

80% Rule Clarifications and FAQ Scenarios

Rationale: to help coaches work within the rule

The MPSSAA is frequently consulted regarding athletic participation on non-school teams and differentiating those teams within the 80 percent rule as outlined in the MPSSAA Handbook. The below information is to assist school administrators as they separate local school system programs and non-school teams. This information is not specific to COVID-19 operations, rather is the consistent application of the 80% rule as it has been applied annually during the academic year.

From page 34 of the MPSSAA Handbook

“A coach may not coach a team representing the coach’s school beyond the sports season as defined in Regulation .03 of this chapter”

Interpretation:

Any paid or volunteer coach at a member school may coach a non-school team provided the team has no direct affiliation with the school. When coaching non-school teams, including returning school players on non-school teams, the following criteria shall be observed:

- a. The non-school team may not use a name directly connected with the school;
- b. The non-school team may not use school uniforms, equipment or funds;
- c. The non-school team may not use school facilities except as allowed by local school system guidelines;
- d. The non-school team must meet local school system standards of a non-school team; and
- e. The number of returning school players on the non-school team is limited according to the following timeframe.

Timeframe:

1. From the start of the fall sports season as defined in Regulation .03, to the last state championship game of the spring season, the outside teams roster does not exceed 80% of the returning players of what would constitute a starting lineup in that sport OR a modified version thereof. i.e., 7-on-7 football, 3-on-3 basketball, indoor soccer, indoor lacrosse, etc.

SPORT	STARTING LINE UP	LIMIT
Baseball	9	7
Basketball	5	4
Cross Country	7	5
Field Hockey	11	8
Football	11	8
<i>Football 7v7</i>	7	5
Golf	4 state members	3
Gymnastics—Boys	6 events	4
Gymnastics—Girls	4 events	3
Lacrosse - <i>Boys</i>	10	8
<i>Lacrosse - Girls</i>	12	9
Soccer	11	8
Softball	9	7
Swimming	12 events	9
Tennis	8 state events	6
Track & Field	18 events	14
Volleyball	6	4
Wrestling	14	11

2. From the last state championship game of the spring season to the first day of fall practice, the outside team roster is unrestricted on the number of returning players.

Important Clarifications

- The 80% rule extends to the end of the spring sports season. During the 2020-2021 academic year, the current last date of the MPSSAA sport season is slated for June 19, 2020.
- The rule separates the local school system team participating out-of-season from a non-school team through an individual analysis of the characteristics of the non-school team. The characteristics do not allow for more than 80 percent of returning players of what would constitute a starting lineup in that sport or modified version thereof, if the non-school team is coached by a coach of the same school of the returning players.
- The rule refers to returning players. Returning players are defined on page 30 of the MPSSAA Handbook as, "A player who has represented his/her school in that sport." Consistent with COMAR, local school systems may provide more restrictive interpretation on this definition, including incoming freshman and transfer students.
- The language in the rule speaks to "any coach" and "representing the coach's school." Swapping different sport coaches from the same school challenges the rule if the teams are operating above 80 percent of what would constitute a starting lineup in that sport or modified version thereof.
- The language speaks specifically to the characteristics of a single team. Multiple teams coached by coaches from a school in which their characteristics comply with the 80 % rule do not challenge the rule as the individual analysis of each team shows compliance.
- School systems, who hire coaches that have coached with more than 80 % of returning players between competition seasons may cause a violation. The same criteria that is being applied to all current high school coaches and non-school teams shall apply to the high school team at the start of their competition season to ensure competitive equity between coach and student-athlete opportunities in between seasons.