As we prepare for the start of the 2019 season, this is the first of several direct correspondences you will receive from me to communicate important points during the season. These memos will also be posted on the softball page on the OHSAA website for easy reference in case your assistant coaches would like to view them as well. A reminder that practice may begin on February 18 and you are permitted to schedule your first game beginning March 23. I look forward to another exciting softball season!

Rules Meeting
The required Softball State Rules Meeting, for both coaches and officials, will be available beginning this Wednesday, January 30 at 9:00 am on your myOHSAA profile. As a reminder, the State Rules Meeting is a mandatory requirement for every head softball coach to view in the state of Ohio. If the Rules Meeting is not viewed prior to Thursday, March 21 at 11:59 pm, there will be a $50 late fee to view it. The FINAL deadline to view the Softball Rules Meeting is Monday, April 29 at 11:59 pm. The penalty for not completing this requirement by the final deadline is removal from the OHSAA Softball Tournament.

From January 30 at 9:00 am until April 29 at 11:59 pm, you may view the Softball Rules Meeting by logging into your myOHSAA profile, clicking on the Rules Meeting tab and then Find a State Meeting.

Softball Coach Manual
The 2019 Softball Coaches Manual is now available on the Softball page on our website. This manual is a great reference for all coaches and administrators, with information on the NFHS rules, explanation and reminders on OHSAA administrative rules, FAQ’s, etc. This can be found at https://ohsaa.org/Portals/0/Sports/Softball/sbmanual.pdf.

Indoor Softball
A reminder that the last date to participate in indoor softball is February 1.

Open Gyms/Fields
Open gyms/fields cannot be made mandatory, they must be ‘unstructured free play’, so no coaching may take place. Under no circumstance may open gyms/fields be a disguise for an early start to practice. Open gyms/fields are defined in their entirety in General Sports Regulation 10.

Non-Interscholastic Rule
General Sports Regulation 7 prohibits student athletes from participating in programs of the same sport, such as travel or recreational softball, during the high school season of play. A student athlete is considered a team member once they have competed in their first scrimmage, preview or contest for their school. We recommend that coaches go to great lengths to explain this to their players and remind them periodically that they are not permitted to play on a non-school team during the softball season, as doing so makes the individual immediately ineligible.

A student athlete may participate on a non-school team as soon as her school softball season is complete.

Private Instruction During the Season
We get this question a lot and wanted to make sure it was addressed!

Q: Are softball players able to receive private instruction during the school season?
A: Student athletes may receive outside private instruction during the softball season, as long as the instruction received is one-on-one (hitting, pitching, etc.)—the instruction cannot be any type of team play.

Please do not confuse private instruction with the Individual Instruction rule (General Sport Regulation 8); the Individual Instruction rule affects school coaches only and is a separate rule.

Out of State Travel
If you are traveling to a non-contiguous state over spring break or anytime during the season, please remember the following:

- No school time may be missed for travel or competition.
- The contest must be classified the same for both teams involved—it cannot be a scrimmage for one school and a game for the other.
- The contests must count in your 27 game-season limitation or the four-scrimmage limitation.
- All Ohio administrative rules must be followed.