

Open Gyms

The purpose of open gyms is to provide an opportunity for the students from a school to get together to play and recreate with one another. Coaches and schools cannot be involved in out-of-season practice for athletes. However open gyms do not violate WIAA rules if they are conducted according to the following guidelines:

1. The open gym is made known and available to any student in the designated population of that school that is interested in attending. Open gyms may be gender specific. It is also acceptable to include people from the community. Schools may conduct "open gyms" in any activity. It is not acceptable to include athletes from another school; public or nonpublic.
2. There is **no instruction** during the open gym **by a coach or anyone else.**
3. Coaches may supervise open gyms, but they may not instruct, organize drills, etc. Coaches can also recreate with students in school sponsored; open gym settings that are purely recreational in nature, i.e., there is no instruction by the coach or anyone, sport skill demonstration, organized drills or resemblance of a practice being conducted.
4. There is no organized competition, such as established teams participating in round-robin competition, etc.
5. A member school is permitted to supervise conditioning programs under the open gym provisions, which may include weight lifting, speed, agility, fitness. The program must be limited to non-sport and non-sport-skill-specific instruction. Basic instruction e.g., safe lifting, safe spotting, training regimen and rationale, are permitted. No sport implements and/or sport specific movement/drills should be part of the open gym or weight room. These conditioning programs must be made known and accessible to all interested students and must be voluntary. **Open weight room attendance must not be required or mandated by a coach, and attendance may not be recorded.**

Schools and coaches must clearly understand that the philosophy of the open gym is that youngsters from that school may attend, for wholesome **recreation**, or for purposes of improving their skills if they choose, but it's something they do on their own. It would be a violation of WIAA rules to mandate attendance at open gyms, or to provide incentives for athletes to attend open gyms, or to limit participation based on athletic status, or to allow athletes from other schools to come and work out or compete against your school's athletes. (BL – Art. II and RE – Art. VI, Sect. 2)

Q: What is the school population?

A: The students from that school in grades 9-12.

Q: Can students from the middle school in the district participate?

A: No. MS and HS students can attend separate open gyms. The HS students attend a HS open gym and the MS students attend a MS open gym.

Q: What would the definition of "people from your community" mean?

A: People from the community (adults and alumni) may attend. Graduates/alumni - home on break/summer vacation are typically afforded status as "members of the community." Most traditionally, members of the community will be parents and/or former students, as well as non-students, who come and recreate with the kids.

Q: Can students from another school participate in our open gyms?

A: Open gyms are only for students and community members of that school. Your player cannot attend an open gym at another member school. The other school may not open the gym to students from other schools. With the co-op, students involved in the co-op may be allowed since they participate in your co-op program.

Q: Can coaches recommend workouts for open gyms by posting programs?

A: No. Keep in mind this is designed for play and recreation, not workouts.

Q: What is the designation of weight rooms?

A: Weight rooms are considered open gyms and should be operated as such. Here's the rule: A member school is permitted to supervise conditioning programs under the open gym provisions, which may include weight lifting, speed, agility, fitness. The program must be limited to non-sport and non-sport-skill-specific instruction. Basic instruction e.g., safe lifting, safe spotting, training regimen and rationale, are permitted. No sport implements and/or sport specific movement/drills should be part of the open weight room. These conditioning programs must be made known and accessible to all interested students and must be voluntary.

Q: I was wondering if you could assist me in a quick question. I have a student that is interested in lifting weights after school; however, the bus that would take him home doesn't drop him off at his house (our late bus doesn't go door to door, just to drop off points). The nearest drop off point is close to 6 miles from his house. My question is, could our school district provide him with a ride home in a school vehicle right to his house or is that a violation of the rules?

A: The only way this would be possible is if

you have a late bus (or something similar) which takes any and all interested students home after school. If it is something for only one athlete or other athletes, then it would not be allowed. Schools may pay expenses and provide transportation to similar in-season activities in that sport and during unrestricted contact days in the summer. Students must pay their own expenses, including transportation, to any nonschool (out-of-season) camps, clinics, or specialized training. Schools may pay expenses and provide transportation to similar in-season activities in that sport and during unrestricted contact days in the summer.

Q: Our football coach has proposed the following: 1) Require football players to sign in when reporting to the weight room in the off-season, and 2) Send a letter to football players who do not regularly attend open weight room regarding possible removal from the roster if their attendance does not improve. Is this allowed? Can the coach collect workout information at the end of a lifting session?

A: What your football coach has proposed would be a violation of the membership open gym regulations and out of season coaching contact rules. Collecting workout information is akin to taking attendance. Simply stated, attendance may not be collected and/or used to determine team status; playing time, earning a letter, etc. (See #5 above)

Q: Can a coach run with their voluntary team of runners in the winter at places like the XYZ Center?

A: First, you cannot have a voluntary team out of season. The rule states "...students may voluntarily assemble at any time without school and/or school coach involvement" on page 37 of the Senior High Handbook. Open runs may be conducted the same as open gyms provided they are school organized, open to any and all interested students, limited to the school population, voluntary, and follow all open gym rules. In open runs, the coach could recreate in school sponsored open gym settings. However, if the running program is located at the XYZ Center; is not school run/organized; and is not limited to the school population, then a coach could not run with the athletes because it is not a school sponsored open gym. If a school open run was designated at the XYZ Center, then the limitations of your own students would enter into the equation. If you run at the XYZ Center with your friend and have zero interaction with your team, you could run there. ●