



INSIDE OHSAA SOFTBALL



The Ohio High School Athletic Association

“Fall Ball Edition”

Revised: July 7, 2016

The OHSAA provides and communicates regulations with its member schools and coaches. However, the ‘explosion’ of non-school programs such as “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.

Advice for “Fall Ball” Coaches & Players

Jerry Snodgrass

Lauren Prochaska

Assistant Commissioner

Program Coordinator

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 was an exception to this between May 26th and July 31st of 2017*. Since “fall ball” occurs after this July 31st date, players playing in “fall ball” leagues ARE limited this ‘4 player limit’.
- Though a regulation went into place 3 years ago that permits school coaches the ability to provide INDIVIDUAL instruction, this does NOT give any exception to coaching players from their school on fall softball teams. All school coaches should **carefully read the advice/explanations and Q and A’s provided to them.**

Did You Know?

Gov. Kasich signed House Bill 143 into law over 4 years ago. That law now requires coaches (ANY coach school **or non-school**) to receive education on Concussions. Fall Ball coaches 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 coaches 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 a Concussion Information Sheet. I encourage you to get ‘ahead of the game’ and obtain the form, print copies for your 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-%20ODH%20Revised%203.ashx>

If School Coaches Can now Provide Individual Instruction in the Fall.....

Then why can’t they coach players from their school in ‘fall ball’? It is simple – the regulation put into place this year limits the individual instruction to a total of 4 individuals (non-coaches) present in all the combined facilities where the instruction is taking place to FOUR individuals.

As a “Fall Ball” Coach, What Can I Do (and NOT do)???

If you coach a 7th & 8th grade SCHOOL team: You are **NOW permitted** to coach players that played for your school’s 7-8 teams in “Fall Ball”. Any individual instruction you provide would be subject to the provisions of the new Out-of-Season Instruction Regulation.

If you coach a 9th – Varsity SCHOOL team: You are **not permitted** to coach players that played for your school’s 9-12 teams in “Fall Ball”, however, you **NOW ARE PERMITTED** to coach players that played for your school’s 7-8 grade teams in “Fall Ball”. Any individual instruction you provide would be subject to all provisions of the new Out-of-Season Instruction Regulation.

If you are NOT A SCHOOL coach: 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 in “Fall Ball”?*

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 listed above 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, ACME, Legion, etc.) team/program at any time.
2. After the season – which includes FALL BALL - players that played for a school may practice, tryout and compete with non-school teams, but...
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 – EXCEPT BETWEEN MAY 26th & JULY 31 WHEN THERE ARE NO LIMITS.

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

A: *There are no restrictions outside the season so 8th graders MAY play on the same teams with 9-12 graders in Fall Ball and any other non-school team.*

Despite what team are called, any “Fall Ball” team is a NON-SCHOOL TEAM

Do NOT Confuse the 50% (4) Limitation of Players on the Same Team with the Individual Instruction Regulation that Permits Individual Skill Instruction to 4 Individuals at a Time – They are Entirely Different Regulations

Advice for “Fall Ball” Players & Coaches Page 2

Who Can and Who CANNOT play on the Same Fall Ball Team?

Answer: Anyone that played for a SCHOOL SPONSORED softball team during the previous school softball season is bound by regulations approved by the OHSAA.

What Coaches are Bound by OHSAA Regulations?

Answer: Anyone that was paid OR volunteered as a softball coach for a school softball team during the 2015 school softball season is bound by regulations approved by the OHSAA. There is no distinction between paid coaches or volunteer coaches – they are all under the same regulations.

We did not have an 8th Grade (Junior High) School Softball Team – Does she Count in the Player Limitations of 4 per team?

Answer: No. As mentioned, if your school did not have a school sponsored team at the 7-8th grade level, she would not be considered a ‘player’ for your school.

Does a Player From Our School Count in the “4 Player Limit” if She Did NOT play For The School Team Last Year?

Answer: No. He would not count in that limit

From The Above Answer, Does that Mean a Team Could Have Four Returning Players From The School Team Along With 5 Players That Did Not Play for the School Team?

Answer: Yes. The only players that count in the 50% limitation (4) are those that played for the school teams the previous season.

What Ages Can Play Together on ‘Fall Ball’ Teams?

Answer: Any ‘fall ball’ team is the same as a summer team – they are **NOT** school teams. So, the OHSAA rules that address ‘who can play with whom’ are not applicable. Simply put, if the league or teams wish to permit 8th graders to play with 9-12th graders or 6th graders with 7-8th graders, that is entire up to the organizers of the league/games.

Is There a Regulation that prohibits a Volleyball Player at the School From Participating in Fall Softball?

Answer: No. The OHSAA does not regulation/restrict members of a school team (volleyball in this example) from participating in sports of a different season (softball in this example) while a member of the school team. The only restriction would prohibit a volleyball player (in this example) from playing any form of NON-School **VOLLEYBALL** while a member of the school football team. The school or coach may have restrictions (and have the authority to do so) but you should check with your school or coach.

Could a School Coach Coach a Team Comprised of Players from a DIFFERENT School?

Answer: Most certainly, YES. There is no regulation that prohibits a school coach from coaching individuals from another school at any time.

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 jnodgrass@ohsaa.org or lprochaska@ohsaa.org and we will answer them and add them to this document and update it on a regular basis – for the benefit of everyone.

Great Resources for All Non-School & ‘Fall Ball’ Coaches

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

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

Ohio Department of Health REQUIRED Form for Youth Sport Participants:

<http://www.healthyohioprogram.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

PLAY BALL