

To: All Head Softball Coaches
From: Jerry Snodgrass, Assistant Commissioner/Softball
Lauren Prochaska, Team Sports Program Coordinator
Re: Coaches Memo 4: April 25, 2016

The good weather is here! Certainly has been a frustrating start to the season for most of us but softball coaches handle the adversity as well as any sport coach. As we are in full swing for the season now, here are some important reminders and help items:

NFHS Softball Questionnaire

It is that time of the year again—be a part of the National Federation of High School Sports (NFHS) softball rules-writing process by taking the annual Softball Rules Questionnaire. The questionnaire is provided so the opinions of a national sampling of coaches (and registered umpires) will be considered by the NFHS Softball Rules Committee. Instructions and access to the survey was sent on the emailed version of this memo. If you are a HS Head Softball coach and did not receive that memo directly please email me (jsnodgrass@ohsaa.org) or Lauren (lprochaska@ohsaa.org) for the instructions. You should receive a separate email blast as a reminder from our office, but you may access the questionnaire at this link: <http://www.nfhs.org/sports-resource-content/nfhs-sport-questionnaires/>

The deadline for the NFHS Softball Questionnaire is May 18, 2016

Records for Seed Meetings – Out of State Teams

Many who have traveled out of state to play inquire about how to post their record vs an out of state team. You will need to get the enrollment of that school and plug it into the enrollment breakdown for Ohio to determine what division that school would be if it were an Ohio school and record the win/loss based upon that.

Speaking of the “Rules Process”

Since we are asking you to be part of the “process”, now is a great time to provide you some info on what that ‘process’ actually is. This is probably one of the most misunderstood items as it relates to playing rules of ANY sport. Most think ‘we’ (the OHSAA) sit around and make up rules on ‘double first bases’, etc. etc. But, far from the truth. We have a very informative explanation how the process actually works for making playing rules at: <http://www.ohsaa.org/sports/sb/girls/2016/2016NFHSRulesProcessforSoftball.pdf>

Individual Participation Limits – 32 Playing Dates

As everyone should know by now, with the cooperation of the OHSBCA, we were able to increase the number of contests an individual may participate in from 27 games to no more than 32 DATES. I believe this was a good increase and is designed to help maintain JV and Freshmen programs that are dwindling in many areas. However, someone in the softball world (see above about administrating SB), pointed out there is no reference to junior high in this regulation and if you read it as written, you would be led to believe that a player in the Junior High would be permitted to participate on up to 32 dates despite only a 17 game schedule permitted at the Junior High. And....I thank him for pointing this out and it will be written differently next year. At present, 17 games are permitted at the Junior High and there was no increase in the number of games OR dates a junior high individual may participate in. A Junior High player may only participate in 17 games. I am taking very good feedback on this whether I want to look at increasing that at the Junior High level next year.

Make Up Games – League vs Non-League

What a misconception. We have had so many games cancelled because of rain, including many league games. Now that good weather is upon us, we think nothing of calling up a non-league opponent and letting them know we are not going to play because we have to make a league game up on that night and we already have umpires, etc. BUT, surprise.....it really doesn't work that way. When schools agree to play a contest, they memorialize that agreement with a contract. That contract is binding. There is NO language in that contract that permits a school to void the contract to play someone else (a make-up game). So, why has it occurred for so long and why are we just addressing it now? It's simply a different time. For so long, schools/Athletic Directors just played the ‘good guy’ role and LET opponents out of contracts to make up games. Now? Not so much. Want some teeth in the contract you make with another school? Put a dollar amount in the penalty clause for voiding a contract. A contract between 2 schools is binding. Or, put language in that IS an agreement to let you make up a league game and void the contract. Keep in mind, both parties (schools) must agree to it. Something to think about with a growing issue.

Tournament Regulations

The idea behind OHSAA Tournament Regulations is to provide a consistent set of rules and regulations by which all tournaments across the state in each of the districts is conducted and played by. These regulations are reviewed each year with input from OHSAA Staff and Coaches' Associations. Ultimately, these regulations are approved by the OHSAA's Board of Directors and applicable to ALL 6 Athletic Districts across the state. It addresses everything from ticket prices to how many individuals may be in uniform. Please take a moment and download these regulations and review them BEFORE going to your draw on Sunday. You can download these at: <http://www.ohsaa.org/sports/sb/girls/sbrglts.pdf>

From the Eyes of the Umpire

Here are a few items being addressed to ALL softball umpires in their weekly correspondence this past week:

The Use of Resin

Whether resin is powdered or in rock form, as well as other 'comparable drying agents' can be used and where it must be kept have been among the issues addressed by umpire this past week. Umpires receive weekly correspondence and continued education throughout the season. So....What can be used by the pitcher? As stated in **NFHS Rule 6-2-2** powdered resin may be used and under normal conditions the resin bag can be on the field behind the pitcher. If weather conditions dictate, the resin bag is often kept in the pitcher's pocket which is also acceptable. **Rock resin is not** permitted for use by the pitcher as this rule does not list it as a legal item. When a comparable drying agent, such as Gorilla Gold is used, it must be kept in the pitcher's pocket and in a way that it will not bother the batter. This is because a cloth item, such as Gorilla Gold, cannot really be left lying on the field.

The Double First Base – Color/Logo Restrictions

Many have asked (and a few have used) a double first base that has school colors on it and even a school logo. Is this permissible within the rules? Keep in mind again, this is an NFHS Rule identified actually in NFHS Rule 1-2-1 "Note". The rule does permit the use of a double first base only by state adoption (Ohio does permit it) and the foul side of the base must be a SINGLE color other than white. It does not state WHAT color. So, many believe it must be orange (it does not have to be by that definition). Therefore, ANY color is permitted, but it simply must be a SINGLE solid color – which also means 'no logo' permitted.