

THIS WEEK IN BASEBALL



The Ohio High School Athletic Association

Issue #1 – April 18, 2013

What a difference 1 year makes with weather. We were in our 3rd week of 70-80 degree weather a year ago and it is only a wish right now. I know with the 'extra' 2 weeks for all players (not just pitchers/catchers), this may have been one of the more 'challenging' pre-seasons for coaches. So, I appreciate your patience and hope the coming weeks see good Ohio weather. My goal is to have a "TWIB" up about every 7-10 days this spring with the first one emailed to all baseball coaches.

Individual Instruction Proposal PASSED by OHSAA Board of Directors (Sept. 2013)

What a step. Will it be forward or backward? The challenge to answer that will be in front of ALL of us...together. What am I talking about? The OHSAA's Board of Directors passed a committee recommendation that would permit school coaches to provide instruction OUTSIDE the season of play. Yes...let me repeat...to allow you as the school coach to INSTRUCT players outside the season. Think about it; for approximately 90 years, the OHSAA restricted coaching to ONLY during the defined season of play. Then, in the early 90's, the present '10 day' rule was adopted for June and July. Now, effective the fall of 2013, the opportunity to give individual instruction will be provided to school coaches OUTSIDE the season of play AND outside of June and July. Hold onto your chair...yes...this WILL be permitted.

Several key points to this:

-The change/permission is designed to give coaches the opportunity to provide INDIVIDUAL instruction. INDIVIDUAL. What does that mean? Shooting...dribbling, SKILL level instruction. There was no intention to add OR even address TEAM instruction in the summer months.

-It means that "Individual Instruction" must carefully be defined. It will. The board adopted the NCAA language that will permit 4 individuals in all combined facilities where the instruction is taking place.

-Individual instruction will not be permitted during the current 'no-contact periods'.

This was adopted from the proposals first made by the OHSBCA. Early proposals wanted a period in May and October of each year for instruction. However, when other sports came along and requested this same opportunity, it became difficult to provide equal periods of time in the school's facility schedules. Hence the 'anytime' outside the season (except no-contact periods).

The challenges?

They are many. Burnout...and not only players...but for COACHES. Do more and no increase in pay. Non-mandatory...but we know how players (and parents) perceive 'non-mandatory'. The coaches WANTED it...and it is up to all of us together to make it work.

September of 2103. That is when the regulation change will go into effect. Not a day before! And since there are already a few that by the end of this column are looking at ways to 'beat the system' and 'get around' the regulations:

-The rule will be CAREFULLY written to look at every possible 'what if'.

-The same committee recommend SEVERE penalties (suspension and tournament exclusion) for violations.

Obviously...more to follow.

Join The OHSBCA

Though membership is handled through the OHSBCA, I strongly encourage you to join. The OHSBCA has been a great allied organization that represents coaches in Ohio as well as any association. And...membership is a requirement in order for your players to receive All-District and/or All-State recognition. You would not believe how many calls I receive from "mom and dad" wondering why 'Johnny' did not get recognition and all too often it can be traced to the coach not being a member.

Important Reminder for Rating Officials

RATE your Umpires! Rating instructions can be found at :

<http://www.ohsaa.org/myOHSAA/OfficialRatingInstructions.pdf> A few informational items relative to officials and tournament selections:as

- Ratings and votes for officials THIS year affect tournament assignments for NEXT year
- Coaches **RATE** officials
- Local Secretaries, Assignors, District Board Members, OHSAA Staff, and Athletic Directors **VOTE** for officials
- Pools are developed from a combination of Coaches Ratings and other's votes
- Each District Athletic Board assigns officials to Sectional and District Tournaments from procedures they develop.

Little Things – Avoid Bigger Issues

Batting Helmets & Tape: With a pre-game equipment check no longer required, umpires are informed to check helmets when a player uses tape to cover the ear-hole. Why? Too often it (tape) is used to cover cracks in helmets. Players that come to the plate with an illegal batting helmet is permitted to secure a new helmet with no penalty to himself or the coach.

Ski Caps as Headware: Seriously? The NFHS playing rules do not permit the use of "non-traditional" equipment. Ski caps are NON-traditional and are not permitted.

Minimum Temperatures?: I wish I had a dollar for the number of times I have been asked if the OHSAA mandates a minimum temperature for games. Though some leagues have been successful in instituting one, there is no OHSAA regulation on this. When you stop and think, you can imagine how difficult it would be to enforce and the 'gamesmanship' that would occur with this; especially if a team were down a pitcher.

Jewelry

Jewelry is NOT permitted. Professional baseball can wear about anything but jewelry is not permitted. The various necklaces that have energy enhancing powers are not permitted.

Sunglasses

I know the sun has not been out enough this spring to be too concerned but it does come up every year. There are no regulations concerning sunglasses. They can be worn on the bill of the cap and pitchers are permitted to wear them. Keep in mind that an umpire can ALWAYS rule something as being 'distracting to a batter' but generally should only occur if/when a pitcher would be wearing reflective (silver coated) sunglasses.

Legal Baseballs

Each year I hear a few concerns regarding 'legal baseballs', I am often asked whether the Rawlings R-100 is the only baseball that can be used for games. The answer is "No", the R-100 is the official TOURNAMENT game ball. Any ball that has the "NFHS Authenticating Mark" on it can be used for high school play.

Scrimmages and Scrimmages vs Games

Though unlikely this season, remember, if you have scrimmages remaining from the 4 permitted, you may use them any time during the baseball season, including during tournament. **But**, a word of caution...a 'scrimmage must be a scrimmage for BOTH teams'. In other words, it cannot be a scrimmage for one team and a regular season game for another.

Don't Over Schedule!

Though many do not realize it, over scheduling is not permitted by regulation. The practice of over scheduling with the anticipation that you may get rained out enough that you will have enough games to fulfill a 27 game schedule anyhow is a practice that is not permitted. Please keep in mind that the penalty for exceeding the contest limitations is **forfeiture and removal from the tournament**. Check now before it is too late!

Jerry Snodgrass
Assistant Commissioner