

Infractions of eligibility and early practices

OHSET has word of alleged infractions of two rules.

Rule 2.3.1.1 (Eligibility) - *Problem: coaches are denying participation in OHSET of potential athletes.* Discussion of “participation in OHSET” included the understanding that grooms “participate” (but don’t ride) as detailed in rule 2.3.5 “Non-Competing Athlete”. The board emphasizes that coaches have the latitude to limit an athlete to certain riding events, to in-hand events only or from any event during competition **based on the coach’s assessment of that athlete’s ability to handle the equine and/or the event(s).** **Safety and liability** are the considerations here. Athletes may not be limited or denied based on attributes listed in rule 2.3.1.1 (race, creed, sex, ability or skill level, physical or mental challenge).

Rule 3.3 (Practices) – *Problem: coaches are calling practices prior to the official OHSET December 1 start date.* If “practice” sessions or clinics are open to the district and not considered mandatory for any team, then it is not a team practice. Team pennings, jumping clinics, etc. are not practices unless attendance is limited and the practice gives one team a competitive advantage, or unless the coach is actively coaching athletes in that event. Athletes may receive individual instruction during the off-season, since they do not have the next season’s patterns to practice specifically. **However, a coach (who will coach that athlete during the season) instructing an athlete in a gaming event during the off-season enters a gray area that could result in a code of conduct investigation (per OSAA rules and OHSET Code of Conduct).** (deleted)

Rules page 28 under “Frequently Asked Questions Regarding Insurance and Risk” is very specific on liability for off-season practices:

What happens if a coach/advisor encourages practices out of the OHSET season?

- A. The coach/advisor would not be following OHSET rules and all liability becomes theirs. They would be considered negligent and any injury that occurred would not be covered by OHSET or OHSET’s insurance coverage.
- B. Because OHSET rules are not being followed, according to the OSAA rules that OHSET uses as guidelines, the team could be suspended.