



# OHIO HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION

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**January 23, 2009**

**TO:** OHSAA Member School Superintendents, Principals and Athletic Administrators

**RE:** Coaching Education

With so many concerns being brought to the attention of the Ohio High School Athletic Association Board of Directors and administrative staff regarding the Board's action in June that requires coaches in Ohio to take the National Federation of State High School Association's (NFHS) *Fundamentals of Coaching* course, this memo has been developed to clarify many of the issues surrounding this decision. Included in this mailing and posting is information that will be helpful for you as we move forward with this requirement. Attached are documents on:

1. Why the Need for Coaching Education
2. Why the NFHS *Fundamentals of Coaching* Course
3. What They are Saying about Coaching Education
4. *Fundamentals of Coaching* Course Facts & Figures
5. Questions and Answers on Coaching Education

Please know that the action by the Board is not intended to be punitive to our coaches. Instead, the decision was made for three primary reasons:

- 1.) It is the right thing to do in today's climate, where our school sports programs are facing so many challenges — the challenge of non-school participation options; the challenge of funding our programs; the challenge of working with more and more non-teacher coaches who may not understand the mission of education-based athletics, and the challenge of helping the public understand the uniqueness of school sports, which help our sons and daughters prepare for the next level of life, not the next level of sports.
- 2.) We have a great opportunity to teach the new and non-teacher coaches and provide a refresher for our established, veteran teacher-coaches the true purpose of school sports and the vitally important role that they play with our young people. This is especially necessary in today's world when public scrutiny is at an all-time high.
- 3.) The high level of legislative interest due to some high profile occurrences of coaches who have made poor choices. Added to this level of interest is the notion that the proposed legislative requirement will be much more time-consuming and costly than the OHSAA's. Therefore, we believe that it's much better for the requirement for coaching education to come from within rather than from a mandate by the legislature.

With a team effort on Coaching Education, which is supported by so many professional organizations both statewide and nationally and was highly recommended to the Association's Board in September 2007 as part of an OHSAA Strategic Plan, we believe this requirement will not only help Ohio maintain its reputation of having the top interscholastic coaches and programs in the nation, but, more importantly, will also have a significant impact on the lives of the young people with whom our coaches work.

Please carefully review this material to learn more about the Coaching Education program and, specifically, the NFHS *Fundamentals of Coaching* course. Thank you for your attention to this matter, and we invite you to channel all comments and questions on this issue to the following e-mail address: [coached@ohsaa.org](mailto:coached@ohsaa.org).

Sincerely,

*Mike Richards*

Michael Richards, President  
Ohio High School Athletic Association  
Board of Directors

*Dan Ross*

Daniel B. Ross, Ph.D., Commissioner  
Ohio High School Athletic Association

## **Why the Need for Coaching Education?**

What makes the interscholastic sports program unique from all other levels of sports is that it seeks, above all else, to be a part of the educational experience for its participants.

While the performance of any sports team depends on well designed plays, the structure of educational athletics demands that our young people not only hone their athletic skills, but that they also develop the tools educational athletics provide: skills like hard work, team work, ethics, integrity, respect, sporting behavior, citizenship and critical thinking skills — tools that will serve our participants in the next level of their lives.

We need to remember who we are, what we are and why we play the games. We're educational athletics, not big-time event promoters. We're the builders of tomorrow's community leaders, not farm clubs for college and professional teams. We're an after-school activity, not intended to be a year-round endeavor. Our programs should allow "kids to be kids." There is nothing wrong with striving to be the best. But we must seek to develop all the students who want to participate to be their best — their best as individuals, as students, as teammates, as members of the communities — and not just their best as athletes.

No one individual figures larger in this equation than the coach, and the closest link to the student-athlete is the teacher-coach.

The teacher-coach, whether or not a school faculty member, is the ultimate delivery system of the real message and meaning of high school sports to young people. It is critical that teacher-coaches have the correct philosophical approach to educational athletics instilled in them first, or the only message the kids will hear will be about Xs and Os, wins and losses and playing at the so-called "next level." It is also critical that teacher-coaches have an approach to the game that is philosophically in step with the mission of school sports and that they believe educating young people comes ahead of wins and losses. Additionally, teacher-coaches must serve as role models and not engage in unsporting behavior toward someone on the other team or an official, and they must remember they are educators every time they go to practice or a game.

Teacher-coaches make the difference in school sports. They affect young lives in a way no one else can. They can be the strongest part of our extracurricular activities if they do everything every day in every way to teach our young men and women what's truly important about interscholastic athletics.

The teacher-coach with the correct philosophical approach to school sports is the coach who seeks to develop each participant's character — to be their best as a person first, a student second and an athlete third. These are the coaches who are long remembered by their former players — from those who were the stars to those who barely remember the final scores of their games — as the ones who had the most influence on their personal growth. In other words, they'll remember the relationships and the life lessons learned, not the championships.

Developing the teacher-coach and ensuring that our high school sports programs remain unique from all other levels of sports is a huge challenge in today's day and age. That is why the time is right for Ohio to require that its coaches take the National Federation of State High School Associations' *Fundamentals of Coaching* course. The course will ensure that our teacher-coaches are delivering the right message about school sports and that our participants are receiving that message in order to continue interscholastic athletic programs as we know them in the future.

The privilege of participating in educational athletics should be one of the most exciting experiences of young people's lives. It is imperative, then, that teacher-coaches be given the proper tools to work with their student-athletes since they are the single most important person in determining the experiences our young people receive.

## Why the NFHS *Fundamentals of Coaching* Course?

### **Course Description**

- Provides a unique, student-centered curriculum for interscholastic coaches.
- Provides training opportunities for our teacher-coaches to improve themselves and to teach their student-athletes the purpose of educational athletics.
- Assists coaches in creating a healthy and age-appropriate sport experience.
- Supports the mission of the 18,500 schools from NFHS member associations.
- Addresses the needs of the NFHS member associations as an affordable, accessible and relevant educational experience.
- Is designed to prepare interscholastic coaches for their roles in an educational setting.
- Includes the following units: educational athletics and the role of the coach; the coach as manager; the coach and interpersonal skills; the coach and physical conditioning, and the coach as teacher.
- Includes an OHSAA state component that encompasses key OHSAA bylaws and other appropriate, timely issues.
- Is a one-time course that will take 4-to-6 hours to complete on-line and 6-to-8 hours to complete in a blended delivery option.
- Is currently supported by 42 member associations of the NFHS.

*“With a curriculum emphasizing the role of the teacher-coach in promoting learning and the educational mission of interscholastic athletics, Fundamentals of Coaching was purposefully designed with and for interscholastic teacher-coaches and covers the eight domains of coaching competencies identified in the revised National Standards for Sport Coaches.*

*“The course’s ‘student first, athlete second’ philosophy and research-based content is delivered in a way that assists all coaches in creating the optimal learning environment to ensure the development of the whole student.*

*“The (Fundamentals of Coaching) course may not be the panacea to all issues facing interscholastic athletics in this country, but it does represent a hugely important initiative that, when complete, will transform the face of educational programming for teacher-coaches in this country.”*

**— Darren C. Treasure, Ph.D., former professor at Arizona State University and author of the NFHS *Fundamentals of Coaching* course**

*“This was a very good course for me and my staff. The course content allowed us to refocus our energy upon the real mission we should have as high school coaches. It was almost like a personal coaching ‘time out’ to remember why we got into this business in the first place.”*

**— A veteran Ohio interscholastic football coach**

*“I believe the NFHS Fundamentals of Coaching course is the best tool on the market to focus interscholastic coaches on their mission as coaches: student-centered and educationally-based athletics.”*

**— A veteran Ohio interscholastic athletic administrator**

## **What They are Saying About Coaching Education — Page 1 of 2**

*“In the last 15 years at the interscholastic level, schools are starting to realize that it makes sense to train coaches. First, it brings coaches into the pool with other educators, and second, it gives coaches the information on their role in the interscholastic setting, which is different from clubs and youth sports. Our view is that coaching is a teaching tool and one part of the educational process, not a win at all costs mentality. That has been creeping into other sports, so it’s even more necessary to train coaches.*”

*“Ohio is showing leadership by requiring coaches to take the NFHS Fundamentals of Coaching course. Ohio is saying this makes sense and that it’s critically important that we train our coaches. For many years, some states have felt that if you teach, you must just know how to coach. The course lays the foundation for many things that will come after this that will help coaches. And we are providing the training at a cost-effective level. We realize economically this couldn’t be happening at a worse time, but that’s not a reason to not do it.*”

*“The bottom line is to help kids have a positive experience, and training is the first step in ensuring that a positive learning experience comes from athletics. Folks in many professions – teachers, doctors, lawyers, car mechanics – all are required to be certified because what they do is important. Why don’t we train and certify coaches? We should. We’re seeing more and more lawsuits and school districts are being brought in to help when negligence is being claimed.”*

**— Tim Flannery, Assistant Executive Director  
National Federation of State High School Associations;  
Athletic Administrator, North Olmsted (Ohio) High School , 1983-1998;  
1996 Ohio Athletic Administrator of the Year**

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*“The Ohio Department of Education is pleased to work with the Ohio High School Athletic Association in the important work regarding coaches education in Ohio. We value the important role coaches play in making successful citizens of today’s youth through their tireless dedication to the students in Ohio’s schools. Through the efforts of the OHSAA, BASA, OASSA, OSBA, OIAAA and all member schools, I am pleased to see increases in the level of training and professional development for these important role models of tomorrow’s leaders.”*

**— Deborah Delisle  
Ohio Superintendent of Public Instruction**

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*“We encourage all school staff to receive the highest quality training possible to help our students and athletes reach their potential. We applaud the OHSAA for providing this professional development and support the program.”*

**— Richard Lewis, CAE, Executive Director  
Ohio School Boards Association**

## **What They are Saying About Coaching Education – Page 2 of 2**

*“With the increasing number of non-teaching coaches in our schools, the need to improve the knowledge base of those who guide our student-athletes is more important than ever. While teaching the fundamentals and intricacies of a sport may be an important part of coaching, more important is the responsibility of coaches to promote teamwork, good citizenship, self-discipline and respect for teammates, opponents and the sport itself. Our members, school administrators, are charged with the duty of providing dedicated, capable, mature coaches who place the long-term results of participating in athletics ahead of the short-term rewards of wins over losses. An effectively structured education program for all coaches helps to insure that they understand their roles in the education of the students with whom they work.”*

**– Jim Harbuck, Executive Director  
Ohio Association of Secondary School Administrators**

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*“Coaching education, and specifically the Fundamentals of Coaching course, is a medium that can help coaches and school personnel become change agents when working with the student-athletes in our schools. Once that process occurs, the real purpose of school sports programs can be shared with parents, community members and other stakeholders of our programs. BASA supports the OHSAA in its efforts to provide additional educational opportunities for coaches and encourages the OHSAA membership to also embrace this important endeavor.”*

**– Jerry Klenke, Ph.D., Executive Director  
Buckeye Association of School Administrators**

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*“Our interscholastic coaches today are charged with the dual responsibility of not only developing championship teams but, more importantly, also developing student-athletes with championship character and providing them with tools that will lead to success later in life. To help reach this goal, the OIAAA executive board is supportive of the OHSAA’s model that requires our coaches to take the NFHS Fundamentals of Coaching course.”*

**– Dan Adams, Assistant Principal and Athletic Administrator,  
New Concord John Glenn High School;  
President, Ohio Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association**

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*“Coach education is not a luxury or something a school, school district or state can choose to ignore, but a necessity – particularly if we are to fulfill the educational mission of interscholastic athletics and contribute to the education of the whole child.”*

**– Darren C. Treasure, Ph.D., former professor  
at Arizona State University and author of  
the NFHS Fundamentals of Coaching course**

## **Fundamentals of Coaching Course Facts & Figures**

### **\*Requirements**

**NOTE:** For the purposes of this initiative, “teacher-coaches” refers to ALL interscholastic coaches REGARDLESS of whether they are certified to teach or not.

- All teacher-coaches, paid or volunteers, in grades 7 through 12 in Ohio are required to take the NFHS *Fundamentals of Coaching* course as a one-time fulfillment.
- All teacher-coaches, paid or volunteer, without a **current** Pupil Activity Supervisor Permit are required to complete the course by **January 1, 2010**.
- All teacher-coaches, paid or volunteer, with a current Pupil Activity Supervisor Permit that are renewing their permit any time **after January 1, 2010**, are required to complete the course at the time of renewal.

**\* Please note that the timelines listed above have been adjusted from earlier proposed timelines.**

### **Costs**

- \$55 for the blended version in which the course is delivered in a combined classroom setting and on-line.
- \$65 for the on-line version.
- The cost the OHSAA pays the NFHS per participant is \$37, which includes course research, preparation, technology (including “Help Desk” features) and maintenance of the web site to offer the course. Each instructor who teaches the classroom units of the course receives \$10 per participant. The operations cost (includes postage, time on task for personnel assigned to oversee registrations, mailings and other administrative functions) is \$2 per participant.
- The balance of the cost (\$6 for the blended version\* and \$16 for the on-line version) will be invested into the development of additional educational opportunities for OHSAA member school constituents (to be called the OHSAA Education Academy). Potential plans include opportunities for student-athletes (healthy lifestyles, training, sport specialization/avoiding burnout, advice for the college-bound student-athlete); parents (parent-coach communications, healthy lifestyles for your child, goals and objectives for your child); officials, and the media.
- School districts and athletic booster clubs are certainly welcome to cover complete or partial costs of their coaches to complete the course. The OHSAA will share any innovative ideas it receives from the membership.

**\* Note that the cost that the OHSAA pays the NFHS per participant for the blended version will increase by \$5 on September 1, 2009. Therefore, only \$1 of the balance will go toward developing the OHSAA Education Academy.**

### **Additional Benefits**

- Those who complete the *Fundamentals of Coaching* course will have the opportunity to acquire CEU and college credit.

### **Additional Information**

- When on the home page of the Ohio High School Athletic Association web site ([www.ohsaa.org](http://www.ohsaa.org)), click on the “Coach Education” logo. This will take viewers to the main page for the OHSAA’s coaching education program.
- Viewers will not only learn more about the course, but they also can view a demonstration of it and go to a question-and-answer page (which is also included in this mailing/posting).
- Additional questions can be answered by going to the National Federation of State High School Associations web site at [www.nfhslearn.com](http://www.nfhslearn.com). Participants can also register for and begin taking the course at this location.

## Questions and Answers on Coaching Education — Page 1 of 2

### **Q. Is the Fundamentals of Coaching course a requirement for Ohio coaches?**

- A. Yes. All teacher-coaches, paid or volunteers, in grades 7 through 12 in Ohio are required to take the NFHS *Fundamentals of Coaching* course as a one-time fulfillment.

All teacher-coaches, paid or volunteer, without a **current** Pupil Activity Supervisor Permit are required to complete the course by **January 1, 2010**.

All teacher-coaches, paid or volunteer, with a current Pupil Activity Supervisor Permit that are renewing their permit any time **after January 1, 2010**, are required to complete the course at the time of renewal.

### **Q. Why is there a need to have a course for coaches and why was the NFHS *Fundamentals of Coaching* course selected?**

- A. Across the country, there is a significant movement to certify athletic coaches much like we certify our classroom teachers. With all of the various options that parents and student-athletes have to choose from for their athletic pursuits, the OHSAA, along with many of Ohio's educational organizations (the Ohio Association of Secondary School Administrators, the Ohio Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association, the Ohio School Boards Association, the Buckeye Association of School Administrators) and the National Association of Secondary School Administrators, has endorsed the NFHS *Fundamentals of Coaching* course as the most cost-effective, easily deliverable course in addressing the common focus of interscholastic coaches.

### **Q. Are there differences between the “on-line” *Fundamentals of Coaching* course and the “blended” course options?**

- A. The content between the completely on-line course and the “blended” option of the course is identical. The primary difference between the two formats is that when taking the “blended” version, the coach has the opportunity to interact with other participants which provides for a more meaningful course experience. In the “blended” version, the first two chapters of the course are presented by the class facilitator in a clinic-like setting. Then, the remainder of the course is completed by the participant totally on-line.

### **Q. How much does the course cost for Ohio coaches?**

- A. The “blended” version of the *Fundamentals of Coaching* course is \$55; the on-line version of the course is \$65.

### **Q. Why does the on-line version cost more than the “blended” version?**

- A. Although the content is virtually the same for either version, the “blended” delivery of the course is the preferred option. This is because in the face-to-face classroom method, there is significant interaction among the classroom participants and facilitator, which provides the participant with a richer experience.

### **Q. How do I purchase and register for the on-line version of the course?**

- A. Go to [www.nfhslearn.com](http://www.nfhslearn.com) and log onto the site. Then:
- Register on the site by clicking on “Register” in the upper right-hand corner and provide all requested information.
  - Select “Courses” on the left side of the menu.
  - Select the course and click “Purchase”.
  - Select “I am purchasing a course for myself” and click “Continue.” Choose “Ohio” for your state and click “Save.”
  - Follow the on-screen prompts to complete your purchase.
  - Once registered, you can go directly to the course each time you return by clicking “Sign In” on the [www.nfhslearn.com](http://www.nfhslearn.com) home page.

### **Q. What should I do if I have a problem with my transaction or I entered incorrect data on my registration or payment?**

- A. E-mail the NFHS at [help@nfhslearn.com](mailto:help@nfhslearn.com) regarding your transaction.

### **Q. I’ve heard mentioned “On-line Course license” and “Blended Course license.” Is there any difference?**

- A. Yes. The purchaser (either the individual or a school) must determine which type of course they are buying because, although the content is the same, the way they are used is very different. With an on-line course license, the registrant will start from the very beginning of the course and work their way through all content. With a blended course license (which is received from the class instructor at the course site), the registrant will start with the Unit 1 and Unit 2 review quizzes since these areas will have been covered in the classroom.

## Questions and Answers on Coaching Education – Page 2 of 2

**Q. I've been give a license number for an on-line course. How do I redeem it in order to take the course?**

- A. Go to [www.nfhslern.com](http://www.nfhslern.com) and click on the "Sign In" link in the upper right-hand of the page.
- Register on the site using your e-mail address and by creating your own password. On future site visits, you will always use this e-mail address and password to access the course, purchase additional courses or redeem licenses.
  - From "My Homepage," click on the "Redeem License" button.
  - Enter your license number and click "Submit" (Note: You will only have to enter this license number ONCE, like a coupon; on future site visits, you will access the course by entering your e-mail address and password). As you enter the license code, be sure not to confuse numbers with letters.
  - Follow the on-screen instructions.

**Q. I've heard that the NFHS site also has an on-line First Aid ("Sports Med") course which satisfies Ohio's requirement for certification. How do I find out more?**

- A. Yes, the NFHS offers an on-line First Aid course which can be used to satisfy the ODE's Pupil Activity Validation class requirement. Go to [www.nfhslern.com](http://www.nfhslern.com) and click on the "First Aid for Coaches" link. Currently, the NFHS First Aid for Coaches course costs \$45 and is taken totally on-line.

**Q. Can I receive college credit for the NFHS *Fundamentals of Coaching* course?**

- A. Yes, you can receive one graduate semester hour of credit from Ashland University for \$172. To register on-line for graduate credit, go to: <http://www.ashland.edu/academics/education/profdev/aumain/workshop-detail.php?WID=11822>  
For additional information, contact Ashland University Professional Development Services at 419-289-5350 or 1-800-882-1548, ext. 5350.

**Q. Can schools group-purchase course licenses for their coaches?**

- A. Yes, a single "blended" license or multiple "blended" licenses may be purchased. To purchase a single "blended" license, go to the Coach Education area of the OHSAA web site ([www.ohsaa.org](http://www.ohsaa.org)) to find a course being offered in your area and print the registration form for an individual. Complete the form and forward it, along with your school's purchase order number listed on the document, to the OHSAA Coaches Education Registration address listed on the registration form.

To purchase multiple "blended" licenses for several coaches, go to the Coach Education area of the OHSAA web site ([www.ohsaa.org](http://www.ohsaa.org)) to find a course being offered in your area and print the registration form for a group. Complete the form and forward it, along with your school's purchase order number listed on the document, to the OHSAA Coaches Education Registration address listed.

To purchase multiple licenses for the completely on-line course, go to the NFHS site ([www.nfhslern.com](http://www.nfhslern.com)) and sign in.

- Select the "Courses" page from the left-hand menu.
- Click the "Purchase" button.
- Select "I am purchasing one or more courses that I intend to distribute to others."
- Click on "Continue."
- Select the course, select "Ohio" and list the quantity and click "Add."
- When ready, click on "Checkout."
- Select payment type: School Purchase Order or credit card.

**Q. I would like to host a "blended" course session for my coaches. How can I get a class taught at my site?**

- A. Go to the Coach Education area of the OHSAA web site ([www.ohsaa.org](http://www.ohsaa.org)), print out the "REQUEST TO HOST A BLENDED SESSION FORM" and follow the instructions. Complete the form by listing your suggested date, site and time of the blended session. Indicate any other parameters in limiting attendees (see form for details).

**Q. How many attendees does my school district or school need to have to schedule a blended session of the *Fundamentals of Coaching* course?**

- A. A minimum of 15 attendees and a maximum of 40 confirmed participants are required to schedule a blended approach course.