Ohio High School Athletic Association
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Basketball Coaches’ Memo #3
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With the season on the horizon, I have had many questions thrown my way...that is a GOOD thing. I would always rather you ask for permission rather than forgiveness. When forgiveness is asked for, it typically comes with penalties for you, your kids, and/or the team. If you are unsure, simply shoot me an email and I will always get back to you in less than 48 hours!

Alumni and Other Non-Team Members Practicing With Your Team
In the past week, there have been over 40 questions regarding this subject, so let me share some scenarios with you. At least one of these situations may be helpful for you and your team...

Scenario #1: Your team is playing in a game coming up that has a ‘big man/girl’ and you obviously want your team to be prepared. So, you bring in the 6’10” player that played for your team 7-8 seven-to-eight years ago – an alum of your program. Can you do this?

The Answer: First, many of you have most likely done this for years. Our regulations state that any practice with another TEAM is permitted but must be counted as a scrimmage. We further interpret that to also mean that if any one individual (or more) from a TEAM practices with you – the same holds true...it must be a scrimmage and counted as such. But in this case, the 6’10” alum that is coming in to give your team a good look in practice is not a member of any team. So, at this point, that decision is left to your administration on who is permitted to practice with you. You may be thinking then, ‘who cares?’ I’ll address that later. But since we (the OHSAA’s regulations) do not restrict who practices with you if it is not a team or a member of a team, you would not be violating any OHSAA regulations by permitting it.

Scenario #2: You’re the coach of a girls’ team. You have a group of boys in your school that are not on the boys’ basketball team. They come in two days a week to give your team a ‘better look.’ Is this permitted?

The Answer: Back to the answer in Scenario #1. By virtue of the fact the boys are not members of any basketball team, once again, the OHSAA regulations do not restrict who practices with you. You may be thinking then, ‘who cares?’ I’ll address that later also.

Scenario #3: You’re the coach of the girls’ JV team. Your second team is limited in talent and numbers so to give a better practice look, you want practice against/with the freshman boys’ team in your school. Is this permitted?

The Answer: No. As stated in the previous two scenarios, OHSAA regulations require any practice with a TEAM to be considered a scrimmage. So does that mean you can do it IF you call it a scrimmage and have scrimmages remaining? No again. The OHSAA has a long standing bylaw that prohibits practice and competitions between genders.

**No one ever plans on getting hurt. No one ever plans on an unusual situation to occur. First, none of those individuals that are not members of your team are covered by the OHSAA’s Catastrophic Insurance Policy. Though I am sure in 99% of the cases, the superintendent does not even know you might be doing it. But, I am also very doubtful any liability insurance from the school covers any accident either. So, there you go...the answer to a scenario that is very difficult to find without extrapolating several different OHSAA regulations and bylaws.

Criticism of Officials
With everything occurring on social media today, just a reminder that criticism of officials is not permitted in any form of media, whether it be in print, on live/taped delayed media or on social media. “Think Twice” – as we reminded coaches in the online Rules Meeting.

Parents Behavior
Something you may want to mention at the “Meet the Team”/Pre-season meeting are the expectations of not only your athletes, but also their parents. This is a good way to be proactive with any issues you think could be a potential problem for the season. The NFHS has made many NO COST online courses available to coaches. One course you are encouraged to view is titled “Importance of Parent Engagement” and is easily accessible through the “Learning Center” at https://www.nfhslearn.com. And, again…it is FREE and a good tool for coaches to use in dealing with parents.

Add to the upcoming calendar
I will present more information regarding special events and dates as the season progresses, but two to put on your radar:

1. The 2018-19 Battle for the Golden Megaphone is back. Please forward this to the head of your student section and let them go to work in showcasing your school’s steps in promoting positive support! https://www.ohsaa.org/RTG/goldenmegaphone
2. Military Appreciation Night: If you are hosting a game on Friday, January 18, we ask that your team and athletic department take part. Feel free to reach out to that night’s opponent and come up with a creative way to honor our military.