels and other sharp instruments or devices.
6. Although saliva has not been implicated in HIV transmission, to minimize the need for emergency mouth-to-mouth resuscitation, mouthpieces, resuscitation bags, or other ventilation devices should be available for use.
7. Athletic trainers/coaches with bleeding or oozing skin conditions should refrain from all direct athletic care until the condition resolves.
8. Contaminated towels should be properly disposed of/disinfected.
9. Follow acceptable guidelines in the immediate control of bleeding and when handling dressings, mouthguards and other articles containing body fluids.

You are encouraged to log on to the OHSA's website at www.ohsaa.org and refer to the Sports' Medicine dropdown menu for additional information.

Officials Specific Information

(From www.ohsaa.org and the OHSAA Handbook for Officials)

Our member schools have entrusted officials to assist them in the education and development of their youth through athletics. This requires officials to be independent, impartial, and responsible to the people they serve. In recognition of these expectations there is an established **Code of Ethics and Code of Conduct** for all officials. The purpose of the code is to establish guidelines for ethical standards of conduct for all officials.

Officiating code of ethics:

An Official must devote time, thought and study to the rules of the game and the mechanics necessary to carry out these rules so that one may render effective and credible service in a fair and unbiased manner

An Official must work with fellow officials and the state association in a spirit of harmony and cooperation in spite of differences of opinion that may arise during debate of points or rules at issue

An Official must resist every temptation and outside pressure to use one's position as an official to benefit oneself. Under all circumstances, officials must avoid promoting the special interest of any person or group of persons other than the athletes we serve

An Official must constantly uphold the honor and dignity of the avocation in all personal conduct and relations with the student-athletes, coaches, athletic directors, school administrators, colleagues, and the public, to be a worthy example to the athletes under one's jurisdiction

An Official will be prepared both physically and mentally, dress accordingly to expectations and maintain a proper appearance that is befitting the importance of the game

An Official shall avoid the use of tobacco and related products at the contest site

An Official must remember and recognize that it is important to honor contracts regardless of possible inconvenience or financial loss

Every member of the officiating profession carries a responsibility to act in a manner becoming a professional person. The conduct of any official influences the attitude of the public toward the profession in general as well as toward the official in particular.

Sports officials bear great responsibility for engendering public confidence in sports. They are critical to the health of athletic competitions. Officials ensure games are played fairly, by the rules, within the spirit of the rules and in a safe manner. Officiating takes a great deal of preparation, continuing education and commitment of time.

Pre-season preparations:

We have encouraged coaches to invite local officials to meet with their team during pre-season workouts. It allows the officials to meet the athletes and discuss new rules. It gives athletes an opportunity to ask questions and have a discussion prior to competition days. We also recommended inviting an official(s) to a pre-season meeting with team parents. Again, it provides a forum for healthy discussions and an opportunity for parents to learn more about the sport. Many of you already participate in such activities, but for those that do not, please get involved!

NOTE: Annual renewal cards are sent to the address the OHSAA has on file, failure to notify the OHSAA will result in your not receiving the renewal card.

Address changes are now to be submitted via www.myOHSAA.org . Please log-on in order to make the appropriate changes.

Website resources:

Our website includes a great deal of information specifically geared for officials. Go to www.ohsaa.org and click on "officiating" on the left side of the home page. On the officiating page you will find the following information. When you have questions, this may be a great place to start!

Topics include:

- OHSAA officiating FAQ's, clinics, hall of fame info
- OHSAA rules meetings – information on local & state meetings, how to maintain your officiating permit
- Directory of officiating information & forms – assigners, instructors, local & district secretaries, OHSAA staff
- How to become an OHSAA official – info for beginning and experienced officials, suspended and retired officials wanting to reinstate
- How to change the status of your officiating permit – information on upgrades, retired status, active military duty and address changes
- How to renew your OHSAA officiating permit – information on annual renewal procedures and fees
- Game assignments – regular season and tournament selection processes and voting results
- Officials needed posting
- Coach and player game ejections – ejection forms and procedures
- Officiating uniforms, equipment and supplies – uniform regulations, authorized dealers, pins & patches
- Officiating ethics and code of conduct

Officials Ejection Protocol

Officials shall file a written report with the school and the OHSAA office whenever a coach or player is ejected from an athletic contest. Use the "Official's Report" form explained earlier in this manual (available on the "Officiating Home" page of the OHSAA website). Additional forms can be obtained by contacting the Association office or your local association secretary. The report shall be filed with the reported school and the OHSAA within 48 hours of the ejection. Whenever an ejection occurs, the ejecting official shall speak with the offender's principal/athletic director no later than the first school day following the ejection. An official failing to follow the ejection protocol and/or failing to file the Official's Report may be penalized in accordance with Section 7 of the OHSAA Handbook for Officials.

The "Official's Report" form is also used to report good or poor sportsmanship, severe injuries, facility problems, or equipment problems. Ejections other than players or coaches and other items of which the Commissioner should be made aware must be provided.

Please use only one form per school. Each offending school will need its own copy. The reporting official will receive notification of resolution upon receipt of the reported school's reply.

It is the official's responsibility to send a copy of the form to the reported school.

Please write legibly and include the ejected person's first and last names. Make sure that the form is complete at the bottom with the date and name of the administrator that you spoke with at the school.

General Ejection Procedures

General Sports' Regulation 14.2 (passed by the OHSAA's Board of Directors in 2008) requires any coach ejected from a contest (paid OR volunteer) to complete the **Teaching and Modeling Behavior** course through the NFHS and submit payment of a \$100.00 fine within 30 days of the ejection.