

To: All Head Baseball Coaches  
From: Jerry Snodgrass, Assistant Commissioner/Baseball Administrator  
Emily Gates, Team Sports Program Coordinator  
Re: Coaches Memo 2 – February 19, 2016

*It all starts Saturday, February 22. I encourage you to be sensible. It is a long month before your first game so you don't need to cut on the first day and you probably can afford to give winter sport athletes a few days off. Neither are required but just consider it. This is the second of the weekly notes to keep in contact with you and provide you and your assistant coaches with helpful information. Please continue to share these with your staff and they are always posted online a few days later at: <http://www.ohsaa.org/sports/bb/boys/default.asp>*

### **Just Tryin' to be Helpful**

Yes, this is directed to BASEBALL coaches. Please provide this to assistant coaches in your system. But also....all the administrative rules for softball are the same as baseball. Be a good guy if you want – share them with your softball coach. They may find them very helpful. And they might give you an extra 15 minutes of gym time while you are inside! The reference at the bottom on NFHS rules obviously do not apply but all other items I mention do. And, since I do not administrate softball, I am only communicating with baseball coaches. We are just tryin' to help.

### **Non-Interscholastic Reminder #1**

Trust me, you'll see many of these reminders – this is the first of them. The good news – non-school baseball has exploded in Ohio. The bad news – non-school baseball has exploded in Ohio! Joking aside, aside from 'overuse injury' issues, which will be addressed in the future, the explosion of non-school (travel/club) baseball in Ohio has brought with it many challenges to OHSAA rules affecting school teams and players. A basic premise of OHSAA regulations prohibits players on school teams from practicing, trying out, working out, or competing for any NON-school baseball while a member of the school baseball team. If you are on the team – say goodbye to your travel/club baseball team until the school season is over. PLEASE put this on your weekly reminders – especially for your JV/Freshmen teams (if you have them). Please remind them of this weekly. Why? Because if they do violate this – they become ineligible immediately. And, if they would happen to get in a game as an ineligible player because you did not know they played in a travel game or practice/tryout, it would require forfeiture of that game. Please put this as a weekly reminder.

### **Non-Interscholastic Rule – Fact 1**

Now let's answer this. Based on the above, once the player is part of the school team, they cannot participate in club/travel baseball. Period. But (and this is a confusing/seldom known fact), a player actually does not become a member of the school baseball team until he plays in the first scrimmage or game for the school. So, you can see what develops – practice begins Saturday, Feb. 22. A player goes ahead and practices with his travel team on February 28. So does he violate the rule and become ineligible?? No....not if he did not play in a SCHOOL game or scrimmage before that. And, I have enjoyed the mild winter but it is highly doubtful you would have a scrimmage or game by then.

### **Non-Interscholastic Rule – Fact 2**

So, what is defined as a "Non-Interscholastic" event? Any practice, tryout, workout or game with any NON-SCHOOL team. We commonly call it 'travel' or 'club' baseball. But other 'events that fall into this are All-Star games, Showcases, college tryouts (an increasing trend that has caused issues), and professional tryouts. You cannot caution players enough.

### **Ineligible Players due to Transfer and Scholarship**

No ineligible player, regardless of reason, is permitted to play in any **contest** and the OHSAA defines contests as "Scrimmages, Previews, Foundation Games, Regular season games, and Tournament games". So, just a reminder that those sitting out the first 50% of the season are **not permitted to participate in scrimmages**.

## **“Hey Blue!” The Slide Rule**

*One of the chief cornerstones for NFHS rules committees is the consideration of safety for those playing the respective sport. It was with this fundamental in mind, that the Baseball Rules Committee adopted the "force-play slide rule" in high school some years ago. The intent was to eliminate the "take-out" slide that had dangerous potential for injury as a baserunner would attempt to disrupt the infielder attempting to receive the baseball and throw it for a double play. The rule basically requires that a runner, in a force situation, slide in a direct line between the two bases. It is important to remember that in high school, a slide is never mandatory, but in a force situation, if the runner chooses to slide, he must execute a legal slide and do so in a direct line. The runner may slide to a side of the base where the fielder is not making the play, or may go in standing up by moving away from the base to the side, or infield, where the play is not being made. One of the key components is, when the runner opts to slide, he does make a legal slide. It is important to remember that the fielder has "protection" on the back side of the base or home plate. If a runner slides and goes past the base or plate, and makes contact or alters the fielder's play, the runner has committed an illegal slide, which is interference in this situation. The rule does apply at all bases, including home plate, (except for first base), in a force situation.*