

# INSIDE OHSAA SOFTBALL



The Ohio High School Athletic Association

Open Gym Explanation

Revised November 2016

“Open Gyms”....probably one of the most misleading concepts when it relates to Softball and Baseball. First, softball is not played in a gymnasium – issue #1. Which, is why the title of General Sports Regulation #10 is Open Gymnasiums OR **Facilities**. Here is a look at what softball (and baseball) coaches CAN and CANNOT do and an overall explanation of General Sports Regulation #10 It should take the doubt out of what coaches CAN and CANNOT do.

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## ***Open Gymnasiums or Facilities*** ***General Sports Regulation 10***

Softball and Baseball Coaches have come to rely on “Open Gyms” to prepare for the upcoming season and generally start utilizing the permissions in this regulation (General Sports Regulation 10) in early January after the Christmas Break. Unfortunately, there has been much read into the regulation OR much not defined – giving reason for coaches to develop many of their own interpretations. “Open Gyms” are defined as “**unstructured free play**”. That definition lends itself then to understand that basically the only thing permitted is to choose sides and play – which IS what occurs in *basketball* Open GYMS.

The individual Instruction Regulation (General Sports Regulation 8.2.1) was enacted to allow for all the OTHER drills, etc. – soft toss, pitching instruction, hitting instruction, etc. And, it was a MAJOR rule change that opened up the ability for coaches to do MANY things outside the season.. And, the limitations/parameters within that regulation limit those numbers that are present to FOUR at any one time (in any and all facilities where it is taking place). Nearly anyone could accept and understand if that limitation was NOT in place, then **practice** would take place outside the season and basically would/could lead to year-round practice.

So, in a nutshell, nearly any ‘activity’ that is organized and NOT unstructured/free play – it would HAVE to fall under the guidelines and parameters of the Individual Instruction Regulation.

You can read everything about that regulation at:

<http://www.ohsaa.org/Portals/0/Sports/Softball/IndividualInstructionRegulation.pdf>

Of course, this would lead to the question of “**What IS permitted during an Open Gym?**”.....

Basically, by the definition of “Open Gymnasiums or Facilities” – players could choose sides and play (not practical indoors of course) or pick up balls and throw to each other. May seem restrictive (and probably IS) but this reverts back to exactly why the Individual Instruction Regulation was enacted.

The only area that we have defined that would be permitted to occur in an open gym in addition to any unstructured/free play is the supervision/use/feeding of a pitching machine. However, when instruction takes place inside the cage with a machine, once again, it must fall within the parameters of the Individual Instruction Regulation.

If you instruct or if it is “Organized” – It must fall within the Individual Instruction Regulation.

If you just supervise players throwing in a gym/indoor facility or supervise them hitting in a cage – it can fall within the Open Gym/Facility Regulation