



THE REBOUNDERS REPORT



The Ohio High School Athletic Association

Volume 5 Issue 4

January 6, 2015

What started 'easily' with winter weather changed drastically with the new year. The challenges to get games made up, frustrations often felt this time of year with teams. I hope to get caught up and provide a few upcoming reports on "Shot Clocks", Video Replay, and upcoming tournament thoughts/issues.

"The Headband"

Every year it is something that causes a stir about this time with the Uniform Rules – Rule 3 of the NFHS Basketball Rules. Last year it was the "Full 90 Headwear", this year it is the headband that ties in the back. Let me explain: First, the rules on headbands have not changed...thankfully. A headband by rule – Article 4 b of Section 5 of Rule 3 – is defined as "any item that goes around the entire head". If worn, only 1 headband is permitted and it must be worn on the forehead/crown, and must be nonabrasive and unadorned. **And, it must be a maximum of 2 inches.** So, along comes a manufacturer that markets a headband that ties in the back. It's ok by definition of a 'headband'. So far...so good. But, that manufacturer also produces a headband that exceeds 2 inches in width. Whether it is 2.5 inches or 3 inches or 5 inches – it exceeds the permitted size. And trust me, ALL equipment manufacturers KNOW the NFHS rules – they are NATIONAL rules. (think about it). Now we have a small issue; that headband is NOT LEGAL since it exceeds the 2 inch maximum.



But here is the scenario: "My team" has gone 10 games with what you now say is an "illegal" headband and at game 11 the officiating crew makes us take them off. That isn't right!"

Answer: Correct...it is not right that it was let go for 10 games. But, one of the requirements for coaches is to ALSO know the rules and not permit players to participate wearing illegal equipment. As a former coach, I admittedly will tell you that 99% of the coaches (myself included) do not know/did not know the intricate parts of various rules. (Trust me when I say the last 7 years as a state-wide administrator have been eye-opening when it comes to the rules). So, we are all at fault – and had even I anticipated these prior to our Rules Meetings I would have addressed them in the mandatory State Rules Meetings for Coaches AND Officials. I often wonder....do these items get released AFTER our rules meetings for a reason? Just a thought. Interestingly enough, the sport of baseball and soccer both had equipment checks done by the officials/umpires prior to the start of the game. Officials/Umpires checked each player for illegal equipment, cracked helmets (baseball) etc. Recently, the NFHS rules did away with those checks and required one simple question by the officials/umpires to the coach: "Are your players properly and legally equipped?" And as you might imagine, that answer would be 'yes' and if a player steps to the plate or is found to have illegal equipment on the field – the penalty is issued to the coach. Football has a variation of the same. If I were a betting person – I see that coming in basketball.

So, the bottom line – if they are greater than 2" in width, headbands are not legal. They never were.

Speaking of Uniform Rules & Other Equipment Issues

So many other things are surfacing about undergarments, shooting sleeves, etc. Just a reminder that any undershirt MUST be the same color as the predominant color of the jersey. I have reports of 'gray' t-shirts, etc., and though again, I could refer to the part about it being ignored – bottom line is they must be the color of the jersey. Anything that is not part of a t-shirt or uniform is considered a sleeve – and must meet the separate requirements of a sleeve. Please review the Pre-Season Coaches Guide for the details.

Other Equipment Issues: Occasionally this time of year with injuries, I will receive a request to issue a waiver for a splint on a broken finger or a cast on a wrist covered by padding, etc. Another key part of the "Equipment Rule" (specifically Article 2 of Rule 3-5) prohibits the wearing of a guard, cast, brace or any hard substance made of plastic, plaster, metal, leather or other substance on the ELBOW, HAND, FINGER, THUMB, WRIST or FOREARM – EVEN when if it would be covered. The main reason for this is to prevent eye injuries to an opponent. I am sure that most doctors would not be aware of the rule so they write the 'note' with good intentions. However, even with a doctor's note – it is not permitted.

"Respecting the Game"

One thing veteran coaches agree with – the high school game is under tremendous challenges and has been for a few years. Numbers are dwindling on teams, kids lack a commitment like they did 'when we played', etc. This is a particularly challenging time of the season; some teams are out of league races, some players are not playing as much as they (or their parents) think they should play. Non-school coaches are often in players' ears about what they would do if THEY were the coach of the kid's team, etc. etc. But one thing nearly everyone agrees upon is the need to 'Respect the Game'. Yes, maybe an overused phrase but if we ALL stop and think about the importance of that, that also means respecting the very rules that are an attempt to keep the game 'pure' and 'good'. Are there changes necessary – most likely yes. But we can use the system in place (the NFHS rules questionnaire process) to help make those changes. Ohio is a significant player in that process and we should utilize it for the good of the game. But in the mean time – we do need to step back and focus on "Respecting the Game" during this time.

Shortened Games – Lack of Numbers

It is unfortunate but occurring all over the state –numbers are down. I am amazed when I hear of teams that have such a long history of success having trouble fielding teams and many that have cancelled JV teams. I believe we are all going to be challenged to find answers and I look forward to being part of that challenge. The 110 quarters permitted at the 9-12 level was designed to 'help' with that, giving the flexibility of playing 'up and down' to maintain JV teams.

Ejections

On the GOOD side; Ejections are down SIGNIFICANTLY this year. To date there have been:

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| Junior High Players: 9 | Junior High Coaches: 3 | High School Girls' Players: 6 | High School Boys' Players: 9 |
| | High School Girls' Coaches: 5 | High School Boys' Coaches: 4 | |

This is a direct reflection on coaches and their role as educators – and I commend you for that. For all the negative I mentioned above, please don't let that overshadow the good that you are doing. I only wish in my career that we could get all school board members and administrators to accept the good over the wins/losses. But it doesn't stop us from trying.