

Flash Photography

Authorized news media representatives, who have been approved for credentials by contest managers or the OHSAA, shall be permitted to use electronic lighting equipment (includes both strobe lights and flashes mounted to cameras) throughout the course of a given activity in all sports **EXCEPT** bowling, gymnastics and diving (including warm-ups). In addition, electronic lighting is NOT permitted to be used in the following situations: in basketball in the free throw lane area (behind the background); in golf during and a few seconds before the swing; and in swimming immediately before the start of a race so as to not interfere with the starter's signal.

Additional Photography Note: In the sport of volleyball, electronic lighting is not permitted at any time during OHSAA tournament contests, and electronic lighting is only allowed during regular-season contests in gymnasiums that do not meet the minimum lighting standards of 1600 ASA (film speed) at 500th of a second at an aperture of f2.8. If those lighting conditions apply, flash photography may be used, but not when a student-athlete is serving. During regular-season volleyball contests, photographers must work with school administrators anytime prior to the start of a match to test equipment and have the light meter reading verified. The reading can then be used for future matches in the same facility in the same season without retesting.

Photographer Positioning

In **basketball**, photographers and videographers are prohibited to position themselves behind the backboard (within the free-throw lane area) unless approved by the OHSAA.

1. The first violation of this policy shall result in a warning from contest managers or the OHSAA, and the second violation of this policy shall result in the removal of the photographer from the contest facility by contest managers or the OHSAA.
2. Photographers may position themselves along the baseline outside the lane area of the court (and are permitted to use electronic lighting as specified in Section 6-c).
3. The use of remote-operated cameras behind a basket is permitted (without flash) so long as the guidelines listed above are followed.
4. In soccer, photographers are permitted between the team benches only if approved by the head official (who may consult with both head coaches, if needed).

Photographers for other sports shall be placed in positions in accordance with National Federation of State High School Associations National Rules. In the sport of **football, field hockey and soccer**, photographers shall be positioned behind the restraining line, which is two or more yards from the sidelines and end zones. In **volleyball**, photographers shall not be positioned in an area that could be "in play." When a soccer match goes to penalty kicks (after overtime), photographers may position themselves on the field in the midfield area if approved by the site manager or media coordinator. In addition, photographers shall not be positioned in the team boxes between the 25-yard lines. In **baseball**, photographers are prohibited from being in live ball areas unless a photographer's area (typically with a paint or chalk line) has been established by the game manager and approved by the officials before the game. The OHSAA requests that at least one area be designated for photographers that provides an unobstructed view of the field. In **softball**, no such photographers area is permitted inside live ball areas.

Officials have the authority to remove any member of the media for not staying in or keeping their equipment in designated dead ball areas. In the sport of **golf**, photographers are not permitted to take photos while a player is addressing his/her ball and during his/her swing

Photography Regulations Continued on Back Page

unless the photographer is at such a distance away from the player that no audible noise can be heard by the player. In the sports of **volleyball, bowling, track and field, swimming and tennis**, contest officials have additional authority to decide where photographers may position themselves based on the layout of the facility or competition area.

Special Access and Photo Sales

1. Individual credentialed media personnel and spectators may not sell photos from OHSAA state tournaments. Furthermore, credentialed media may not give photos to current student-athletes (or their parents or legal guardians) or post galleries of their photos from state tournaments. (A gallery is defined as more than five photos displayed on one webpage.) If a credentialed media photographer posts a photo on his/her personal webpage, it may not be made available for high-resolution download.
2. In team sports (field hockey, soccer, volleyball, football, team wrestling, ice hockey, basketball, softball, baseball and lacrosse), one school-designated photographer (student or adult) may be credentialed for OHSAA tournament contests if approved by the school's athletic administrator. The school-designated photographer may only give his/her photos to the school (athletic director, principal or head coach) for the school's use. Photos may not be sold or posted online in galleries (see previous note) and may not be posted so they are available for high-resolution download.
3. Bona fide newspapers, as determined by the OHSAA, may sell photos from OHSAA tournament contests via the newspaper's office or official website. Permission is granted because newspapers have always been permitted to fill the photo requests of their readership, and photo sales is not their primary purpose for covering a contest.
4. School officials have the authority to permit or deny freelance photographers (including parents) from having special access at their regular-season athletic contests.
5. School officials have the authority to permit or deny the sale of photos from their regular-season contests.
6. Freelance photographers who are granted a media credential for sectional, district and regional tournament games (and state semifinal games in the sports of football, soccer and lacrosse) may sell photos from the contest as long as the photographer is affiliated with a specific school and can produce a written or on-site verbal show of support from that school's athletic director. However, said photographers may not set up booths or tables, distribute promotional material or request that public address announcements be read that advertise their services.
7. Freelance photographers who are not affiliated with a bona fide media outlet will not be credentialed for state tournament contests. Photos taken from spectator viewing area at state tournament contests are for personal use only and may not be sold.

Use of Drones

The use of Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS), most commonly referred to as drones, is not permitted anywhere within the entire athletic facility during any OHSAA tournament contest, beginning one hour before the contest is scheduled to begin. This includes both indoor and outdoor contests. The facility includes both the area above the playing surface itself, and the areas above the surrounding surfaces that are a part of the facility, including, but not limited to, bleachers and other seating areas, parking lots, sidewalks, running/walking track, adjacent athletic fields, etc.

1. The use of UAS at regular-season contests is permitted pending approval from the host institution, which accepts all liability and confirms that the UAS complies with local, state and federal regulations.

2025-26 OHSAA

Working with the Media

The OHSAA's guide for coaches, student-athletes, administrators and tournament managers, and the media who cover high school sports.



Ohio High School Athletic Association

www.OHSAA.org

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Edited and Endorsed by the OHSAA Media Advisory Committee, the Ohio Prep Sportswriters Association and the Ohio Newspaper Photographers Association



The Value of Working with the Media

Positive exposure in the news media is not simply a by-product of having a winning program. It is often the result of preparation, good communication and providing the media with the information they need to do their jobs. That is true in any sport, any time of year, win or lose, regular-season or a state championship.

When a school sports program or tournament site has positive relationships with the media, the value is immeasurable, both in terms of “positive press” and building relationships with the media that can last for years.

Tips for Working with the Media

1. Be available via email and telephone to correspond with media to answer their questions, including credential requests, work spaces, parking, seating and your specific policies, etc.
2. Establish a seating area for media members, as well as an overflow area if the area is full. Assign specific seats with name cards, if needed, giving priority to media that have followed a team for all or the majority of its season, along with larger regional or statewide media outlets.
3. **BROADCAST CONNECTIONS** (especially for football press boxes and basketball gymnasiums): Having internet connections or phone lines available is crucial for radio stations and is greatly appreciated. A nominal fee can be assessed (typically less than \$50).
4. Be sure that electrical outlets are available. Set out power strips, if needed.
5. Explain if wireless internet signals are available. Wireless internet access is very important for media, especially for those required to provide game updates on social media.
6. If possible, provide media with rosters, programs, statistics, etc., and any other information you have been able to assemble prior to the game.
7. Explain where photographers may shoot from. In baseball (not softball), this includes any “dead ball” areas inside the playing field fence, pending approved by the head umpire. The umpire has authority in this area. See the full photography regulations in this brochure.
8. Explain postgame interview procedures to coaches and media before the game.

For football playoff games, host sites shall use the OHSAA press box priority seating memo posted on the OHSAA's football webpage.

Broadcast Fees

During OHSAA tournament contests, game managers collect broadcast rights fees, when applicable. The broadcast fees chart is posted on the OHSAA's “News & Media” page at OHSAA.org. Special video restrictions apply for tournament contests and when the OHSAA's official television and video streaming partners are covering a game. Also, some radio stations have been approved to pay fees directly to the OHSAA, or have fees waived as OHSAA Radio Network affiliates. Contact the OHSAA Communications Department to check the status of a station.



Tips for Effective Media Relations

Cooperation and a positive attitude are the cornerstones of developing relationships with the media and getting good exposure for athletic programs and tournament sites. Being prompt, following through on scheduled interview times, providing statistics or access to coaches and/or student-athletes all go a long way to having a positive relationship with the media. In return, that should result in cooperation from the media when their help is needed for making public announcements or getting exposure for a good story.

Welcome All Media — The OHSAA asks that host sites accommodate the media of the visiting team, especially the primary broadcast media that may need additional time to set up.

Media Needs — Understanding deadlines and specific needs of the media will go a long way toward creating good relationships.

Consistency in Results Reporting — Coaches and tournament managers (or an assigned person) should contact the media report the final score immediately after the game.

Availability — Let media know when you're available, such as in your voicemail greeting or email auto-reply.

Uniforms and Jersey Numbers — Media rely on clearly visible jersey numbers. When ordering new uniforms, please have numerals be a contrasting color to the jersey.

School Website and Social Media — When schedules are finalized, alert your local media to let them know where it is posted. Rosters and statistics are also a tremendous help. Sending stats to the local media or posting them on the school's web site can cut down on the number of requests for that information.

Photo/Media Days — Publicizing your team picture day can help the media with photos and interview opportunities.

Advance Notice Helps — When possible, give reporters as much advance notice about events and be sure to notify when there are postponements and cancellations.

Negative News — Deception, denial or dishonesty will never help ease negative news. It is much better to deal with it right away. Never say “no comment,” as that implies a negative situation. It's always better to cooperate with the media and give your side of the story then be silent and let the media speculate. You can also use an interview as a chance to educate the media or explain the situation. In addition, assume that everything you say will be quoted. At no time is any statement “off the record.”

Reporting OHSAA Tournament Scores and Postponements

It is essential that **tournament managers (or their assigned person) report the final result of each tournament contest as soon as possible.** In some sports, that involves entering the score online into the myOHSAA bracket and/or contacting the Associated Press.

Contact the Associated Press for Football and Basketball

The Associated Press compiles nightly score lists in football and basketball, during both the regular-season and tournament. Results can be reported to the Associated Press using several methods:

Toll Free: 800-300-8340 E-mail: apscores@ap.org

Fax: 888-832-0338 Text: 801-252-6046

Please be sure to say or type the sport, the gender and “Ohio” in the subject line of your information.

Update Brackets in myOHSAA for Soccer, Volleyball, Field Hockey, Ice Hockey, Basketball, Lacrosse, Softball and Baseball

For instructions on entering scores into myOHSAA, tournament managers should contact the OHSAA.

Additional Postgame Responsibilities

1. Ensure that interviews take place per the procedures you explained prior to the game.
2. Allow media members a minimum of 60 minutes after the game to work at press row or the designated work area.
3. If inclement weather is an issue and you have an indoor space available for media to work, explain where it is located and any important details associated with that space.

Utilizing Social Media for Scores

Schools are encouraged to use their social media accounts to report scores. When reporting a score, please be sure to include the sport, gender, opponent and level of competition (varsity, JV, freshman, etc.).

OHSAA Tournament Policy/Public Address Announcement on Spectators Taking Photos and Videos

Spectators taking photographs or videos may not interfere with the view of this contest by other spectators, nor may they take additional space in seats that have been purchased. In addition, all photographs and videos taken by spectators at this event are for personal use only. The use of photographs for commercial or scouting purposes is strictly prohibited.

For more information or questions, please contact Tim Stried, OHSAA Director of Media Relations, at tstried@ohsaa.org or 614-267-2502, ext. 124.