

To: All Head Baseball Coaches  
From: Jerry Snodgrass, Assistant Commissioner/Baseball Administrator  
Emily Gates, Team Sports Program Coordinator  
Re: Coaches Memo 5: March 31, 2016

*The first full week of baseball is under our belt and despite some bad weather late in the week, a fairly good week across the state. Many schools made southern trips and despite all the great things about that, I also know the challenges that presents. One question that surfaced while teams were 'down south' was whether Ohio HS Baseball teams could play non- members of another state or "Prep Schools" from other states. Alarms went off for many since MOST states do not permit it. Ohio is one of the few that DOES....you may play ANYONE as long as it counts as one of the 27 scheduled games.*

### **Administrating Softball**

Many of you recently caught this on my Twitter account. Effective Monday 3/28, I am now assuming the role of administrating Fast Pitch Softball in addition to my duties as Baseball administrator. Just as Emily Gates, my baseball assistant and Program Coordinator assists me in baseball, Lauren Prochaska will do the same in Fast Pitch Softball. I anticipate no changes whatsoever that affect you as a coach. But....please encourage your Softball coach to follow me on Twitter @Jerry\_Snodgrass as I do put many helpful items there for them (just as I do in baseball).

### **Minimum Temperature?**

This comes up each year – Is there a mandated minimum temperature to determine whether a game can be played or not? No. First, it would be next to impossible for US to monitor. Though I trust the weather apps pretty well, the bickering back and forth on whether it is too cold or not just is something left to baseball coaches to decide. I am aware of leagues that have attempted to establish minimum temperatures and they have found the same issue – it is nearly impossible to enforce and regulate.

### **Who Can We Play Against?**

Addressed a little in the opening of this memo, Ohio schools are permitted to play 'anyone', Freshmen or Junior High teams could even play 'club' or 'travel' teams if they choose. You, just make certain that a scheduled regular season game on YOUR schedule (or a scrimmage). Most states do not permit it to protect the 'purity' of high school sports. Not giving the club/travel teams someone to play against is in essence not promoting the non-school teams or programs. This is especially the case with the states that have an abundance of Prep Schools. However, there is only one Prep School in the state of Ohio that participates in the sports world so it is a non-factor in Ohio.

### **"Outside Instruction" DURING The Season**

This becomes a MAJOR question as we progress into the season. Before I get into the nuts and bolts of this, there is one fact that we should all know: *For many years, COACHES and SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS want players on teams to be focused on the task at hand – school baseball, AND with the coaching and direction of SCHOOL coaches.* This is not meant to be derogatory toward travel/non-school coaches, it is just what we have always believed in. Now...the nuts and bolts of this regulation....

The OHSAA's Non-Interscholastic Regulation DOES permit individuals on your team to receive INDIVIDUAL SKILL INSTRUCTION by non-school coaches during the season **unless YOU or your school has a policy against it.** But....there is more to the story:

First, the OHSAA's Non-Interscholastic Rule prohibits players in a sport from participating in any workout, practice, tryout or competition with a non-school team or program during the same sport season. A baseball player cannot participate in any of the above with a non-school team or program while a member of the school baseball team. And, as mentioned, this was all done years ago at the request of schools AND coaches to keep players' focus on the school team.

So....receiving INDIVIDUAL INSTRUCTION (as an individual OR a group) can occur provided the coach or school does not have a policy against it. But, assuming they do not, many non-school programs have taken this permission and run with it. So the "club/travel" coach decides that he/she is going to give "individual instruction" to a group of players that *just happen to be on his or her spring/summer team.* Permissible? Maybe....but it no doubt is skirting the rule.

So, my method of dealing with it is this way:

1. Generally, I figure if there is some payment for a lesson/instruction....then there is probably little chance they are violating the intended non-interscholastic rule and it truly IS an instructional lesson.
2. If there is no payment – then I generally view it as a rogue summer/travel coach trying to get his team together and simply CALLING it individual instruction (since we would not see what he/she is doing).

One may not agree but my stance on this has been to uphold the integrity of why this rule was created and the best safeguard for baseball coaches to caution their players. Since the penalty for violating it is immediate 'ineligibility' – and resulting forfeitures if that ineligible player would get in a contest.....I figure my stronger stance on it is more protective of the school. AND...I

So...I hope that isn't too confusing. Just the stance I have taken on it to protect teams and coaches and attempt to stay within the framework of the intentions of that General Sports Regulation.

### **Individual Participation Limits – 32 Playing Dates**

As everyone should know by now, with the cooperation of the OHSBCA, we were able to increase the number of contests an individual may participate in from 27 games to no more than 32 DATES. I believe this was a good increase and is designed to help maintain JV and Freshmen programs that are dwindling in many areas. However, someone in the softball world (see above about administrating SB), pointed out there is no reference to junior high in this regulation and if you read it as written, you would be led to believe that a player in the Junior High would be permitted

to participate on up to 32 dates despite only a 17 game schedule permitted at the Junior High. And....I thank him for pointing this out and it will be written differently next year. At present, 17 games are permitted at the Junior High and there was no increase in the number of games OR dates a junior high individual may participate in. A Junior High player may only participate in 17 games. I am taking very good feedback on this whether I want to look at increasing that at the Junior High level next year.