

**SAFETY FIRST**  
**Guidelines and Clarifications during Pre-Match Warm-ups**

*PLEASE KEEP A COPY WITH YOU AT MATCH*

The OHSAA does not set the warm-up period for regular season, but instead advises the use of our tournament procedure as a recommendation for warm-ups. There have been multiple reports submitted to the office regarding injuries occurring during one team's exclusive use of the court caused by an errant ball coming from the off-team's warm-up drill. Also, national data show an alarming trend regarding Pre-Match injuries. "High School RIO data show that volleyball continues to have one of the lowest injury rates of the 22 sports under surveillance...of the competitive concussions with data on the timing of the injury, 33.3% were sustained during pre-game/warm-ups." The OHSAA Board of Directors at its August Meeting approved the warm-up protocol for the 2019 Tournament. The "off team" will not be permitted to use volleyballs away from the main court during warmups, no matter what the gym set up may be like. This is a requirement for the OHSAA 2019 Tournaments and is strongly recommended for regular season.

Administrators, coaches, players and referees share the responsibility for safe warm-ups. The OHSAA offers the following guidelines to support improved safety during warm-ups:

- During regular season matches the OHSAA warm-up protocol recommends the following guidance, the "off" team is only permitted to warm up in the gym during the "on" team's exclusive use of the court if this can be done without restricting the activities or compromising the safety of the "on" team. "Exclusive" use of the court is interpreted to include whatever area outside the court boundaries and as much of the playing area as needed to accommodate how the individual coach chooses to have his/her team warm up.
- IF a gym does not have sufficient space to accommodate the "off" team warming up without interfering with or compromising the safety of the team that has "exclusive" use of the court, the "off" team is NOT permitted to warm up using volleyballs in the gym in which the match will be played. Stretching exercises could be done in a non-playable area.
- Upon arrival court-side, referees are expected to assess the court and entire playing area to determine whether facility layout will accommodate the "off" team warming up. The referees must determine whether whoever has exclusive use of the court is able to warm up without in any way being affected by warm-up activities of the "off" team, especially those involving ball handling, hitting and passing.
- IF – in the judgment of the referees – warming up by the "off" team would in any way negatively affect the warm-up and/or the safety of the team that has exclusive use of the court proper and surrounding area, the "off" team will not be permitted to warm up.
- The referees' decision should be communicated to both head coaches prior to or at the meeting with coaches and captains.

### **During the warm-up period**

At least one referee should observe the warm-up at all times to ensure that – if the “off” team is being allowed to warm up – there is no infringement that compromises safety or full use of the playing area by the team that has the court. Referees use awareness and common sense, including stopping the clock if necessary to ensure a team is able to conduct its warm-up without interference or infringement on warming up safely.

Enforce the intent of the 15-second warning double-whistle that tells the team with exclusive court use to:

- complete its last playing action(s) and not start another;
- gather up the warm-up volleyballs and put them into carts for the other team to use;
- ensure that the other team may enter the court in preparation for its exclusive court use without having to deal with flying volleyballs;
- whistle to ensure compliance while warning/penalizing if necessary for a team's failure to respond, for continuing to hit;
- advise the team assuming exclusive court use that its first "swing" should not occur before the horn sounds to protect the team exiting the court.