

TO: All Head Softball Coaches
From: Jerry Snodgrass, Assistant Commissioner
Lauren Prochaska, Program Coordinator
Date: August 19, 2016
Re: Softball Coaches August Memo

There has been a huge increase in amount of correspondence from softball coaches as it relates to out of season coaching – especially with “fall ball”: General Sports Regulation 7.5.1 that permits school coaches a total of 10 days to coach players in team play during June and July and General Sports Regulation 8.2.1 that permits school coaches to coach 4 individuals for individual skill instruction outside the season of play. This memo is intended to clarify this confusion as we soon end the No-Contact Period and into what has become a “Fall Ball” period of time.

No Pitch Count in Softball!

Every once in a while, I make a mistake...and I made one. In my attempt to align administrative regulations of softball with baseball, I inadvertently copy/pasted a regulation for baseball that previously restricted pitchers to 10 innings in days into the softball regulations. This was a MISTAKE and there is NO pitch count being implemented in softball. My apologies for causing the panic!

Inside OHSAA Softball

We encourage you to frequently check the “Inside OHSAA Softball” link at: <http://www.ohsaa.org/sports/sb/girls/default.asp> We periodically update this with various helpful documents. This will be especially helpful to coaches in the off-season as we will take a break from weekly memos.

Out of Season Instruction & Team Play Explanations

First, let’s look at General Sports Regulation 7.5.1 – the regulation that limits/addresses school coaches permissions to coach OUTSIDE the season of play. In so many words, it states *high school coaches are **not permitted to coach players that played for their own school teams ANYTIME outside the season of play EXCEPT for 10 days (as a staff) during June and July.*** Period. That statement then easily explains that no school coach could coach any players that played for their school team the previous season in ‘fall ball’. Period. So, here are a few Q and A’s to emphasize the point:

Q: First, is a volunteer considered a ‘school coach’?

A: Yes, by law, a volunteer coach is considered the same as a paid coach. They must be board approved and they must possess all the certifications. They simply do not receive pay. A volunteer coach, whether he/she coaches 1 hour a week or 50 hours a week must abide by all OHSAA (and ODE) regulations.

Q: Can a coach from our school coach 4 kids from our school that played on our team on a fall ball team?

A: NO. Based on the explanation given above to General Sports Regulation 7.5.1, no school coach may coach ANY kids from their school *that played for their school*, on a fall ball team.

Q: Can a coach from our school coach 1 individual from our school team on a fall ball team?

A: NO. Obviously no – see the above answer.

Q: Can a coach from our school coach individuals from our school team in INDOOR softball during the winter?

A: NO. Again, the above explanation of General Sports Regulation 7.5.1 above does not permit a school coach to coach players from his/her school *that played for the school* in ANY softball outside the season except during June and July.

Q: Since you are saying that school coaches cannot coach **players that played for their own school**, how do you identify whether a person is considered a **“player from his/her school”**?

A: A great (and common) question. A player is considered to be a softball player for your school if she played for a **school sponsored 7-12 team in a scrimmage or game** the previous season. Even if she is a transfer student (new) to your school this year, if she played for the PREVIOUS school team the previous season she is considered to be a player from your school now that she is a student at your school. We simply assume she will be a player for your team.

Q: Can a school coach provide coaching to a team that has players on it from his or her school team in PRACTICE but not a game?

A: No. The same exact rule that provides school coaches the 10 days in June and July applies to practices as well as games.

Q: Can a school coach conduct tryouts for a fall ball team in which students from the coaches' school are involved?

A: No. Tryouts are considered part of 'coaching' – prohibited outside the season of play.

Q: If one of the players on the fall ball team is the coach's daughter and that girl played for the coach's school team, is this an exception and would permit the school coach to coach his/her own daughter?

A: No. There is no exception provided to parents to coach their daughter in team play if that parent is a school coach and the daughter played on the school team coached by her parent.

Q: So, despite everything a coach "might hear" from other coaches, no school softball coach may coach any player that played in scrimmages or game for his/her school team the previous season in any softball practice or game anytime outside the season except during June and July?

A: Yes – EXACTLY. You now understand General Sports Regulation 7.5.1 that has been in place for nearly 20 years.

Understanding the above leads us to look at a further explanation as it involves junior high/middle school players:

The regulation that prohibits coaches from coaching outside the season prohibits them from coaching players ***that played for their school team*** the previous season. So...if an individual did not PLAY for the school team the previous season, **the school coach would not be prohibited from coaching them.** This can now be applied to the following Q and A's.

Q: Does this mean a school coach could coach incoming freshmen (freshmen for the 2016-17 school year) on a fall ball team?

A: Yes – as long as those incoming freshmen did not play for the SCHOOL JUNIOR HIGH team. If you did not have Junior High (school sponsored) softball, the coach could coach them.

Q: If we DID have Junior High (school sponsored) softball and the player played for our junior high, does that mean the school coach can NOT coach them?

A: Yes, since they played for your school team the previous year, even though it was the Junior High, after August 1 we consider them to be a returning player from your 9-12 program.