

OHIO HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION 2021



SOFTBALL MANUAL

Table of Contents

A Message from the OHSAA.....	2
Important Softball Dates/Contact Information/Links.....	3
Softball Coaches Association	4
Rules Interpretation Meeting Information.....	5
Scheduling and Out-of-State Contests	6
OHSAA Regulations Points of Emphasis	7-9
More on OHSAA Regulations	10-12
Regulations on Bats.....	13
Pre-Season Parent/Player Meetings	14
Coach Certification & Education Requirements	14
Communication to Coaches	14
Coaches' Code of Ethics	15
A Message from Director of Officiating Education Jerry Fick	16
Officials Code of Ethics	17
2020 (2021) Rules Information	18-19
Additional Uniforms Information.....	19
Jewelry Regulations.....	19
End of Game Procedures	20
NFHS State Adoptions for Ohio.....	21-22
NFHS/OHSAA Rules Modifications and Recommendations (COVID-19)	23-29
The 2021 OHSAA Tournament	30
Rating and Voting for Officials	31
Ejection Procedures.....	32
Public Address Announcer – Welcome & Introductions	32
Concussion Management	34-35
Communicable Disease Procedures	36
Frequently Asked Questions	37-40
Sportsmanship	41-42

A Message from the OHSAA Sport Management Team

As we near the start of the softball season, we look forward to continuing to work with the sport and with each of you. Communication is key in the successful administration of any of our sports. We encourage you to ask questions or seek assistance from the OHSAA sport management team or your athletic administrator. We will continue to try to keep you informed of changes and current information with periodic memos emailed directly to you as well as various informative documents on our website. **Please** take the time to review the information within this manual.

Rules meetings remain **mandatory** for Varsity Head Coaches and again this year will be required **online**. This is addressed in the early pages of this Coaches Guide. We hope you'll encourage your assistant and junior high coaches to view this also. The purpose of the Rules Interpretation Meetings 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 softball 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. This guide should serve to provide all coaches with clear answers and interpretations to the many regulations governing grades 7-12 softball in Ohio.

With the support from the NFHS Softball Rules Committee, the Ohio Department of Health and the Ohio Governor's Office, there are 2021 rules modifications and rules recommendations and general requirements and general recommendations that are meant to decrease potential exposure to the COVID-19 coronavirus. Those modifications, recommendations and requirements are not an exhaustive list and there might be additional steps in each school, city and state to help prevent the spread of the virus. Even when taking all precautions, there will still be risk of transmitting illnesses. Everyone should stay vigilant about the health of members of their teams. Lastly, the situation with COVID-19 is rapidly changing. The modifications, recommendations and requirements may quickly become outdated. We will keep you updated with any changes as they occur, but please also keep up with the latest from the CDC and other health officials in your area.

We wish each of you a successful season and many thanks for the great work you do with the student-athletes at your school.

The Ohio High School Athletic Association Mission Statement

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

Important Dates and OHSAA Contact Information

Practice May Begin on February 22, 2021

Online Meeting was Activated February 10 at 9:00 a.m.

First Day of Coaching: February 22, 2021

March 27, 2021: FINAL Day for Completion of Rules Meeting before LATE Fee

Regular Season Contests May Begin: March 27, 2021

Non-Interscholastic Date: March 27, 2021

April 26, 11:59 p.m. – FINAL DAY for Completion of Rules Meeting with LATE Fee
(team cannot enter the OHSAA tournament if meeting not completed by this time)

Tournament Draw Meeting: May 2, 2021 2:00 p.m.

Sectional Tournaments: May 8 – May 15, 2021

District Tournaments: May 17 – May 22, 2021

Regional Tournaments: May 26 – May 29, 2021

State Tournament: June 3 – June 5, 2021

Softball Non-Interscholastic Date

*The OHSAA establishes a “non-interscholastic” date for each sport that is on the date that regular season competition is permitted to commence. That date for 2021 is March 27. Though softball student-athletes are not permitted to play ANY non-interscholastic softball (travel, club, etc.) DURING THE SEASON OF PLAY, any player that violates this rule on or after the established ‘non-interscholastic date’ loses his/her eligibility for the OHSAA tournament at all levels. **THIS DATE IS EARLIER THAN PREVIOUS YEARS, so please continue to remind your players of the non-interscholastic rule throughout the season.***

OHSAA Staff Contacts for 2021

Emily Gates, OHSAA Sport Management Staff

egates@ohsaa.org

- Primary daily contact to answer questions emailed from coaches and administrators

Bob Goldring, OHSAA Senior Director

bgoldring@ohsaa.org

- Oversees production of all manuals, regulations and publications

Doug Ute, OHSAA Executive Director

dute@ohsaa.org

- Oversees regional and state tournament sites and management

Jerry Fick, OHSAA Director of Officiating Development

swdoc@fuse.net

- Primary daily contact for rules interpretations

Softball Informational Links

OHSAA Softball Webpage:

<http://www.ohsaa.org/sports/softball>

NFHS Softball Webpage:

<https://www.nfhs.org/activities-sports/softball/>

OHSAA Softball Sports Regulations:

<https://ohsaaweb.blob.core.windows.net/files/Sports/Softball/2021/SoftballRegs.pdf>

OHSAA General Sports Regulations:

https://ohsaaweb.blob.core.windows.net/files/Sports/GeneralSportRegs2020_21.pdf

Softball Uniform Regulations:

<http://www.ohsaa.org/SchoolResources/uniform/softball>

NFHS/USA Softball Approved Bat List:

<https://www.teamusa.org/USA-Softball/Certified-Equipment>

Coaches Education:

www.nfhslearn.com

Ohio HS Fastpitch Softball Coaches Association:

<http://www.ohsfscs.org>

OHSFSCA

Ohio High School Fast Pitch Coaches Association

OHSFSCA Officers

President

Sarah Looker, Pickerington North HS

Sarah.Looker@plsd.us

President Elect

Cassie Gaye, North Olmsted HS

gaye.cassandra@gmail.com

Past President

Dale Dawson, Cleveland St. Joseph Academy

Treasurer

Bill Amero

bill.amero@gmail.com

Assistant Treasurer

Nick Joseph

Secretary

Melissa Lahna, Bellaire School District

easterndistrictsoftball@gmail.com

PR Director/Web Coordinator

Madeline Amero

m.amero@boardmanschools.org

Clinic Director

Jim Piazza, Keystone HS

jbdpiazza@yahoo.com

Clinic Assistant

Sharon Monas

State Poll Director

Brenda Radabaugh, Oregon Clay HS

bradabaugh@oregoncs.org

OHSAA Representative

Barbara Sleet, Fort Frye HS

barbara.sleet@fortfrye.org

***** Mark Your Calendars *****

2022 OHSFSCA Coaches Clinic

January 14-15

Hilton Easton, Columbus

The Ohio High School Fast Pitch Softball Coaches Association

The purpose of the Ohio High School Fastpitch Softball Coaches Association is to unify all softball coaches in the state of Ohio, to promote high school softball, to create an official line of communication with the Ohio High School Athletic Association (OHSAA), to foster higher standards of professionalism and ethics, and to maintain a strong contact with national, state, and local coaches organizations of softball.

What the OHSFSCA does for You

1. Conducts the Annual OHSFSCA Convention & Clinic
2. Conducts annual board meetings
3. Maintains the OHSFSCA Website at www.ohsfsc.org
4. Conducts the State Coaches' Poll
5. Selects All-State Teams in each Division
6. Sponsors and Conducts the Annual All-State Awards Recognition Banquet
7. Sponsors the Delores Bilhardt Award
8. Maintains and selects the Hall of Fame and Induction Banquet
9. Provides Scholarships to graduating sons/daughters of member coaches
10. Selects an annual Academic All-Ohio team
11. Honors coaches with Service and Victory Awards
12. Honors Past Presidents and Selects and Honors Hall of Fame members
13. Serves as liaison to the OHSAA Board of Directors

OHSFSCA District Meeting Information Found at:

<http://www.ohsfsc.org/districts.html>

OHSFSCA Representatives

Central District President

Jen Goff, Bishop Ready HS

East District President

James Townsend, Malvern

Northeast District President

Tom Shiban, Westlake HS

Northwest District President

Matt Hoiles, Elmwood HS

Southeast District President

Odie Estep, Symmes Valley HS

Southwest District President

Blaine Wallace, Western Brown HS

Rules Interpretation Meetings

Please remember that completion of the Rules Interpretation Meeting of the meeting is **MANDATORY** for coaches and umpires.

The ONLINE Rules Meeting link was activated February 10 at 9:00 a.m. The last day for completion of the online version for coaches and umpires is **March 27 at 11:59 p.m.** After that time, a \$50.00 late fee is charged for access to the meeting. The FINAL deadline WITH PENALTY, will be Monday, April 26 at 11:59 p.m.

For Coaches: Rules meetings are ONLY available through the coach's individual myOHSAA account.

IF you do not already have your account, you will obtain your myOHSAA account in this way:

1. Your Athletic Director adds the staff member's name by using the "Add New Staff" button.
2. Your AD follows the prompts to add the:
 - a. New Staff Member's FIRST NAME
 - b. New Staff Member's LAST NAME
 - c. New Staff Member's EMAIL ADDRESS
 - d. Check box(es) to assign the appropriate roles/positions
 - e. Click the "INVITE NEW STAFF" button
3. The invited staff member (you) receives an email from info@myohsaa.org. Please check junk and spam folders for this email if you don't see it in your inbox.
4. Once the new staff member (you) opens the email,
 - a. Click the link inside and follow the prompts to either 'login' or 'create an account'

Once you login to your myOHSAA profile, click on the "Rules Meetings" tab and then Find a State Rules Meeting. Please do not use a Chromebook to watch the meeting as there have been issues with the meeting freezing. When you access the Rules Meeting, **MAKE SURE the email address tied to your myOHSAA account matches the email used in the school's staff management. If not, the school will not receive credit for the meeting.** All screens of the presentation must be viewed for attendance credit to be provided. PLEASE note that attendance credit is NOW INSTANTANEOUS, and you can check your myOHSAA account for attendance. Go to the Rules Meetings Tab and "My State Meeting Attendance" on the left-hand side. There will be a date and time stamp indicating completion of the meeting. If you do not see your attendance in your account after completing the meeting, please email me so I can make the proper adjustment.

Scheduling & Out-of-State Contests

The first date for REGULAR SEASON CONTESTS is **Saturday, March 27, 2021**. This could impact a team that was planning on a 'southern trip' to a non-bordering state.

- You may not play any regular season contest prior to Saturday, March 27, 2021.
- If you scrimmage another opponent, it must **ALSO** be part of the other team's allotted scrimmages. In other words, it cannot be a 'scrimmage' for YOUR team and a regular season contest for the OTHER team.
- Teams may not travel out of state **JUST to practice**.
- Teams may travel out of state to compete in scrimmages, previews and games in states OR provinces in Canada that border Ohio regardless of distance. The states are Indiana, Kentucky, Michigan, Pennsylvania and West Virginia and the province is Ontario in Canada.
- Teams may travel to a non-bordering state ONE TIME ONLY per season only.
- Teams may also practice while participating out of state so long as the practices do not result in loss of school time.
- In all contests competed outside Ohio, each school shall follow all Ohio eligibility standards, general and sport-specific regulations as well as the playing rules (NFHS or national governing body) as adopted by the host state association.
- **The penalty for schools that participate in a regular season contest before March 27 or travel to a non-bordering state more than one time per season shall be INELIGIBILITY FOR THE OHSAA TOURNAMENT**

NFHS Sanctioning of Contests

Whether a contest/event is in Ohio or outside of Ohio, schools must secure a sanction through the National Federation of State High School Associations for competition by a member school in any of the following contests:

- a.) Any interstate tournament in which four or more schools participate ANY event which includes either an Ohio or an out-of-state school that is co-sponsored by or titled in the name of an organization outside the school community;
- b.) Events involving non-bordering states where five (5) or more states are involved;
- c.) Events involving non-bordering states if more than eight (8) schools are involved;
- c.) Events involving two (2) or more schools that includes a team from a foreign country, with the exception of Canada and Mexico. NOTE: In b.) and c.) above, no sanction is required if the contest(s) only involve Ohio schools and/or schools which border Ohio.

Schools desiring to participate in an event covered under the aforementioned scenarios must visit

<https://www.nfhs.org/Sanctioning/> in order to obtain the sanction.

End of Season Date

Relative to regular season 'in-state' contests: Teams may schedule games right up until the board adopted "Season End" date of **June 12, 2021**. This means that, even though you are in the OHSAA tournament or eliminated from the OHSAA tournament, you may still schedule (usually 'make up') a contest until this date. Keep in mind that playing this late also eliminates any opportunity for a player to play non-interscholastic softball until the school season is complete.

A Note on Scrimmages

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, whether in state or out of state, it must be counted as a 'scrimmage' for both teams, so that means the opponent must have a scrimmage remaining on its schedule as well.

Scheduling Conflicts

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.

Over Scheduling

Scheduling more contests than the sport's regulations permit in any sport is **NOT PERMITTED**. Overscheduling will lead to contract disputes and, if not be settled, could result in financial penalties being levied by the OHSAA even if there is no financial clause listed on the contract.

OHSAA Regulations Points of Emphasis

Bylaw 4-7-1 – Transfer

In the referendum vote which took place in May 2018, the member high school principals voted to change the transfer consequence, for those students who change high schools and do not meet a transfer exception, from the first half of the season to the second half of the season plus the OHSAA tournament. Once the first 50% of the maximum allowable regular season contests have been competed, the student becomes INELIGIBLE for the remainder of the regular season plus the OHSAA tournament. **The current regulation in softball** is that the student becomes ineligible at **Game 15**.

We urge your athletic administrator to direct any questions they might have about this transition and the application of the transfer consequence to a member of the compliance team: Kristin Ronai (kronai@ohsaa.org) or Ronald Sayers (rsayers@ohsaa.org).

Inclement Weather

The NFHS has added a new note to the inclement weather policy which reads:

***NOTE:** At night, under certain atmospheric conditions, lightning flashes may be seen from distant storms. In these cases, it may be safe to continue an event. If no thunder can be heard and the flashes are low on the horizon, the storm may not pose a threat. Independently verified lightning detection information would help eliminate any uncertainty.

The thirty-minute rule remains in place. Any time you hear thunder, there is an automatic 30-minute wait. When lightning is seen, play would be suspended as normal and the 30-minute count would begin. The note simply allows coaches and umpires to determine whether to continue play if there is no thunder and you can determine that the lightning is not a threat. This is only applicable at night.

• **Thirty-minute rule:** Competition or practice shall be suspended once lightning has been recognized or thunder is heard. It is required to wait at least 30 minutes after the last flash of lightning is witnessed or thunder is heard prior to resuming practice or competition. Given the average rates of thunderstorm travel, the storm should move 10-12 miles away from the area. This significantly reduces the risk of local lightning flashes.

Any subsequent lightning or thunder after the beginning of the 30-minute count shall reset the clock, and another count shall begin.

Sports Regulation 7.5 – Coaching Out of Season (10-Day Rule)

If you recall, OHSAA **removed** the regulation last spring that limited coaches in team sports from coaching students from their school teams, and removal of that restriction was extended through August 31, 2020 (coaches in team sports were previously limited to coaching for 10 days between June 1 and July 31). To ensure students can obtain coaching from their school coach during these uncertain times of the pandemic, the OHSAA has **REMOVED** the 10-day limitation between June 1 and July 31 in 2021. That means coaches in softball **MAY** coach students from their school teams without restriction between June 1 and July 31, 2021. This regulation is explained further on page 65 of the 2020-21 *OHSAA Handbook* under General Sports Regulation 7.5.1. Note that participation under General Sports Regulation 7.5.1 cannot be mandatory and that General Sports Regulation 8.2.1 should be reviewed since it pertains to out-of-season instruction, which is different than the regulations pertaining to General Sports Regulation 7.5.1. There are three regulations that have not changed:

1. The No-Contact Period. It still exists and that STILL means that during that period of time you will NOT be permitted to coach.
2. The regulations that limit any non-school team to only 4 players that played for the same school team still exists. That has not changed and there is no plan to change it. And for the record, whether a school coach or a non-school coach is coaching a non-school team, the “50% rule” applies and there are no plans to change it.

— *Continued on the Next Page*

OHSAA Regulations Points of Emphasis

3. There can be no rotating players from your school teams from one non-school game to another. In other words, your permission to coach a team that consists of 4 players from your school does NOT give you the permission to use 4 different players in each game you play in. This is true whether you are coaching the non-school team or not, rotating players to 'get around' the 4-player limit is not permitted. You simply cannot have 5 or more on a non-school roster and only play 4 in each game.

Sports Regulations 8.2, Individual Skill Instruction (Non-School Coaches During the Season)

MANY questions arise regarding players receiving individual instruction during the season from individuals not associated with the school's softball program. These include (but not limited to) instruction from private hitting instructors and pitching instructors. The OHSAA's Sports Regulation 8.2 addresses the specifics of Instruction DURING the season by 'outside individuals.' Sports Regulation 8.2.3 reads:

"Non-school coaches or instructors may provide individual skill/coaching instruction to a member of a school team at any time provided the individual skill/coaching instruction does not violate any Board of Education (or similar governing body), school administrators' or school coaches' policies or the Ohio Revised Code."

The language of this regulation provides the latitude to a school's administration OR coach that may NOT want to allow players to obtain "outside instruction" during the season. Within this regulation, you are given the authority to do so within your own athletic/team policies.

Sports Regulations 8.3.1, Individual Skill Instruction

This regulation permits school coaches the opportunity to provide individual skill instruction outside the season of play AND outside the June 1 – July 31 period referenced above in Sports Regulation 7.5. It is written with the intent of providing SKILL INSTRUCTION to individuals and is not intended – nor written – to permit any addition to the "team days" permitted during June and July. Additionally, it is intended to provide an affordable alternative to 'private' instructors. This regulation clearly limits the number of individuals (regardless of age or gender) present while the instruction is taking place to **SIX** (**Note:** this number was increased following OHSAA Board of Directors action on October 1, 2020). ALL coaches, whether paid OR volunteer, must follow the guidelines established within this regulation. It is built upon the assumption that ANY individual that works with individuals in a school has a Pupil Activity Coaching Permit and falls under these guidelines. Special attention should be given to the Ohio Ethics Law as it relates to school individuals using school facilities outside the normal work environment. (See your school administration on the Ohio Ethics Law and how it relates to you as a coach).

To reiterate, this regulation was not designed to provide more team coaching opportunities out of season and in no way designed to be a team workout regulation outside the season. It is available for our school coaches to give hitting instruction, fielding instruction or pitching instruction – INDIVIDUAL SKILL instruction – outside the season.

— Continued on the Next Page

OHSAA Regulations Points of Emphasis

Double First Base Required in Ohio

This is identified as a “State Adoption” that permits states to CHOOSE whether they wish to use a double first base. This is identified in a note in Rule 1-2-1 of the NFHS Softball Rules. The idea behind ‘state adoptions’ is to permit each state association (the OHSAA in this case) to adopt a ‘yes or no’ for ALL teams in the state. Given that, and the safety involved, it is required of all schools in Ohio. Previously, this was left up to the schools – meaning one school in Ohio could choose to use it yet other schools not.

Supervision

Softball coaches are permitted to supervise weight lifting during the No-Contact periods. This is not a permission to hold conditioning, open fields, or coach out of season, merely a permission to supervise weight lifting activities in a weight room.

32 Dates, 27 Total Contests

Individual players are permitted to participate in games on 32 DATES. Previously, players were permitted to ONLY appear in 27 total contests. By changing this and permitting 32 “dates,” it affords the opportunity to keep JV programs alive by offering a little flexibility to move players ‘up and down.’ Additionally, since a doubleheader (or the one-day tripleheader in softball) is on a single DATE, this affords a player to play in one game of a doubleheader for the JV team and maybe get an inning or two in with the varsity in the second game of a doubleheader and only count that as one DATE of the 32 permitted. Keep in mind that no player may ever play in more than two contests in a single day with the one-day exception permitted in softball for a tripleheader. The challenge for coaches – KEEPING TRACK of this. The penalty for a player that exceeds the contest limitations is INELIGIBILITY. And, if an ineligible player participates in a contest, it results in FORFEITURE of the contest. As in other sports when exceeding contest limitations comes into question, coaches MUST provide written documentation (scorebook pages for example) to prove compliance. So, it does provide flexibility, but it adds an administrative dimension for coaches.

More on OHSAA Regulations

Regulations governing the sport of softball are divided into two basic categories: **GENERAL Sports' Regulations** and **SOFTBALL Regulations (sport specific)**. These are reviewed annually and approved by the OHSAA's Board of Directors.

General Sports Regulations

These regulations can be accessed and address regulations that affect all sports governed by the OHSAA. They include, but are not limited to, such things as Instructional Programs outside the window of the season, Physical Fitness (Conditioning) Programs, Open Gym Regulations, No Contact Periods and Player and Coach Ejection Policies. These are important and *most* areas of concern can be addressed simply by reading through these Regulations or contacting your Athletic Administrator. They are easily accessed via the OHSAA website by navigating to the "Softball" webpage and clicking on "General Sports' Regulations" on the left hand side or directly going to: <https://www.ohsaa.org/Portals/0/Sports/GeneralSportsRegulations.pdf>. You are **strongly encouraged** to take the time to read these to familiarize yourself and your staff with the various rules approved by our Board of Directors that govern all sports. Though there are far too many to list in this manual, a *few* of the more common ones that affect softball squads are:

Open Gyms/Facilities/Fields at Member Schools (changes highlighted in gray screen)

Open Gyms (or facilities) are clearly defined in **Rule 10 of the OHSAA Sports' Regulations**. An abbreviated version states:

- A school may open its athletic facilities for **unstructured free play** provided the activity is supervised by a school employee who may remove participants or spectators for disciplinary reasons.
- The school may designate the sport or sports that will be played during the free play period, but **may not limit participation** to a select group of students from within the school. Participation **may** be limited to students enrolled in that specific school.
- There can be no designation of who will play on which team or who will play whom. Only those students participating may be involved in the selection of teams.
- Regulation timing of games is not permitted.
- Written scorekeeping is not permitted.
- No individual invitations, written or oral, are permitted to any student who is not enrolled and in that school district.
- A coach, paid or volunteer, violates the provision of these regulations when the coach requires, suggests or in any way implies that a student's chance to be selected for an interscholastic squad is contingent upon participation at an open gymnasium or facilities program.
- Mandatory attendance at open gyms/facilities is **not permitted**.
- Transporting athletes to a school or non-school open gym/facility is a violation for any member of the coaching staff, paid or volunteer.
- Coaches **may participate** in the unstructured free play in the open gym/facilities.
- Schools MAY restrict individuals from observing the open gym/facility activity.

Softball Specific Regulations

Each spring, regulations for the upcoming school year are approved by the Board of Directors for every sport the OHSAA sponsors. These address areas such as (but not limited to) Non-Interscholastic competition, number of contests (game, scrimmage or preview) that are permitted, season start and end dates, out of state travel, etc. All coaches should familiarize themselves with these regulations. Coaches should familiarize their entire staff with the importance of these Regulations as they directly affect the eligibility of student-athletes. Upon approval, they are submitted for printing to the annual OHSAA Handbook (which every administrator has been provided). These are also available on the OHSAA website. A few of the Sports' Regulation **highlights** are listed, but you are encouraged to read the entire regulations.

— Continued on the Next Page

More on OHSAA Regulations

Game Limitations (Grades 9-12)

Maximum number of games permitted: **27 on a maximum of 27 playing dates**

(Do not confuse this with PLAYER limitations)

Scrimmages/Previews: Maximum of **4** scrimmages OR **3** scrimmages and 1 Preview

Scrimmage Note: Scrimmages MAY be held at any time during the season but MUST count as the same for both competing teams. In other words, Team A cannot count it as a 'scrimmage' while Team B counts the competition as a 'game.' This is especially important to be aware of when competing in out of state scrimmages/contests.

Game Limitations (Grades 7-8)

Maximum number of games permitted: **17 and 1 Post-Season tournament not to exceed 4 games**

Scrimmages: Maximum of **2** scrimmages

Scrimmage Note: Scrimmages MAY be held at any time during the season but MUST count as the same for both competing teams. In other words, Team A cannot count it as a 'scrimmage' while Team B counts the competition as a 'game.'"

Non-Interscholastic Competition

A member of an interscholastic softball squad (grades 7-12) sponsored by the Board of Education **cannot participate in a non-interscholastic softball 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 softball anytime during the school team's season. This is explained in OHSAA General Sport Regulation 7.2.1. A student-athlete becomes a member of the school team when she participates in a scrimmage, preview OR regular season or tournament game as a substitute or as a starter.

A member of an interscholastic softball team sponsored by the Board of Education **MAY** participate in non-interscholastic softball (such as 'club' or 'travel') PRIOR TO and AFTER the school season under the following conditions:

- Teams formed for FALL softball leagues may have no more than **FOUR** players from any one school on the same team. Included in this number are freshmen, JV and varsity players from the previous year's roster.
- Teams that form for SPRING and SUMMER softball may only have **FOUR** players from any one school on the same team **until the Friday prior to Memorial Day**. Between the Friday prior to Memorial Day and July 31, any number of players from any one school may be on the same non-school team. Please note in this regulation that although teams may play in excess of the 50% limitation between the Friday prior to Memorial Day and July 31, 2021, school coaches may not coach them until June 1, 2021.
- Graduating seniors are exempt from this particular four-player limitation.

Comments to News Media

Each year, unpleasant situations arise as a result of comments made to the news media by coaches. The OHSAA Constitution and Bylaws reads in part "Great care shall be exercised in the selection of officials, well in advance of the contest and agreed upon by schools involved" and goes on to say "Public criticism of officials is a direct reflection upon those who were responsible for assigning the officials to the game. Officials/Umpires are trained and expected to make no derogatory comments directly to the media or through the use of social media regarding other officials, the players, coaches or schools. Coaches and participants are expected to follow the same procedure and make no derogatory public comments directly to the media or through the use of social media regarding not only the officials, but also the players, coaches or schools. Failure to follow this request will result in penalties as outlined in Bylaw 11.

Videotaping Regulations

Regular Season Contests

- It is permissible for a school or a school representative to videotape or photograph regular season contests (including previews and scrimmages) of the team or individuals from one's own school. Such videotapes or photographs may be used for "in-game" coaching purposes only if it is specified in the national playing rules of the sport or in the specific sport regulations.

— *Continued on the Next Page*

More on OHSAA Regulations

- It is permissible for a school or a school representative to videotape or photograph regular season contests (including previews, scrimmages and/or practices) of teams or individuals **not** from one's own school **only with the written consent of all schools participating in the contest(s)**.

OHSAA Tournament Contests

Videotaping and Photographing by Participating Schools

- Videotaping OHSAA tournament contests of the team or individuals from one's own school participating in the contest is permitted provided prior arrangements are made with the tournament manager, and it is done at the expense of the school involved. A maximum of two individuals per school are permitted to videotape.
- All photographs and videos taken by school representatives of the team or individuals from one's own school at OHSAA tournament contests are for school use ONLY. The use of photographs or videos taken by school representatives for commercial purposes is strictly prohibited. Such videotapes or photographs may be used for "in-game" coaching purposes only if it is specified in the national playing rules of the sport or in the specific sport regulations.
- It is permissible for a school or a school representative to videotape or photograph tournament contests (including practices) of teams or individuals **not** from one's own school **only with the written consent of all schools participating in the contest(s)**.
- It is permissible for a school or school representative to *utilize* video and photographs of tournament contests (including practices) of teams or individuals **not** from one's own school **only with the written consent of all schools participating in the contest(s)**.

See the 2020-21 OHSAA Handbook (pages 83-84) for additional regulations on use of unmanned aerial vehicles (drones) and regulations on videotaping and photographing by spectators

Doubleheaders/Tripleheaders

There are NO RESTRICTIONS on playing doubleheaders on school nights. Doubleheaders are permitted now to be played on ANY night of the week and are simply dependent on local school district/athletic department policy.

ONE TIME PER YEAR, softball teams are permitted to play three contests in one day provided it is on a non-school day.

Umpires

Umpires used for Varsity contests must be OHSAA Class 1 umpires (a Class 2 umpire may be used in emergency situations with approval from the OHSAA Officiating Department). Class 1 or Class 2 must be used for JV contests. Class 1, 2, 3 or an umpire in training must be used for freshman contests. If only one OHSAA umpire is present, the contest may be played if opposing coaches mutually agree.

Protests

Protests arising from the decisions of interpretations of the rules by officials during the game will **not be considered**. All decisions and interpretations of the rules are **FINAL**. This means that correctable errors must be corrected during the game and within the time established by playing rules. No video evidence is permitted to determine errors or correct them before, during or after the contest.

Indoor Softball

There is no limit on the number of players from the same school team competing together in indoor softball from November 1-February 1, as long as the team is not being coached by a school coach, paid or volunteer. School coaches are still limited to coaching four from their own team.

Regulations on Bats

Below is detailed information on bat regulations, definitions and penalties. All NFHS rules governing bats are found in Section 5 of Rule 1 (page 12-13 of the NFHS Rules Book).

Bats – Definitions and Penalties – Rules 1-5-1, 2-4, & 7-4-2

- An illegal bat does not meet the specifications of Rule 1-5. Altered bats and non-approved bats are both types of illegal bats. There are other types of illegal bats – a bat without a sufficient safety grip or a bat that has pine tar on the barrel are just two examples. A batter who enters the box with an illegal bat or is discovered having used an illegal bat with the infraction being detected by the umpire or the defense prior to the next pitch is out. The ball is immediately dead, and all runners return to the base occupied at the time of the pitch. If a runner was retired on the play, the out stands and the runner does not return.
- An altered bat was once legal but has been structurally changed by rolling, shaving, warming, or some other intentional act. When an altered bat is used, all penalties for an illegal bat apply PLUS the batter and head coach are also ejected from the game.
- A non-approved bat is one that does not meet USA Softball (formerly ASA) specifications OR has been placed on USA Softball list of non-approved bats with the USA Softball certification mark. When a non-approved bat is used all penalties for an illegal bat apply PLUS the batter and head coach are also ejected from the game (same penalty as for an altered bat).
- Beginning in 2020, a new definition has been added for a damaged bat. This item is defined as a bat that was once legal but is now broken, cracked, dented, rattles, or has sharp edges that could cut the ball. Note that a bat that has developed instability in the handle or taper (often called a wobble) is considered a damaged bat. Damaged bats are not considered illegal and when discovered are immediately removed from the game without penalty.
- It is important to know what Certification Marks are required for NFHS softball competition. Rule 1-5-1d and Figure 1-6 have now been updated to include USA Softball's newest certification mark shown which are also provided below – there are now three marks which are the only approved marks for bats used in high school play:



NFHS rules require that bats meet the USA Softball bat performance standards. Thus, bats that only bear approval marks from other softball organizations without one of the above certification marks do not meet the requirements for use in high school play. Note that USA Softball also publishes a listing of Non-Approved Bats with Certification Marks. This was created to provide a listing of bats that had once been approved for use but are no longer deemed approved for use. This listing can be found on the USA Softball website at this link:

<https://usa.asasoftball.com/e/BB1P2000.asp>.

Pre-Season Parent/Player Meetings

Pre-season meetings with parents are **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, sporting behavior issues and expectations, travel plans for away contests, etc. Also, a course titled "The Role of the Parent in Sports" has recently been offered by the NFHS and is FREE to parents. Encourage them to watch this very informative video course. This and other appropriate courses are available through the www.nfhslearn.com website. Once we return to "normal" after COVID, schools are encouraged to invite local umpires to meet with their team and parents at these meetings. This allows the umpires to meet the athletes and discuss new rules and gives athletes an opportunity to ask questions and have a discussion prior to game days. Again, it provides a forum for healthy discussions and an opportunity for parents to learn more about the game.

Coach Certification & Education Requirements

All Coaches of Middle School/Jr. High and High School teams **MUST** have a Pupil Activity Permit issued by the Ohio Department of Education to coach in the state of Ohio. The application process can begin here: <http://education.ohio.gov/Topics/Teaching/Licensure/Audiences/Coaching-Permits>. The application requires: 1.) completion of a background check; 2.) completion of the NFHS' "Fundamentals of Coaching" course; 3.) completion of CPR training through a course approved by your school or district; 4.) completion of First Aid for Coaches requirements; 4.) completion of Concussion training, and 5.) completion Sudden Cardiac Arrest training.

Communication to Coaches

The OHSAA will continue to send information to member school superintendents, principals and athletic administrators electronically with timely updates and reminders on a variety of topics through the *OHSAA Administrator Update*. These bulletins are usually sent weekly and are also posted on the OHSAA website. Additional communication with softball-specific information will be emailed periodically to head coaches and athletic administrators as needed and will also be posted on the OHSAA website.

Coaches Code of Ethics



From the NFHS Softball Rules Book

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 promote the entire interscholastic program of the school and direct the 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 students 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.

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.



A Message from Jerry Fick, OHSAA Director of Officiating Development for Softball

The Officials Program

OHSAA Officiating Department

Beau Rugg, Senior Director of Officiating
Angie Lawler, Director
Tyler Brooks, Director
Ben Ferree, Assistant Director

Directors of Officiating Development

Lori Powers-Basinger: Gymnastics
Gary Wilkins: Ice Hockey
Don Muenz: Soccer
Jerry Fick: Softball
R.J. Van Almen: Swimming & Diving
Diane Plas: Volleyball
Toby Dunlap: Wrestling
Bruce Mauer: Football
Denny Morris: Basketball
Dan McGinnis: Baseball
Dale Gabor: Track & Field
Travis Burwell: Field Hockey
Lee Spitzer: Boys Lacrosse
Lissa Fickert: Girls Lacrosse



Welcome to another softball season in Ohio. This preseason Softball Manual has been compiled for coaches **and** officials to serve as a reference from pre-season to post-season.

Several years ago, the OHSAA's Board of Directors adopted a transition from the long standing "District Officials' Committee (DOC)" to individuals directly responsible for officiating oversight in each specific sport. On the left column of this page, you will read the various directors hired to serve in this important role.

Education and Recruitment are the basic cornerstones for the Directors of Officiating Development and as we make strides to improve these areas, the entire sport will stand to reap the benefits. I continue to work hand in hand with the OHSAA's Officiating Department and Sport Management Staff to bring forward the best officiating practices available. The utilization of each local association is critical in the communication necessary to meet our goals for providing quality, continuing education while also emphasizing the recruitment of new, young officials into the umpire ranks. As you know, we began communicating with local associates in "Weekly Bulletins," and the help of local secretaries to disseminate this information is of critical importance.

We know that everyone was disappointed that we lost the 2020 season due to the COVID-19 coronavirus pandemic. A lot of people have worked tirelessly to develop protocols to help limit the spread of the virus in 2021, so it is imperative that all of us – umpires, administrators, coaches, participants and spectators – work together so that we can ultimately benefit our greatest resource: the student-athletes in Ohio.

I continue to look forward to the limitless opportunities this position provides, and thanks for the opportunity to serve the umpires in Ohio!

Yours in High School Sports,

Jerry Fick

Director of Officiating Development – Softball

Officials Code of Ethics

(From 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.

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.

2020 Rules Information*

***NOTE:** Due to the cancellation of spring sports at high schools across the country, the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) will not be publishing new rules (both print and digital) for 2021 in the sport of softball.

Because very few schools were able to compete in softball prior to the March shutdown of schools due to the COVID-19 pandemic, competition in softball in 2021 will be conducted under 2020 NFHS rules for softball. The 2020 NFHS publications will be used for the 2021 season, including the Softball Rules Book and the Softball Case Book. In addition, the 2020 NFHS Simplified and Illustrated Rules and 2020 Rules by Topic book for softball produced in concert with Referee Enterprises Inc. (REI) will be used in 2021 as well.

The following national playing rule updates were to go into effect in 2020 and will now begin with the 2021 season.

Rules Changes

1-5-1e, 2-4, 2-4-3, 7-4-2 PENALTY NOTE: Damaged bats are defined.

Rationale: Clarifies that a damaged bat is removed from the game without penalty.

6-1-1: Prior to starting the delivery (pitch), the pitcher shall take a position with the pivot foot in contact with the pitcher's plate.

Rationale: Clarifies that the pivot foot must be in contact with the pitcher's plate, rather than on the top surface of the pitcher's plate.

9-1-1 EXCEPTION c: A run is not scored if the runner advances to home plate during action in which the third out is made by the preceding runner who is declared out on an appeal play.

Rationale: Clarifies that on any appeal play, a run is not scored if the third out is made by a preceding runner.

Major Editorial Changes

1-1-7: Clarifies that game management or a state administrator may establish a dead-ball media area within the confines of the field, but that area will remain a dead ball area throughout the game.

1-5-1d: Updates to add the new USA Softball All Games certification mark.

8-4-3d PENALTY: Clarifies that the batter-runner, not the batter is awarded bases when a fielder intentionally contacts the ball with detached equipment.

Editorial Changes

1-2-3, 2-22-4, 2-57-3, 3-4-1c, 7-1-2 PENALTY 2

Points of Emphasis

1. Bat certification marks and USA Softball's list of Non-Approved Bats with Certification Marks
2. Damaged bat vs. illegal bat penalties
3. Contact with the pitcher's plate
4. Inspection of equipment

The NFHS Softball Rules Committee and the NFHS Board of Directors believe there are areas of the game of interscholastic softball that need to be addressed and given special attention. These areas of concern are often cyclical and some areas need more attention than others, which is why they might appear in the rules book for consecutive editions. These concerns are identified as "Points of Emphasis." For the 2020 (now 2021) high school softball season, attention is being called to the topics below. When a topic is included in the Point of Emphasis, these topics are important enough to reinforce throughout the academic year because they are not being given the proper attention.

Bat Certification Marks and USA Softball Non-Approved Bats with Certification Marks:

See page 13 of this Manual for more information.

— *Continued on the Next Page*

2020 Rules Information*

Points of Emphasis, Continued

Inspection of Equipment:

It is the head coach's responsibility to make certain all players are legally and properly equipped, which includes checking bats, helmets and catcher's gear prior to every contest. Although umpires may inspect equipment, they are no longer required to do so. What is important to remember is equipment wears during use. Bats can become damaged, or a player may purchase a new bat that does not meet the NFHS requirements. Both catchers' helmets as well as batter's helmets have screws that hold face guards in place. These screws loosen and will eventually fall out rendering the equipment illegal for use and potentially causing a safety risk to the player if not detected. It is critical that coaches remain vigilant in inspecting equipment before every contest to ensure no damage has occurred or new noncompliant equipment has been purchased since their last inspection.

Damaged Bat vs Illegal Bat Penalty:

Clarification was needed to delineate the difference between a player using a bat that is damaged versus a bat that is illegal for high school play. By definition, a bat that is damaged (Rule 2-4-3c) is removed from the game without penalty (7-4-2 NOTE). An illegal bat that is non-approved or altered will continue to result in the head coach and the batter being ejected.

Contact with the Pitcher's Plate:

Due to the varying levels of play and levels of skill in pitching development, prior to the start of the pitch, NFHS rules allow the pitcher to choose foot placement. The pitcher may choose to take a position with the pivot foot in contact with the plate and the non-pivot foot behind the pitcher's plate or both feet in contact with the pitcher's plate. Prior to the start of delivery, both feet must be on the ground within or partially within the 24-inch length of the pitcher's plate. This allows for personal preference and developing pitchers to work through levels of progression.

Additional Uniform Information

We often receive calls relative to uniform requirements. Uniform regulations are developed as part of the National playing rules by the National Federation (NFHS). Specifically, these are addressed in Section 2 of Rule 3 (pages 31 and 32). With new styles being developed year after year by college and professional teams, we encourage you to review these uniform regulations when ordering new uniforms. The uniform regulations are posted on the OHSAA website.

Rule 3-2-1 - State Associations may, on an individual basis, permit a player to participate while wearing a different style uniform for religious reasons, inclement weather, etc.

Beginning with the 2018 season, Ohio permits a different style uniform to be worn for inclement weather such as a sweatshirt or jacket. No request needs to be submitted.

Ohio's Stance: ADOPTED in Ohio – APPROVED in 2017-18

Jewelry Regulations

Many questions arise early in the season regarding jewelry regulations. The mere fact jewelry is permitted under some other rule codes gives many the belief it is permitted in high schools also. **Jewelry is NOT permitted** and addressed in two different NFHS Rules. Only religious or medical medals may be worn, and a religious medal **MUST BE TAPED** and **worn UNDER** the uniform. A medical alert must be taped also and may be visible.

Daith Ear Piercings are permitted provided they are accompanied by a physician's note. Please submit this to Emily Gates (egates@ohsaa.org) for approval and a waiver.

End of Game (Suspended/Complete Game) Procedures

*** PLEASE PRINT OR COPY THIS PAGE AND KEEP IT WITH YOU DURING GAMES ***

*** PROVIDE IT TO JV and FRESHMEN COACHES ***

Considerable confusion exists year after year in the area of complete or suspended games. Recently, it has surfaced that schools and/or leagues have chosen NOT to follow these adopted procedures. It is important that **ALL SCHOOLS FOLLOW** this regulation. Penalties for non-compliance range from fines to suspension from the OHSAA Tournament.

MOST softball games end when the team behind in the score completes its turn at bat in the seventh inning (or an extra inning) or when the home team scores the go-ahead run in the seventh inning (or an extra inning). The following exceptions to this are:

- Coaches and the plate umpire may mutually agree to end a game early. This could be in situations where there is a tremendous lead after 2 or 3 innings and both coaches simply agree to end the game. **The score stands and the game is over.**
- Anytime a team has a 10-run lead and the team behind in the score has completed its turn at bat in the fifth inning OR the home team takes a 10-run lead in the fifth inning, **the game ends.**

Though a game also ends when it is forfeited under NFHS Rule 4-3, no OHSAA contest can be forfeited until after it has started.

- A game that is not started is considered a “NO CONTEST,” regardless of reason.

Suspended Game Procedures

No game is ever ‘called’ and ‘started over’ at a later date. When a regular season game is interrupted or suspended for ANY reason and the game cannot be resumed on that date, the game will be **SUSPENDED** if the team behind in the score has not completed its turn at bat in the fifth inning.

When a game HAS gone beyond the fifth inning, it is a complete game, subject to these TWO EXCEPTIONS:

- 1.) The game is tied. The OHSAA does not permit any softball game to end in a tie. All games are considered as “won,” “lost” or “suspended.” Therefore, **a tied game is a “Suspended” game.**
- 2.) The game has gone five innings and the visiting team has scored one or more runs to tie the score or take the lead, and the home team has not re-taken the lead and the game is called while an inning is in program but before it is completed.

When a suspended game is completed, it shall be continued from the point of suspension with batting orders and lineups the same. Substitutions may be made. Any player that may have been suspended from the original contest is suspended and not able to play in the resumed game. Suspended games that are never completed simply go down as a “No Contest.”

Examples of Completed/Suspended Games

In a regular season game, the home team is ahead 2-0 after FIVE innings and:

- The game is called prior to the start of the sixth inning due to darkness: **Ruling: COMPLETE GAME**
- The first batter in the top of the sixth inning is at bat with any count on the batter and the game cannot be completed: **Ruling: COMPLETE GAME**
- The first batter in the top of the sixth inning reaches base and the game is called. **Ruling: COMPLETE GAME**
- The visiting team scores one run in the top of the sixth inning and the game is called at any time during the sixth inning. **Ruling: COMPLETE GAME**
- The visiting team scores two runs in the top of the sixth inning and the sixth inning is not complete, nor does the home team re-take the lead in the bottom half of the sixth inning. **Ruling: SUSPENDED GAME**
- The visiting team scores two or three runs in the top of the sixth inning and the sixth inning is not completed nor does the home team retake the lead in the bottom of the sixth inning. **Ruling: SUSPENDED GAME**
- The visiting team scores two or three runs in the top of the sixth inning and the home team retakes the lead in the bottom of the sixth. The game is called later in the bottom half of the sixth inning or after six complete innings. **Ruling: COMPLETE GAME**

NFHS Permitted State Adoptions for Ohio

The OHSAA has maintained a stance of being “100% compliant” with NFHS Softball Rules. The NFHS Rules carefully permit each state the right to adopt certain rules that are specific to that state and are known as “**State Adoptions.**” These “State Adoptions” do not cause any fundamental change in the game from state to state. These permitted fastpitch “State Adoptions” and Ohio’s decision on the adoption are as follows:

Rule 1-2-1 Note – A Double First Base is permitted

Effective the 2017 season, this is now adopted and required in Ohio.

Ohio’s Stance: ADOPTED in Ohio

Rule 3-2-1 – State Associations may, on an individual basis, permit a player to participate while wearing a different style uniform for religious reasons, inclement weather, etc.

Approved for the beginning of the 2018 season, Ohio permits a different style uniform to be worn for inclement weather such as a sweatshirt or jacket. No request needs to be submitted.

Ohio permits a different style uniform to be worn for religious reasons with a written request stating the player’s name, grade and school.

Ohio’s Stance: ADOPTED in Ohio

Rule 3-2-4 – By state association adoption, for special occasions, a commemorative or memorial patch, not to exceed 4 square inches, may be worn on the jersey.

Ohio does permit this with a written request.

Ohio’s Stance: ADOPTED in Ohio

Rule 4-2-3 – Permits states an option on how they agree to end a shortened game

Game ending procedures may be determined.

By mutual agreement of the opposing coaches and the umpire-in-chief a game may be shortened, or the game terminated at any time.

A game shall end any time after 5 innings or after 1/2 innings when a team is 10 or more runs behind and has completed its term at bat.

If a game is called prior to the completion of a full inning after the fifth inning, the game becomes a suspended game in the following situation:

The visiting team has scored one or more runs to tie the score or to take the lead, and the home team has not retaken the lead.

Ohio’s Stance: ADOPTED in Ohio for REGULAR SEASON ONLY

If a suspended game is to be completed it will be continued from the point of suspension with the lineup and batting order of each team the same as the lineup and batting order at the moment of suspension, subject to the rules of the game (substitution may be made). Any suspended game, if it is to be resumed, will be picked up from the point of interruption. **Once a game has started, it will not start over.** Any suspended game, regardless of where it was interrupted, will be re-started from the point where play was suspended (see the previous page for additional examples).

Ohio’s Stance: ADOPTED in Ohio

Rule 4-2-3 – NOTE 2

By state association adoption, the number of innings for one or both games in a doubleheader may be scheduled for five innings. Current state association game-ending procedures still apply.

Ohio’s Stance: ADOPTED in Ohio

— Continued on the Next Page

NFHS Permitted State Adoptions for Ohio

Rule 4-3-1 – Permits a state to determine how it counts a suspended game

By state association adoption, a regulation called game, where a winner cannot be determined, shall be counted as 1/2 game won and 1/2 game lost for each team.

Ohio's Stance: NOT **ADOPTED in Ohio**

Relative to Tournament Play in Ohio: Any suspended OHSAA tournament game shall be continued from the point of suspension at a later time. All OHSAA tournament games shall be played to completion per the playing rules (the 10-run rule would be applicable).

Ohio's Stance: **ADOPTED in Ohio**

Rule 4-3-1a – Permits each state to how to determine a forfeit

State associations are authorized to specify the time frame and/or circumstances before a forfeit shall be declared for a late arrival by one of its teams.

The following has been ADOPTED in Ohio:

No interscholastic contest is subject to forfeiture unless the contest has been started. Any scheduled regular season contest that is not started due to unforeseen circumstances such as, failure of a team to arrive, strikes and school closings are "No Contest." Contests not played are not included in won-lost statistics.

NFHS/OHSAA Rules Modifications & Recommendations (COVID-19)

With the support from the NFHS Softball Rules Committee, the Ohio Department of Health and the Ohio High School Athletic Association, the rules modifications and rules recommendations and general requirements and general recommendations outlined in this document are meant to decrease potential exposure to respiratory droplets by encouraging social distancing, limiting participation in administrative tasks to essential personnel and allowing for appropriate protective equipment.

Note: This is not an exhaustive list and there might be additional steps in each school, city and state to help prevent the spread of the COVID-19 coronavirus. Even when taking all precautions, there will still be risk of transmitting illnesses. Everyone should stay vigilant about the health of members of their teams. Lastly, the situation with COVID-19 is rapidly changing. These considerations may quickly become outdated. Please keep up with the latest from the CDC and other health officials in your area. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

Visit the Ohio Health Director's Second Amended Sports Order <https://bit.ly/2RWa1jh> and these two documents

- Health Department's Responsible RestartOhio guidance document for sports:

<https://coronavirus.ohio.gov/static/responsible/Youth-Collegiate-Amateur-Club-Pro-Sports.pdf>

- Health Department's Responsible RestartOhio guidance document for sports venues:

<https://coronavirus.ohio.gov/static/responsible/Sports-Venues.pdf>

*for further requirements and recommendations that apply to all sports, including softball, **and includes mandatory requirements for youth, collegiate, amateur, club and professional sports**. Please know that some of the requirements and recommendations in this sport-specific document duplicate state guidance.*

In addition, this addendum to the Sports Order addresses modifications to spectator capacity limits:

<http://bit.ly/ODHOrderAddendum>

Softball rules modifications and general requirements must be adhered to and followed. Softball rules recommendations and general recommendations are optional and not required but are permitted and strongly encouraged.

Note: Some softball facilities are privately-owned. Be sure non-school facility administrators know and follow these policies and procedures prior to practices or contests.

2021 Softball Rules Modifications

Softballs

- Any ball that comes into contact with bodily fluids must be replaced or disinfected.
- All balls must meet NFHS and OHSAA requirements and must be new or in good condition.

Player Equipment

- Personal items such as towels, facial coverings and water bottles shall not be shared.
- If equipment such as helmets and bats must be shared, proper sanitization must be performed between users.
- Player/team equipment shall be sanitized before and after each practice or game.

Face Shields

- Per guidance from the NFHS Sports Medicine Advisory Committee, plastic shields covering the entire face (unless integrated into the face mask and attached to a helmet) shall **not** be allowed during contests.
- Use of these items during practices increases the risk of unintended injury to the person wearing the shield and their teammates.

— **Continued on the Next Page**

NFHS/OHSAA Rules Modifications & Recommendations (COVID-19)

Pregame Conference

- Attendees are limited to the head coach from each team plus the umpires.
- Coaches shall stay outside the width of the batter's box at home plate, maintaining six feet of distance between each person.
- Everyone attending this meeting must wear a face covering.

Substitutions

- Verbal exchanges shall occur six feet from the coach or substitute to the plate umpire and from the plate umpire to the opposing team's coach.

Bench and Field Conduct

- The number of individuals in the dugout is dependent on the size of dugout.
- Players and coaches must maintain six feet of social distance.
- NFHS rules allow for dugouts/designated warm up areas to be extended to provide for social distancing. If needed, these areas shall be clearly marked and located beyond the end of the dugout furthest from home plate.
- Players are not permitted to leave the dugout area to congratulate players scoring or after home runs.
- Players and all team personnel shall follow the "no touch" rule – refraining from high fives, handshakes and other physical contact with teammates, opposing players, coaches, umpires and fans. A "tip of the cap" can be used following the game in lieu of the handshake line.

Charged Conferences

- Coaches holding defensive conferences must stay on the home plate side of the pitcher's circle and the player(s) must be on the opposite side of the pitcher's circle maintaining the six feet distance.
- Only one coach is permitted during the conference.
- When a coach visits the pitcher, all other players shall stay outside the pitching circle.
- Team huddles without physical distancing are prohibited.

Exchange of Lineup Cards

- Lineups shall be handed to the umpire, and the umpire will verbally approve or ask any questions about the lineup.

Infractions by the Pitcher

- The pitchers shall not lick their fingers and wipe them off.
- Pitchers shall not put their hands to their mouths or blow into their hands prior to pitching the ball. This will be a "no pitch." Any umpire shall make this call. The ball is dead immediately. The ball will be replaced and sanitized and pitchers must sanitize their hands before play continues.
- A pitcher using a resin bag shall take that item to the dugout with him/her at the end of each half inning.

2021 Softball Requirements

General Requirements

- **People (players, coaches, officials, spectators, etc.) feeling sick or that have been exposed to someone sick, should not attend or participate in competitions or practices.** For CDC COVID-19 symptom guidance, go to: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html>.
- All participants and spectators shall practice at least six feet social distancing and wear face coverings at all times except when eating/drinking or on the field of play.
- Host facilities shall communicate with spectators "know before you go" before each event.
- Anyone attending a practice or game – players, coaches, officials, trainers, cheerleaders, volunteers, staff, spectators, etc. – must conduct a symptom assessment before each practice or contest, and anyone experiencing symptoms must stay home (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html>).

— *Continued on the Next Page*

NFHS/OHSAA Rules Modifications & Recommendations (COVID-19)

- Individuals with COVID-19 symptoms should isolate themselves per CDC's guidance and contact their healthcare provider (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/isolation.html>).
- Individuals with confirmed COVID-19 or who have symptoms should follow CDC's guidance for when they can be around others again (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/end-home-isolation.html>).
- Individuals exposed to a person with COVID-19 must complete their quarantine before attending a practice or game.
- Any player, spectator, coach, or umpire who is under a modified quarantine due to an in-school exposure must not attend practice or competition until the completion of quarantine.
- Consistent with state guidance, schools/teams regarding "Confirmed or Suspected COVID-19 Cases:"
 - Immediately isolate, and seek medical care for, any individual who becomes ill or develops symptoms.
 - Contact the local health department about suspected COVID-19 cases or exposure.
 - The affected person should seek COVID-19 testing as soon as possible. Teams, schools, and clubs should work with parents to ensure they have access to testing through their healthcare providers or direct them to testing options.
 - Coaches/administrators must work with the local health department to identify individuals who were potentially exposed to help facilitate contact tracing. This includes, but is not limited to, athletes, coaches, officials, volunteers, parents and other support personnel.
 - A team or school must notify all athletes and parents/guardians associated with the affected team regarding a positive test. Athletes and families must be reminded of proper daily health screening protocols.
 - If the affected individual participated in competitive play, the team is responsible for notifying any opponents played between the date of the positive test and two days prior to the onset of symptoms. If the teams or schools in different counties, the health departments in each county should be notified to help facilitate effective contact tracing.
 - An athlete who tests positive for COVID-19, whether symptomatic or asymptomatic, must not return to sport activities until the athlete has completed a medical exam and documentation is provided that clears the individual to return to play. The documented medical exam must specifically include an assessment of the cardiac/heart risk of high-intensity exercise due to the potential of myocarditis occurring in COVID-19 patients. More information on this issue can be found at <https://www.acc.org/latest-in-cardiology/articles/2020/07/13/13/37/returning-to-play-after-coronavirus-infection>.
 - Follow protocol for cleaning and disinfecting if a COVID-19 case is identified at the venue.
 - Players, coaches, officials or other individuals who had close contact (within six feet of an infected individual for at least 15 minutes), or who had direct physical contact with the person (e.g., who were coughed on or sneezed on by the infected person), must self-quarantine.
 - CDC continues to endorse quarantine for 14 days and recognizes that any quarantine shorter than 14 days balances [the] reduced burden [of quarantine] against a small possibility of spreading the virus [beyond 10 days]. CDC recognizes that reducing the length of quarantine may make it easier for people to quarantine by reducing the time they cannot play sports. Close contacts who remain asymptomatic may consider the following to consider stopping quarantine:
 - After day 10 without testing.
 - After day 7 after receiving a negative test result (test must occur on day 5 or later).
 - After stopping quarantine, close contacts should:
 - Watch for symptoms until day 14 after exposure.
 - If you have symptoms, immediately self-isolate and contact your local public health authority or healthcare provider.
 - Youth who are not required to quarantine due to exposure occurring in a classroom setting under school-based exposure guidance are permitted to participate in outdoor sports activities as long as they remain symptom-free and follow applicable sports guidance.

— Continued on the Next Page

NFHS/OHSAA Rules Modifications & Recommendations (COVID-19)

- If the identity of all persons in close contact with an infected individual cannot be readily determined or if the coaches, players or their parents/guardians or administration of the team do not effectively cooperate with the local health department contact tracing process, then the local health department may require the entire team, including coaches, to self-quarantine for 14 days following exposure. Individuals may return to play afterward if they have not had any COVID-19 symptoms.
- ***Your local health department shall determine if modifications to quarantines are appropriate.***
- Individuals must maintain a minimum of six feet of social distancing, including athletes when not on the field of play.
- Facial coverings are required under the Sports Order. At minimum facial coverings should be cloth/fabric and cover an individual's nose, mouth, and chin.
- CDC does not discourage gaiters, but recommends that gaiters should have two layers, or fold it to make two layers <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/about-face-coverings.html>.

Requirements for Coaches

- For out-of-state travel, follow the COVID-19 guidance of the state and local public health jurisdiction to which the team is traveling. Also be aware of Ohio's Travel Advisories (<https://coronavirus.ohio.gov/wps/portal/gov/covid-19/families-and-individuals/COVID-19-Travel-Advisory/COVID-19-Travel-Advisory>).
- Coaches and other personnel must wear face masks at all times, including when arriving and departing the facility and during active play.
 - Under the state's Sports Order, at minimum facial coverings (masks) should be cloth/fabric and cover an individual's nose, mouth, and chin.
- Sanitize equipment as often as time permits.
- Coaches who wish to discuss a rule or a ruling on the field must maintain at least six feet of physical distance from the umpire.
- Base coaches must stay six feet from all runners at all times.
- Do not shake hands or fist bump other officials, players or coaches.

Requirements for Players

- Conduct daily symptom assessments before each practice or contest.
- No congregating before or after practices or games is permitted.
- Do not share equipment, towels, facial coverings, water bottles, other drinks or food. If equipment must be shared, proper sanitation must be performed between users.
- All players must sanitize their hands should their gloves be removed before and after warm-ups and at period breaks.
- All those on the bench shall observe social distancing of six feet.
- Facial coverings are required under the Sports Order for student-athletes not participating in the contest, and/or players in the dugout/bench area when not playing defense. At minimum, facial coverings should be cloth/fabric and cover an individual's nose, mouth, and chin.
- Do not shake hands or fist bump other officials, players or coaches.

Requirements for Facility Hosts

- Inform the local health district when events are scheduled and establish a plan to handle those persons who fail a symptom assessment or temperature check or exhibit signs and symptoms of COVID-19.
- Limit bench and/or sideline personnel to participants, coaches, medical staff and game-day staff.
- If possible, provide designated space (locker room, classroom, etc.) for officials' pregame and post-game activities. If the designated space cannot accommodate six-foot social distancing of all officials, then a separate space should be provided where officials can observe six-foot social distancing and be removed from spectator/team interaction.

— ***Continued on the Next Page***

NFHS/OHSAA Rules Modifications & Recommendations (COVID-19)

- Clearly review prior to the contest mandates, best practices and school/host facility policies with visiting team administrators and/or coaches and officials as they relate to, but are not limited to, parking; entrances and exits; medical care; spectators; ticketing; locker rooms/showers; athletic training rooms and restrooms; water; towels; equipment, and shelters in the event there is inclement weather.
- Seating must be in groups of no more than four people who know one another, although up to six members of the same household may be seated together.
- Each seating group must be separated from the next group by at least six feet in each direction.
- In fixed seating, seating groups must be assigned in staggered rows to prevent contact between groups.
- General admission (e.g., lawns, standing room, in-fields) is allowable only to the extent six feet of distance between groups of patrons can be clearly marked and strictly maintained.
- High touch areas (railings, restrooms, athletic training rooms, locker rooms, etc.) must be cleaned and disinfected frequently.
- Hand sanitizer must be readily available throughout the venue.
- Designate a Compliance Officer who is responsible for compliance with the Ohio Department of Health Director's Sports Order.
- Follow Responsible RestartOhio Guidance for Restaurants for concession stands:
<https://coronavirus.ohio.gov/static/responsible/Restaurants-and-Bars.pdf>

Requirements for Spectators

- Conduct daily symptom assessments before each contest.
- No congregating before or after practices or games is permitted.
- Six-foot social distancing must be maintained between individuals/family groups.
- Facial coverings are required unless exceptions can be met as listed in Ohio Department of Health Director's Sports Order. At minimum, facial coverings should be cloth/fabric and cover an individual's nose, mouth, and chin.

Requirements for Umpires

- Facial coverings must be worn at all times with the exception of active officiating or warm up. At minimum, facial coverings should be cloth/fabric and cover an individual's nose, mouth, and chin.
- Take your temperature prior to attending your competition. If temperature is above 100.4 or you do not feel well, notify your contracted school immediately.
- No congregating before or after games is permitted.
- Six-foot social distancing required during pre- and post-game conferences and during stoppage of play during contests.
- The plate umpire calling balls and strikes shall allow adequate distance behind the catcher while still being able to perform his or her duty.
- Do not shake hands or fist bump other officials, players or coaches.

Softball Umpire Mechanics Modifications

- The plate umpire calling balls and strikes shall allow adequate distance behind the catcher while still being able to perform his or her duty.
- The catcher and batter shall be at a six-foot distance when the umpire is dusting off home plate.
- Fielders shall be at a six-foot distance when the umpire is dusting off the pitcher's plate or any other base.
- Base umpires shall maintain six feet from any player when in any starting or initial position.

2021 Softball Requirements Rules Recommendations

Recommendations for Coaches

- Communicate your guidelines in a clear manner to students and parents prior to events with reminders as appropriate.

— *Continued on the Next Page*

NFHS/OHSAA Rules Modifications & Recommendations (COVID-19)

- Consider conducting practices in “pods” of same students, always training and rotating together in practice to ensure more limited exposure if someone develops an infection.
- Keep accurate records of those athletes and staff who attend each practice and contests in case contact tracing is needed.
- At a minimum, before and after every practice or contest, sanitize equipment as often as time permits with an EPA approved sanitizer for emerging pathogens.
- Consider limiting contests against only teams in your local area or, if out-of-state, against teams located in counties that are contiguous to Ohio.
- Should not share clipboards, whiteboards, dry erase boards or any other equipment used for coaching purposes.
- It is recommended that each team have an equipment handler to remove bats and helmets from the field of play. This person may wear gloves and/or sanitize equipment after use.
- Consider limiting day-of roster to 22 dressed players.

Recommendations for Players

- Athletes should tell coaches immediately when they are not feeling well.
- Arrive at the facility dressed in partial or full uniform and plan to leave the facility in partial or full uniform.
- Consider making each student responsible for their own supplies and ensure distancing of equipment to avoid cross contamination.
- Students should wear their own appropriate workout clothing (do not share clothing), and individual clothing/towels should be washed and cleaned after every workout.
- If equipment must be shared, proper sanitation must be administered between users.
- Cloth face coverings/masks are permitted during active play if an individual prefers to wear one. Cloth face coverings/masks are not required while engaged in active play. State and local requirements for face coverings are to be followed when not actively engaged in play.
 - If worn on the field, face coverings may be of any number of colors, but not distracting.
 - Gaiters are permitted as face coverings. If a gaiter is worn, it should have two layers, or fold it to make two layers, per CDC’s recommendation.
- Bring your own water bottle.
- It is recommended that sunflower seeds, gum and similar products be prohibited in the confines of the field.

Recommendations for Umpires

- Arrive at the facility dressed in partial or full uniform and plan to leave the facility in partial or full uniform.
- Bring personal hand sanitizer. Wash hands frequently.
- Do not share equipment.
- Follow social distancing guidelines. Consider six feet minimum distance when talking to others (players, coaches, other officials).
- Cloth face coverings/masks/shields are permitted, if an individual prefers to wear one.
- Gloves are permissible.

Recommendations for Parents

(A family’s role in maintaining safety guidelines for themselves and others):

- Make sure your child and immediate household members are free from illness before participating in practice and competition (if there is doubt stay home).
- Provide personal items for your child and clearly label them.
- Disinfect your student’s personal equipment after each game or practice.
- Educate yourself on the risks and benefits of athletic participation in the time of COVID and ensure you and your athlete are aware of the guidance surrounding athletic events.

— *Continued on the Next Page*

NFHS/OHSAA Rules Modifications & Recommendations (COVID-19)

- Use contact-less payments where possible.
- Limit press box/official scorers area to essential personnel only and demonstrate social distancing as much as possible.
- Appoint an individual(s) who is responsible for assisting the host facility manager(s) in logging all incidents and action plans when mandates have not been followed and/or incidents occur; logging recommendations for improving the host facilities' game-day strategies, and creating reports on said items that were logged.

Exchange of Lineups

- Beside the requirements listed previously regarding lineup cards for the umpire, it is recommended that lineups be exchanged team-to-team and teams-to-scorekeeper being shared via photo or text.

OHSAA Postseason Note

Potential options may be considered regarding all levels of OHSAA Tournament games/format depending upon the status of COVID-19.

The 2021 OHSAA Tournament

The OHSAA sponsors the softball tournament in four divisions. The 2021 softball tournament regulations are posted on the OHSAA website. Each of the OHSAA's District Athletic Boards are empowered to organize and conduct softball tournaments at the sectional and district levels. They are conducted according to the tournament regulations adopted by the Board of Directors each winter. Due to the COVID-19 coronavirus pandemic and the fact that there was no softball season held in 2020, schools will be assigned to the 2021 tournament based strictly on their 2018 EMIS numbers, and the Competitive Balance data that normally is used from the previous season was not factored in. As a result, here are the divisional alignments for the 2021 Tournament.

<u>Division</u>	<u>Girls Enrolled</u>	<u>Total Schools</u>
I	339 or more	188
II	192 - 338	188
III	112 - 191	187
IV	111 or less	189

Representation from the district to the regional tournaments in softball for 2021 will be: **Division I:** Combined Central and one Southeast school (Logan) 4; Combined Northeast and one East school (New Philadelphia) 6; Northwest 2, and Southwest 4; **Division II:** Central 2; East 2*; Northeast 5; Northwest 3; Southeast 1, and Southwest 3; **Division III:** Central 2; East 1; Northeast 4; Northwest 3; Southeast 3, and Southwest 3; **Division IV:** Central 2; East 1; Northeast 3; Northwest 5; Southeast 2, and Southwest 3. * Denotes tied with Southeast District but gained the second qualifier based on a coin flip.

For specific school assignments by division, visit: <https://www.ohsaa.org/Sports-Tournaments/Softball/Softball-2021>

Tournament Draw Dates

The draw date for tournaments is Sunday, May 2 at 2:00 p.m.

State Tournament Dates, Site & Order of Games

June 3, 4 and 5 — Firestone Stadium, Akron

Division I, IV, III, II

Athletic Districts

Representation to the regional tournament (the number of Regional 'qualifiers') from district winners is determined by a formula based upon the number of teams participating in the previous year's tournament. With a few exceptions, most schools in the counties listed below are assigned sites from the respective District Athletic Boards. You are encouraged to visit their websites for additional information.

Central District: www.ohsaa.org/cdab

East District: www.ohsaa.org/edab

Northeast District: www.ohsaa.org/nedab

Northwest District: www.ohsaa.org/nwdab

Southeast District: www.ohsaa.org/sedab

Southwest District: www.ohsaa.org/swdab



Rating and Voting for Officials

OHSAA tournament officials are selected by a process approved by the Board of Directors. That 'process' is an important one for both coaches AND officials and is the basis for officials assignments to OHSAA Tournaments. To make this process work, it requires coaches and administrators to do their part. Officials take this process seriously and it is in everyone's best interest to have the correct input for the assignment of officials. A few important things to note:

1. Coaches **RATE** officials. There are three other categories that **VOTE** for officials. Those three categories are: athletic administrators, each local officials' association and a "stakeholders group" that includes OHSAA staff, certified assigners and approved observers.
2. Ratings are best done at the conclusion of a game but need to be done by the end of the season. Officials are **NOT** able to see how a coach rated them.
3. "Pools" of officials are created as a result of ratings and votes. These pools are arranged into a "state pool," "regional pool" and "sectional/district pool." Each pool has more officials than are needed at that level. Pools are created by mathematically by calculating the total of each of the four categories to equal a score
4. District Athletic Boards utilize the various pools to assign officials to **sectional and district tournaments** in their respective athletic districts. The process of assignment from approved pools is at the discretion of each District Athletic Board.
Note: The total score is not made available to those making assignments; merely the 'pool' itself is made available to them.
5. The OHSAA Office utilizes the pools to assign officials to the **regional and state tournaments**.

Rating Instructions

1. Login to your myOHSAA account.
2. Click the "Schools" icon near the upper right corner to access your school's myOHSAA account.
3. Click the blue button labeled with the name of your high school.
4. If you are a coach, click the orange "Rate Game Officials" button near the upper left corner.
If you are an athletic administrator, click the "Rate Game Officials" link in the left navigation.
5. Once you are on the Rating Game Officials page, click the star (green or red) to access the rating form for that sport. Stars that are gray are sports that are currently out of season.
6. Follow the instructions at the top of each sport specific rating page and click on the green "Add Officials to Rate" button.
 - Type the first few letters of the official's last name or their permit number and wait for the list of matching officials to appear below the input box.
 - Select the official from the list to add them to the input box.
 - Once the official is added to the box, select the appropriate rating and click the "Save" button.
7. The official's name and rating will be added and displayed on the "Rate Officials" page.
8. Continue adding officials using the "Add Official to Rate" button.
9. Officials can be added to the rating form at different times throughout the season until the deadline. A maximum of 50 officials can be added to the rating form.
10. Ratings can also be changed using the "Edit" link after the official's rating entry on the rating form until the deadline.

Ejections Procedures

- **ALL ejections REQUIRE a report to be completed and filed with the OHSAA.**
- **Ejection Reports are completed and submitted electronically. This automatically sends the report to the school.**
- In the event of a coach or player ejection, he/she is ejected from ALL GAMES for the remainder of the day of the ejection PLUS all contests at all levels until two regular season/tournament contests are played at the same level of the ejection or disqualification. 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" online course within 30 days of the ejection. The responsibility for compliance rests with the school's administration.
- Ejected **COACHES** are required to LEAVE the premises immediately. If no assistant coach is present, the game is over and the score stands 'as is'.
- Ejected **PLAYERS** are to remain in the BENCH AREA under the supervision of the coach.
- **NEW IN 2001** – Any player or coach ejected for fighting is ejected from ALL GAMES for the remainder of the day of the ejection and will be ineligible for all contests at all levels until **FOUR** regular season/tournament contests are played at the same level as the ejection or disqualification.
- **ALL EJECTIONS ARE FINAL AND NOT PERMITTED TO BE APPEALED** per the OHSAA's Board of Directors.
- Though every ejection has its own story, do not call the OHSAA office asking for an appeal of the ejection. It will not and cannot be overturned. The circumstances surrounding the ejection can and should be expressed on the "School Response Form" that will be received by the school after the ejection occurs.

For Public Address Announcer – Welcome & Introductions

Good afternoon. On behalf of _____ High School, welcome to today's game between _____ High School and _____ High School.

Ladies and gentlemen, we live in a great country with freedoms like no other. To honor America and in respect for ALL who have served this great country to defend our freedoms, you are invited to stand and join in singing our National Anthem. ***Play National Anthem.***

Fans, the teams participating in this contest thank you for your tremendous support throughout the season. You are reminded to act with dignity, speak with courtesy and play with pride! On behalf of the Ohio High School Athletic Association and everyone participating in this contest, please remember to Respect the Game!

Visiting Team:

Home Team:

	#	Name	Position			#	Name	Position
1.					1.			
2.					2.			
3.					3.			
4.					4.			
5.					5.			
6.					6.			
7.					7.			
8.					8.			
9.					9.			
P					P			

The Head Coach for _____ (Visiting team) is _____ and he is assisted by _____.

The Head Coach for _____ (Home team) is _____ and the assistant coaches are: _____.

Immediately following each half inning:

In that inning for _____:

_____ Runs

_____ Hits:

_____ Errors:

and _____ LOB

Concussion Management

Implementation of State Law and NFHS Playing Rules Related to 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 <http://ohsaa.org/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.

— *Continued on the Next Page*

Concussion Management

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.

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 OHSA 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 OHSA 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.

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.
 - 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.)
 - If symptoms recur, athlete must return to previous level and should be reevaluated by an appropriate health care professional.
 - 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.)

OHSA Concussion Authorization to Reenter Form

<https://www.ohsaa.org/Portals/0/Sports-Medicine/AuthorizationToReenter.pdf>

OHSA Concussion Report Form

<https://ohsaaweb.blob.core.windows.net/files/Sports-Medicine/OHSAConcussionReport.pdf>

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 basketball 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.

For more information, go to the OHSAA's website at: <https://www.ohsaa.org/communicablediseases>

Frequently Asked Questions

The OHSA receives a *large* volume of calls and emails at the conclusion of the season in regard to what coaches can and cannot do. Though this is not inclusive, a few guidelines are listed below to assist you AND your middle school and sub-varsity coaches. Please remove, copy and share this information with others on your staff. Please go through your Athletic Administrator for questions related to the OHSA's Bylaws and Sports' Regulations. All are contained within the OHSA's Handbook and are also available online at www.ohsaa.org.

When is Softball's "No-Contact Period"?

Answer: The "No-Contact Period" for softball begins August 1 and ends August 31.

Can Middle School Players practice or play with High School players?

Answer: No. OHSA Bylaws prohibit middle school players from practicing *or* competing with High School players during the season of play in all sports.

Can Middle School Players participate in Open Gyms/Fields at the High School level?

Answer: Yes. OHSA Bylaws and Sports Regulations do not prevent anyone from participating in Open Gyms/Fields/Facilities.

Can Middle School Players participate with High School Players during "Summer Ball" or "Fall Ball?"

Answer: Yes. Any competition that occurs outside the defined season of play is not considered OHSA "sponsored" and therefore, not under any regulations that limit 7-8 from playing with 9-12 individuals.

Can Middle School Players Be Included with High School Players during Individual Instruction permitted by Sports Regulation 8.2?

Answer: Yes. Since it is OUTSIDE the season, there is no restriction on age groups relative to this regulation. ANY individual receiving instruction must be counted as one of the FOUR (4) permitted in *all combined facilities where the instruction is taking place*.

What can we as coaches do during an Open Gym/Field?

Answer: Coaches may supervise only. Open Gyms/Fields cannot be made mandatory. Open Gyms/Fields must be 'free and unstructured play, so NO coaching may take place during them. They are defined in their entirety in General Sports Regulation 10 on page 67. Under no circumstances may Open Gyms/Fields be a disguise for an early start to practice. Language in the "Individual Instruction" regulation (General Sports Regulation 8.3) delineates the permissions in that regulation from those in Open Gyms.

What can coaches do during Conditioning Programs?

Answer: First, conditioning programs (defined as "Physical Fitness Programs in the OHSA Handbook) cannot be made mandatory. General Sports Regulation 9 on page 67 of the OHSA Handbook defines Physical Fitness/Conditioning Programs. Obviously, conditioning programs cannot be used as a 'disguise' for conducting out of season practices. Language in the "Individual Instruction" regulation (General Sports Regulation 8.3) delineates the permissions in that regulation from those in Conditioning Programs.

Who can volunteer to be a member of the coaching staff?

Answer: To work with student-athletes in any school program, an individual must receive his/her Pupil Activity Permit through the Ohio Department of Education and be approved by the school's Board of Education. Once achieving these requirements, a volunteer falls under all Bylaws and Sports Regulations of the OHSA which limits them to the same out of season coaching limitations as paid staff members.

— Continued on the Next Page

Frequently Asked Questions

Can a volunteer coach players from the school team during the “Off-season” “travel softball” (or other non-school Softball)?

Answer: YES, all school coaches can coach non-school softball outside the season with players from your school teams on it. The following regulations still apply:

1. The No-Contact Period. It still exists and that STILL means that during that period of time you will NOT be permitted to coach.
2. The regulations that limit any non-school team to only 4 players that played for the same school team still exists. That has not changed and there is no plan TO change it. And for the record, whether a school coach or a non-school coach is coaching a non-school team, the “50% rule” applies and there are no plans to change it.
3. There can be no rotating players from your school teams from one non-school game to another. In other words, your permission to coach a team that consists of 4 players from your school does NOT give you the permission to use 4 different players in each and every game you play in. This is true whether you are coaching the non-school team or not, rotating players to ‘get around’ the 4 player limit is not permitted. You simply cannot have 5 or more on a non-school roster and only play 4 in each game.

If my son or daughter plays on a Non-Interscholastic team (such as “club” or “travel”) can I coach them if I am a school coach?

Answer: YES, same as above.

Can a player on my team participate in non-interscholastic team(s) at the same time as the season?

Answer: No. Sports’ Regulation 7.2 prohibits student-athletes from participating in programs such as “Travel, Club” and like programs during the season of play. Coaches should go to great lengths to explain this to players on their teams and remind them periodically throughout the season.

When CAN a player on my team participate in Non-Interscholastic Softball?

Answer: As soon as her season is complete. This means a Varsity player may participate as soon as her last game (including tournament) is played. Any sub-varsity player may play non-interscholastically when her season is complete **but** it must be kept in mind that she cannot return to dress/participate in any OHSAA tournament game. Many athletic administrations will safeguard this by allowing no level of player to participate in non-interscholastic softball until the varsity’s last tournament game. Though not entirely necessary, this DOES safeguard all athletes.

How many players can play together on a Non-Interscholastic team (such as but not limited to “travel” or “Summer Ball” or “Fall Ball”)?

Answer: FOUR (4). OHSAA Sports Regulations limit the number of participants on any non-interscholastic roster during all months except May 21, 2021 (the Friday prior to Memorial Day) through July 31, 2021, to no more than 50% of those that make up a starting lineup of a team. In Softball that magic number is 4.

How are players ‘considered’ when Middle School/Junior High players play with High School players in the off-season?

Answer: Players are considered middle school/junior high until August 1 of their 9th grade year and are considered separate as it relates to participating on non-interscholastic teams. For example, four 8th graders could participate on a “Club” (non-interscholastic) team along with four 9th graders from the same school. They are considered separate.

During the summer, how many days are we permitted to coach our players?

Answer: From June 1 – July 31, 2021, a coaching staff is **NOT RESTRICTED** in the number of days permitted to coach your players during what is known as ‘instructional days.’ These days are designed as “Team Instructional Days” and are afforded to coaching staff’s for that reason. Coaches are reminded that these coaching days between June 1 and July 31 cannot be mandatory.

— Continued on the Next Page

Frequently Asked Questions

Are players permitted to receive “private” instruction from individuals such as “outside/private” pitching instructors or hitting instructors DURING the season of play?

Answer: Yes, if your school athletic administration approves it. Sports’ Regulation 8.2.3 DOES permit individuals to receive Individual Skill Instruction at ANY TIME in Individual or Group lessons.

One of my players was selected to play in a BASKETBALL or SOCCER All-Star game during the softball season. Is she permitted to play in that contest?

Answer: Yes. The regulations prohibit players from playing non-interscholastic SOFTBALL during the softball season. They do not prevent a player from playing in another sport.

Given the above, does that mean a softball player is permitted to play on an AAU Basketball team during the softball season?

Answer: Yes, the player would not be violating any OHSA regulations.

Given the above, does this also mean that a player could be on our school’s track team while also being on the school’s softball team?

Answer: Yes. Any limitations on that would be imposed by individual schools.

Can players participate in “Hitting Leagues” during the off-season?

Answer: Yes, however, they are limited to the 50% limitation of four players from the same school on the same “hitting league” team.

Since weather issues often force games to be made up LATE in the season, how late can we actually play a game?

Answer: The last date for a game to be played is the Saturday after the state tournament

IF we have to make up games late in the season, can our players play for their summer teams while still completing our regular schedule?

Answer: NO. All non-interscholastic rules are in effect during the season, regardless of how late the season goes.

What is meant by the “Non-Interscholastic Date” and when is it?

Answer: The “Non-Interscholastic Date” for softball is **March 27, 2021**. Though softball players are not permitted to tryout, practice OR compete for any non-interscholastic team during the season of play, any player that does so ON or AFTER this date renders a player ineligible for the OHSA tournament in addition to any other penalties.

I have a player that has been selected to participate in a “Home Run Derby” contest during the season. Is she permitted to do this?

Answer: Yes. A contest such as this is not considered as “non-interscholastic softball” and is permitted to do this. One should pay CLOSE ATTENTION to the prizes being offered and the amateur rules associated with the contest.

What if a school approved coach wants to coach a non-school team (i.e. ‘travel’) during the same time he is coaching the school team. Is that permissible?

Answer: Yes. The OHSA has no regulation prohibiting this. However, it does not waive any of the “Recruiting Bylaw” defined in detail in Section 9 of Bylaw 4. Coaches that do this should pay special attention to this Bylaw to not attempt to circumvent the “Recruiting Bylaw”.

Can I travel out of state to play a contest?

Answer: Yes, with certain restrictions. Teams may travel out of state to a bordering state (contiguous state) an unlimited number of times to play. Teams may travel to NON-bordering (contiguous states) **one time** per sport per season to compete provided there is no loss of school time.

— *Continued on the Next Page*

Frequently Asked Questions

Can I take my team out of state just to practice?

Answer: No.

Can my team practice while out of state to a permitted tournament?

Answer: Yes. OHSAA Bylaw 9 permits a team to practice out of state while part of an approved out of state competition so long as the practice does not result in a loss of school time.

Are we permitted to schedule MORE than 27 contests in the event we have rainouts?

Answer: No. Teams are NOT permitted to over schedule. Consider the consequences; a few years ago, the weather in Ohio was GREAT. There was talk that many teams DID over schedule and were forced to 'drop' or cancel contracts. There are serious repercussions for breaking contracts, whether financial penalties exist on the contract or not. With internet communication, games are easy to pick up if you need games.

Can I have a scrimmage during the season or during tournament time?

Answer: Yes. As long as a team has a scrimmage remaining, they may use it at any time. It IS important to note that any scrimmage with another school must be a scrimmage for THAT school also; it cannot be a 'game' for one school and a 'scrimmage' for another school.

Can teams practice with another school?

Answer: Yes, BUT, it must be counted as a scrimmage.

Can a School team play against a non-school team?

Answer: Yes. Ohio is one of the few states that do not regulate 'who' its teams participate against.

Sportsmanship

As we prepare for the upcoming seasons, the Ohio High School Athletic Association (OHSAA) wishes to emphasize to each of you the importance of your leadership role in the promotion of 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 who may be 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 students, officials, coaches, and fans. Thank you and have a great season!

The Ohio High School Athletic Association challenges all of us in the softball community to take positive steps toward the goal of attaining the high ideal of good sportsmanship. It is the responsibility of each of us to serve as a positive role model and set high expectations for others.

The OHSSFSCA and Sportsmanship

The Ohio High School Fast Pitch Coaches Association stands tall in its commitment to good sportsmanship. The school-based experience is one that affords tremendous opportunities to student-athletes that they will remember for a lifetime. Those experiences are dependent on the role model the head coach provides. The OHSSFSCA encourages all coaches to exhibit behavior that serves as a role model for the student-athletes we serve. In conjunction with the OHSAA's Sportsmanship, Ethics and Integrity (SEI) Committee, the OHSSFSCA annually selects a recipient of the SEI Award that is recognized at the state tournament.

The Administrator's Role in Sportsmanship

Athletic departments are comprehensive, pre-eminent teaching departments with a subject matter all their own: self-confidence, leadership, teamwork, discipline, perseverance, respect for others, strategic thinking, dedication, the importance of rules, and sportsmanship. These are true life lessons and participation in athletics provides another forum for learning. Coaches and Officials are responsible for promoting sportsmanship and positive behavior on the field. Administrators, we need your continued assistance in promoting sportsmanship and controlling fan behavior in the stands! Let the parents and fans know what you expect!

The Coach's Role in Sportsmanship

Your athletes will demonstrate the attitudes and behaviors they have learned from you, either through direct instruction or through observation of your actions. ***Never underestimate the influence you have on your players!*** You must:

- Abide by and teach the rules of the game in letter and in spirit.
- Set a good example for players and spectators to follow.
- Respect the integrity and judgment of game officials. Treating them with respect, even if you disagree with their judgment, will serve to create a positive impression of you and your team.
- Display modesty in victory and graciousness in defeat.
- Develop a program that rewards participants and spectators for displaying proper sportsmanship and enforces penalties on those who do not abide by sportsmanship standards.

It is difficult to develop a great pitcher, a great catcher or a great outfielder. That is true. However, your greatest challenge is to develop mature young adults who will become great citizens and role models in your community.

The Student-Athlete's Role in Sportsmanship

You serve as a role model for your younger siblings, young fans in the stands, your teammates, and your classmates. Set high expectations for everyone and help them follow-through! You must:

- Accept and understand the seriousness of your responsibility, and the privilege of representing your school and the community.

— *Continued on the Next Page*

Sportsmanship

- Live up to the standards of sportsmanship established by the school administration and the coaching staff.
- Learn the rules of the game thoroughly and discuss them with others. This will assist everyone in the achievement of a better understanding and appreciation of the game.
- Treat opponents as you would like to be treated with respect.
- Respect the integrity and judgment of game officials. Treating them with respect, even if you disagree with their judgment, will serve to create a positive impression of you and your team.

The Official's Role in Sportsmanship

Your job is not an easy one, but the official must be aware that they are an important component in the educational development of students. To carry out this responsibility, you must:

- Know the rules and mechanics of our sport and the philosophy behind them.
- Get fit and stay fit. An official with all of the rules and mechanics knowledge and people skills in the world does no good if he or she cannot physically keep up with play.
- Maintain professional and ethical relationships with athletic administrators, especially in the area of fulfilling game contracts.
- Work cooperatively with fellow officials during games and within the referees' association to improve members' performances.
- Maintain at all times and when interacting with all participants, an attitude of civility and professionalism.
- Practice effective preventive officiating as much as possible before, during, and after a game. The quiet word, proper signals, timely verbal instructions, a simple thank-you to a player for avoiding an unsporting act, and well-thought-out pre-game conferences with the teams and other game officials will result in an improvement of sportsmanship by eliminating the chance for things to go wrong.

The National Association of Sports Officials (NASO) conducted a survey of 550 sports officials and asked "*what is the number-one problem in our games today?*" Not too surprising, the number one response was "Poor Sportsmanship." As a result, the NASO brought together some of the best and brightest in youth, high school, collegiate and pro sports to examine the issue and explore the official's role in promoting positive on-field behavior. The results were published in the book at the right and identified 3 critical ideas:

1. What exactly is at Stake
2. What is Expected of Officials, and,
3. What steps need to be taken

As a result, the following are important results of this study and publication:

1. 65% of respondents indicated their respective associations do not do *enough* to help improve sportsmanship.
2. 89% of officials responding consider themselves PARTNERS with players, coaches and administrators in improving sportsmanship.
3. 54% of officials responding indicated they felt they DO have the training, authority and knowledge to make an impact.

Sportsmanship for Parents

The NFHS has made a NO COST online course available to PARENTS to help them understand their role in their son/daughter's athletic career. The course is titled "The Role of the Parent in Sports" and is easily accessible through the "Learning Center" at www.nfhslearn.com. And, again, it is FREE and a good tool for coaches to use in dealing with parents.

Conclusion

Good sportsmanship is everyone's responsibility. It is the essence of interscholastic athletics. Remember...some may question an official's call or a coach's substitution, but no one can question the value of good sportsmanship.

