

To: All Head Softball Coaches
From: Jerry Snodgrass, Assistant Commissioner/Softball Administrator
Lauren Prochaska, Team Sports Program Coordinator
Re: Coaches Memo 5 – May 4, 2016

Warmer weather is here and we are entering the heart of league play. Here are a few reminders for everyone. We hope you find these useful.

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.

NFHS Softball Questionnaire - Reminder

This is a simple reminder from last week's Coaches' Memo to be an important part of the National Federation of High School Sports (NFHS) softball rules-writing process by taking the annual Softball Rules Questionnaire. You can access the questionnaire at: <http://www.nfhs.org/sports-resource-content/nfhs-sport-questionnaires/> and the questionnaire site closes on May 18.

The NFHS Rules Process

Since you are asked to be an important part of the NFHS Softball Rules process, we have posted on the "Inside OHSAA Softball" webpage a document that actually explains the entire process. It is interesting and a process that few actually realize exists. You can read/download it at: <http://www.ohsaa.org/sports/sb/girls/2016/2016NFHSRulesProcessesforSoftball.pdf>

Courtesy Runners – Does it Count as a Game Played?

This has come up by several coaches. Players are permitted to participate in games on 32 dates (effective last year). Does the player that is used in a game as a courtesy runner count that as one of the games/dates played? The answer is YES for obvious reasons – the player participated in the game. Whether it be as a pitcher, a batter or a courtesy runner – they participated. The increase from 27 games to 32 dates was partially done to promote this very situation. Participation as a courtesy runner counts as participation in one of the 32 dates permitted by a player.

The OHSAA Rules/Tournament Stuff

With tournament play beginning this week in many districts, PLEASE make sure you download and READ the OHSAA Tournament Regulations. Everything from the number permitted to dress for tournament to admission prices are addressed in the regulations. These regulations are reviewed by our elected Board of Directors prior to their approval. You can download them directly from: <http://www.ohsaa.org/sports/sb/girls/sbrglts.pdf>

The OHSAA Tournament – How Representation Affects Areas of the State

News Flash – the OHSAA tournament is not (and never has been) a "Best of the Best" tournament. In other words, it is set up *geographically* by determining the number of qualifiers each District gets to the Regional Tournament. Easier to explain this way: An area of the state (Athletic District) that may only have 17 Division I teams is not given the same number of qualifiers to the Regional Tournament that an area of the state (Athletic District) that has 76 Division I teams gets. Now you see how complicated this can be. With 6 Athletic Districts in Ohio – determining how many each District gets to the Region is a process called "Representation". I encourage you to download and read about this process at: <http://www.ohsaa.org/sports/sb/girls/2016/OHSAASoftballTournamentsHowRepresentationAffectsTeams.pdf>

Players Outside the Dugout

Another item that has surfaced recently so a good opportunity to address this for everyone. A few teams have decided to send a player from their team out into the stands to chart pitches, essentially going back and forth between the dugout and the stands. Here is why this is **not permitted**: Under Rule 3-6-6 team personnel must remain in the dugout except for the limited exceptions listed. Team personnel are defined in Rule 2-59 and include everyone located in the dugout that is a "school representative." Therefore, a person who establishes him/herself as team personnel is limited to staying in the dugout. The rules aren't completely clear on when this occurs but I am very comfortable saying that this would be determined when umpire jurisdiction begins under Rule 10-1-2 (when one umpire arrives within the confines of the field). An individual must be one place or the other (stands or dugout) but not both. Rule 2-17 indicates the dugout area is reserved for team personnel – therefore no 'visitors'.

Did you Know

There are 2548 registered and active softball umpires in the state of Ohio.

From the Eyes of the Umpire

The following is provided in conjunction with the OHSAA's "Director of Development":

The Pre-Game Equipment Check – Umpires and Coaches Help Each Other

Many questions continue regarding the pre-game equipment check. This check is mandated by Rule 10-2-3a. Umpires are required to check the bats and both batting and catcher's helmets. One concern that has been expressed is that many umpires are not checking to insure that the NOCSAE stamp (shown on Page 14 of the 2016 NFHS Rules Book) is on every catcher's helmet and on the batting helmet. The phrase "Meets NOCSAE Standard at the time of manufacture" must be permanently affixed to the face protector. If part of the phrase, even most of it, has worn off, the protector is still legal as long as some of the phrase can be seen. Once no portion of this phrase is visible the face protector can no longer be used. If you can't find the required stamps and phrases on the equipment umpires are instructed to ask where it can be located. If it cannot be located, it becomes the responsibility of the coach to remove the piece of equipment. Also, remember to politely request that all equipment be placed in front of the dugout for inspection. This is intended to help speed up the process and keep umpires out of the dugout.