



THE REBOUNDERS REPORT



The Ohio High School Athletic Association

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What about OHSAA Rules & Regulations?

In Issue 1 of Rebounders Report, I detailed how the NFHS (National Federation) formulates the playing rules for all 50 states that sponsor basketball in schools. Now...the administrative rules. Many don't like 'em, many disagree with some of 'em, but nearly all organizations are built out of need to regulate competition. Many questions came to me regarding "our" rules, or the Ohio High School Athletic Association Rules. Why only 2 players from a school on the same non-school team, why can't we travel to Florida multiple times, why can't coaches coach "AAU" or "travel teams with players from his/her school on it? Whether you agree or not, hopefully, this will provide you a little insight on the OHSAA rules and how they are developed.

The OHSAA is a FREE VOLUNTARY Organization

Hard to believe? Yes, the OHSAA is a *voluntary* organization that does not even charge a membership fee. There is no charge for a "Tournament Fee". Truthfully, though we often take that for granted, you would be hard pressed to find a "club" or "travel" tournament that does not charge an entry fee to participate. This is often taken for granted.

Free and Voluntary, But....

Of course...membership IS free and voluntary but with it comes a few 'conditions'. Each year, a school's Board of Education decides whether to join the OHSAA or not. Upon choosing to do so, the Board of Education creates a resolution and signs an official Membership Card to join the OHSAA and abide and enforce its regulations. Of course, agreeing to this also provides them representation AND voting privileges relative to these rules. Also, accepting membership is also an acceptance to play under tournament regulations, sites, AND assignments in the OHSAA tournament. Prior to each year's tournament, the **Tournament Regulations, the Sectional, District, Regional and State Assignments** are proposed and approved by the elected Board of Directors.

"Other Benefits of Membership"

As mentioned, schools receive input through representation (to the Board of Directors) and a vote on any proposals to change the rules of the association (bylaws). The OHSAA conducts season ending tournaments that ALL schools may enter free of charge. Generally, through time, organizations are built on the need to provide structure for the group. The OHSAA does just that – writes the rules and regulations for school-sponsored sports and tournaments. All schools across the state play under these regulations with the ultimate goal of regular season and tournament contests being fair across the state. The OHSAA also annually purchases Catastrophic Insurance for nearly 250,000 participants across the state at a cost of nearly ¾ of a million dollars. The hope is this is never needed, however, unfortunately it has been utilized numerous times across the state. The OHSAA is also a member of the NFHS, the "National Federation of High Schools" – an organization of ALL state associations like the OHSAA. There are 51 (Washington D.C. has their own athletic association). Membership gives Ohio access to the playing rules and valuable input in issues that affect all high school aged student-athletes.

How is the Organization (OHSAA) Structured?

Ohio is generally recognized as one of the 3 largest states in regard to school athletic participation and success*. In comparison, it is the 32nd smallest staff in the nation. Is that the company line? No...just a fact.

The Board of Directors: Elected on a rotating basis from each of Ohio's 6 Athletic Districts, there are 6 total voting members that serve 2 year terms. Additionally, there is a female representative, an ethnic minority representative, a Junior High representative making up 9 total voting members. An appointed representative from the Ohio Department of Education and the Ohio Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association (OIAAA) serve as to ex-officio (non-voting) members to the Board of Directors.

The Commissioner: As nearly everyone knows, Dr. Daniel B. Ross is the Commissioner of the OHSAA. Many states refer to their director as an "Executive Director", but in Ohio he is simply known as the "Commissioner".

Assistant/Associate Commissioners: Serving as assistants to Dr. Ross, the OHSAA currently employs 6 individuals. Including myself, the others are Dr. Deborah Moore, Roxanne Price, Steve Neil, Bob Goldring, and Beau Rugg. Each has a variety of duties such as overseeing transfer and eligibility rules (bylaws), overseeing Coach Education, and overseeing 17,000+ officials. Each Assistant/Associate also oversees and administrates specific sports sponsored by the OHSAA. What they specifically administrate can be found at: www.ohsaa/general/about/contact.htm

Sport Administrators: Along with most Assistant/Associate Commissioners. A few individuals; Dale Gabor and John Dickerson, serve as sport administrators for a selected few sports (golf, track and field and cross country).

Administrative Assistants: There are several "Administrative Assistants" in the OHSAA office that assist with all tournament and administrative tasks of the OHSAA.

District Athletic Boards: The member schools in each of the 6 Athletic Districts across the state elect 9 members to a board that is given the responsibility of conducting Sectional and District Tournaments in their respective Districts. Each Board (called a "DAB") is comprised of 9 members elected for 6 year terms and are made up of 2 from the larger Schools in the district (AAA), 2 from medium sized schools (AA) and 2 from smaller schools (A). Additionally, an Individual representing Junior High Schools, Females and Ethnic Minorities are elected to round out the 9 member Board.

Rules, Rules....and More Rules. Why There Are So Many and HOW THEY GET CHANGED/REVISED

The OHSAA operates under a Constitution. The Constitution details exactly how the OHSAA conducts its business, how it's members are permitted membership and who MAKES the rules and how the rules can be CHANGED. The Rules and Regulations of the organization are separated into 4 separate categories: **Bylaws, GENERAL Sports Regulations, SPECIFIC Sport Regulations, and Tournament Regulations.**

Bylaws: The Bylaws of the OHSAA are items that govern such things as Eligibility, Transfer, Classification of schools into divisions, Administrative Responsibilities for schools, and overall basic 'conditions' of membership. There are currently 13 OHSAA Bylaws. Go ahead....download them and check them out at: <http://www.ohsaa.org/general/about/Bylaws.pdf> These Bylaws may ONLY be changed upon a majority vote of the member schools. The Constitution requires the OHSAA to put forth any recommended changes in Bylaws to the membership for vote in the spring of each year. So, any change (whether it be related to transfer, eligibility or other requirements has occurred as a result of the majority of the schools voting in favor of a proposal during the spring of one of the past 100+ years. Nothing can be changed without this approval.

General Sports Regulations: The "General Sports Regulations" are a series of regulations that encompass and regulate ALL sports. Such things as Instructional Programs In and Outside the Season, "Open Gyms", "No-Contact Periods", etc., are examples of such "General" Sports Regulations. The General Sports Regulations may be changed by a majority vote of the elected Board of Directors members – they do NOT need to be voted upon by each member school, the member schools entrust their vote to the representatives they elect (Board of Directors). Recommendations for changes come from OHSAA Staff Members, Board of Directors' members, Member schools, allied Coaches Associations, and occasionally from legislative involvement.

Specific Individual Sport Regulations: These "Individual" Sport Regulations are specific to each of the sports the OHSAA recognizes and sponsors tournaments. These regulations address such items as the start and end date for each sport, the number of contests permitted in each sport, participation limitations for individuals in a sport (the number of quarters or contests each individual is permitted). Individual Sport Regulations affect the *specific* sport and recommendations for changes come annually from the allied Coaches Associations. Each Coach Association is provided an opportunity each year (by Constitution) to request/recommend any changes to their specific sport regulations. They make their presentation to the Board of Directors and the Board of Directors determines – by majority vote – whether to accept or deny any recommendations. The OHSAA's Sport Administrators also make recommendations for changes. In *most* cases, any changes made are not made until the next school year to keep the OHSAA Handbook up-to-date, though the Board of Directors has the discretion to implement any change at their liking.

Tournament Regulations: Each OHSAA sport tournament is governed under a set of regulations known as "Tournament Regulations". These tournament regulations are approved annually by the Board of Directors and are the administrative rules by which tournaments are conducted in each of the recognized sports. These tournament regulations include the breakdown of divisions by enrollment count, the number permitted in uniform, the number permitted in on approved Pass Lists and admission prices. Though the OHSAA Sport Administrator proposes these Tournament Regulations to the Board of Directors to govern ALL tournaments from Sectional through State Championships, each District Athletic Board conducts their respective Sectional and District Tournaments within these overall regulations. For example, though the Tournament Regulations may indicate that "*maximum ticket prices may be \$7.00 for adults*", one District Athletic Board may elect to charge \$5.00, another \$6.00 while another may charge \$7.00. All possible because it is 'within' the overall Tournament Regulations.

Each year, **The OHSAA Handbook** is printed that details ALL current Bylaws, General Sports Regulations & Specific Individual Sport Regulations. Each of these sections of the "Handbook" are posted online on the OHSAA's website at www.ohsaa.org.

What Makes States Different?

Though all states belong to the "NFHS", they vary in their administration of the extracurricular events they administrate. Some examples:

Many states are "Activity" Associations. They include debate, FFA, bass fishing (yes!), archery in addition to Athletics.

Most states charge membership fees to their member schools. Ohio does not of course.

Many states control the league their members are in. Ohio of course does not.

Several states hire and assign officials for all regular season contests from their state office. Ohio does not of course.

Interestingly enough, Ohio is the 3rd or 4th largest state association with the one of the smaller administrative staffs of all state associations.

District Athletic Boards

Sectional & District Tournament Organization

Organizing over 825 schools into tournaments is an incredible task. Securing sites, hiring/assigning officials and selecting competent (and willing!) managers is a challenge for the OHSAA and therein lies the importance of each of the District Athletic Boards or "DAB's". There are 6 different "DAB's" and each is comprised of 9 members ELECTED from the member schools in their respective Athletic Districts. One member is selected from each DAB to represent the "DAB" on the Board of Directors. The 6 Athletic Districts are:

Northwest (www.nwdab.org)

Central: (www.cdab.org)

Northeast: (www.nedab.org)

Southwest: (www.swdab.org)

East: (www.eastohsaa.org)

Southeast: (www.seodab.org)