

# TENNIS

## GENERAL INFORMATION:

- A. Tennis is a team state championship sport for boys and girls that is based on Region play in all classifications. Beginning and ending dates for practice and competition can be found at the front of this publication.
- B. All state tournament matches will be 2 of 3 full sets with NO-AD scoring. The difference between NO-AD scoring and Regular scoring only occurs when the score of the game becomes "deuce." At deuce, one game point will be played to decide the winner of the game. The receiver of the serve may decide which side of the court to receive the game-deciding serve.
- C. All tennis matches will be played according to tennis rules published by the U.S. Tennis Association (USTA) unless otherwise specified by the Georgia High School Association.
  - 1. The rules of the USTA Handbook relating to lateness for a match will apply to GHSA matches.
  - 2. There will be continuous play except that a GHSA certified coach from that school may talk to their player(s) as they change ends of the court after a game, but the player(s) must stay on the court.
  - 3. In regular season play and in the Region tournament, the 8-game Pro Set format is allowed if both coaches are in agreement. 8-Game Pro Set: First player to win 8 games by a margin of 2 games (ie, 8-5, 8-6, 9-7) wins the set - if score gets to 8-8, the tie-breaker as outlined in this section is used. In Regular season matches, Regular season Tournaments, and in the Region tournament if both coaches agree, Regular Scoring may be used.
  - 4. Any GHSA tennis match that is interrupted, such as by weather or darkness, and can not be completed that day should be resumed (if it is to be made up) from the exact point of interruption at a future date agreed upon by the competing schools.
- D. Teams are restricted to no more than eighteen (18) varsity play dates excluding Region and State tournaments. The 18 play dates are for the complete team (singles and doubles). There will be no singles tournaments allowed.
  - 1. Each play date of an invitational tournament counts toward the maximum of 18 play dates.
  - 2. No school shall enter any invitational tournament unless it has been approved by the GHSA Executive Director.
  - 3. It is permissible for coaches to use "split squads" during the regular season. However, the use of split squads will count as two (2) of that school's maximum allowed play dates.
  - 4. There shall be no interscholastic practices and/or scrimmages.
- E. The format for all GHSA tennis matches during the regular season, region tournaments and state playoffs shall be three (3) singles matches and two (2) doubles matches played on composition (hard) surfaces unless the competing schools agree to play on a non-composition surface prior to the match. With prior agreement of both coaches, JV squads may use a format of two (2) singles matches and one (1) doubles match. NOTE: No GHSA match at any level may be played where there are fewer than three (3) points available and any pre-match forfeitures must take place at the lowest level. No. 1 singles and No. 1 doubles may never be forfeited before a match begins.
  - 1. An individual player may play in either one (1) singles match or one (1) doubles match ONLY.
  - 2. Substitution is not permitted once a match is engaged under USTA definition. If any injury occurs during play that prevents a player from completing the match, that player defaults and the opponent is awarded the victory.
  - 3. Teams have the option to play a 10-point tiebreaker (see USTA rules for playing process) in lieu of a full third set during the regular-season and Region tournament by agreement of the two coaches during the regular-season and by a majority vote of the Region coaches in the Region tournament. Note: All State Playoff matches must be best of three full sets. Note: All State Playoff matches must be best of three full sets with NO-AD scoring.
  - 4. Teams may play up to three (3) matches in a day IF a 10-point tiebreaker is used in lieu of a full third set in all three matches.
- F. 7-Point Tie-Breaker for Singles (Team A vs B)
  - 1. This is used when the score is tied 6-6 (or 8-8 in Pro-Set) in any set (1st, 2nd, or 3rd).
  - 2. Player A serves the first point from the right service area.
  - 3. Player B serves the second and third points from the left and right service areas respectively.
  - 4. Player A serves the fourth and fifth points - again alternating the service areas.
  - 5. Player B serves the next two points and ends of the court are changed between these two points.
  - 6. Player A serves the eighth and ninth points.
  - 7. After this, the serve is alternated on every two points.
  - 8. If the tie-breaker ends with a 6-6 score, the players change ends of the court and alternate serves until one player is ahead by two (2) points - which gives that player a set victory of 7-6.
  - 9. Players switch ends of the court after every six (6) points and at the end of the tie-breaker.
- G. F. 7-Point Tie-Breaker for Doubles (Team A & B vs C & D)
  - 1. Player A serves the first point from the right service area.
  - 2. Player C serves the second and third points - alternating the service areas.
  - 3. Player B serves the fourth and fifth points.
  - 4. Player D serves the sixth and seventh points, and ends of the court are changed between the points.

5. After this, play continues with the same service rotation until one team has either won seven (7) of the first twelve (12) points, or a team established a two-point margin after twelve (12) points have been played.
  6. Teams change ends of court after every six (6) points and at the end of the tie-breaker.
- H. Schools must enter team schedules, rosters and weekly game/meet results during the season on MaxPreps and be responsible for updates as needed. This information will support statewide media, event programs, broadcasts partners and GHSA Region Standings. Teams are encouraged to maintain team/individual statistics on MaxPreps.

## **REGION COMPETITION:**

- A. Each Region will determine how it will choose its top four (4) teams. *In Classes 1A-1, 2A, 3A and Private (1-3) Playoff Qualifiers and Seedings will be determined by the GHSA Post Season Ranking Formula (PSRF). Refer to Appendix PSR in the Constitution and By-Laws for formulas, explanations and examples.*
1. The top 4 Region representatives shall be determined no later than April 18, 2026.
  2. The top four Region teams must be submitted to the GHSA no later than 9:00 a.m., on April 19, 2026.
  3. Five percent (5%) of the gross gate receipts (if admission is charged) will be sent to the GHSA, and then the Region will decide how to handle expenses and disbursements.
- B. At the end of the regular season and prior to any post-season play, each coach will submit to the Region tournament director and enter electronically on the GHSA MIS web site an official playoff roster listing the singles players as Nos. 1, 2, and 3 and the doubles teams as Nos. 1 and 2, in proper order of ability (based on the integrity of the coach). This roster will be the lineup used in ALL tournament play thereafter, unless an alternate is used under the restrictions listed below. NOTE: If no Region tournament is held, the official playoff roster must be entered electronically at the end of the regular season and prior to the start of the state tournament.
1. Stacking of one's lineup is strictly prohibited in any regular-season match, invitational tournament or state tournament match. An obvious attempt to stack a lineup (i.e., use a player or doubles team below their relative ability level on the team) may result in the immediate disqualification of the entire team.
    - a. For each regular-season match, the coach will choose three players (A, B & C) to play singles and two pairs of players (D1 & D2) to play doubles that day. The best player of A, B and C must play the No. 1 position in singles and the weakest must play No. 3 singles. The best doubles team of D1 and D2 must play No. 1 doubles (Note: Points may only be forfeited beginning with the lower positions and working upward unless an injury or illness occurs after a match has begun).
    - b. It is not stacking to alternate from match to match during the regular season the positions of A and B, B and C, and even A and C if the playes are of relatively equal ability. Likewise, D1 and D2 could alternate if these teams are of relatively equal ability. (c) It is not stacking if players alternate from singles to doubles, and vice versa, from match to match during the regular season as long as the singles players being used that day are listed from No. 1 to No. 3 according to relative ability, and the best doubles team being used that day plays at No. 1 doubles.
  2. Designate up to six (6) alternates on the official playoff roster to be used under the following conditions:
    - a. Alternates should not be better in ability than ANY of the players listed on the playoff roster in the positions of Nos. 1, 2, or 3 singles OR Nos. 1 or 2 doubles.
    - b. Alternates may be used in either singles or doubles competitions, but the same player may not be used for both in the same round of competition.
    - c. Substitutions made after the official playoff roster has been submitted must be made at the lowest level of singles play with all others moving to the higher level of competition. In doubles competition, the coach has the option to place the alternate in the open slot or to place the alternate on the No. 2 doubles team and move a player from the No. 2 doubles team to the No. 1 doubles team, if the original vacancy is on the No. 1 team. A player may never be used in a position lower than his original position. NOTE: A substitution violation results in the loss of that line and not the forfeiture of the entire team match.
    - d. If the original contestant(s) resumes play, everyone moves back to their original positions listed on the submitted playoff roster.
    - e. A player listed as a singles player on the official playoff roster shall not switch over to doubles competitions in any later round, or vice-versa.
  3. A serious injury, illness, suspension or other conflict MAY warrant a waiver of the anti-stacking restrictions listed above. Such waivers will be considered on a case-by-case basis upon receipt of proper documentation to the GHSA office, including a letter signed by the school's principal.
  4. A school objecting to an opponent's lineup must provide documentation (newspaper articles, scorebooks, and written confirmation from other coaches) of any stacking violations.

## **STATE TOURNAMENT:**

- A. The State Tournament is considered a continuation of the Region Tournament.
1. Tournaments will be held for both boys teams and girls teams in each classification.
  2. Trophies shall be presented to the champions and runners-up in each classification - both boys and girls.
  3. In order to host a State Tournament match beyond the region level, the host school must have available a minimum of two (2) courts. Four (4) courts is preferable.

4. The First 4 Rounds of the State Tournament will take place on the "home" courts of the higher seeded teams. The First Round must be completed no later than April 23, 2026 the Second no later than April 29, 2026 the Third Round by May 4, 2026 and the Fourth Round no later than May 8, 2026.
  5. In each round of the state playoffs, the following will apply:
    - a. Coaches will contact each other and set up a mutually agreeable time and date.
    - b. If an agreement on time and date cannot be reached, the Executive Director will set the time and date.
    - c. In situations where fewer than five (5) courts are available per team match, the order of play must be as follows: No. 1 singles, No. 1 doubles, No. 2 singles, No. 2 doubles, No. 3 singles.
    - d. The home team is responsible for reporting the winners and scores to the GHSA office by 9:00 a.m., the day after the match.
  6. The State Semi-Finals will be held for both boys and girls in all classifications will be held at the location of the team with the higher seed or winner of the coin toss. The finals will be held at the Rome Tennis Center at Berry College on May 13, 2026. The exact schedule will be posted on the GHSA web site prior to the tournament. Rain Make-up is scheduled to be May 14, 2026.
- B. All team matches shall be the best three of five (3 singles/2 doubles) lines. *The scoring for each line shall be 2 of 3 full sets with NO-AD scoring.*
1. A team winning three (3) of the five matches (3 singles/2 doubles) shall be the winner.
  2. A team match is concluded as soon as three (3) points have been won, unless both coaches agree to finish all five lines.
- C. Each team shall furnish five (5) cans of high-quality, heavy-duty tennis balls *in the First 3 Rounds of the State Tournament.*
1. New balls will be used in the first team match.
  2. After the team match, the losing team will keep the balls used in that match, and the winning team takes the unopened cans of balls to the next round of competition.
  3. At the State Finals, the GHSA will supply the tennis balls.
- D. In the First 4 Rounds of the State Playoffs, the host school shall provide a designated "site manager" to make rulings concerning sportsmanship, lateness, or other rules violations that might occur during the match. This person should be a certified USTA official, when possible, hired and paid for by the host school. In instances where a USTA official cannot be secured, a school administrator must be the replacement. *For the Finals The GHSA will provide the site managers and officials.*