

Are Your Certified Teacher-Coaches Eligible to Coach?

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By virtue of Arkansas state law, the Arkansas Department of Education requirements and the rules of the Arkansas Activities Association Handbook, a person CANNOT serve as a *head or assistant coach* for the sports of **football, basketball or track** unless that person is a certified teacher, employed full time by the school and the individual either has a coaching endorsement listed on his or her teaching certificate or the individual holds a college degree in health and physical education / kinesiology. By prohibiting others from coaching these three sports, a long time standard of the Arkansas Department of Education remains intact.

For all other sports, schools may assign certified teachers, employed full time and eligible to be paid from teacher salary funds, as a head or assistant coach FOR interscholastic contests. For such individuals there is a requirement, to be eligible to coach interscholastically, for successful completion of the NFHS Coaches Education Program courses, *Coaching Fundamentals* and *First Aid for Coaches* available online and coordinated by the Arkansas Activities Association, as well as the AAA State Rules Test. See the AAA's Coaches Education page. (Go to www.ahsaa.org ...Look Under Non-Athletic Activities for Coaches Education).

The AAA Handbook charges schools with the responsibility for using only coaches who meet the specific requirement for their sport(s). A full time certified teacher with a coaching endorsement (implied with a physical education / kinesiology degree) can be a head or assistant coach in any sport. A certified teacher with NFHS Coaches Education Program credentials can become a head or assistant coach in any sport *other than football, basketball or track*. All of the full time, certified teachers meeting one of these criteria are eligible to be paid by the school for their interscholastic coaching assignment.

The certified, full time teachers who seek Coaches Education credentials are required to successfully complete the following:

1. **First Aid for Coaches** – An online course that includes an overview of the coach's responsibility to his or her athletes for minimizing risk, assessing the athlete's condition by sight and questions, having a broad background in general sports medicine knowledge and determining when expert assessment if needed.
2. **Coaching Fundamentals** – An online course including sessions on coaching philosophy, effective teaching styles, student learning styles, motivation, sport psychology, practical situations and outcomes, coaching teams and individuals and sport management.
3. **Arkansas Activities Association State Rules Test** – A printable order form for this test is on the AAA's Coaches Education web page. In addition to successful completion of the online courses, the state rules test must be successfully completed with a score of 80% before the individual is considered eligible to coach interscholastically.

NOTE: A frequently asked question concerns who can help with practice. The school can permit any individual *for whom they are willing to assume liability* to help with practice; however, such a person can perform NO COACHING DUTIES during an interscholastic contest. Doing so would subject the school to the liability of forfeiture and possibly further penalty.