



GHSA

"ITEMS OF INTEREST"

April 2024

Seven Years Later, Change is Inevitable ... Again

As I prepared to write this "Items of Interest", I am reminded that this is the last "Items of Interest" of the school year and therefore it is the last newsletter that I will write as the Executive Director of the Georgia High School Association.

I looked back seven years as I wrote my first newsletter and I wrote that change is inevitable. I stated that it was important to me that I be accessible to you under any circumstance and that I provide you with great customer service. I also wanted our processes and procedures to be transparent. It is my hope that I have been available to our member schools and while there is no way I can follow the by-laws and make everyone happy, I hope that I have been able to adequately express the justification associated with my decisions.

Change is just as inevitable as it was seven years ago and while I prepare for change in my life, I am excited about the coming change in the GHSA.

Dr. Tim Scott has been named as the sole finalist for the GHSA Executive Director position and the State Executive Committee will vote to ratify the Board of Trustees' recommendation at the April 15, 2024 meeting.

I have known Dr. Scott for many years, and he brings a wealth of experience to the association. He has been a teacher, coach, assistant principal, principal, assistant superintendent, and superintendent. He is an outstanding educator and I look forward to working with him to ensure a smooth transition for the member schools as well as the GHSA office.

There are many things I am proud of that happened during my time as Executive Director, but I know that all the positive things are the result of a team effort. I have been fortunate to work with an outstanding Board of Trustees during my entire time at the GHSA and am grateful for their support as well as the State Executive Committee.

Your GHSA office staff is the best anywhere and does an outstanding job to ultimately provide opportunities for our student athletes. They are family to me, and words could never express the appreciation I feel for them and their efforts. Technology improvements, increased sport offerings and facing and working through a pandemic are just a few things that come to mind, but it's safe to say the GHSA has come a long way and your efforts are appreciated. Because of our member schools, we were able to lead the nation in opening our state for high school sports. It was the right thing to do and our students deserve our best efforts.

Finally, I am grateful for the opportunity to have served the GHSA as Executive Director. I am also grateful to each of you and for your friendship. I hope to be around and will stand ready to help you in any way I can. After all, I'm sure you have my phone number and look forward to hearing from you! Always remember, you will make an impact on the student athletes you serve so make sure it's a positive one!

Sincerely,

– Dr. James R. Hines, Jr., Executive Director



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- GHSA STAFF -
Areas of Responsibility

ROBIN HINES - Executive Director - (extension 41)
 Administration, By-Law Interpretations, Hardship Rulings,
 Football Playoffs, Coaches Education Program

ERNIE YARBROUGH - Assistant Executive Director - (ext. 27)
 Championship Events, Officials Coordinator,
 Swimming, Lacrosse

TANYA ANDERSON - Associate Director - (ext. 29)
 Literary, One Act Play, Esports, DragonFly Liaison,
 Cross Country, Track & Field, and Event Sanctioning

DON CORR - Associate Director - (ext. 34)
 Softball, Wrestling, Baseball, Sports Medicine

KEVIN GIDDENS - Associate Director
 Bass Fishing, Football and Soccer Consultant

DARRELL LANE - Associate Director - (ext. 42)
 Volleyball, Basketball, Soccer

PENNY PITTS MITCHELL - Associate Director - (ext. 22)
 Cheerleading, Game Day Cheerleading, Gymnastics, Dance,
 Student Leadership, Title IX

JAY RUSSELL - Associate Director - (ext. 23)
 Football, Flag Football, Golf, Hardship Eligibility

CARROR WRIGHT - Associate Director - (ext. 39)
 Coach's Liaison, Compliance & Transfer Eligibility,
 Sportsmanship

STEVE FIGUEROA - Media Director - (ext. 26)
 Media, Newsletter, Constitution & Calendar, Tennis

ROBIN BULLINGTON - Office Manager - (ext. 33)
 Budgeting and Finances, Playoff Finances, Staff Procedures

JULIE JONES - Administrative Assistant - (ext. 24)
 Coaches Education, Dues, Entry Notification

STACEY JONES - Administrative Assistant - (ext. 32)
 Riflery Liaison, School Contacts & School Passes,
 Directory, Coaches' Clinics, Trophies & Medals

SHERI EUBANKS - Receptionist - (ext. 0)
 Hardship Hearings, Fines, School System/Retiree Passes,
 Publication Orders

PAM THOMPSON - Officials' Registrar - (ext. 30)
 Officials' Registration, Testing & Online Clinics, Service Awards

Congrats to Literary State Champs

The 2024 Literary State Championships saw two unusual events. Georgia Military College (pictured below) won its division (Class A, Div. 2) for the ninth straight season, while there was a rare tie for first in Class A, Div. 1 between Bleckley County and King's Ridge. The rest of the state champions are pictured on Page 3.



Sharks Win Another AAASP Title

Taking on a new championship foe in the Clayton County Eagles, the Houston County Sharks cruised to a 35-16 victory on March 9 to capture another AAASP Wheelchair Basketball State Championship in Macon.

The 2024 title gives the Sharks their third AAASP title in a row, and makes it 11 championships in the last 12 seasons for the Houston County powerhouse.

The rest of the basketball state champions are pictured on Pages 4-5 of this newsletter, while the 3-point shootout and slam dunk winners can be found on Page 6.



GHSA Licensed Products

This month's featured licensees are: **Jostens**, official championship rings and jewelry (jostens.com); **CheerSounds**, official music provider of cheerleading with premade mixes, make your own mix, and fully custom music (cheersounds.com); **Musco Sports Lighting**, leader in developing sports-lighting technology solutions (musco.com); **Hudl**, official video exchange service (hudl.com); **Hartwell Studio Works**, creating unique, dynamic and protectable spirit logos (hartwellstudioworks.com); **NFHS Network**, School Broadcast Program produces, distributes and monetize your school's own video streaming Web powered by PlayOn Sports. (nfhsnetwork.com/associations/ghsa); and **RefReps**, exclusive standardized officiating education partner (refreps.com).

Literary State Champions - 2024



7A: Buford



6A: Houston County



5A: Greater Atlanta Christian



4A: Perry



3A: Bremen



2A: Vidalia



A, Division 1: Bleckley County (tie)



A, Division 1: King's Ridge (tie)

Girls Basketball State Champions - 2024



7A: Grayson



6A: Marist



5A: Jackson-Atlanta



4A: Baldwin



3A: Hebron Christian



2A: Mount Paran



A, Division 1: St. Francis



A, Division 2: Greenforest

Boys Basketball State Champions - 2024



7A: Grayson



6A: Riverwood



5A: Kell



4A: North Oconee



3A: Sandy Creek



2A: Westside-Augusta



A, Division 1: Mount Vernon



A, Division 2: Greenforest



Yarbrough Wins NASO Award

RACINE, Wis. — Ernie Yarbrough, Georgia High School Association (GHSA) assistant executive director and coordinator of officiating, was chosen as the 2024 NASO Mel Narol Medallion Award recipient. The award will be presented in Atlanta on Tuesday, July 30, during the Celebrate Officiating Gala, sponsored by Fox 40 International. The Gala caps off the 2024 Sports Officiating Summit.

"I am truly humbled to receive this prestigious award," said Yarbrough. "The Lord blessed me with 30 years of running the court and another 20-plus trying to give back by creating options and growth for those who have come after me."

Beside the GHSA, Yarbrough's formal influence in the sports world has included work in the NFL, USA Softball and the American Basketball League (ABL). He worked in player development for three different NFL franchises over 13 years. For more than 50 years, Yarbrough has been involved in fastpitch softball as a player, coach and administrator. He served as the ABL's Director of Officiating from 1996-99 and has remained active in officials' observation for multiple college conferences including the Atlantic Coast Conference, the Southern Conference and the Big South Conference.

"Ernie Yarbrough has impacted tens of thousands of officials for more than four decades," said NASO President Bill Topp. "He is a consistent presence for new and veteran officials and has earned the respect of local, state and national leaders."

Prior to receiving this Mel Narol Medallion award from NASO, Yarbrough was the 1995 Naismith High School Basketball Official of the Year in Georgia and was a 2023 NFHS Citation recipient, designed to honor individuals who have made significant contributions to high school athletics and activities.

Yarbrough is a longtime NASO member and supporter. During his time with GHSA, he has been involved in historic Sports Officiating Summits held in Atlanta in 2011 and scheduled for July, 2024.

"Ernie helped lead one of the most successful State Day events when we were in Georgia in 2011," said Topp. "And he's still doing it, leading our 2024 Officiate Georgia Day efforts as we get ready to head back to Atlanta. NASO is proud of its relationship with Ernie and is eager to recognize him with the Mel Narol Medallion Award."

Yarbrough noted, "To be part of this fraternity of former Mel Narol Medallion recipients who cared enough to contribute to officiating is an honor beyond what I could have ever imagined."

Dunk & 3-Point Winners Crowned

The fifth annual GHSA Slam Dunk and 3-Point Shooting Champions, presented by BSN Sports, were crowned during the 2024 State Championship Basketball Championships at the Macon Centreplex March 6-9.

Congratulations to Clinch County's Jeremy Bell who won the slam dunk contest by defeating Chris Perry of Bradwell Institute, Evan Montgomery (North Oconee) and Dylan Barbra (East Coweta) in the finals.

The North Hall duo of Athena Vachtsevanos and Micah Jimerson won the CoEd 3-Point title over Malay Mitchell & Hudson Dudish (Commerce), Aryana Thomas & Ruben Compton (Lowndes) and Izhah McCutchins & Josh Cornett (Trion). Riverwood's Lizzie McGrath won the girls 3-point title, defeating McCutchins, Ellie Southards (Rabun County) and Amira Walters-Smith (Colquitt County).



Boys Dunk Champion Jeremy Bell with Wayne Hicks of BSN Sports (L) and Dr. Robin Hines



Co-Ed Champs Athena Vachtsevanos & Micah Jimerson of N. Hall with BSN's Blake Smith & Hines



Dr. Hines and BSN's Alan Long With Girls 3-Point Winner Lizzie McGrath of Riverwood (and guest)

Congratulations to Riflery Champs

Congratulations to Camden County, winning back-to-back GHSA Riflery State Championships on March 16 at the Ware County Shooting Complex in Waycross.

The Wildcats fired a team total of 2,338 in the three-position air rifle format followed by Tallulah Falls (2,328) and East Coweta (2,324). Individual winner was Katlyn Sullivan of Statesboro (466.9) followed by Jordan DeJesus (Camden County, 465.3) and Lumpkin County's Liv Lusk (453.2).

Thanks to Ware County Shooting Complex range officials, Lisa Kelley (meet director), TeamIP, volunteers, teams, and competitors on a successful championship.



Back-to-Back Team State Champion Camden County



Individual Winners (L-R) Jordan DeJesus, Katlyn Sullivan & Liv Lusk



Gymnastics State Meet April 17-19

The 2024 GHSA Gymnastics State Preliminaries and Championships will be held April 17-19, at Buford Arena. Qualifying teams and individuals will compete on balance beam, uneven parallel bars, vault and floor exercise. Tickets are \$15.00 and are available ONLY on GoFan.

The Preliminary Meet will take place on Wednesday, April 17th. Session 1 will begin at 1:00 p.m., for A-5A schools and Session 2 for 6A-7A schools will begin at 5:30 p.m. Both sessions will include individual and team competitions. Spectator doors will open 30 minutes prior to competition.

State Finals will be held on Friday evening, with competition scheduled for 5:00 p.m.

The defending state team champions are Buford in the 6A-7A division and North Oconee in the A-5A division.



Slow Pitch Elite Eight April 17-18

The 2024 GHSA Slow Pitch Softball Elite Eight State Championships, presented by Mizuno, will be held April 17-18 at Twin Creeks in Woodstock. Admission is \$10.00 per day and tickets will be available ONLY on GoFan.

SCHEDULE:

Wednesday, April 17

- 11:00 am Field #1: TBA
- 11:00 am Field #2: TBA
- 11:00 pm Field #3: TBA
- 11:00 pm Field #4: TBA
- 12:30 pm Field #3: Second Round
- 12:30 pm Field #4: Second Round
- 2:00 pm Field #3: Loser First Round
- 2:00 pm Field #4: Loser First Round
- 3:30 pm Field #3: Loser Second Round
- 3:30 pm Field #4: Loser Second Round

Thursday, April 18

- 11:00 am Field #4: Loser Semifinals;
- 11:00 am Field #3: Winner Semifinals
- 12:30 pm Field #3: Loser Play-In Game
- 2:00 pm Field #3: Finals



Student Leadership Conference April 12

The GHSA Student-athlete Advisory Council presents the 2024 Student-athlete leadership conference.

The deadline to register was March 29, 2024.

See details below:

- * Two (2) student-athletes from your school
- * Held at the Macon Convention Center
- * April 12: From 9 a.m. until 2 p.m.
- * Free to students
- * Includes lunch and T-shirt
- * Loaded with great speakers and topics!

For more information, contact Penny Pitts Mitchell (706-647-7473, ext. 22) or penny@ghsa.net.

Spring Esports Final on May 1

The 2024 GHSA Spring Esports State Championships, powered by PlayVS, will be held May 1 at the University of West Georgia Coliseum. Titles will be determined for Rocket League, Madden 24, NBA2K24 and Splatoon 3. Trophies and medals will be awarded to champions and runnersup in each.

The playoffs leading up to the finals will take place April 16-26. Exact schedules may be found on the GHSA web site. Spectators are welcome to attend any event free of charge.



Officials Appreciation Week in April

The NFHS is excited to announce our final officials' appreciation week of the 2023-24 school year. NFHS Spring Sports Officials Appreciation Week will take place from **April 14-20, 2024**.

Participation in spring sports officials' appreciation week can be as simple or as extravagant as schools want it to be. Many schools will not only get their teams involved in the fun, but will also ask student groups on campus to get involved.

Here are some ideas:

- Officials' appreciation week banners and signage on the fence, wall, etc., surrounding the contest playing area.
- Gift cards/cookies/donuts/other items presented to the crew by both the home and visiting team.
- Photos of the officiating crew with both teams and coaches prior to the start of the game (or at the end, depending on timing).
- Read a PSA at the start of the game, thanking the crew for working the contest.
- Student escorts of the crew onto the field/court/pitch.
- "Thank you" cards, signed by the team and coaching staff.
- Special appreciation signage in the officials' locker room.
- Recorded "thank you" messages from student-athletes and coaches to officials, posted on social media.

These are just some examples of what schools can do – the possibilities are endless!

Bass Fishing State Qualifier #4 at Lake Hartwell on April 20

The fourth and final qualifying tournament in Bass Fishing will take place on April 20 at Lake Hartwell in Lavonia. Below is more information on the event:

Tournament Director:

- Scott Ellison – MLF Big 5
270.205.6864 or scott.ellison@majorleaguefishing.com

High School Fishing Contacts:

- Joey Bray, National Youth Director SAF/TBF
580.716.4251 or Joey@federationangler.com
- Scott Ellison, MLF Big 5
270.205.6864 or scott.ellison@majorleaguefishing.com

Practice:

- Competition waters open for practice until 5 p.m. on April 19.
- The purchasing of, or bartering for, information or the hiring of fishing guide services will not be permitted after April 9.

Boat Operation:

- Contestants are not permitted to drive the boat when the combustion engine is in operation. Each boat will be driven by a coach or volunteer driver. Contestants may operate the trolling motor. Coaches and volunteers may provide assistance, including information about locating and catching fish, but are not permitted to fish.

Catch & Size Limit:

- Five bass per team; minimum 12 inches on all bass.

License Requirement:

- A Valid GA fishing license is required for students 16 and older.

Format:

- Each GHSA approved school may enter up to six boats in each regional competition. The top 15 boats from each regional advance to the state Championship. One additional boat will advance from each regional for every 10 boats that compete over a minimum of 100 boats in the regional. Boats advance from the first event in which they qualified. If a boat has already qualified for the state championship, the next eligible boat will advance.

GHSA Contact:

- Kevin Giddens - 229-529-4410 or kevin@ghsa.net

Registration:

- All anglers must pre-register online at HighSchoolFishing.org no later than Monday before the event at 8 a.m.

Mandatory Registration:

- Friday, April 19, 5:00-7:00 p.m.
- Tugaloo State Park Ramp, 1763 Tugaloo State Park Road, Lavonia, GA, 30553 (Anglers, coaches & captains **must** attend).
- Pretournament meeting immediately following check-in.

Takeoff and Weigh-in on April 20:

- Takeoff: 7:00 a.m.
- Weigh-in: 3:00 p.m.

Items to Bring:

- Signed liability release
- Personal floatation device
- Valid student ID
- Valid license for state waters to be fished if 16 or older
- Sunscreen & sunglasses
- Rods and reels
- Line cutters & needle-nose pliers
- Lures & tackle
- Rainsuit
- Jersey or shirt representing your school

HIGH SCHOOL FISHING

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GEORGIA HIGH SCHOOL ASSOCIATION
STATE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING
AGENDA

MARRIOTT / Macon City Center - Macon, GA

Magnolia Ballroom

April 15, 2024 - 9:00 a.m.

Call To Order	Jim Finch, President
Pledge of Allegiance	Curt Miller, Vice President
Invocation	Carror Wright, Associate Director
Roll Call	Steve Figueroa, Media Director
Adoption of Agenda	Executive Committee

COMMITTEE PROPOSALS:

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

1. **Proposal** to change pay scale for Dance Officials to be exactly the same as the current scale for Cheerleading Officials: \$10.70 per team for the first 12 teams (with pay for a minimum of 12) and \$8.60 per team for more than 12 teams. (GHSA Office)
2. **Proposal** to modify By-Law 1.62, item "c-3" on page 19 of the GHSA Constitution as follows (deleted text struck out) so as to allow students from non-member schools who transfer to GHSA schools to be eligible immediately as long as it is their first enrollment in a GHSA school: "The student has not yet established eligibility in grades 9-12 at a member school ~~serving his area of residence~~. Eligibility is established at the first time the student enrolls in a GHSA member school for the first time." (Eagles Landing Christian Academy)
3. **Proposal** to modify By-Law 2.16, item "a" on page 24 of the GHSA Constitution as follows (new text in italic): A *GHSA member school* playing a non-region schedule may not participate in post-season competition *in the GHSA or any other association*. (GHSA office)
4. **Proposal** to modify By-Law 2.62, item "a-2" on page 28 of the GHSA Constitution as follows (deleted text struck out): (2) Participants must be in compliance with all eligibility rules of their respective associations ~~with the exception that only those participants in grades 9-12 shall be allowed to participate~~. NOTE: This would allow GHSA schools to compete against non-GHSA schools that have athletes in grades lower than 9th, as long as they are eligible for high school competition in their own association. This includes GISA, GAPPS, and member schools from other State Associations who are full members. (Muscogee County Schools)
5. **Proposal** to add a new item "g" to By-Law 2.62 on page 29 of the GHSA Constitution as follows: All competitions in sports utilizing a Rating Formula to seed post-season qualification **MUST** be played to completion with a winner and loser being determined. (GHSA office)
6. **Proposal** to include contest officials under the GHSA Concussion Policy (by-law 2.68) should they exhibit any signs, symptoms or behaviors consistent with a concussion during the officiating of a contest or scrimmage. (GHSA office)
7. **Discussion** on allowing a two-week "Arm Conditioning Period" in Baseball prior to the official date for the start of practice beginning with the 2025 season. During this two-week period, only balls, gloves and catcher's gear could be used and the four athletes to one coach skill-building sessions could not be held at the same time as the Arm Conditioning Period workouts. (North Cobb High School) For information only – no vote will be taken.
8. **Recommendation** of the Board for the position of Executive Director to succeed Robin Hines, who is retiring.

RECLASSIFICATION COMMITTEE

Discussion on a "competitive balance" formula that may be used in the reclassification process for the 2026-28 reclassification cycle. (GHSA Office) For information only – no vote will be taken.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Executive Director Robin Hines will address the committee on several issues.



FROM YOUR MUSCO GEORGIA SALES TEAM

In the past decade, LED lighting has revolutionized sports lighting, providing a cost-effective and energy-saving solution for facilities ranging from high school fields to professional stadiums. It also put advanced special effects and light shows within reach of venues of all shapes and sizes. But while high-quality LED systems have elevated game nights for high schools right here in Georgia, poorly designed technology from inexperienced manufacturers can cause serious problems with inadequate light levels, excessive spill and glare, and overall reliability. Here are five tips for upgrading to LED lighting.

1. NOT ALL SPORTS LIGHTING IS CREATED EQUAL

Every manufacturer's LED equipment is going to perform differently. This is especially true in a sports lighting situation, where it's important for a system to be durable and reliable, guarantee light levels, and minimize glare and spill. It takes years of research and experience for manufacturers to get a handle on this.

2. FIND A SOLUTION THAT MINIMIZES SPILL AND GLARE

Glare and spill light can affect player performance and be distracting for fans. They can also impact neighbors. We've seen situations with other manufacturers' LED technology where facilities are forced to leave their lights off until they resolve issues with spill. Fortunately, there are solutions available that include optics and visoring to keep light on the field.

3. LOOK FOR A COMPLETE SYSTEM

When evaluating potential partners for your lighting project, look for a complete system from a manufacturer that provides lighting, structural, electrical components, and integrated surge protection all built to work together. Many sports lighting manufacturers only sell LED fixtures, and then build out their system with pieces and parts from different suppliers. That can make it difficult to guarantee the performance of the lighting and availability of replacement parts, and to be confident your system will be durable enough to last long after the warranty expires.

4. DON'T SKIP THE DESIGN PHASE

The best way to ensure your LED retrofit delivers the light levels you need—at minimal cost over both the short- and long-term—is with photometric lighting designs in the project's planning phase. Partners often ask if they can switch their old fixtures out for LED in a one-to-one swap, and while that approach will sometimes meet your project needs, it's situation dependent.

5. UNDERSTAND YOUR WARRANTY

No sports lighting is maintenance-free. It is important to be clear on the length and details of your system's warranty so that you know who is responsible for scheduling, performing, and paying for any necessary service. For comprehensive coverage, look for a combination of proactive system monitoring and a parts-and-labor warranty that is backed by a network of regionally based technicians who can provide timely service.

About The Authors | Learn More

To learn more, contact Musco's field sales representatives in Georgia: Josiah Smith (josiah.smith@musco.com) and Rob Staples (rob.staples@musco.com)

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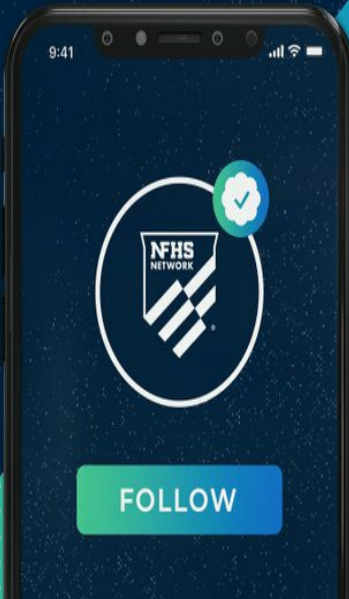



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GHSA - April Calendar - 2024

April

- 1 GHSA Participation Survey Due
- 6 Complete Area SP Softball
- 10 SP Softball Sectionals
- 11 Complete Region Tennis
- 13 Complete Region Soccer
- 14, 15 State Executive Committee meeting
- 16 Girls First Round State Soccer (A, 3A, 5A & 7A)
- 17 Boys First Round State Soccer (A, 3A, 5A & 7A)
- 17, 18 Slow Pitch Softball Elite Eight Tournament
- 17-19 State Gymnastics preliminaries and finals
- 18 Girls First Round State Soccer (2A, 4A & 6A); Complete First Round State Tennis
- 19 Boys First Round State Soccer (2A, 4A & 6A)
- 20 Complete Area Lacrosse & Region Baseball
- 23 Girls Second Round State Soccer (A, 3A, 5A & 7A)
- 23, 24 First Round State Lacrosse playoffs
- 23-26 First Round State Baseball playoffs
- 24 Boys Second Round State Soccer (A, 3A, 5A & 7A); Complete Second Round State Tennis
- 25 Girls Second Round State Soccer (2A, 4A & 6A)
- 26 Boys Second Round State Soccer (2A, 4A & 6A)
- 26, 27 Second Round State Lacrosse playoffs
- 27 Complete Region Track
- 29 Complete Area Golf (5A-7A)
- 29, 30 State Soccer Quarterfinals All Classes; Second Round State Baseball playoffs
- 30 Quarterfinals State Lacrosse playoffs; Complete Quarterfinal Round State Tennis
- 27, 28 First Round State Lacrosse playoffs
- 27-30 First Round State Baseball playoffs

GHSA Sponsors

