

**•CURRICULUM COURSES:** Classes with content specific to an MHSAA tournament sport (e.g., football class) must be open to any student and must provide nearly equal attention to three different topics in an academic term such as other sports, weight training, fitness, etc. In football, except during the season, plays and schemes of the school team may not be taught and regular or improvised football equipment may not be used. Out of season, school coaches cannot be involved in these classes unless they are the full-time teacher of the course.

### During the Summer ...

During the summer, some limitations continue. Except for football, fewer restrictions are in place. There are no school teams in the summer; however, school coaches and students may assemble from the same school over the summer in various settings beginning on the Monday after Memorial Day. Football has a practice limit of no more than seven players in the summer prior to Aug. 1 in informal football activities in helmets and shoes with a coach.

**•SUMMER COMPETITION LIMITS:** Five sports are limited to 15 dates of competition when more than four or seven students from that school and a school coach are present in competition against others not enrolled in that school. Basketball, volleyball and ice hockey (four players and coach); soccer, lacrosse and football (seven players and a coach). Football may only have seven summer dates of competition (passing league games). Summer competition must be prior to Aug. 1 and must follow the travel rule if held outside of Michigan: ALL teams at an event must be within 300 miles or from bordering states (not just those you play against). Sports not on this list are not limited in summer competition, but the four Year-Round Principles continue to apply.

**•INCOMING 9TH GRADERS** become “high school students” when the four-player rule ends on the Monday after Memorial Day. Provided these former 8th-graders are not still involved in middle school sports, they may begin working out with high schools in the summer. This does not change the rule that prohibits recruiting for athletic purposes (undue influence).

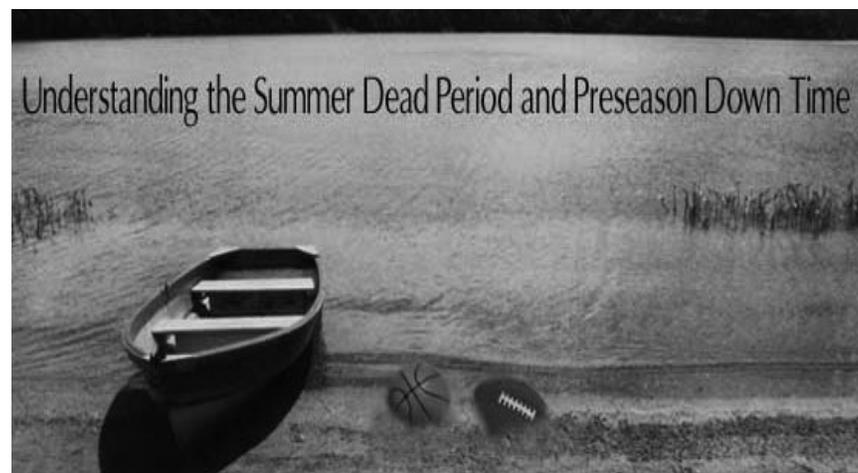
**•THE FOUR-PLAYER PERIOD ENDS** on the Monday after Memorial Day which is also the Monday after Baseball and Softball District Tournaments and the Track Finals. Except for the dead period (below), any number of players may have contact with their coach in the summer provided the four Year-Round Principles apply (there is a seven-player limit in football). Schools must regulate the frequency and intensity of any summer voluntary workouts so students may participate in more than one sport and so that families may have time away from school sports.

**•SUMMER DEAD PERIOD:** A seven-day zero player/coach and zero school facility period of time from the end of school or participation in the MHSAA spring tournaments to Aug 1. No coach contact whatsoever is allowed including at fundraisers, functions or places of employment. Each school sets its own seven-day dead period and it applies to ALL sports, except that non-school summer baseball or softball games and practices (American Legion) may continue in the summer dead period. Most schools select a seven-day period which includes July 4.

**•FOOTBALL:** Only football helmets and football shoes are permitted out of season in ANY setting, including camps or clinics, whether held in-state or out-of-state. No pads except during the season. In the summer, a school football coach has a limited allowance to conduct or coach at a bona fide football camp with any number of players from the school. If a school is conducting a football camp, be sure and consult the Handbook for the actual rule. In the summer, besides the seven dates of competition (passing leagues), school coaches and up to seven players may assemble at one time for informal football activities or workouts which must also follow the four Year-Round Principles.



# OUT-of-SEASON COACHING REGULATIONS



A Summary of MHSAA Handbook  
Regulations and Interpretations

## Four Year-Round Principles ...

**Four year-round principles** apply to schools and coaches out of season ALL the time; both summer and off season during the school year at workouts, clinics, camps or competitions.

1. **No activity may be mandatory or part of selection to the school team.**
2. **No school transportation or school or booster club funds for transportation.**
3. **No school general funds; a limit of \$200 per student and sport from school-approved fundraised money is allowed.**
4. **No school competition uniforms or warmups may be used (practice jerseys are permitted).**

## During the School Year ...

During the school year, there are limitations on coaches and some permitted activities:

**•FOUR-PLAYER PERIOD:** Coaches are limited to providing coaching in their sport to four students in grades 7-12 of the school district in which they coach. Even though MHSAA membership now extends to 6th-graders, the out-of-season coaching limitation applies to grades 7-12; so existing programs to 6th-graders with school coaches may continue. The four-player period runs from the Monday when Aug. 15 occurs through the Sunday after Memorial Day (Aug. 12, 2019 through June 1, 2020). Coaches can coach out of season up to four “players” (students in grades 7-12 are called players for this rule). This applies to any setting including a camp, clinic, AAU game, travel softball team or indoor soccer league. As has always been the case, two coaches present does not increase the limit to eight players.

**•INCIDENTAL PRESENCE OF MORE THAN FOUR PLAYERS:** Bowling and golf coaches may be present coaching within the four-player rule at a non-school facility even if more than four students of their school district in grades 7-12 are present, provided they are only coaching four players and other students’ presence is **coincidental and not prearranged by the coach**. This same allowance is permitted to any coach at **non-school facilities with multiple playing surfaces** such as is likely to occur at a large soccer or tennis complex.

**•CALLING SOMETHING A CLINIC,** charging a fee or holding the event at a non-school facility (batting cage, indoor soccer or lacrosse) does not waive the four-player rule. Booster clubs may not fund or support activities during the school year which the school or coach are prohibited from doing such as batting cages, indoor courts or fields, hire trainers, etc. High school administrators (including athletic directors) acting on their own in programs involving students in grades 9-12 may not sponsor or support out-of-season programs or perform out-of-season functions which the school or coach is prohibited from doing. This allows administrators to be involved with middle school age students out of season.

**•ROTATIONS** (also known as circuit training or stations) are permitted provided there is no more than one four-player group with sport-specific instructions. Rotations from open gyms, weightlifting or conditioning to four-player sport-specific skill workouts are intended to be a more efficient approach to off-season workouts. Sport-specific equipment is permitted at an open gym but there may not be any coaching instruction. **Any number of rotations can have sport equipment for students to select from, but only one group may have coaching instruction and this group may not exceed four students. These rotations must adhere to the elements of an open gym and are not permitted during the preseason down time. See the next page on open gyms.** Two gyms on the same campus does not permit two four-player skill groups. The four Year-Round Principles continue to apply – especially that all sessions are voluntary and not part of team selection.

**•COORDINATING OR ASSISTING:** During or in preparation for the four player period coaches may not make arrangements for activities they themselves are prohibited from doing. Groups that exist because of the school (e.g. booster clubs) may not do that which the school or coach is prohibited from doing. Coaches may not provide transportation, create a schedule for more than four of their players, or arrange for someone else to coach to get around the four-player rule. Coaches may be spectators at events but not coach when more than four of their players are present; and they may distribute information produced by someone else regarding out-of-season camps or clinics. Involvement must be voluntary and clearly not part of selection to the school team. In hockey, a school may commit to rent ice for off-season, non-school activity so as to secure in-season ice rentals and pricing. If necessary, consult the exact Handbook language on what is generally prohibited and permitted during or in preparation for the four-player period.

**•CONDITIONING AND WEIGHTLIFTING:** Provided they are not mandatory or part of team selection, conditioning and weightlifting are permitted year-round except during the summer dead period. Conditioning must be non-sport-specific and not use any equipment such as balls, nets, dummies, sleds or helmets. Jump ropes, cones, fitness apparatus are permitted.

**•OPEN GYMS (& ROTATIONS):** May be conducted in one or more sports but must follow the four Year-Round Principles and especially not be part of team selection. Coaches may not coach, critique, evaluate or participate in the sport they coach. Open gyms are student conducted and recreational. There shall be no organized instruction or competition, drills or practice structure and no instruction by captains, parents or others. Open gyms must be open to all students of the school, but not necessarily open to the general public or students from other schools.

**•PRESEASON DOWN TIME:** Just prior to each season, to establish an official start to practice, this period prohibits open gyms, rotations, competitions, or sport-specific camps or clinics from occurring at the school or sponsored elsewhere by the school regardless of whether that school sponsors the sport. No competition, intrasquad or intersquad may occur with groups that resemble school teams. Voluntary conditioning, weightlifting and four-player coaching may continue in the preseason down time – but no open gyms, practices or rotations. The fall sports down time is Aug. 1 to the start of practice, winter sports is 14 calendar days before practice begins, and the spring sports down time runs from March 1 to the start of practice. Middle schools observe this period 14 days before practice begins. Because conditioning is so similar to actual practices in swimming, cross country and track, coaches in these sports may not provide instruction in any sport-specific technique or conduct sessions which involve both time AND distance during the preseason down time.

**•CHEER RESTRICTIONS:** Because of the similarity between Competitive & Sideline Cheerleading, a school which sponsors MHSAA Competitive Cheer may not hold any cheer activities from the end of winter sports (the last Monday of March – 3/30/20) through the 3rd Friday in May (5/22/20). This restriction prohibits coaches or cheerleading advisers from working with more than four students from the school district grades 7-12 in cheer-related activities including but not limited to tumbling, gymnastics, instruction, routine development, tryouts, etc. This rule prevents competitive cheer teams or individuals from holding out-of-season activities under the premise of sideline cheer practices or tryouts. (Note: Interpretation 236 prohibits a coach from “coordinating or assisting” during or in preparation for the four-player period. A coach may not arrange for a parent or non-staff person to coach out of season or to do that which the coach is prohibited from doing). Ending the cheer restriction time by the third Friday of May allows a school, if it so chooses, to have fall sideline cheerleading tryouts before school is out in June. Competitive cheer coaches remain subject to the four-player rule through the Sunday after Memorial Day.