Ohio High School Athletic Association
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Softball Coach Memo
Out-of-Season Reminders

Nov. 1 begins the period for permissions granted for players participating in Indoor Softball. With the no-contact period long over, this out-of-season time provides many opportunities for coaches and players. The main purpose of this memo is to clear up any misconceptions that many have and many more that coaches have developed. Ultimately this protects YOU and your players from ineligibilities, suspensions and fines so I hope this helps in many ways.

Indoor Softball
Let's start here. First, someone years ago determined that “indoor softball” is different than outdoor softball and therefore should be granted permissions that remove some restrictions from out-of-season play. Regardless of my opinion on that, “it is what it is”. So, here is a look at Softball Regulation 2.6 that states:

**Participation in Indoor Softball is not a violation of OHSAA Non-interscholastic Sports Regulation 7.3 if played indoors from Nov. 1, 2017 – February 1, 2018, for student-athletes.** What does this mean?

- **Fact:** Read ‘as is’, this regulation is a player regulation.
- **Fact:** Players may play in excess of the so-called “50% limitation” (4 in softball) on teams if they are playing in team play INDOORS between those 2 dates.
- **Fact:** There is nothing in this regulation that addresses school coaches.

This rule is then quite simple taking it on the surface as how it is written. It is a regulation that gives permission to players that played for school teams the permission to play in excess of the 50% limitation. It does not extend any permissions to coaches. Coach regulations for out-of-season are a totally separate regulations. Now, let's look at COACH regulations:

- **Fact:** Coaches are permitted 10 days per staff of team instruction during June and July
- **Fact:** Coaches may coach players from their school teams in non-school softball (travel, club, indoor, etc.) team play provided there are no more than 4 individuals from the same school teams and it is not during the No-Contact Period. This regulation was adopted in the 2017-18 school year and was communicated to softball coaches in an August email (see below also)

- **Fact:** Teams that are comprised of 4 or less players from the same school's 9-12 teams in which school coaches (paid or volunteer) are coaching, cannot have players rotate on and off team rosters –whether a roster exists or not.

So this clearly defines that board approved softball coaches (paid or volunteer) can:
1. Coach a team in indoor softball IF that team is made up of 4 or less players that played for the same school’s 9-12 teams last year,
2. NOT coach a team in indoor softball if that team is made up of MORE than 4 players that played for the coach’s same school’s 9-12 teams last year.
3. NOT coach teams that have 4 individuals from the coach’s 9-12 school teams that rotate on and off that team’s roster.

**REMINDERS and REVIEW of Sport Regulation 7.5 – Coaching Out of Season in Club/Travel Softball & “Fall Ball” & Indoor Softball**
From end of July correspondence, you should now be aware that school coaches may coach “Fall Ball” teams that include players from your own school. We cannot emphasize the number of emails and calls we have received attempting to ‘invent’ many interpretations of this. It is quite simple but, we need to emphasize 2 important things with this new permission:

1. The regulations that limit any non-school team to only 4 players that played for the same school team still exists. That has not changed and there is no plan TO change it. And it does not matter whether a school coach is coaching the ‘fall ball’ team or a non-school coach is coaching them – THE 4 PLAYER RESTRICTION REMAINS IN PLACE.
2. There can be no rotating players from your school teams from one game or practice to the next. In other words, your permission to coach a team that consists of 4 players from your school does NOT give you the permission to use 4 different players in each and every game or practice you participate. This is true whether you are coaching the non-school team or not, rotating players to ‘get around’ the 4 player limit is not permitted.

**Individual Instruction**
We are entering the 5th year for the Individual Instruction Regulation. Knowing most softball coaches do not utilize this until January, there are still some things to take note of. Though there are some fairly strict parameters, this is a reminder that the purpose of this was to provide coaches the opportunity to provide individual SKILL instruction – NOT team workouts. I would encourage you to read, print and disseminate the updated explanation of this regulation located at:

Four MEANS Four – no more than 4 individuals in all the combined facilities.
Open Field/Open Gym
It has been our intent to remove any and all misunderstandings and also address all scenarios permitted within various other sports regulations – most notably those addressing “Open Gyms/Fields” and “Conditioning & Weight Programs”. Basically, in an “open field”….it can be unstructured play. No instruction, no hitting ground balls, no rotating into the batting cages, etc. You may ask “what CAN you do”? Basically, players can choose sides and….play softball. But keep in mind, that is why the individual instruction regulation was put in place – to PERMIT you to do some coaching/instruction outside the season. “Open Fields/Gyms” and “Individual Instruction” are 2 entirely separate regulations and I strongly encourage you to understand both. Detailed off-season softball Q and A's are addressed in a document under the “Inside OHSAA Softball” heading at: http://www.ohsaa.org/sports/softball