

So, What CAN I Do?



Ok, you're a school Soccer Coach. The season just ended or you have been named the new coach of the school sometime in the off-season. You want to do everything possible to improve your team's weakness' and improve your chances to compete. You sincerely WANT to follow the rules...so what is it you CAN do between now and next season? Everything you WANTED to know and probably some you DIDN'T want to know is explained below.

Comments

First, understand that OHSAA regulations are created and approved each year by the schools – the very schools where you and other coaches are employed. And, they are by design. Kids need a break – COACHES need a break. And, nearly every sports psychologist agrees it is nearly impossible to maintain a 'hungry' student-athlete/soccer player when they are asked to be under the gun for 12 months a year. Though many 'club/travel' coaches come into the school soccer system believing that our regulations limit a player's ability to 'get a college scholarship', it needs to be clearly articulated that school sports – by their very design – are geared toward the 98% that do NOT go on to participate in college and that soccer (and all school sports) are a part of the educational process – not the pathway to a college scholarship. Just a simple fact. Therefore the following regulation AND permissions exist:

Facts

- All Coaches, whether are PAID or VOLUNTEER are under the same regulations. There is no distinction between a paid coach or a volunteer coach with one exception – the volunteer coach receives no financial compensation.
- Out of Season Regulations are in place for Junior High/Middle School as well as High School teams
- All references to a coach or player are **where that coach or player coached or played the previous season**. In other words, any coach between the end of the season and next season is referenced as the coach at the school where he/she coached the previous season. The same for players.
- Schools, through their Principals, are self-policing. Seem strange? It is the very design of the OHSAA – member schools agree each year to become members that give them all the privileges of a member school – insurance, regulations, input in making regulations/rules, tournament participation among them. In return, the schools agree to abide and enforce these rules. And....all at no charge to the schools while also sharing in the profits generated from tournament income and reimbursement for tournament participation in many sports. We tend to refer to this as "Respect the Game". Without it – it does not work.

The No-Contact Period

The "No-Contact Period" is just that – a period of time in which school coaches are not permitted to have any soccer related contact with players that played for their school teams the previous season. This No-Contact Period starts with the teams' last contest and continues for 28 days. I encourage you to read details about the No-Contact period and print this:

<http://www.ohsaa.org/sports/so/2014OSW/SoccerNoContactRule.pdf>

The Individual Instruction Regulation (OHSAA's General Sports Regulation 8.2)

Coaches wanted more time with players. Several 'Coaches Associations' – spearheaded by the OHSBCA – continually requested school coaches be given the opportunity to provide **individual skill instruction** to players from their teams in the off-season. Prior to this, coaches had a 'hands off' policy which forced players to seek help from 'outside' individuals. Many of these "outside individuals" recognized this, charged high fees and often had far less training than the school coach. The OHSAA listened and developed a regulation **giving coaches exactly what they asked for**. For obvious reasons, there are restrictions that protect this permission so it does not turn into something that it was not designed to do. This was designed, as mentioned, to allow coaches to provide *individual skill instruction* – including 'goalkeeper skills'. It was **NOT** designed to increase any team practice time outside the season. With the adoption of this regulation it now DOES permits a coach or coaches the opportunity to teach these skills by permitting individual skill instruction:

- ANYTIME outside the season except during the No-Contact Periods – including during the summer months when coaches are provided 10 days of "team time".
- With a limit of 4 individuals present in all the combined facilities at any one time. Again, refer to the PURPOSE of this regulation.
- Not during an Open Gym or Open Field that is occurring simultaneously – obviously doing so would mean there would be more than "4 present in all the combined facilities" whether those in the Open Gym/Field would be receiving instruction or not.

Want more detail on this Individual Instruction Regulation? I encourage you to read and print this:

<http://www.ohsaa.org/sports/bk/ReboundersReport/GeneralSportsRegulation8.6Explanation.pdf>

Open Gyms/Open Fields

Any sport can conduct an “Open Gym” or an “Open Field” or “Open Facilities” outside the season AND outside the No-Contact Period, however there are some simple definitions and regulations governing them. Occasionally I hear coaches wanting to invent their own rules about Open Facilities to make it fit their needs. However, Open Gym/Field/Facility rules are very clear and defined. Basically, an “Open Gym/Field” is “free and unstructured play”. You, or a person authorized to do so by a school district opens up the gymnasium or supervises and outdoor field and those that show up chose sides and play soccer. Pretty simple. No instruction, no drills on the other half of the field, no Individual Instruction taking place with goalkeepers, etc. Free and unstructured play. Pretty simple.

Conditioning & Weight Lifting

Yes, there are well thought out regulations on “Conditioning and Weight Lifting” as well. Why? So no one can use these concepts as a way to instruct players and have practice outside the season of play.

Want more detail on the “Conditioning and Weight Lifting” Regulations? I encourage you to read and print this:

<http://www.ohsaa.org/sports/bk/2014-15BasketballQ&A.pdf>

The “10 Day Rule” in June and July

There was a time when the only team instruction permitted to school coaches was during the actual season of play. In the early 1990’s, Coaches Associations lobbied for an opportunity to spend time with potential teams. Basically, school coaches (remember there is no difference between a Paid or a Volunteer coach) are permitted a total of 10 days of ‘team’ instruction/coaching (anything more than 5 players in team play) between June 1 and July 31. Once again, the regulation is strictly and clearly defined to eliminate all the scenarios that some might want to ‘invent’ to make the rule fit their needs. Each coach is not permitted 10 days individually – obviously. The 10 days are ‘per staff’ – all defined easily by those coaches that are Board of Education approved – paid or volunteer. There is a separation between 7-8 grade and 9-12 that provides even greater opportunity for team instruction during June and July. A day spent with a group of 8th graders at a ‘Team Camp’ does not count against the 10 days permitted for a freshmen, JV or Varsity team going to a “Team Camp”. A day spent with a group of JV players at a “Team Camp” DOES count toward the 10 permitted for all 9-12 teams. When any team has 2 or less players from the school’s team on it (most likely an “AAU” team), those days do not count toward a coaching staff’s 10 days. Also, keep in mind if you do not HAVE 7-8th grade soccer – none of those players are bound by any OHSAA regulations...which means you can work with them an unlimited amount of time.

Want more detail and specifics on the “10 Day Rule”? I encourage you to read and print this:

<http://www.ohsaa.org/sports/so/2014OSW/SoccerOutOfSeasonRegulations.pdf>

Out of Season Coaching Permissions Timeline

The Season: From defined start date of practice until team’s last contest

The No-Contact Period: From the team’s last contest running continuous for 28 consecutive days

The Individual Instruction Regulation: Running continually from the end of the No-Contact Period at the end of a teams’ season until the start of the “August” No-Contact Period. Resumed again after Labor Day and running continuous to defined start of the season.

Open Gyms/Fields: Running continually from the end of the No-Contact Period at the end of a teams’ season until the start of the “August” No-Contact Period. Resumed again after Labor Day and running continuous to defined start of the season.

Conditioning & Weight Training: Running continually from the end of the No-Contact Period at the end of a teams’ season until the start of the “August” No-Contact Period. Resumed again after Labor Day and running continuous to defined start of the season.

The 10 Day Rule: Permitted between June 1 and July 31