The OHSAA’s Board of Directors approved the addition of General Sports Regulation #8.2.1 that permits school coaches to provide INDIVIDUAL instruction outside the season of play. This includes players that were part of their school teams the previous season. This is designed as guidance for Administrators and Coaches administering and utilizing this General Sports Regulation while also clarifying several often-confused facts surrounding other out-of-season regulations.

1. How is “coaching” defined in terms of Sports Regulation #8, Non-Interscholastic Programs as well as Instructional Program regulations?
   Answer: “Coaching” refers to any organizational or instructional contact with student-athletes in the sport for which a coaching staff member in a member school is responsible. Specific activities include but are not limited to: practice or other instructional situations in which the coach conducts specific drills, teaches skills, supervises game or competition-like activities or in any other way supports the instructional environment; game or competition situations in which the coach sits on the team bench, is in the direct vicinity of the competition in areas reserved for coaches and/or delivers instruction to athletes while they are competing. “Watching Film/Video” with players is also considered coaching. It is not a violation to be a spectator at a competition and sit in those areas reserved for spectators; however, the coach must be certain not to engage in those behaviors that are specific to the coaching task.

2. Is it considered ‘coaching’ if I provide a list of drills to a player or a captain on my team for him/her to perform with a group of individuals?
   Answer: Yes. Given the above, this is clearly “supporting the instructional environment.”

3. What may an interscholastic coach do with athletes from his or her program during the school year OUTSIDE the defined season of the sport?
   Answer: In team sports of baseball, basketball, cross country, field hockey, football, cross country, ice hockey, softball, soccer, track and field, volleyball, and wrestling, the coach may supervise open fields/gyms, conduct fitness/conditioning programs and converse with students regarding non-interscholastic competition/training opportunities EXCEPT during the No-Contact Period. Effective September 3, 2013, coaches may provide INDIVIDUAL instruction to players. The regulations for “Open Fields/Gyms” and “Fitness/Conditioning Programs” are CLEARLY defined so as not to be confused with regulations that permit out-of-season instruction. In the individual sports of bowling, gymnastics, golf, swimming and diving, and tennis, members of the coaching staff may coach students from the school where employed outside the interscholastic season of the sport. The newly adopted Out-of-Season regulation (limiting attendance to 4 individuals) is not in effect for coaches of these individual sports.

4. When is the No-Contact Period?
   Answer: The No-Contact Period is in place for basketball, field hockey, ice hockey, soccer and volleyball and runs from the team’s last contest and continues for 28 days. Additionally, the sports of basketball, ice hockey, baseball and softball have no-contact periods that take place the entire month of August (August 1 – August 31).

5. Can Student-Athletes be REQUIRED to attend “Open Fields/Gym” or “Fitness/Conditioning Programs” or “Individual Instruction Sessions?”
   Answer: Under NO circumstances may coaches state or imply in any way that attendance at these permissible activities is required OR a prerequisite for trying out for or being selected to the school squad.

Revised 6/21/2017
6. What Can the Coach do during Open Fields/Gym and Fitness/Conditioning Programs?
   Answer: The coach may SUPERVISE these. The coach may PLAY (if he/she so chooses) during Open Fields/Gym. For example: A soccer coach may NOT coach or instruct in soccer skills or soccer techniques during these activities and no soccer equipment may be used during Fitness/Conditioning Programs. Open Fields/Gym permit the players to choose sides and play without officials or without keeping any kind of official time or score.

7. Now that a school coach is permitted to provide INDIVIDUAL instruction outside the season of play, what is the intent of this regulation?
   Answer: First, the regulation intends to permit EDUCATION-based (school) teacher-coaches to be on the same level as non-school based coaches. School coaches are trained as education-based teacher-coaches and the intention is to provide the same opportunity for these teacher-coaches that non-school coaches currently have.

8. Does this mean I can coach my TEAM during AAU and other times outside the season now?
   Answer: Yes, but outside the permissions granted within the Individual Instruction Regulation. The “Individual Instruction Regulation” is a ‘stand alone’ regulation and is limited within its definition to providing INDIVIDUAL SKILL instruction with strict parameters of no more than 4 individuals present in all the combined facilities. The following Q and A’s explain this further.

9. So, how do you define INDIVIDUAL instruction?
   Answer: The coach may provide individual instruction (utilizing the definition of ‘coaching’) for no more than FOUR players in all combined facilities where the instruction is taking place.

10. What if I have 1 player present, is that ok?
    Answer: Yes, because the limit is 4.

11. What if I have 4 players present, is that ok?
    Answer: Yes, because the LIMIT is 4.

12. What if I have 4 players present and 4 of my coaches present, is that ok?
    Answer: Yes, because the limit is 4 INDIVIDUALS receiving instruction present.

13. What if I am working with 4 players and a volunteer assistant coach is working with 4 others on the other end of the field, is that ok?
    Answer: No, because the limit is 4 in all combined facilities where the instruction is taking place.

14. What if we simply ‘drop a curtain’ in the gym so 4 players are being instructed on one end of a gym while 4 others are being instructed on the other. Is this ok?
    Answer: No, because the limit is 4 in all combined facilities where the instruction is taking place.

15. Can we have 4 individuals receiving instruction in the ‘main gym’ while 4 others receive instruction in the ‘Auxiliary gym’?
    Answer: No, even though the gyms are separate, they are still considered as part of the “all combined facilities” and instruction would be limited to 4 TOTAL in any and all gymnasiums.
16. Can we have 4 individuals receiving instruction in the high school gym while 4 others receive instruction in the junior high or elementary gym?
   Answer: No. Regardless of where the gym is located, if it is part of the same school district, ALL gyms are considered as part of “all the combined facilities” and instruction would be limited to 4 TOTAL in any and all gymnasiums.

17. If there are other individuals on the field but the coach(es) are only working with 4 individuals at a time, is this ok?
   Answer: No, because the limit is 4 in all combined facilities where the instruction is taking place.

18. If graduating senior OR graduate is one of the individuals that is receiving instruction, does he/she count in the total of 4?
   Answer: Yes. Because the limit is 4. Regardless of age, there is a limit of FOUR individuals present in all combined facilities where the instruction is taking place.

19. Is there a time limit on how long I can work with a group of 4 individuals?
   Answer: No. Local school administration (and hopefully coaches!) will determine what an appropriate length of time is.

20. Are there a limited number of days per week, hours per week or weeks per month that instruction can take place?
   Answer: No. Due to sizes of schools, number of individuals interested in receiving instruction, facility availability in schools – no limitations were placed on this.

21. Can I have 2 current juniors and 2 current 8th graders present to make the total number 4 receiving instruction?
   Answer: Yes, because the limit is 4.

22. But, based upon the above, aren’t 7th-8th graders prohibited from participating/competing with 9th-12th graders?
   Answer/Comment: That regulation is true during the season of play and not in effect outside the season. Local school policy may determine whether you are permitted to do this or not. Ask your school Athletic Administrator.

23. Would this permit a GIRLS’ coach in a school to provide individual instruction to up to 4 individuals in the same gym/facility as the BOYS’ coach to up to 4 individuals? 
   Answer: Since the two programs (boys and girls) are separate, there is nothing that would violate this OHSAA regulation and it would be permitted. Each gender would need to meet the requirements of the regulation as written.

24. Consider this scenario: I am a school coach and we have a graduate that played successfully (or still is) at the collegiate level. He/she wants to come in and conduct ‘training sessions’ with our players. Is he/she bound by this ‘4 player rule’?
   Answer: The answer is complicated. First, by Ohio Administrative Code, any individual that supervises or works with students is required to be approved by the Board of Education AND receive the proper certification (Pupil Activity Coaching Permit). Without it, your school would be taking on the liability of that individual in all aspects. So, the correct answer is the person must be Board of Education approved and therefore would be considered one of your coaches and therefore WOULD be under these regulations.
25. Consider this scenario: Prior to our open gyms, I give our players a workout they need to do. Is this permissible?
   Answer: Since you are providing the workout (whether it is written or oral), you are conducting instruction. Therefore, this DOES fall under the new ‘4 player rule.’ It would be permissible, but would be limited to 4 players in all combined facilities where the instruction is taking place. Keep in mind again...the regulation was adopted to provide school coaches the ability to provide individual instruction outside the season. It permits you to do just that. It must be done within the guidelines.

26. I am a school basketball and soccer coach. My son plays AAU Basketball and Club soccer. Am I permitted to coach him outside the season in AAU/Club Soccer since he is my son?
   Answer: Yes. Though the fact he is your son does not enter into the reason, OHSAA regulations now (effective the August 1, 2017) permit school coaches to coach players from their own school in team play outside the season provided the 50% limitation is still in place on that team. So, regardless of the fact he is your son, you are able to coach an “AAU” basketball team that has players from your school provided there are no more than 2 players from your school on that team. Likewise in soccer – you are now permitted to coach a ‘Club/Travel” soccer team outside the season that has players from your school on the team provided that team does not have more than 5 players from your school on the team.

27. Is this (the above) also the case if I am a school volunteer?
   Answer: Yes, paid and volunteer coaches are under all the same regulations in Ohio.

28. What activities may an interscholastic coach conduct with athletes from his or her program during the summer from June 1–July 31?
   Answer: June 1–July 31 is considered the “summer” period during which coaches may have coaching contact with student-athletes who participated in their interscholastic programs during the past school year with no limitations to the number present. For example, members of a school soccer coaching staff, both paid and volunteer, may have a combined total of 10 days of coaching contact in either instructional programs or non-interscholastic competition programs.
   Question A: Does this mean I can take my team to a Summer Tournament?
   Answer: Yes, it cannot be mandated and if there are more than 4 players on the team you take, it counts toward one of the 10 permitted to the staff in the summer.
   Question B: Does this mean the head coach can coach the Varsity team for 10 days and the Assistant Coach can coach the JV team for an additional 10 days?
   Answer: No, read above. The 10 days are provided as a combined total to the entire coaching staff.

29. From June 1 – July 31, what is considered a ‘coaching day?’
   Answer: During this time, ANY activity in which instruction/coaching takes place in which there are five or more individuals present counts as ONE of the 10 days permitted to a school's coaching staff. If you are providing individual skill instruction and 5 or more are present – it counts as one of the 10 permitted. If you are coaching a team (whether against another team or not), and there are 5 or more present – it counts as one of the 10 permitted.

30. May the varsity coach have 10 days of contact in addition to the JV, reserve and freshman coaches?
   Answer: As mentioned above, the 10-day provision refers to the combined efforts of all coaches for that school. It is not permissible for each coach to have 10 days with his/her athletes separately.

31. Are Volunteers accountable to the ‘10-day provision?’
   Answer: As mentioned above, ALL coaches in public as well as non-public schools, whether they receive a salary or are volunteers, must be approved by their respective Boards of Education (or other governing board in a non-public school) and must meet all required coaching standards as stipulated by...
The only way that a person can work with student-athletes in an OHSAA member school during the interscholastic season is to have this approval and meet all standards. Thus, “volunteer” coaches are also accountable to the 10-day restriction as well as all other OHSAA bylaws and regulations governing coaches.

32. Does WATCHING a camp program or a non-interscholastic contest count as one of the 10 contact days?

Answer: No, there are no restrictions on being a spectator for these events. However, coaches are cautioned that they must avoid any instructional or organizational contact (or the appearance thereof) during these events.

Question A: How far does the concept of ‘coaching’ go between June 1 and July 31?

Answer: Activities such as serving as the goalkeeper, passing to a player, assisting with drills or functioning as a “gofer” during camps or clinics are considered to be organizational in nature and thus would count in the 10-day total for coaching staff members.

33. What restrictions are placed on PLAYERS regarding what they may do (or NOT do) during the sport season?

Answer: The primary restriction for players in team sports is found in Sports Regulation 7.3. Very simply, while a student is playing for the school team (from the time he/she plays in his/her first contest until she plays in the last match of the season), he/she may not tryout with, practice for or play in an actual contest with a non-interscholastic team OF THE SAME SPORT. “A school soccer player cannot tryout/practice/compete with a NON-school SOCCER team,” basketball with basketball, etc., etc.

34. What restrictions are placed on PLAYERS regarding what they may do OUTSIDE the School sport season in non-interscholastic competition?

Answer: Anytime outside the season of play, EXCEPT DURING JUNE AND JULY, players that played on a school 9-12 team the previous season are limited to 50% of the number that constitute a starting lineup in that sport on the same non-school team roster. For soccer, that number is 5; basketball – 2, volleyball – 3, etc. Keep in mind that with the change in General Sports Regulation #8, they may receive INDIVIDUAL instruction anytime within the 4-player limitation.

35. What restrictions are placed on PLAYERS regarding what they may do during the June/July period?

Answer: From June 1 - July 31 there are no restrictions on the number of players from one school that may compete together in the same non-interscholastic program.

36. May a player receive individual skill instruction during the school’s sport season from a non-interscholastic (“Club”/“Travel”/“AAU”, etc.) coach?

Answer: While it is not the position of the OHSAA to encourage outside instruction during the school season, individual skill instruction MAY be received by a squad member at any time in individual lessons provided that these individual skill instructions do not violate any Board of Education, school administrators’ or coaches’ policies.