



Ohio High School Athletic Association

“Softball Individual Instruction” OHSAA General Sports Regulation 8.2

*General Sports Regulation #8.2 permits school coaches to provide **INDIVIDUAL** instruction outside the season of play. This includes players that were part of their school teams the previous season. This is designed as guidance for Administrators and Coaches administrating and utilizing this General Sports Regulation while also clarifying several often-confused facts surrounding other out-of-season regulations.*

Go to the following link and watch the short (10 minute) presentation that will explain the regulation and allow the downloading of two important documents. This is available at:

<http://ohsaa.articulate-online.com/4244037503>

1. How is “coaching” defined in terms of Sports Regulation #8, Non-Interscholastic Programs as well as Instructional Program regulations?
Answer: “**Coaching**” refers to any organizational or instructional contact with student-athletes in the sport for which a coaching staff member in a member school is responsible. Specific activities include but are not limited to: practice or other instructional situations in which the coach conducts specific drills, teaches skills, supervises game or competition-like activities or in any other way supports the instructional environment; game or competition situations in which the coach sits on the team bench, is in the direct vicinity of the competition in areas reserved for coaches and/or delivers instruction to athletes while they are competing. “Watching Film/Video” with players is also considered coaching. It is not a violation to be a spectator at a competition and sit in those areas reserved for spectators; however, the coach must be certain not to engage in those behaviors that are specific to the coaching task.
2. Is it considered ‘coaching’ if I provide a list of drills to a player or a captain on my team for him/her to perform with a group of individuals?
Answer: Yes. Given the above, this is clearly “*supporting the instructional environment.*” These are commonly known as “Captains’ Practices” and would only be permitted within the permissions outlined in General Sports Regulation 8.2.
3. What may a school softball coach do with players from his or her program during the school year OUTSIDE the defined season of the sport?
Answer: In all team sports such as softball, the coach may supervise open fields/gyms, conduct fitness/conditioning programs (this includes WEIGHT PROGRAMS) and converse with students regarding non-interscholastic competition/training opportunities EXCEPT during the No-Contact Period. Coaches may also provide INDIVIDUAL instruction to players as defined in Gen. Sports Regulation 8.2. The regulations for “Open Fields/Gyms” and “Fitness/Conditioning Programs” are CLEARLY defined so as not to be confused with regulations that permit individual instruction.
4. When is the No-Contact Period?
Answer: Softball’s No-Contact current No-Contact Period will end on September 6, 2016 - the day after Labor Day. By definition, it ends on Labor Day and starts 28 days prior to Labor Day.
5. Now that a school coach is permitted to provide INDIVIDUAL instruction outside the season of play, what is the intent of this regulation?

Answer: First, the regulation intends to permit EDUCATION-based (school) teacher-coaches to be on the same level as non-school based coaches. School coaches are trained as education-based teacher-coaches and the intention is to provide the same opportunity for these teacher-coaches that non-school coaches currently have. IT IS EQUALLY IMPORTANT TO INDICATE THAT IT IS NOT INTENDED AS AN OPPORTUNITY TO PROVIDE MORE TEAM WORKOUT TIME.

6. Does this mean I can coach a team in travel softball outside the season as long as I do not have more than 4 players on the team from my school?

Answer: Definitely Not. No more than you were permitted in the past. The regulation clearly states that coaches may instruct individual skills with no more than 4 present in all the combined facilities where the instruction is taking place. In all team play there will ALWAYS be more than 4 present, therefore coaching any number of players in team play would not meet the language of this General Sports Regulation. The OHSAA permits a school's entire coaching staff a total of 10 days of instruction/team coaching between June 1 and July 31. This regulation has not changed. There was no intent to increase or decrease the number of days before or during June 1 – July 31. The regulation was changed to provide coaches the opportunity to provide INDIVIDUAL instruction to players and utilize the skills of good school basketball coaches.

7. So, how do you define INDIVIDUAL instruction?

Answer: Instruction in individual skills (hitting, fielding, pitching, position play) to no more than FOUR players in all combined facilities where the instruction is taking place.

8. What if I have 1 player present, is that ok?

Answer: Yes, because the limit is 4.

9. What if I have 4 players present, is that ok?

Answer: Yes, because the LIMIT is 4.

10. What if I have 4 players present and 4 of my coaches present, is that ok?

Answer: Yes, because the limit is 4 INDIVIDUALS receiving instruction present.

11. What if I am working with 4 players and a volunteer assistant coach is working with 4 others on the other end of the field, is that ok?

Answer: No, because the limit is 4 in all combined facilities where the instruction is taking place.

12. What if we simply 'drop a curtain' in the gym so 4 players are being instructed on one end of a gym while 4 others are being instructed on the other. Is this ok?

Answer: No, because the limit is 4 in all combined facilities where the instruction is taking place.

13. Can we have 4 individuals receiving instruction in the 'main gym' while 4 others receive instruction in the 'Auxiliary gym'?

Answer: No, even though the gyms are separate, they are still considered as part of the "all combined facilities" and instruction would be limited to 4 TOTAL in any and all gymnasiums.

14. Can we have 4 individuals receiving instruction in the high school gym while 4 others receive instruction in the junior high or elementary gym?
Answer: No. Regardless of where the gym is located, if it is part of the same school district, ALL gyms are considered as part of “all the combined facilities” and instruction would be limited to 4 TOTAL in any and all gymnasiums. The main reason for this? When this was formulated, no one wanted to get involved with the specifics of *where or how far away* a second facility might be. In some schools, the middle school gym is directly across the hall from the main gym. In other towns, the middle school may be several miles away from the high school gym. It was simply easier to say “no” to all of it.
15. If there are other non-coach individuals in the gym but the coach(es) are only working with 4 individuals at a time, is this ok?
Answer: No, because the limit is 4 in all combined facilities where the instruction is taking place.
16. If graduating senior OR graduate is one of the individuals that is receiving instruction, does he/she count in the total of 4?
Answer: Yes. Because the limit is 4. Regardless of age, there is a limit of FOUR individuals present in all combined facilities where the instruction is taking place.
17. Is there are time limit on how long I can work with a group of 4 individuals?
Answer: No. Local school administration (and hopefully coaches!) will determine what an appropriate length of time is.
18. Are there a limited number of days per week, hours per week or weeks per month that instruction can take place?
Answer: No. Due to sizes of schools, number of individuals interested in receiving instruction, facility availability in schools – no limitations were placed on this.
19. Can I have 2 current juniors and 2 current 8th graders present to make the total number 4 receiving instruction?
Answer: Yes, because the limit is 4.
20. But, based upon the above, aren't 7th-8th graders prohibited from participating/competing with 9th-12th graders?
Answer/Comment: That regulation is true during the season of play and not in effect outside the season. Local school policy may determine whether you are permitted to do this or not. Ask your school Athletic Administrator.
21. Can I have a weight lifting program occurring at the same time Individual Instruction with 4 players is taking place?
Answer: Actually, YES. We assume (of course) weight lifting is taking place in a weight room. As a result, weight lifting programs and individual instruction could occur simultaneously. It is the one ‘permission’ that is often questioned but IS permitted. Quite simply, weight lifting is different than softball instruction. Using a weighted bat is NOT.
22. Would this permit a baseball coach in a school to provide individual instruction to up to 4 individuals in the same gym/facility as the softball coach to up to 4 individuals?
Answer: Since the two programs (baseball and softball) are different sports, there is nothing that would violate this OHSAA regulation and it would be permitted. Each gender would need to meet the requirements of the regulation as written.

23. Consider this scenario: I am a school coach and we have a graduate that played successfully (or still is) at the collegiate level. He/she wants to come in and conduct 'training sessions' with our players. Is he/she bound by this '4 player rule?'

Answer: The answer is complicated. First, by Ohio Administrative Code, any individual that supervises or works with students is required to be approved by the Board of Education AND receive the proper certification (Pupil Activity Coaching Permit). Without it, your school would be taking on the liability of that individual in all aspects. So, the correct answer is the person must be Board of Education approved and therefore would be considered one of your coaches and therefore WOULD be under these regulations.

24. Consider this scenario: Prior to our open gyms, I give our players a workout they need to do. Is this permissible?

Answer: Since you are providing the workout (whether it is written or oral), you are conducting instruction. Therefore, this DOES fall under the new '4 player rule.' Commonly these are called 'captains' practices' but must fall under instruction if coaches are providing the skills to be taught or worked on. It would be permissible, but would be limited to 4 players in all combined facilities where the instruction is taking place. Keep in mind again...the regulation was adopted to provide school coaches the ability to provide individual instruction outside the season. It permits you to do just that. It must be done within the guidelines.

25. What other 'activities' are considered "Coaching" and fall under the guideline of this "4 Player Rule?"

Answer: This should now be clear within the OHSAA's interpretations of the General Sports Regulations - watching film with players may be the best example. It is permitted, but all must be used within the regulation that limits 4 individuals present in all combined facilities where the instruction is taking place. It is the belief that use of these training aids and watching film generally includes SOME form of instruction and therefore these activities are permissible – but within the confines of this newly enacted regulation.