

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 (battling 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 battling 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 are prohibited from making arrangements for activities they are prohibited from engaging in. 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.