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PRACTICE AND CONDITIONING RULES INTERPRETATIONS

Last updated Monday, June 25, 2007. Additional interpretations are noted by this (“☛”) symbol.

The outline below is meant to give schools a guide to determining what is, and is not, a violation of the NCS bylaws and policies concerning practice during the season of sport, outside the season of sport, and during the defined summer months. The NCS Commissioner of Athletics has the power of interpretation of the definition of practice. Questions regarding practice, sport specific conditioning activities, general conditioning activities, weight training, etc. should be directed to the NCS Office in writing.

General Rules:

Definition of Season of Sport

Season of sport is defined as the time period between the first day of practice and the final date of competition, according to the dates set by the Board of Managers on a yearly basis. An individual student's season of sport is defined as the time period, between their first participation in an inter-school competition and their final date of competition for the school team, up to and including the North Coast Section and/or CIF championships.

The first day of practice and the final date of competition can be found in the NCS Championship Schedule, a three-year calendar of dates updated each year by NCS staff and approved by the Sports Advisory Committee and Board of Managers. Be aware that the Board of Managers, at any of their three meetings each year, may change these dates. The NCS Championship Schedule may be viewed and printed from the NCS web site, www.cifncs.org. In the left hand column click on Calendars, then click on NCS Championship Schedule – 3-Year, then click on the current year's or following year's calendar.

During the season of sport, NCS member schools are allowed to practice, scrimmage and compete against other high school teams according to NFHS, CIF, NCS, league and school guidelines. NCS practice and season of sport guidelines can be found in the NCS Sports & General Rulings Handbook in the 100H and 200H series of bylaws. All interpretations in this document are based on the NCS Sports & General Rulings Handbook 100H and 200H series of bylaws.

Approved Sport Specific Conditioning

Only the sport of football has an approved sport specific conditioning week (the week prior to the start of football practice). No other sport has an approved sport specific conditioning period. If a school sport, other than football, conducts specific sport conditioning as a team or individuals prior to the start of the season, that school is in violation of NCS bylaws. Sport specific conditioning sessions by a school are prohibited outside the season of sport during the school year.

Weight Training and Other Allowable General Conditioning Activities

Weight training is not a CIF sport. Potential team members may weight train anytime during the course of the year with school approval. However, when weight training is moved from the weight room to the outside and drills involve the use of specific sport equipment, then the school is in violation of season of sport rules. Allowable general conditioning activities include plyometrics, stretching exercises, running or other aerobic exercises, non-sport specific agility activities and rope climbing. General conditioning activities do not include activities that use equipment specific to the sport (ex. - balls, blocking dummies, re-bouncers, etc.), running plays, discussing strategies, working on individual or team defense or offense and viewing sport specific videotape ☛ *or leadership training with potential team members.*

Association with a School Coach

NCS rules were never written to limit the association of a student-athlete with a certified school coach. Outside the season of sport rules were written to limit the liability of the schools. Therefore, it is not illegal for a high school coach to work with an individual student-athlete or with two or more student-athletes during the summer time, or in their capacity as a club coach during the school year and outside the high school season of sport. During the school year and outside the high school season of sport the coach must follow the guidelines for coaching an outside team as it pertains to the use of school facilities or school equipment. Violations of the outside the season of sport rules may involve the use of school facilities, school equipment, etc. and favoritism of the high school towards the coach in providing access to facilities or equipment.

During the School Year and Outside the Season of Sport

Practice and Conditioning Guidelines:

Definition

During the school year and outside the season of sport is defined as the time from the first fall practice date until the NCS published first day of practice for the specific sport and from the NCS published final date of competition for the specific sport till the last CIF competition of the school year (currently the CIF Boys' Golf Championship).

Examples of prohibited activities during the school year and outside the season of sport

During the school year and outside the season of sport, as defined above, school **may not** conduct practice or sport specific conditioning. The only exception to the prohibition on sport specific conditioning is the approved football conditioning week. Examples of prohibited activities during the school year and outside the season of sport are:

1. ☛ Coaches, either assigned by the school or acting as volunteers, **may not** work with a potential team member one on one using school facilities and equipment, *other than non-sport specific conditioning.*
2. ☛ Coaches, either assigned by the school or acting as volunteers, **may not** work with potential team members using school facilities and equipment, *other than non-sport specific conditioning.*
3. Coaches **may not** have sport specific conditioning prior to the start of the season.
4. Coaches **may not** mandate that potential team members attend open gym and open field.
5. ☛ Coaches **may not** conduct drills or any kind, *other than non-sport specific conditioning.*
6. Coaches **may not** review video or film of the sport with potential team members.
7. ☛ Coaches **may not** conduct leadership training with potential team members.
8. ☛ Coaches **may not** meet with potential team members beyond the three organizational meetings allowed in NCS Bylaw 208H. *Organizational meetings are meetings used to discuss when the official season of sport will start, give out school permission forms, school physical forms, etc. Organizational meetings **are not** meetings to discuss activities that the school is not allowed to conduct.*
9. ☛ Coaches **may not** use school facilities or equipment other than as allowed by school or district policy for outside use. *Schools and school districts may not give a discounted rate to coaches for the use of school or school district facilities if the use of the facilities involve potential team players and the use is for sport specific conditioning. Coaches may not be treated any differently than any private citizen using school or school district facilities when reserving school or school district facilities. This includes, but is not limited to, insurance requirements, completion of facility use forms, payment for custodial costs, facility rental costs, cost of utilities, etc, when the use is related to sport specific conditioning.*
10. ☛ Coaches **may not** organize a school team meeting to discuss activities **not** sponsored by the school.
11. Coaches **may not** encourage potential high school team members to participate in practices, scrimmages or contests with a club team or program to which the students do not already belong.
12. ☛ Coaches **may not**, even as a private citizen, conduct a club program that has preparation for the high school season, as its sole purpose. A legitimate club program **must have** its own opportunities for competition, and actively engage in competition with other club teams. Otherwise, the activity would be considered a high school practice outside the high school season of sport.

13. Coaches **may not**, even as a private citizen, use potential team members to demonstrate skills and/or strategies of the sport at clinics or camps.
14. ☛ Coaches **may not** instruct a potential member, or potential team captain, with the workout for the day and then have the potential team member or potential team captain bark orders, blow a whistle, and give instructions, etc. as if they were conducting practice.
15. ☛ Coaches **may not** use school equipment or facilities for camps or clinics that involve potential team members.
16. ☛ Coaches **may not** conduct tryouts for the next season's team.

Examples of things that a coach **may** do:

1. Coaches **may** supervise open gym and open field.
2. Coaches **may**, one time outside the season of sport, post workouts for potential high school team members to follow on their own.
3. Coaches **may**, as a private citizen, coach a club team.
4. Coaches **may** participate in activities (ex. pick-up games) as long as they do not instruct students in the skills and/or strategies of the sport.
5. ☛ Coaches **may** conduct clinics, for pre-high school age students, as a fundraiser. Advertising for the clinic must be open to any interested party of the targeted age group. Care must be taken to discuss or encourage enrollment in the school where the coach is employed.

Open Gyms and Open Fields

Open gyms and open fields may be sponsored by NCS member schools during the period of the first NCS authorized conditioning or practice date of the fall season through the last NCS/CIF athletic competition under the following conditions:

1. The open gym or open field is open to all community members regardless of age or gender.
2. The school must, at the very least, advertise an invitation for participation of all community members in its daily bulletin.
3. ☛ During open gym or open field, attendees may work on individual skills.
4. During the open gym or open field there cannot be any coaching or practice as defined by NCS Sports & General Rulings Bylaw 200H, 201H.a, 202H, 203H, 205H and 206H. School personnel, including paid and volunteer coaches, may supervise a facility and may participate in activities (ex. pick-up games) as long as they do not instruct students in the skills and/or strategies of the sport. *(NCS Board of Managers 1/17/03)*

Examples of what coaches **may** do at open gym or open field:

1. Coaches **may** sit in the stands or bleachers and supervise the community members who attend the open gym or open field.
2. Coaches **may** unlock gates or doors to allow community members access to the field or gym.
3. Coaches **may** participate in pick-up games or practice their own skills if they choose (ex. field baseballs, shoot baskets, high jump, etc.).
4. Coaches **may** make fixed or immovable school equipment necessary for the activity available for use by any community members who attend (ex. - volleyball nets and standards, high jump pits, etc.). This does not include school bats, balls, protective equipment or other items designed for individual use.

Examples of what coaches **may not** do at open gym and open field:

1. Coaches **may not** conduct open field or open gym as a practice.
2. ☛ Coaches **may not** conduct *sport specific* drills of any kind.
3. Coaches **may not** bark orders, blow a whistle, and give *sport specific* instructions, etc. as if they were conducting practice.
4. Coaches **may not** separate the community members who have attended the open gym or open field from potential team members for any activities during open gym and open field.

5. Coaches **may not** correct players when they make mistakes in shooting, pitching, fielding, etc.
6. Coaches **may not** throw passes, set for spikes, hit infield ground ball or outfield fly balls, or otherwise assist students in skill development.
7. Coaches **may not** reserve space or courts for the use of potential high school team members.

☛ **Tryouts**

Since high school practices cannot begin until the Board of Managers designated starting date, it would be a violation of NCS practice rules to conduct tryouts for the high school team in the summer preceding the school year or during the school year but outside the season of sport. The NCS Commissioner of Athletics has consistently interpreted the rules such that tryouts for the high school team are considered part of practice during the season of sport. Conducting tryouts outside the season of sport would therefore be a violation of the NCS practice rules. Additionally, it would be politically dangerous to select a team without having every student who wanted an opportunity to tryout present. Selecting the team months prior to the start of the season and at a time of the year when people are often away on vacation, or unaware of the tryout because it is out of season, would deny equal opportunity.

During the Summer Time

Definition

Summer time is defined as the period of time between last CIF competition of the school year (currently the CIF Boys' Golf Championship) until the NCS published first official day of practice in the fall. During the summer time NCS/CIF bylaws concerning use of facilities, equipment, assignment of a coach by the school or school district, practices and non-NCS/CIF contests do not apply. **However, all NCS and CIF Eligibility Bylaws related to pre-enrollment contact and undue influence apply both during the school year and in the summer. Summer is not open season to recruit students to attend or transfer to a certain school.**

During the Summertime

If, during the time period defined above as summertime, the school or district administration approves the use of its facilities and equipment, a coach **may** work with one or more potential team members. **If the school administration approves**, examples are:

1. Coaches may have a regular practice everyday of the week, including Sunday.
2. Coaches may schedule two practices a day.
3. Coaches may work with an individual student on the track, in the pool, on the field, or in the gym.
4. School A may invite School B to play a game.
5. Football coaches may check out equipment for potential football players to go to camp.
6. Football coaches may take potential football players to camp.
7. Coaches may sponsor clinics at their school.
8. Coaches may invite more than one school to participate in multiple games or scrimmages.
9. Schools may practice together.
10. Schools may use school uniforms, balls, protective gear, protective equipment, facilities, etc.

Additional Questions that have been received by the NCS Office

☛ **Spring Football**

Spring football may be conducted according to the following guidelines:

Spring practices shall not start earlier than the Monday two weeks prior to Memorial Day and must be completed before spring final examinations start.

- a) Spring practice shall not exceed ten (10) practice sessions, none of which may be held on Saturday or Sunday.
- b) The only allowable football equipment for spring football shall be: football shoes, footballs, helmets and blocking bags.

Interpretations regarding spring football practice:

1. Spring football practice does not have to be conducted on consecutive days, however, spring football practice must conform to the time period outlined above.

2. Schools are allowed 10 practice sessions. Sessions may be broken down to a single level (J.V. and varsity). However, only 10 days are allowed. Schools may not have 10 days with one level and 10 days with a second level. Schools may have five days with a single level and five days with a second level.

☛Football Conditioning in the Fall

Interpretation

1. During football conditioning in the fall only conditioning activities are allowed as described in NCS Sports and General Rulings bylaw 18.106H. The viewing of films is not allowed.