SOCCER

GENERAL INFORMATION:

A. Soccer is a state championship event for boys and girls played in the Spring season.*Schools in classes 2A through 7A are aligned in Regions. Class A will be an Area sport in soccer.*
B. All soccer matches will be played according to the rules published by the National Federation, and all National Federation recommendations for “State Adoption” have been adopted by the GHSA. Sub-varsity matches are limited to 35-minute halves.
C. The number of soccer matches allowed (not including state tournaments) shall be eighteen (18)*and the PSR minimum number of games to qualify is fourteen (14) . Please refer to the PSR Appendix for additional information.* If a region chooses to play a region tournament, those matches must be included as part of the 18-game total allowed. Beginning and ending dates for practice and competition can be found at the front of this publication.
D. All GHSA varsity soccer matches shall be played with one or more officially-dressed officials who are registered under the GHSA plan for the registration of officials.
E. The use of WBGT for ALL Contests is mandated as follows:
    1. WBGT must be measured 15 minutes prior to start of contest, coaches and officials must be notified.
    2. If WBGT is equal or above 86.0 F, an ice immersion tub must be present and ready for use.
    3. If WBGT is equal or above 88.0 F, Referees will take a 3-minute hydration break at or near the midway point of each half (ball out of bounds/foul assessed or goal scored). Teams to the bench area during hydration break, no coaches permitted on field.
F. Teams arriving late for a contest by thirty (30) minutes or more shall forfeit the match, and shall pay the officials unless prior arrangements are made in a timely manner, and both teams agree to start the game late or reschedule it. Consideration will also be given to emergency situations over which the traveling school has no control. The host school has the responsibility of notifying the officials of these changes.
G. A student may not participate in more than three (3) halves of soccer per day except in a tournament setting, when a player may play two full matches in a calendar day.
H. All soccer matches, regardless of classification(s) must be played to completion with no ties. For all region and post season matches, the overtime procedure described in item "E" later in this section will be invoked. For all non-region regular season matches that end in a tie after 80 minutes of regulation, these matches will go straight to penalty kicks. For this, start at sub-letter "C" under section "E" of the Overtime Procedure.
I. *In accordance with the National Federation allowance for a state adoption (Rule 7-1-5), when there is a competitive imbalance between the teams, the match will be shortened as follows:*

    1. *At the end of the first half, if one team has gained an eight (8) goal differential, or if it achieves such a differential during the second half, the game shall be terminated.*

J. Matches that are interrupted by weather or mechanical difficulties will be replayed from the point of interruption unless the team that is behind chooses not to complete the match.
K. In accordance with GHSA By-Laws, soccer coaches will be required to attend a GHSA rules clinic. Failure to do so will result in a fine for the school for each coach who does not attend.
L. Schools must enter team schedules, rosters and weekly game/meet results during the season on the*GHSA MIS System* and be responsible for updates as needed. *Deadlines for submitting information must met. All schools, regardless of classification, are REQUIRED to enter all game results into the GHSA MIS site immediately following their respective contest. This is imperative as it will affect all classifications in the Post Season Ranking System.* This information will support statewide media, event programs, broadcasts partners and GHSA Region Standings. Teams are encouraged to maintain team/individual statistics on MaxPreps.
M. Scrimmage (Bylaw 2.62 F) -One interscholastic scrimmage (two teams meeting head-to-head) is allowed in the sports of Baseball, Basketball, Football, Flag Football, Lacrosse, Soccer, Softball, Volleyball and Wrestling (tri match allowed on days preceding school or quad match on days not preceding a school day).
    1. This scrimmage may be scheduled anytime between the beginning of practice as set by the GHSA and the first regular season game for each team.
    2. This scrimmage is for varsity teams only, and shall be played with normal timing and/or scoring rules except as noted in individual sports sections.
    3. Officials registered with GHSA must be assigned, and the GHSA “Fee Chart” must be followed.
    4. A school may not scrimmage another school that is counting the scrimmage as a regular-season contest.

REGION/AREA COMPETITION:

A. When a *Region/Area* has not adopted its own tie-breaker method, the following Tie-Breaking Procedure will be used

for seeding purposes:

1. Record against all teams in the Region/Area.
2. Winning team in head-to-head competition between schools that are tied.
3. Goals allowed in head-to-head competition between schools that are tied.
4. Goal differential in head-to-head competition between schools that are tied (maximum of three (3) goals per game).
5. Goals allowed in all Region/Area games
6. Goal differential in all Region/Area games (maximum of three (3) goals per game). Note: When figuring "goals allowed" and "goal differential" in matches decided by penalty kicks, the winning team will have one (1) goal added to its game score and the losing team will have no goals added regardless of the number of penalty kicks that were made by either team.
7. In any step of the tie-breaking process if a three-way tie is broken so that all ties are broken, that step determines the placements. If two teams remain tied after a step is completed, revert back to head-to-head record to break the tie. If the tie cannot be broken, move to the next step.

B. If Regions/Areas sub-divide, then the same tie-breaking procedures (A1 through A7) should be used.
C. For Region/Area and State competition, if the score is still tied at the end of the second overtime period, the penalty kick procedure will be used to determine the winner.
D. Financial procedures for all Region/Area playoffs will be determined by the Region/Area. The host school is responsible for payment of officials. The admission fees for State playoffs begin immediately after Region/Area winners are determined.
E. **OVERTIME PROCEDURE**:
    1. The overtime will consist of two (2) ten-minute periods, which will be played to their entirety.
    2. A coin toss shall take place to determine which team will put the ball in play for the first overtime period.
    3. If the score remains tied following the overtime periods, a "shootout" of penalty kicks will determine the winner.
    4. The head referee shall choose the goal at which the penalty kicks will be taken.
    5. Each coach will select any five (5) eligible players (including goalkeeper) to take the kicks.
    6. A coin toss shall be held with the team winning the toss having the choice of kicking first or last.
    7. Teams will alternate kickers, and there is no follow up on the kicks.
    8. The defending team may change goalkeepers prior to each kick.
    9. Following five kicks from each team, the team with the greater number of successful kicks will be given one (1) point and declared the winner.
    10. If the same number of penalty kicks are successful for each team, each coach will select five (5) different eligible players who will kick in a "sudden victory" situation. Each team will have an opportunity to kick in each round of the sudden victory procedure.
    11. If there is no "sudden victory" winner after five (5) kicks, the process will be repeated until a winner is determined.

STATE COMPETITION:

A. *In all Classes, each Region/Area will determine a Region Champion who will automatically qualify for the post season and host a first round game.*
    1. *In All Classes, the remaining qualifiers (non-Region Champions) for the Post Season will be determined by the Post Season Ranking Formula. Refer to Appendix "PSR" in the GHSA Constitution for detailed information.*
    2. Region/Area winners must be determined by the date indicated on the Beginning and Ending Dates table at the front of this publication.
    3. It is the responsibilities of the host team to furnish game balls beyond those furnished by the GHSA
    4. In the event that two schools involved cannot agree on the arrangements for the series (dates, times, etc.) the GHSA Executive Director will make a ruling to cover the situation.
    5. Prior to the final round, the higher *PSR ranked* team will host, unless the competing teams have the same *ranking*. In that case, *PSR protocol will be followed.*
    6. All Championship games will be played on the dates indicated on the Beginning and Ending Dates table at the front of this publication. Admission prices and exact schedules and sites will be posted on the GHSA web site prior to the finals.
    7. At neutral-site games, each participating team is allowed free admission for a maximum of 25 players and team essential personnel. Coaches will be admitted with a GHSA coaching pass.
    8. In the Finals, the team on the bottom of the official GHSA bracket will be the designated "home" team for purposes of uniform requirements only. Regardless of prior seeding, the team on the bottom of the bracket shall wear dark jerseys and socks for the game.
B. Finances:
    1. The GHSA will receive 12% of the gross gate receipts for a single game and 20% for doubleheaders..
    2. Host schools will pay the Officials Association directly for the first and second rounds of the playoffs. Please see Fee Chart for Playoff Fees. (Please see Soccer Financial Forms)
    3. A pre-set amount for game officials fees will be sent to the GHSA office for the Quarterfinal and Semifinal

rounds, along with 12% of gross gate receipts, and the GHSA office will be responsible for paying the officials.
4. The visiting team shall be paid $.80 per mile (one way) for travel.
5. After these three expenses are paid the schools involved will share the remaining gate receipts equally.
6. The host school is responsible for security, facility fees, maintenance costs, etc., and these expenses shall not be taken out of gate receipts.

C. Admission must be charged at all playoff games. Ticket prices are posted on the website.
D. In order to host a state playoff game, the following site requirements must be met:
1. Seating requirements (seats at 24 inches each):*Private, A, & 2A: 750*; 3A: 1,000; 4A: 1,500;*5A, 6A, & 7A: 2,000*
2. Adequate restroom facilities must be provided
3. Dressing area must be provided for the visiting team and the officials.
4. The playing area must be configured in such a way that spectators must enter through an admission gate.
5. The field must be sufficiently lighted to allow for night play for all semifinal and championship matches.
6. Championships matches will be held at neutral sites.

E. In the post-season tournaments, it is necessary to have team benches located on the same side of the field. This will be true even in situations where fans are kept on opposite sides of the field. Preferably, fans will be on one side of the stadium while Team Benches will be on the opposite side of the field.