This is the second in a series of reports that explain the structural order of the OHSAA’s Administrative rules – how they are determined, approved and implemented. In addition, this report explains significant changes headed into the 2016-17 school/athletic calendar year.

Individual Sport Regulations – They Define EACH Sport CAN and CANNOT Do

The OHSAA’s SPECIFIC Sports’ Regulations are just that – “Specific” to each sport the OHSAA sponsors. They are ‘trumped’ by the OHSAA’s Bylaws and General Sports Regulations (read the ADR 1.) Each sport administrator at the OHSAA submits annual “Sport Regulations” to the elected Board of Directors for approval for the next school year. These Sport regulations define everything from the dates of the season to how many ‘quarters/halves’ a player may participate in. Once approved, these Sport Regulations are communicated to Coaches and school administrators. It then becomes the responsibility of a head coach to communicate these to his/her entire staff with the expectation they be followed – part of the condition of membership in the OHSAA.

Where Did These Come From?
When a change is made to a sports’ regulations, many wonder where the change came from. Though the Board of Directors APPROVED the change, who made the recommendation to change in the first place?

Since the OHSAA is a member-governed non-profit organization, members generally make those recommendations. Rather than listen to individuals who may bring a proposal forth, the OHSAA has recognized Coaches’ Associations to present proposals to the Board of Directors either directly by presenting at a scheduled meeting OR by communicating that request through the sport administrator for that sport. To insure a proposal represents their entire membership, Coaches Associations are being asked more and more to provide data for support of their proposals.

How Are The Specific Sport Regulations Communicate to Coaches?
After approving the OHSAA’s GENERAL Sport Regulations the OHSAA’s elected Board of Directors then is asked to approve the SPECIFIC Sport Regulations proposed by each sport administrator. At this point, these changes (and ALL regulations) are communicated to coaches via Online Rules Meetings that are mandatory for the head coach of each sport and Online Coaches Manuals posted on each Sport’s web page at www.ohsaa.org

Online Rules Meetings for Fall Sports
Mandatory Rules Meetings for Head Coaches for fall sports become available on the following dates:
- Girls’ Tennis & Golf: Tuesday, July 19 @ 4:00 p.m.
- Football, Soccer, Cross Country, Volleyball, Field Hockey: Tuesday, July 26 @ 4:00 p.m.

Some Common Q and A’s About the OHSAA’s Sport Regulations & Bylaws

Q: Can Girls’ Play on Boys’ Teams?
A: Yes, even if a school has a girls’ team in that sport, a girl is always given the opportunity to play on a boys’ team. Once they do so by competing in a game or scrimmage, they cannot ‘go back’ to join the girls’ team if they have one. They are ‘locked in’ to playing on the boys’.

Q: Can Transfer Students Play in Scrimmages?
A: No. The “transfer bylaw” states in essence that students who do not meet one of the exceptions to become immediately eligible are Ineligible for all scrimmages, games, Foundation Games, Jamborees, & Previews until 50% of the maximum number of permitted games are completed.

Q: Can Students from Other Schools Participate in our Open Gyms?
A: That depends on your school’s policy. The OHSAA does not restrict this, so it is entirely up to your school district’s policy.

Q: Can 7-8 Graders Play with 9-12 Graders in Summer Team Camps?
A: Again, it depends on your school’s policy (which probably does not exist). However, the OHSAA does not restrict this outside the season.

Q: Can Coaches Still Have Weight Lifting During No-Contact Periods?
A: Yes, beginning last year, weight lifting (only) in a weight room CAN take place during the no-contact period.

Q: Do Cheerleaders Fall Under the Same Regulations as Other Student-Athletes?
A: It is totally dependent upon your school district’s policy. Cheerleading is not one of the OHSAA’s sponsored sports, therefore ‘we’ do not regulate their eligibility status. Tournament regulations address specific limitations on cheerleaders, however.

Q: Can Athletes in A Fall Sport Participate in Basketball Open Gyms During the Season?
A: As long as your school/coach permit it. The OHSAA’s “Non-Interscholastic Rule” only prohibits athletes from participating in non-school programs of the SAME SPORT during the SAME SEASON. Soccer players cannot play in any non-school soccer during the soccer season.

View ALL the General Sport Regulations in their Entirety on the OHSAA’s website at:
http://www.ohsaa.org/sports/rglts/GeneralSportsRegulations.pdf
Major Changes in the OHSAA’s SPECIFIC SPORT REGULATIONS for 2016-17

**Golf:**
Teams will now be permitted to schedule 20 Total matches with up to 2 of those matches being permitted to be played under “Match Play” rules.

**Tennis, Volleyball, Cross Country, Field Hockey, Ice Hockey, Track & Field**
No changes for 2016-17.

**Baseball**
Scrimmages will now be permitted outside the state in non-bordering states. Players in grades 7-8 will now be permitted to participate in contests on 21 playing dates (up from a previous permitted 16).

**Softball**
Scrimmages will now be permitted outside the state in non-bordering states. A double first base will now be required for all regular season and tournament games (an NFHS Playing rule state adoption). Players in grades 7-8 will now be permitted to participate in contests on 21 playing dates (up from a previous permitted 16).

**Boys’ & Girls’ Soccer:**
A “score differential” (mercy rule) will now be used in the 2nd half of regular season AND tournament games anytime the score differential is 6 goals. Also, INDOOR SOCCER is re-defined to now define it by the number of players playing in Indoor Soccer rather than by it being played under USSF Indoor Soccer Rules.

**Volleyball:**
No changes for 2016-17.

**Football:**
Out of Season Individual Instruction (General Sports’ Regulation 8.2.1) will now permit up to SEVEN individuals present in all the combined facilities where the instruction is taking place.

**Boys’ & Girls’ Basketball**
Junior High/Middle School players will now be permitted to play in 70 total quarters during a 16 game regular season schedule. This is an increase from the previous 64 permitted.

**Wrestling**
Dual wrestling meets will now count as ½ point on the team’s wrestling schedule of 20 total points permitted.

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**Summer “Games” Often Misunderstood**
Shootouts, Tournaments, Team Camps, 7 on 7’s….you name it, they occur during June and July. Why? June and July is the only period of time outside the season where “Team Play” is permitted. Team play is defined as anytime more than 50% of a team’s number that makes up a starting lineup is participating on the same roster. Add to it that school coaches are permitted up to 10 total days where they are able to instruct in a team setting, this has led to all the ‘events’ that take place during June and July. BUT…..all of the ‘events’ that take place are NOT under any of our jurisdiction, they simply are not considered to be ‘interscholastic events’ by the OHSAA. Therefore, we do not regulate ‘who plays with who’. What does that mean? It means that individuals from other schools or transfer students CAN play with players from your school. Many schools today are making their OWN rules that only will allow students enrolled in their school to participate but that is a decision the school makes. Also, that means that during June and July, since the OHSAA does not restrict ‘who plays with who’ an 8th grader could participate along with a 9-12 grader in a summer ‘shootout’ or ‘team camp’.

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**Alumni “Games” Explained**
More and more schools are inquiring about “Alumni Games”. They used to be somewhat exclusive to soccer but are becoming more and more popular in other sports. Ohio is the least restrictive of about any state in the nation when it comes to regulating who its teams participate against. Most states restrict member schools to participating ONLY against other member schools. Ohio, however, permits its teams to participate against “anyone” (grade restrictive). That means that a school team could participate against a group of alumni – either as a scrimmage or as a game. However, it must me just that – a **scrimmage** or a **regular season game**. So, it IS permitted in Ohio.
Consider this – many soccer teams are conducting an ‘Alumni Game’ in July (as late as July 31). Why? Since full teams can play together in June/July (see column to left), this could be done as 1 of the permitted 10 ‘coaching days’. AND…since we do not regulate those events – you could actually charge admission then. If you conduct an Alumni Game as a scrimmage after the season begins on August 1, admission cannot be charged for scrimmages.

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**Do You Have Transfer Student-Athletes?**
If you have transfer student(s) at your school that do not meet any exceptions that would grant them immediate eligibility for fall sports, simply remember these 3 important items:
1. They are NOT permitted to participate in scrimmages
2. They are permitted to practice
3. They are ineligible to participate in scrimmages or games until 50% of the permitted number of games are played