2020

Softball
Coaches
Manual
As we near the start of the softball season, I 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. I encourage you to ask questions or seek assistance from either myself or your athletic administrator. I will continue to try to keep you informed of changes and current information with periodic memos emailed directly to you, as well as with 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 7-12 Softball in Ohio.

This is wishing each of you a successful season and many thanks for the great work you do with the student-athletes across the state.

Lauren Prochaska
Director of Sport Management
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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.ohsfsca.org](http://www.ohsfsca.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
**2020 Important Softball Dates**

Practice May Begin on February 24, 2020

Friday/Saturday, January 17 – 18, 2020: OHSFSCA Clinic  
Wednesday, January 29, 2020: ONLINE Meeting Activated (9:00 a.m.)  
First Day of Coaching: February 24, 2020  
Friday, March 27, 2020: FINAL Day for Completion of Rules Meeting before LATE Fee  
Regular Season Contests May Begin: March 28, 2020  
Non-Interscholastic Date: May 4, 2020  
Tournament Draw Meeting: May 3, 2020 2:00pm  
Sectional Tournaments: May 9 – May 16, 2020  
District Tournaments: May 18 – May 23, 2020  
Regional Tournaments: May 27 – May 30, 2020  
State Tournament: June 4 – June 6, 2020

**Softball Non-Interscholastic Date**  
The OHSAA establishes a “non-interscholastic’ date for each sport that is 4 weeks from the Monday of the state tournament week (May 4, 2020 for Softball). 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. Please continue to remind your players of the non-interscholastic rule throughout the season.

**OHSAA Contact Information**

Lauren Prochaska  **Director of Sport Management**  Softball Administrator/Tournament Coordinator  lprochaska@ohsaa.org  
Jerry Fick  **Director of Development - Softball**  Coordinates Education and Recruitment of Umpires  swdoc@fuse.net

**Softball Informational Links**

OHSAA Softball Webpage: [http://www.ohsaa.org/sports/softball](http://www.ohsaa.org/sports/softball)  
OHSAA Softball Sports’ Regulations: [https://ohsaa.org/Portals/0/Sports/Softball/SBRegs.pdf](https://ohsaa.org/Portals/0/Sports/Softball/SBRegs.pdf)  
Softball Uniform Regulations: [http://www.ohsaa.org/SchoolResources/uniform/softball](http://www.ohsaa.org/SchoolResources/uniform/softball)  
NFHS/USA Softball Approved Bat List: [https://www.teamusa.org/USA-Softball/Certified-Equipment](https://www.teamusa.org/USA-Softball/Certified-Equipment)  
Coaches’ Education: [www.nfhslearn.com](http://www.nfhslearn.com)  
Ohio HS Fastpitch Softball Coaches Association: [http://www.ohsfsca.org](http://www.ohsfsca.org)
Though we encourage EVERYONE to complete the Rules Interpretation meeting ONLINE, a very limited number of ‘face to face’ meetings will be offered in 2020 for umpires only. Completion of the meeting, whether online or face to face, is MANDATORY for coaches and umpires.

The ONLINE Rules Meeting link will be available on WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 29, 2020 @ 9:00 a.m. The last day for completion of the online version for coaches and umpires is Friday, March 27, 2020 at 11:59 pm, or a $50.00 late fee is charged for access to the online version. The FINAL deadline WITH PENALTY, will be Monday, April 27, 2020 at 11:59 pm.

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.
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 change for 2020 in Softball is that the student becomes ineligible at Game 15. Last year, they became ineligible at game 14.

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: Deborah Moore (dmoore@ohsaa.org); Roxanne Price (rprice@ohsaa.org) or Kristin Ronai (kronai@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.
Bats

With this being an NFHS Point of Emphasis this year and the number of issues we had last year, 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).

- For 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:

![Certification Marks](https://usa.asasoftball.com/e/BB1P2000.asp)

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](https://usa.asasoftball.com/e/BB1P2000.asp)
Sport Regulation 7.5 – Coaching Out of Season
This permits all school coaches to coach non-school (fall ball, travel softball, etc.) outside the season with players from your school teams on it. You may hold practices with your non-school teams as well.
There are 3 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.
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.

So.....take the above and it is now easier to understand; the change in this regulation DOES now permit school coaches this opportunity, but other regulations remain unchanged that will not permit any coaching of any kind during the No-Contact Period AND will never permit you to coach a team that has more than 4 individuals from your school team on it (except during June and July).

Scrimmages Permitted in Non-Bordering States
Previously, any contest in a non-bordering state was required to be a regular season game – scrimmages were not permitted. The main reason for this was a simple bylaw that requires “all contests to be the same for both teams”. In other words, in a contest between 2 teams, it must be a GAME for both teams or a SCRIMMAGE for both teams. There were many occasions where an Ohio team playing in the south over spring break would call a contest a ‘scrimmage’ while the opponent (usually a southern school that was already in season) would call it a “game” – a clear violation of the bylaw. Thus, scrimmages in non-bordering states were banned. Since we now permit them, please use extreme caution when scheduling and playing in any scrimmage while in a non-bordering state. This will be extremely important this year as many of you will be scrimmaging out of state with your spring breaks being prior to the start of the regular season this year.

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. In Ohio, this was previously left up to the schools – meaning one school could choose to use it yet other schools not. 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.

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
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 DH for the JV team and maybe get an inning or two in with the varsity in the second game of a DH and only count that as one DATE of the 32 permitted. Keep in mind that no player may ever play in more than 2 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 adds an administrative dimension for coaches.
We have encouraged coaches to invite local umpires to meet with their team and parents at these meetings. It allows the umpires to meet the athletes and discuss new rules. It 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. Pre-season meetings with parents are now mandatory and will most likely occur along with other spring sport teams. This is determined by each school’s Athletic Administrator. This is the time to cover such things as eligibility requirements, individual school policies, individual sport policies, sportsmanship issues and expectations, travel plans for away contests, etc. Also, though mentioned later in this manual, a course titled “The Role of the Parent in Sports” has recently been offered by the NFHS and is FREE to parents. Encourage them to watch this very informative video course. The course is available through the www.nfhslearn.com website.

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 for this certificate is available through local schools’ (usually the Athletic Director). The application requires:

- Completion of an approved Sports’ First Aid Course
- The applicant to possess a valid CPR Card (online CPR is not an accepted method of completion)
- Completion of the required BCI Background Check
- Completion of the NFHS’ “Fundamentals of Coaching” course
- Completion of 1 of the 2 approved Concussion Recognition/Management Courses
- Completion of the ODH/ODE Sudden Cardiac Arrest Certification

Every couple weeks (approximately) of the softball season, a memo is sent via email to all head softball coaches in our data system (provided by school Athletic Directors). These are subsequently posted on the OHSAA website approximately 2 days after being emailed. These contain helpful suggestions, and current announcements for softball coaches throughout the state.

The first date for GAMES is Saturday, March 28, 2020. This could have an effect on any 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 28, 2020.
- If you scrimmage another opponent, it must be part of the other team’s allotted scrimmages also. In other words, it cannot be a ‘scrimmage’ for YOUR team and a regular season contest for the OTHER team.
- Teams may not travel out of state JUST to practice but may practice while out of state for a contest.
- Teams may travel to a non-bordering state ONE TIME ONLY per season only and MAY NOT MISS ANY SCHOOL FOR TRAVEL OR COMPETITION

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

Relative to regular season ‘in-state’ contests: Teams may schedule games right up until the board adopted “Season End” date of June 13, 2020. This means that even though you are in tournament or eliminated from tournament, you may still schedule (usually ‘make up) a contest up until this date. Keep in mind that playing this late also eliminates any opportunity for a player to play non-interscholastic softball until the school season is complete.
You may also conduct a “scrimmage” at any point in the season, including during tournament play provided you have a scrimmage remaining (as does your opponent). Just keep in mind that if you scrimmage another team, it must be counted as a ‘scrimmage’ for both teams so that implies that the opponent must have a scrimmage remaining on their schedule as well.

OHSAA Bylaw 1.2 was adopted by the member schools for 2017-18 that requires several important things as it relates to out-of-state competitions. This bylaw reinforces the fact that ALL contests played out-of-state must be conducted under 2 important criteria:

1. All Competitions must be officiated by licensed umpires in the state of competition
2. All Competitions must be played under all NFHS Softball Playing Rules

Currently it is the responsibility of schools that have agreed to play in out-of-state competitions to insure the above criteria are met. The OHSAA will not approve travel to contests out-of-state that do not abide by these criteria.

**Sports Regulation 8 – Instruction to Players IN and OUT of Season**

**Sports Regulation 8.2 – In 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 Regulation 8.3.1 – Individual Instruction OUT of Season**

**General Sports Regulation 8.3.1 – The “Individual Instruction” Regulation**

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 that was the previous limitation. 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” (10) 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 FOUR. 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).

**Comments Regarding General Sports Regulation 8.3.1:**

This regulation was originally proposed by several different coaches’ associations with the ultimate goal of permitting “our” coaches the same opportunity that private instructors currently have had. We all recognize the explosion of private trainers – from hitting instructors to pitching coaches. Many of them are excellent, many more of them are not and do not possess any of the credentials required of school coaches. The success of this radical departure that now permits ‘our’ coaches to provide the same opportunities to student-athletes rests squarely in the hands of coaches. It is not designed, nor written as such, 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 clearly written to allow coaches to give hitting instruction, fielding instruction or pitching instruction – INDIVIDUAL SKILL instruction – outside the season. I URGE you to act professionally and make this work for the benefit of all.
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.
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, 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 web 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](https://www.ohsaa.org/Portals/0/Sports/GeneralSportsRegulations.pdf). I strongly encourage you 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**
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.**
- 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 in the annual OHSAA Handbook (which every administrator has been provided). These are also available through softball web page at: [https://www.ohsaa.org/Portals/0/Sports/Softball/SBRegs.pdf](https://www.ohsaa.org/Portals/0/Sports/Softball/SBRegs.pdf). Softball specific AND the General Sports’ Regulations are found on the left side of the page. A few of the Sports’ Regulation **highlights** are listed but you are encouraged to read the entire regulations at the above listed website.
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.

Player Game Limitations

Each player may play in games on a maximum of **32 DATES**. This permits a bit more flexibility for using varsity players that may not get much playing time to play ‘down’ on the JV team. The intent of this increase (players were previously limited to playing in 27 GAMES), is to help keep JV and Freshmen teams. By permitting the number of “Dates” in the maximum number, a player playing in a DH would count that DATE as “1”, not each game. Moving players up and down to utilize their maximum number of dates also creates a need to track this carefully by coaches. A player that exceeds the number of dates becomes an INELIGIBLE PLAYER. And...using an ineligible player in a contest results in forfeiture of the contest. So, this give flexibility but also increases the tracking a coach must do.

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’.

End of Season Date

Teams may schedule games right up until the board adopted “Season Ends” date of **June 13, 2020**. This means that even though you are in tournament or eliminated from tournament, you may still schedule (usually ‘make up) a contest up until this date. Keep in mind that playing this late also eliminates any opportunity for a player to play non-interscholastic softball until the school season is complete. (see below)

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. School coaches have their own restrictions that limit them to 10 days of coaching/instruction between June 1 and July 31. 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, 2020, school coaches may not coach them until June 1, 2020.

*Graduating seniors are exempt from this particular 4 player limitation.

Out of State Travel

A softball team may travel out of state to compete in scrimmages, previews and games in states OR provinces in Canada that are contiguous to Ohio regardless of distance. This would include the states of Indiana, Kentucky, Michigan, Pennsylvania and West Virginia and the province of Ontario in Canada. A team may travel out of state **one time** to compete in scrimmages or games in states or provinces NOT contiguous to Ohio but only if there is no loss of school time. **Caution is urged – any scrimmage out of state MUST be a scrimmage for both teams – not a scrimmage for one team and a ‘game’ for the other.** Many southern states do not permit their teams to scrimmage once the season starts so it is strongly recommended to check this before playing ANY contest out of state.

Teams may not travel out of state ONLY to practice (but may practice while in that state awaiting a scrimmage or game).
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.” 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 regarding the players, coaches, or schools. Coaches are expected to follow the same procedure in regard to the officials. Coaches violating this rule may be asked to discuss the problem personally with the Executive Director. (See Sports Regulations “Media Regulations”, page 104, 2019-20 OHSAA Handbook).

Videotaping Regulations
The improvement of various electronic devices, especially cell phones, has drawn much attention to the rules regarding recording softball contests. Complete regulations available on page 103 of the OHSAA Handbook or through the General Sports Regulations on the web under Media Regulations. A few highlights of this include but are not limited to:
- It is permissible for a school to videotape or photograph regular season contests in which the school team is participating.
- It is **not permissible for a school or school representative to videotape or photograph regular season games, scrimmages, previews, OR tournament contests of other schools** without the written consent of the schools participating in the contest.

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 simply dependent on local school district/athletic department policy. **ONE TIME PER YEAR**, softball teams are permitted to play 3 contests in one day provided it is on a non-school day.

Special Note Regarding Non-Interscholastic Softball Teams
Near the conclusion of each softball season, there is a natural tendency for players wanting to start practicing OR playing with their ‘summer’ teams. Rule 7.2.1 of the OHSAA General Sports’ Regulations addresses Non-Interscholastic Participation by stating: “A **member of an interscholastic softball squad sponsored by the Board of Education shall not participate in a non-interscholastic program (Tryouts, practice or contest) as an individual or a member of a team in the sport of softball during the school’s season.**” This defines they cannot **practice** as well as **play in a game.** The basic ‘rule of thumb ‘ is that once an individual **DOES tryout, practice or compete in a game for a non-interscholastic team, that individual may not ‘come back’ to be part of the school team.** Coaches should have heightened awareness of this at tournament time.

Umpires
Umpires used for Varsity contests must be OHSAA Class 1 umpires unless approved in advance by the OHSAA. Class 1 or Class 2 must be used for JV contests. Class 1, 2, 3 or an umpire in training must be used.

Protests
Protests arising from the decisions of interpretations of the rules by officials during the game will **not be considered**. Per NFHS playing rules, their 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 4 from their own team.
Welcome to another softball season in Ohio. This “Pre-Season Manual” has been complied 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 Official Development Directors 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 Lauren Prochaska, the OHSAA’s Sport Administrator for softball 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.

I continue to look forward to the limitless opportunities this position provides. **Everyone’s** efforts, from coaching to administrating to umpiring ultimately benefit our greatest resource: the student-athletes in Ohio.

Thanks for the opportunity to serve the umpires in Ohio!

Yours In High School Sports,

Jerry Fick

Officiating Development Director
1-5-1e, 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.

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.

1-2-3, 2-22-4, 2-57-3, 3-4-1c, 7-1-2 PENALTY 2
2020 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 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:
The NFHS Softball Rules Committee made the determination that clarification was needed to ensure each batter comes to the plate with a bat displaying the proper certification mark making it legal for use in high school play. Bat manufacturers produce several models of bats for multiple organizations. These different models are often custom designed to meet the specific organizations’ individual certification requirements. Bats that are custom designed for one organization may only bear that organization’s certification mark. Conversely, a large number of these bats are designed to meet several organizations’ requirements and will bear multiple organizations certifications marks - making them legal to use in multiple codes. What is important to know is that NFHS Softball recognizes and utilizes USA Softball’s certification process. In order for a bat to be legal for use in NFHS softball it must be marked with the ASA 2000, 2004 or the USA Softball All-Games Certification Mark. Additionally, any bat with one of these certification marks must not appear on the list of the USA Softball Non-Approved Bats with Certification Marks. This list was created as a way to alert players and coaches that a bat that was once approved for use has now been deemed no longer approved for use. All bats that are approved by USA Softball, formally ASA, for use in fast pitch play shall bear one of the markings shown below. Once these bats have entered the market and possible issues arise, there is a process for revoking the approval of these bats. When it has been determined that a bat should have its approval revoked, either through the re-testing process or for a voluntary removal from the manufacturer, the bat is added to the Non-Approved Bats list with Certification Marks. These bats were approved when originally manufactured and were legal for play at that time, but due to some unforeseen issues no longer pass the approval requirements.
**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.
Frequently, we 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, I encourage you to review these uniform regulations when ordering new uniforms. These uniform regulations are posted on the OHSAA website and can be viewed directly by going to http://www.ohsaa.org/SchoolResources/uniform/softball

**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**

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**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 2 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 Lauren Prochaska (lprochaska@ohsaa.org) for approval and a waiver.
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 are informed of this regulation as it MUST be followed. Penalties for non-compliance range from fines to suspension from the OHSAA Tournament. These procedures are part of the OHSAA Adopted Softball Regulations and must be followed. These procedures are here to describe Game Ending and Suspended/Interrupted Game procedures.

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 ten 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 ten 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 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 PROGRESS BUT BEFORE IT IS COMPLETED.**

**Examples of Completed/Suspended Games**

1. 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 inning. The game is called later in the bottom half of the sixth inning or after six complete innings. **Ruling: COMPLETE GAME**

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.”
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 is 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.**
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 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 – APPROVED in 2017-18

**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 4 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 for REGULAR SEASON ONLY in Ohio

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. Any suspended game, regardless of where it was interrupted, will be re-started from the point where play was suspended.

**PLEASE SEE EXAMPLES IN OTHER PLACES IN THIS MANUAL.**
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

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 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, school closings are "No Contest." Contests not played are not included in won-lost statistics.
The OHSAA sponsors the OHSAA Softball Tournament in 4 divisions. Each of the state’s District Athletic Boards are empowered by the OHSAA Constitution 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 at their January meeting. Beginning with the 2020 tournament EMIS numbers will be utilized for a 2 year period with “Competitive Balance Roster Numbers” used annually from the previous season’s required submissions. As a result, enrollment numbers will change annually and divisional alignments will change annually instead of the 2 year cycle used for several years. Divisional alignments listed below utilize Competitive Balance numbers from the 2018-19 roster submissions and are in effect for the 2020 Tournament.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Division</th>
<th>Girls Enrolled</th>
<th>Total Schools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>348 and more</td>
<td>186</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II</td>
<td>198 - 347</td>
<td>186</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III</td>
<td>116 - 197</td>
<td>186</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV</td>
<td>115 and less</td>
<td>191</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Tournament Draw Dates**

The draw date for tournaments is established by the Board of Directors. The official date for 2020 is **Sunday, May 3 @ 2:00 p.m.**

**State Tournament Dates & Order of Games**

*June 4, 5, & 6*

Division IV, Division III, Division II, Division I

Firestone Park, Akron

**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. The complete tournament regulations that were adopted by the Board of Directors at its’ January meeting will be able to be read in their entirety by logging on to [www.ohsaa.org](http://www.ohsaa.org) and navigating to the SOFTBALL webpage under the “Sports and Tournaments” pull down menu. 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.

Northwest District: [www.ohsaa.org/nwdab](http://www.ohsaa.org/nwdab)
Central District: [www.ohsaa.org/cdab](http://www.ohsaa.org/cdab)
Southwest District: [www.ohsaa.org/swdab](http://www.ohsaa.org/swdab)
Southeast District: [www.ohsaa.org/sedab](http://www.ohsaa.org/sedab)
East District: [www.ohsaa.org/edab](http://www.ohsaa.org/edab)
Northeast District: [www.ohsaa.org/nedab](http://www.ohsaa.org/nedab)
You often hear at tournament contests that “the tournament officials have been 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 Athletic Directors 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 3 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.

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 calculating the following:
   1. Total of each of the 4 categories = 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 Tournament**.

**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.
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.

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

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

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

- **Inquiries**
  Our OHSAA office is here to help as needed, but depending on the time of the year it can be difficult to reach us. However, there are other sources of assistance. Our website ([www.ohsaa.org](http://www.ohsaa.org)) includes a great deal of information that covers many of the inquiries we often receive. The website provides softball regulations, general sport regulations, tournament regulations, uniform regulations, etc. Your OHSFSCA Officers are another great resource for you as well. Their contact information can be found on their website ([www.ohfsca.org](http://www.ohfsca.org)).
Ejection 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. Ejected coaches must also pay a $100.00 fine and complete the National Federation of State High School Association’s (NFHS) “Teaching and Modeling Behavior” course within 30 days of the ejection. 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.
- **ALL EJECTIONS ARE FINAL AND NOT PERMITTED TO BE APPEALED** per the OHSAA’s Board of Directors.

**Special Note Regarding Ejections:**

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.

**Comments to the Media – Think First!**

Blame it on professional sports, blame it on the media. It doesn’t matter WHO is to blame – **think first before comments are given to the media.** This is covered in the Rules Interpretation Meeting as well. You may not agree with the officiating, you may use the overused “I fear for my kids’ safety” statement. Regardless.....comments to the media (including Social Media) regarding officiating or unsporting comments about an opponent are **strictly prohibited.** Think twice before speaking. Fines are administered for violations of this OHSAA Board of Directors adopted regulation and are not appealable.
Welcome to ______________________ High School. Ladies and Gentlemen to honor America, would you please rise, gentlemen remove your caps and join in singing our National Anthem; The Star Spangled Banner.

**Play National Anthem**

*After National Anthem:* Good afternoon, on behalf of ______________________ High School, welcome to today’s softball game between ______________________ and ______________________

The OHSAA takes great pride in the conduct of all student-athletes and working with schools to promote good sportsmanship and the values of school-based athletics. We encourage you to cheer for your team during today’s game and to show both teams the same respect you’d like them to display. This keeps with those values and ideals. Spectators are reminded that unruly behavior may result in immediate ejection from the premises. The athletic departments of BOTH schools appreciate your cooperation.

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

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

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

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

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

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

**RETURN TO PLAY PROTOCOL**

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

1) The student’s condition is assessed by either of the following:
   a. A physician, who is a person authorized under Chapter 4731 of the Ohio Revised Code (OCR) to practice medicine and surgery or osteopathic medicine or surgery (M.D. or D.O.)
   b. Any other licensed health care provider that the school district board of education or other governing authority of a chartered or non-chartered nonpublic school, authorizes to assess the student who has been removed from practice or competition.

2) The student receives **written authorization** that it is safe for the student to return to practice or competition from a physician or other licensed health care provider authorized to grant the clearance. Click here [http://ohsaa.org/medicine/AuthorizationToReenter.pdf](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.

**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 OHSAA licensed officials shall possess either a current Department of Education-issued Pupil Activity Program/Coaching Permit or show evidence of completing an approved online concussion education course as stipulated in the section entitled **Approved Online Concussion Education Courses**. This course is valid for three years from the date of completion.

STUDENT AND PARENT REQUIREMENTS

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

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

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

I, ______________________________________________________, M.D., D.O. or _______(other qualified licensed medical provider) have examined the following

(Print name of MD, DO or Other)

student, ______________________________________________________ from ____________________________ High School/7-8th grade school

(Name of Student),

who was removed from a ____________ (sport) contest at the _______ level (V, JV, 9th, 7-8th) due to exhibition of signs/symptoms/behaviors consistent with a concussion. I have examined this student, and determined that the student is cleared to resume participation upon the completion of the directions provided below.

**PLEASE INDICATE YOUR DIRECTIONS BELOW**

___Return to play protocol for concussion as outlined in Zurich Consensus Statement 2012 or as attached.

___Return to play protocol for concussion required under direction of Licensed Athletic Trainer or other qualified Licensed medical provider as approved in above directive

___Return to play protocol for concussion not required, and the student may return to participation in practice and competition on this date ________________

___Other: (explain):

**VALID ONLY WITH ALL INFORMATION COMPLETED**

Signature of Medical Professional

______________________________________________________________

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

Date: _____________________

Contact Information:

______________________________________________________________

(Print or Stamp) Address:

______________________________________________________________

Phone: ______________________________________________________

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

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

**PRESENT THIS FORM TO THE SCHOOL ADMINISTRATOR**

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

You are encouraged to log on to the OHSAA’s website at www.ohsaa.org and refer to the Sports’ Medicine dropdown menu for additional information.
The OHSAA’s Board of Directors approved the following policy with advice from the Ohio Department of Health and shall observe this policy at tournament time in the event of an H1N1 Influenza outbreak.

1. The Ohio Department of Health has advised that it will be the decision of each local health authority in Ohio as to whether or not to close a school or university due to an influenza outbreak; however, at this time the Centers for Disease Control are not recommending closures except in extreme circumstances.
2. In the event schools remain open, competitors and teams shall be expected to play tournament contests on the dates scheduled.
3. In the event schools are closed, the OHSAA, in conjunction with our District Athletic Boards and tournament personnel, shall reschedule the tournament contest for the schools thus affected.
4. Please watch the OHSAA web site home page at www.ohsaa.org and the specific sport page on the web site for more information.

Emphasis on Lightning and Inclement Weather is addressed as an OHSAA Sports Regulation (Page 98). Though all officials received these procedures in pre-season communication, it would be wise to review with them prior to the game. The Lightning and Inclement Weather Policy is relative to ALL OHSAA Sports.

**WEATHER**

**Recognition:**
Coaches, athletic trainers, athletes, administrators and contest officials should be educated regarding the signs indicating thunderstorm development. Since the average distance between successive lightening flashes is approximately two to three miles ANYTIME that lightning can be seen or heard, the risk is already present. Weather can be monitored using the following methods:

- **Monitor Weather Patterns** – Be aware of potential thunderstorms by monitoring local weather forecasts the day before and morning of the competition, and by scanning the sky for signs of potential thunderstorm activity.

- **National Weather Service** – Weather can also be monitored using small, portable weather radios from the NWS. The NWS uses a system of severe storm watches and warnings watch indicates conditions are favorable for severe weather to develop in an area; a warning indicates severe weather has been reported in an area, and everyone should take proper precautions. Any thunderstorm poses a risk of injury or death even if it does not meet the criteria for severe weather. Therefore, anytime thunderstorms are in the forecast (even if it is only a 20 percent chance), event organizers should be at a heightened level of awareness to the potential danger of lightning.

**Management:**

- **Evacuation**- If lightening is imminent or a thunderstorm is approaching, all personnel, athletes and spectators shall evacuate to available safe structures or shelters. A list of the closest safe structures should be announced and displayed on placards at all athletic venues.

- **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.

*NOTE: At night, under certain atmospheric conditions, lightening 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 lightening detection information would help eliminate any uncertainty.
The OHSAA receives a large volume of calls and email 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 page with others on your staff. Please go through your Athletic Administrator for questions related to the OHSAA’s Bylaws and Sports’ Regulations. All are contained within the OHSAA’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 1st and ends August 31st.

Can Middle School Players practice or play with High School players?
Answer: No. OHSAA 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. OHSAA 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 OHSAA “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 Sports’ Regulation #10 on page 85. 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 OHSAA Handbook) cannot be made mandatory. Sports’ Regulation #9 on page 84 of the OHSAA 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 OHSAA which limits them to the same out of season coaching limitations as paid staff members.

Can a volunteer coach coach players from the school team during the June 1 – July 31 period of time?
Answer: Basically, ‘yes’, but when teams are playing with more than 50% of a schools’ roster (4), the days of coaching/instruction must be counted in the 10 total permitted to the staff. If the non-interscholastic team is comprised of 4 or LESS players from the school, the days coaching that team in TEAM COMPETITION do not count toward the 10 days permitted to that coaching staff. Based upon the language adopted in the “Individual Skill Instruction Regulation (8.3), the example given here would NOT fit within that regulation.
What if I INSTRUCT only ONE (or up to FOUR) players in hitting instruction during the June 1 – July 31 period. Do THOSE days count?

**Answer:** IF there are no more than 4 individuals present in all the combined facilities where the instruction is taking place, this would be permissible under General Sports Regulation 8.3 that permits school coaches the opportunity to provide individual skill instruction outside the season of play.

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 22, 2020 (the Friday prior to Memorial Day) through July 31, 2020 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; 4- 8th graders could participate on a “Club” (non-interscholastic) team along with 4- 9th graders from the same school. They are considered separate.

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

**Answer:** TEN (10) anytime there are more than 4 individuals (players from last year’s team or NOT). From June 1 – July 31, a coaching staff is permitted to coach a total 10 days, known as ‘instructional days’. These days are designed as “Team Instructional Days” and are afforded to coaching staff’s for that reason. The General Sports Regulation permitted INDIVIDUAL instruction was added to provide an opportunity for individual skill instruction while leaving the “Team Instruction” time intact.

Does a day of my own summer camp count toward these 10 days?
Answer: Yes, as long as there are more than 4 present in all the combined facilities where the instruction is taking place. Any day of individual instruction or team instruction is considered one of the 10 total permitted between June 1 and July 31 if more than 4 individuals are present in all combined facilities where the instruction is taking place.

Does each member of my staff receive 10 separate days?
Answer: No. Obviously, if this were to occur, a school could have upwards of 40 and 60 days of permitted instruction. The 10 days permitted are per staff.

Do Volunteers count in the 10 day total?
Answer: Yes. As mentioned earlier, all volunteers fall under the Bylaws and Sports Regulations of the OHSAA. The 10 days permitted to a staff are inclusive of paid and volunteer coaches.

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 OHSAA Sports’ 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 4 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 May 4, 2020. 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 OHSAA 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.
Can a school approved coach coach a non-school team (i.e. ‘travel’) during the same time he is coaching the school team?  
**Answer:** Yes. The OHSAA 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.

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.

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.
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.
Sportsmanship is EVERYONE’S Responsibility!

NFHS Sportsmanship Mission Statement

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

The OHSFSCA & 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 OHSFSCA 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 OHSFSCA annually selects a recipient of the SEI Award that is recognized at the state tournament.

The Official's Role in Sportsmanship

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.
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.

**ADMINISTRATORS**
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!

**COACHES**
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.
OFFICIALS/UMPIRES

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.

STUDENT-ATHLETES

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.
- 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.

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.
Respect

THE

GAME