

To: All Softball Head Coaches  
From: Jerry Snodgrass, Assistant Commissioner  
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*As you know, this past season we began communicating directly with head coaches via a direct email. Though we are a long way from the start of the season, the "Summer Season" has taken on a life of its own. As a result, we felt it would be helpful to communicate a few current items to you know. Another will reach you in late July just prior to the start of the "no-contact period". We hope you find this helpful and also hope you have a productive summer while also getting away from it all for a while.*

### **The Summer's Most Common Question**

More than any other question, we are asked if '8<sup>th</sup> graders can play on a JV/Varsity Summer league teams. The answer is YES. Any of the hundreds of events that take place in the summer (or ANY time outside the season) are NOT school athletic contests that we regulate. So, we do not regulate 'who plays with who' at these events. Only during the actual season of play do we prohibit 7-8 graders from practicing or playing with 9-12 players. Ditto with 'transfer students'. Though more and more schools will only permit students enrolled in their school to participate in 'summer events', we have no jurisdiction over that – thus there is no violation of any regulation if a transfer student plays with your 'team' during the summer months.

### **"Major" Change in the OHSAA's No-Contact Rule**

As you know, the OHSAA's No-Contact Period was established to 'give kids (and coaches!) a break' and to permit fall sports to get a start without the pressure of fall sport athletes to participate in open gyms, fall leagues, etc. And, that "no-contact period" has always run for a period starting 28 days prior to Labor Day. At the time this was created, fall sports actually began about 28 days before Labor Day. However, over the past few years, fall sports actually start on August 1. So it would only make sense that the no-contact period would start at that same time. The OHSAA's Board of Directors agreed with me and beginning with the 2016-17 school year, the No-Contact period will now be 'the month of August' – starting on August 1. And yes, realize it adds 3 days to the previous '28 days'. Sorry, it just makes more sense.

### **Change in NFHS Permitted State Adoption - Softball**

The NFHS Softball Rules provide individual states to adopt (or NOT adopt) a limited number of rules – the only playing rules that could possibly differ from state to state. One of those 'state adoptions' is the use of a double first base. Typically a 'state adoption' is either adopted (required) or not adopted) not permitted. However, over the past few years, this fell in a 'middle ground' – you were able to use it 'if you wanted to'. To stay consistent with the permissions granted with 'state adoptions', **the double first base is going to be required for 2017**. Though this will be part of the required Rules Interp meeting next year, it is our intent through this communication to make you aware of it now for budgeting reasons.

### **Another Significant Change in the OHSAA's Sports Regulations**

Another change that we were able to have our Board of Directors approve was a significant change in the out of season TEAM Coaching regulation. This probably will have little effect on Softball since there is not a great deal of Junior High school sponsored softball teams. Currently, school coaches may not coach individuals in any team play (identified as anything involving more than 4 individuals) anytime outside the season of play except for 10 days during June and July. That regulation has been in place for some time and even prohibits parents from coaching his/her son/daughter in any team (Travel/Club, etc.) team play outside the season. However, we felt strongly there are more and more parents coaching at the Middle School/Junior High level in all sports. By rule, they cannot coach their son or daughter in 'Travel Ball' outside of the June July period. We felt they SHOULD be able to. The OHSAA's Board of Directors agreed and now school coaches (not just parents – I did not want to get into DNA testing) MAY coach players from their school in team play outside the season of play – **with the 50% limitation still in effect – AT THE JUNIOR HIGH LEVEL ONLY**. So, as a school coach, if you wish to coach a group of 7<sup>th</sup> or 8<sup>th</sup> graders in 'travel ball' in the spring or summer, you may do so.

### **Are you a NEW Head Coach at Your School?**

Summer brings a period of time where there are many coaching changes. It also gives rise to many administrative questions for new coaches at a school. And....some often 'perceived' permissions that are usually not factual. Coaches that are new to a school often have many questions – often times assuming they have opportunities to extend the 10 summer days or that the no-contact period does not apply to them (both are NOT true!). The document posted at this link is designed to help you with those many questions at your new school, we think you will find it very helpful:

<http://www.ohsaa.org/sports/sb/girls/2016/SoftballCoachPermission.pdf>

### **Inside OHSAA Softball**

Many documents are posted on the Inside OHSAA Softball webpage at: <http://www.ohsaa.org/sports/bk/ReboundersReport/ReboundersReport.htm>  
These documents are designed to help you find the answers to questions that you may not always know or do not encounter on a daily basis. Check them out. In addition, PLEASE make sure you check with your Athletic Director first – especially in cases with transfer student-athletes.

### **Further Communication – Follow Me on Twitter**

You will receive a communication the last week of July dealing with reminders about the No-Contact Period as well as reminders on "Fall Ball". I always encourage any of you that are social media buffs to follow me on Twitter @Jerry\_Snodgrass I communicate many current softball and OHSAA related issues via my Twitter account.