

INSIDE OHSAA SOFTBALL



The Ohio High School Athletic Association

Information and Guidance for "Travel" Team/Non-School Teams & Coaches

The OHSAA provides and communicates regulations with its member schools and coaches. However, the 'explosion' of non-school programs such as "Travel Softball", "Summer Ball" and "Fall Ball" as well as other youth groups outside the school season often affect school team players and their coaches. Since the OHSAA serves its member schools and it becomes nearly impossible to field all calls and emails from non-school coaches. This document serves to answer many of the questions non-school coaches have.

*Jerry Snodgrass
Assistant Commissioner*

The Basic Premise of the OHSAA Non-Interscholastic Rule(s)

Sports Regulation 7 of the OHSAA's General Sports Regulation is the basis for players and coaches and the 'do's and don'ts' of non-school teams. You can reference this at: <http://www.ohsaa.org/sports/rglts/GeneralSportsRegulations.pdf> In a nutshell, it basically indicates the following:

- During the season, team members may not tryout, practice OR compete with summer/fall ball/non-school teams.
- Outside the season, there is a limit of 4 players that played for the same school teams during the previous season on the same non-school team. There is an exception to this between *the Friday before Memorial Day* and July 31st. This exception begins on *the Friday prior to Memorial Day* for PLAYERS since it is the Friday prior to Memorial Day and there are a great number of Memorial Day tournaments around the state. This simply provides a little more flexibility to players and summer teams. This is assuming the school season is complete (see below).
- School coaches, paid or volunteer, may not coach or instruct players that played for their school teams the previous season anytime outside the school softball season. There is an exception to this during June and July. The exception does NOT permit coaches to coach players from their school beginning on *the Friday prior to Memorial Day* – **they must wait until June 1.** This only permits the players to PLAY in excess of that 50% limitation beginning then.

Did You Know?

Gov. Kasich signed House Bill 143 into law in April of 2013. As a result, this required all non-school coaches as well as school coaches to receive education on Concussions? You can access a FREE, and approved course to meet this requirement from the NFHS (National Federation of State High School Associations) at www.nfhslearn.com. Since it is required and free, for the sake of our youth...I recommend you take it now. The law says you must anyhow.

REQUIRED Form for Non-School/Youth Sport Participants

Part of House Bill 143 **requires** that all participants read and acknowledge an Concussion Information Sheet. I encourage you to get 'ahead of the game' and obtain the form, print copies for your AAU/non-school team and collect them. It is the law. You can access/print that form at: <http://www.healthyohiprogram.org/~media/HealthyOhio/ASSETS/Files/injury%20prevention/concussion/Youth%20Sports%20Organization%20Concussion%20Form%20-%20%20ODH%20Revised%203.ashx>

When Does the School Softball Season Actually End?

The school team's season ends upon their last scheduled contest. So, if a JV softball team plays their last game on May 12th, the season ends on May 12th for the players and coaches of that team, even though the Varsity season may not end until May 28th.

When EXACTLY Can a Player Start Participating for her Non-School Softball team?

He may do so as soon as the school season is complete – not a day before. In the above example, if the JV season ended on May 12 as described...he may begin participating (tryout, practice or playing games) with his 'summer team' on May 13th.

But...What About the Varsity Team's Tournament Games?

Sometimes a better way to look at the regulation that states when a player may start practicing/playing with his 'summer team' is to look at it this way: *A player may elect to tryout, practice or compete with his 'summer team' ANY time....but (IMPORTANT), he becomes ineligible to play for the school team from that point on.*

As a "Summer Coach" (Travel, Legion, Babe Ruth, ACME, etc.) What Can I Do (and NOT do)???

If you are a 7-8th grade SCHOOL coach also: You are not permitted to coach players that played for your school's 7-8 teams in Team OR Individual Instruction anytime outside the season of play EXCEPT for 10 days during June and July.

If you are a 9-12th grade SCHOOL coach also: You are not permitted to coach players that played for your school's 9-12 teams in Team OR Individual Instruction anytime outside the season of play EXCEPT for 10 days during June and July.

If you are NOT A SCHOOL coach in addition to your Summer coaching: The OHSAA has no restrictions for non-school coaches.

Q: If I am a school coach of another sport other than softball, can I coach players from my school's softball team?

A: Yes, the prohibition on coaching out of season is 'sport specific'. Softball coaches cannot coach players from their team in SOFTBALL outside the season (except during June and July), Basketball coaches cannot coach BASKETBALL players, etc.

What if I am simply a "Volunteer" for the School Team?

By Administrative Code in Ohio, VOLUNTEER coaches are considered one in the same as a PAID coach, even though you receive no pay and therefore would be under all the same regulations governing paid coaches.

What Can PLAYERS Do (and NOT do)???

1. During the School Softball Season, Players CANNOT participate in any tryout, practice, workout or competition for a non-school (summer, travel, club, etc.) team/program at any time.
2. After the season is complete, players from a school team may practice, tryout and compete with non-school teams.
3. There is a limit of FOUR (4) players that played for the same 7-8 teams or the same 9-12 teams the previous season on the same non-school team.

Q: Is there a restriction on 'who plays with who'...in other words, can a 8th grader play with 9th or 10th graders?

Advice for Non-School Team Coaches

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Separate Junior Highs/Middle Schools

Though Junior High/Middle School softball is not in great numbers in Ohio, school districts that have more than one middle school are afforded the opportunity to have '4 per school' just as the regulation reads. In other words, 4 players from Ronald Reagan Junior High are counted separately from 4 players that attend Richard Nixon Junior High even though they feed into the same High School. This permits 4 from RRJH to play on the same team as 4 players from RNJH.

2 Middle Schools/Junior Highs but ONE combined Middle School/Junior High Team

OHSAA regulations permit schools to form ONE team from two (or more) junior highs/middle schools in the same district. In cases such as this, the individuals that attend one junior high/middle school are NOT counted separately from those in the other junior high/middle school and all count 'together' toward the 4 permitted on the same non-school team outside the season (except from May 27 – July 31).

So....does that mean 4 – 8th graders could play on an Summer team with 4 – 9th graders?

And based upon the above explanation...the answer is 'yes'. Since 7th and 8th are 'grouped together' for this regulation and 9th – 12th graders are 'grouped together', it permits 4 – 8th graders from Smalltown Junior High to play along with 4 – 9th graders from Smalltown High School.

At What Point Is an 8th Grader Considered to be a 9th Grader (for this regulation)

August 1. Example: Emily Smith is an 8th grader that played for Ronald Reagan Jr. High. By interpretation, she is permitted to play along with 4 players that attend his high school. Effective August 1, however, he is considered a 9th grader and therefore would be limited to playing with only ONE other player from the same high school

When Does is an 8th Grader Considered to be a 9th Grader?

August 1. Example: Emily Smith is an 8th grader that played for Ronald Reagan Jr. High. By interpretation, she is permitted to play along with 4 players that attend her high school. Effective August 1, however, she is considered a 9th grader and therefore would be limited to playing with only THREE other players from the same high school in order to stay within the 50% limitation of 4 players from the 'same school'.

Is there Any Regulation that would prohibit a SCHOOL coach from coaching "Travel/Babe Ruth/Legion/ACME, etc. teams comprised of Players NOT from his School?"

No. There is no regulation that would prohibit this. There is also no regulation that would prohibit a school coach from coaching a non-school team during the school season. Often times school coaches (especially sub-varsity coaches) coach a local "travel team" comprised of players that do not play for the school team. There is no regulation that would prohibit this.

"Rotating" Players from a School on "Spring/Summer" Teams

Keep in mind there is no restriction on the number of players that played for any one school team on the same 'summer' team from *the Friday prior to Memorial day* – July 31, however, in the month of May when a school season is complete or possibly in the fall a question arises regarding 'rotating' players from game to game or tournament to tournament. A consistent interpretation of the OHSAA's Off-Season rules do NOT permit rotating players to keep within the 50% limitation during the dates it is in place. In other words, if the Premier-Elite Solar System Traveling Team has Emily, Jacki, Jenn and Lauren (all from the same school) on their team when they enter a tournament on Friday night – Jenn CANNOT be replaced by Angie (from the same school as the others) on Saturday....even if Jenn were injured or cannot show up. If permitted, this would also assume that all FIVE of these individuals would have been practicing together leading up to the tournament – and that is not permitted either.

More Questions?

Many other questions, especially as they relate to school coaches can be answered by downloading the "Off-Season FAQ's" posted on the OHSAA's website at: <http://www.ohsaa.org/sports/sb/girls/2016/QandA.pdf>

Have Another Question Not Answered Here?

This is designed to HELP the non-school coach. Though the number of phone calls and emails make it impossible to return them, submit your questions via email to jsnodgrass@ohsaa.org or Lauren Prochaska at lprochaska@ohsaa.org and we will answer them by adding them to this



Great Resources for Non-School Coaches

Approved Concussion Course: <http://www.nfhslern.com/electiveDetail.aspx?courseID=38000>

Other Concussion Resources: <http://www.ohsaa.org/medicine/sportssafetv.htm>

Softball Sport Regulations: <http://www.ohsaa.org/sports/rglts/SB.pdf>

Ohio Department of Health REQUIRED Form for Youth Sport Participants:

<http://www.healthyohiprogram.org/~media/HealthyOhio/ASSETS/Files/injury%20prevention/concussion/Youth%20Sports%20Organization%20Concussion%20Form%20-%20ODH%20Revised%203.ashx>

OHSAA Sports Regulations Affecting Non-School Coaches/Players:

<http://www.ohsaa.org/sports/rglts/GeneralSportsRegulations.pdf>

NCAA Eligibility Center: http://web1.ncaa.org/ECWR2/NCAA_EMS/NCAA.jsp

OHSAA Off-Season Softball FAQ's: <http://www.ohsaa.org/sports/sb/girls/2016/QandA.pdf>

Online Presentation of OHSAA's "Individual Instruction Regulation: <http://ohsaa.articulate-online.com/4244037503>