

GEORGIA HIGH SCHOOL ASSOCIATION

MINUTES

STATE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

October 5, 2026

The Fall meeting of the State Executive Committee of the Georgia High School Association was called to order at 9:00 a.m., on October 5, 2026, at the Marriott Macon City Center by Jim Finch, President.

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Vice President Curt Miller. The invocation was given by Carror Wright, Associate Director. Roll call by Marvin James, Media Director, showed the following: Present - 68, Absent -1 (A below)

Cleveland Edwards	Paris Burd	Darrell Demastus	Kevin Grooms	Kandace Mitchell	Harley Calhoun	Scarlett Grantham
Lee Heaberlin	Jeff Wallace	Lewis Pulliam	Jesse Crews	Mike Cleveland	Joshua Moore	Regina Montgomery
Don Baker	Peter Giles	Jessica Thomas	Myron Newton	Davis Russell	Chris Ingle-A	Kevin Petroski
Jason Holcombe	Lamarr Glenn	Andrew Calhoun	Nyere Coy Brown	Michael Langston	Dr. Jim Finch	Ricky Turner
Andy Dorsey	Brad Hayes	Reggie Wilkes	Brian Montgomery	Jason Gibson	Curt Miller	Kechia Rowles-sub
Nathan Turner	Marcus Diggs	Brian Gwyn	Brent Mashburn	David Lowery	Dr. Craig Davis	Lisa Isha-sub
Jason Dopson	Robert Wilson	Rendell Jackson	Eric Sutulovich	John Pinson	Joe Sanfilippo-A	
Daniel Garrett	Paul Fitz-Simons	Paul Standard	Jeremy Rayborn	Winston Peterson	Dr. Richard Woods-A	
Steve Waters	Andre Byrd	Hal Lamb	Von Lassiter	Adam Robertson	David Colvard	
Jason Brett	Myss Jelks	Eli Connell	Ron Duncan	Eli Dupree	Dr. Eric Holland	
Jason Carrera	Derek Waugh	Kendall Mills	Crystal Langston	Don Norton	Stacy Bennett	

Motion was made by Jesse Crews, seconded by Don Norton, and unanimously approved to adopt the agenda.

Motion was made by Jesse Crews, seconded by Brian Montgomery to enter into executive session to consider student eligibility issues.

ELIGIBILITY APPOINTMENTS

Motion was made by Kevin Grooms, seconded by Eli Connell to exit executive session.

ELIGIBILITY APPOINTMENTS RESULTS:

Clinch County Appeal of migrant student eligibility issues and penalties – Lee Douglas, AD

Kevin Grooms made the motion to deny, Jason Holcombe seconded.

Motion passes to deny unanimously (68-0)

North Cobb Christian Appeal Student Eligibility – Kyle McVey, AD

Eric Holland made the motion to approve, no one seconded. Motion failed.

Peter Giles made motion to deny, Steve Waters seconded.

Motion passes to deny (66-2) Holland, Derek Waugh opposed.

Eagles Landing Christian Academy Appeal for Student Eligibility – Gus Felder, AD

Scarlett Grantham made the motion to approve, Eric Holland seconded.

Motion passes to approve (68-0)

NIAA Royals Foundation Fundraising Campaign

Kelli Hutchinson presented a fundraising initiative encouraging Georgia high schools and athletic organizations to support the NIAA Royals Foundation, which provides resources for caregivers of individuals affected by Alzheimer's disease. The foundation's mission was inspired by Frank Broyles' experience caring for his wife.

More than 30 schools participated last year, raising nearly \$25,000. This year's campaign has set a goal of \$100,000 and is seeking participation from approximately 500 member schools, including schools affiliated with GHSA, GIAA and GAPPS.

A fundraising toolkit is available to assist schools with ideas and implementation. Schools that participated last year are also encouraged to challenge additional schools to become involved.

No formal action was taken.

Champions Standard Sportsmanship & Leadership Program

The committee reviewed **The Champions Standard**, provided by Coach Stephen Mackey via Zoom. It is a proposed Georgia sportsmanship and leadership initiative based on the Two Words model and its Texas implementation. The program focuses on **respect for others, control of self and a spirit of competition**, with an emphasis on culture change and leadership development rather than simply reducing ejections.

The Texas model reported a **28% reduction in ejections over two years**, with 90% of ejections reportedly occurring in programs that did not participate. The Georgia version is being developed with Georgia-specific branding, curriculum and promotional materials, with implementation targeted for **spring 2027** and coach onboarding before the following fall season.

Committee members and member schools were offered an opportunity to participate in a **no-cost pilot program**, providing access to more than 400 character and leadership lessons. Teams, schools, districts and counties may participate, with their feedback helping tailor The Champions Standard specifically for Georgia.

Action Items: Complete program development and Georgia branding; conduct additional filming and promotion; prepare coach onboarding materials; distribute the pilot-program QR code; and encourage interested Georgia schools to participate and provide feedback ahead of the planned 2027 rollout.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

(Committee reports constitute motions by the Chairman of the Committee, no seconds are required.)

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

1. **Discussion of Dead Week (GHSA office)**– *Received as information with no changes.*

2. **Private School State Playoff (GHSA office)** - Update on the recent meeting with representatives from several private schools regarding the private school state playoff structure and related concerns to discuss and bring proposal to BOT in April 2027. – *Received as information.*

***Body of Amendments attached to END of minutes**

*3. **Clarification of By-Law 2.62 (GHSA office)**– Proposal to further clarify by-law 2.62 – Member schools are not permitted to compete against clubs, groups, unattached competitors or unapproved non-member schools.

Motion made to approve by Regina Montgomery, seconded by Scarlett Grantham.

(Motion passes 12-0 unanimously; Harley Calhoun was absent)

(SEC passes motion 68-0 unanimously)

*4. **Eligibility of Eighth Grade Students (GHSA office)** – Proposal to add a J to 1.45 that says Once an eighth grade student is reported on Eligibility Form D, participates in tryouts, participates in spring practice, or

otherwise participates in sub-varsity events for a member school, the student will be deemed a migrant if the student subsequently is enrolled at another member school subject to the exceptions set forth in By Law 1.62.

Motion made to approve by Jeremy Rayburn; seconded by Steve Waters.

(Motion passes 12-0 unanimously; Calhoun was absent)

(SEC passes motion 68-0 unanimously)

***5. Forfeiture of Games and Records (GHSA office)-** When a Student Participates Under an Injunction Which is Subsequently Dismissed. The current By-Law 1.13 does not specifically mention dismissal of the injunction as a precursor to forfeiture.

Motion to approve by S. Grantham; seconded by Jim Finch.

(Motion passes 12-0 unanimously; Calhoun was absent)

(SEC passes motion 68-0 unanimously)

***6. Amendment to By-Law 2.84 (GHSA office) –** Live Internet Video Streaming of State Playoff Events

Motion to approve by Jason Dopson; seconded by J. Finch

(Motion passes 12-0 unanimously; Calhoun was absent)

(SEC passes motion 68-0 unanimously)

***7. Amendment to Article IV Governance – Section 3 Board of Trustees – Paragraph A (GHSA office) –** to clarify Board of Trustees selection process.

Motion to approve by Brian Montgomery; seconded by Ricky Turner.

(Motion passes 12-0 unanimously; Calhoun absent)

(SEC passes motion 68-0 unanimously)

8. Fine Structure and Rules Violations (GHSA office)– Discussion on rules and violations. – Received as information

9. Proposal for Executive Oversight Committee Nomination (GHSA office)– Jesse Crews nominated Scarlett Grantham.

Motion to approve by R. Montgomery and seconded by Curt Miller. (Motion passes, 11-0, Calhoun was absent and Grantham abstained)

(SEC passes motion 68-0 unanimously)

BASEBALL COMMITTEE

***1. Proposal to -** consider adoption of the playoff rule which states that a game is suspended (if winner cannot be determined) and will start from the point the game was stopped. This is to help with games that are not finished and affecting the PSR. – GHSA Office

Motion to approve Ricky Turner; Paris Burd seconded and the motion passes unanimously 7-0.

(SEC passes motion 68-0 unanimously)

LACROSSE COMMITTEE

1. **Proposal to** – Informational to begin discussions about the shot clock. – GHSA Office. *Received as information*

PSR COMMITTEE

1. **Entering Scores** – Discussion on schools entering scores within a set time frame. – GHSA Office
Received as information

SOCCER COMMITTEE

1. **Proposal to** – Update mercy rule from 10 to 8 – Mark Karen Mount Vernon Academy
Motion to approve by Peter Giles, Don Baker seconded and the motion passed unanimously 5-0
(SEC passes motion 68-0 unanimously)

SOFTBALL COMMITTEE

*1. **Proposal to** - consider adoption of the playoff rule which states that a game is suspended (if winner cannot be determined) and will start from the point the game was stopped. This is to help with games that are not finished and affecting the PSR. – GHSA Office

Motion to approve made by Don Baker; Jeff Wallace seconded and motion passes 7-0
(SEC passes motion 68-0 unanimously)

TENNIS COMMITTEE

1. **Proposal to** - allow coaching during play. Kevin Petroski - Athens Academy
Motion to deny by Andre Byrd and seconded by Paris Burd and motion is denied 7-0

VOLLEYBALL COMMITTEE

1. **PSR Volleyball** – Discussion Volleyball Tournaments / Play dates – GHSA office
Received as information.

LEGISLATIVE REPORT – Presented by **Dr. Robin Hines**

- The legislative outlook was described as favorable, with tax policy, school choice, and voucher expansion expected to remain relevant after the midterms.
- The GHSA Foundation is being organized to support students and scholarships.

LEGAL REPORT – Presented by **Alan Connell, ESQ**

- GHSA incorporation changes venue for cases naming only the association.
- The foundation was also incorporated.
- Active and potential litigation was reviewed, including injury claims and the **Team IP LLC** apparel dispute.
- Insurance carriers are defending the active matters. except for the Team IP litigation.

DIRECTORS REPORT – Presented by Dr. Tim Scott

- GHSA plans to continue waiving school dues and catastrophic insurance costs.
- Officials' recruitment and registration trends were reviewed across football, flag football, cheerleading, softball, and volleyball.
- The football calendar may return to an 11-week season with one bye week during the next reclassification cycle.
- Office renovations and increased corporate sponsorships were reported.

Policies and Programs

- Compliance with knee-pad rules and the wet-ball policy was emphasized.
- The Champions Standard will promote respect for others, self-control, and the spirit of competition through pilot schools and partner organizations.
- The Foundation plans \$25,000 worth of scholarships and a spring banquet.
- **Serata, Maddox, and Evans** will conduct audits, while **Whaley and Hammonds** will handle monthly accounting.

Don Norton made the motion to adjourn; Dr. Craig Davis seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Attached Bodies of Amendments

3. Clarification of By-Law 2.62 (GHSA Office)

2.62 The GHSA shall provide rules and regulations for competition among member schools for those competitive activities listed in the GHSA Constitution and By-Laws.

- a. Member schools may be allowed to schedule and play GISA and GAPPS (formerly GICAA) member schools provided the principal or athletic director of each agrees in writing, utilizing the standard “GHSA Cross-Play Contract,” available on the GHSA web site (www.ghsa.net).
 1. GISA and GAPPS schools competing with GHSA schools must comply with all GHSA safety rules and requirements and must be in compliance with Official Code of Georgia Sections 20-2-319.2 relating to pre-participation physical exams and 20-2-324.1 relating to concussion management protocols.
 2. Participants must be in compliance with all eligibility rules of their respective associations.
- b. In situations not covered by section (a), member schools shall compete, practice or scrimmage only against other member schools or against schools that are full members of the State Association in their respective states (NOTE: Football games may be scheduled only if the opponent is a full member, without restrictions, of its state athletic association). When competing internationally, member schools may compete only against school teams in that nation that are composed of students of similar ages. International exhibition competitions or scrimmages are not allowed. NOTE: When member schools compete out of state, the host state’s adaptations of NFHS playing rules will be enforced, and all GHSA by-laws regarding sportsmanship, eligibility and game times will be enforced.
- c. Member schools are permitted to compete against non-member schools in activities not listed in the GHSA Constitution and By-Laws.
- d. The GHSA Executive Director has the authority to approve competition between GHSA schools and private schools from states in which membership in the State Association is not allowed. These non-member schools must meet or exceed the State Association standards in order to compete with GHSA schools.
- e. A member school shall have no more than one varsity, one junior varsity, and one 9th grade team.
 1. Any sub-varsity team is limited to a maximum number of games equal to 70% of the varsity allotment in that sport. EXCEPTION: New schools that have only 9th and 10 grades with JV teams only (no varsity) are allowed to play the number of games allowed for varsity teams.

2. Competition between sub-varsity and varsity teams and/or individuals at the same event is prohibited. An exception may be made by the Executive Director for schools just opening and for schools just starting a particular sport.
 3. In the sports of Cross Country, Golf, Swimming, Tennis, Track & Field and Wrestling, a school may use a “split squad” at two regular season events on the same day at the varsity or sub-varsity levels. Both of the contests must be counted against the total number of contests allowed in that sport (Exception: Golf – see Golf section). Individual players may not exceed the total number of contests allowed at the varsity level of that sport.
 4. Unattached Competitor: Individual athletes may participate in non-GHSA events in the sports of Cross Country, Golf, Gymnastics, Riflery, Swimming, Tennis, Track and Wrestling as long as they do not represent their school, do not wear the school uniform, and are not coached at the event, or transported to the event, by their high school coach. “House teams” made up of athletes from various schools competing in a GHSA event are not considered to be unattached competitors and are illegal.
 5. No athlete will be allowed to compete in a GHSA game or contest (even in post-season play) unless accompanied by certified professional school personnel whose names have been submitted to the GHSA as coaches. Those students chaperoned by someone other than a certified professional will not be allowed to compete.
 6. In any GHSA sport, there may be no “open” competitions or exhibition performances that extend participation beyond the three levels of competition (i.e., varsity, JV, 9th grade) mandated in this by-law. The only interscholastic contests in which results are disregarded are scrimmages as defined below.
 7. Drones shall not be permitted to fly during any GHSA sanctioned contest. Note: This prohibition begins when the gates or doors open and extends until the last spectator has left the field or arena.
 8. Live Animals are prohibited at any indoor GHSA event unless a signed permission letter is acquired from the principal of the school wishing to bring the animal and the principal of the host school (if different). A copy of this letter must be provided to the GHSA office. NOTE: This by-law does not pertain to certified service animals
- 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.

- g. All competitions in sports utilizing a Ratings Formula to seed post-season qualification **MUST** be played to completion with a winner and a loser being determined.

4. Eligibility of Eighth Grade Students (GHSA Office)

1.45 Eighth grade students may participate on a sub-varsity team of a high school provided they attend a feeder school of that high school.

- a. Students in grade 8 are never eligible for a varsity event in any activity.
- b. Eighth grade students who play on a high school team must meet all middle school requirements as put forth by the State Department of Education.
- c. An eighth grade student who is declared ineligible at a middle school or retained for academic reasons, is considered to be ineligible for participation on a sub-varsity high school team.
- d. Eighth grade students participating on a sub-varsity team may only participate in 70% of the number of games allotted to the varsity team in that sport. Eighth grade students may not participate in more sub-varsity and middle school contests combined than the number the GHSA allows for varsity competition in that respective sport.
- e. Students below the eighth grade are not eligible to participate on any high school team.
- f. Students enrolled in grade 8 in a middle school or junior high school which is a feeder school to the member high school may participate in Spring football practice.
- g. Students enrolled in grade 8 in a middle school or junior high school which is a feeder school to the member high school may try out for cheerleading, girls flag football, softball, and volleyball at the high school. Eighth grade students at a non-feeder school that has no system high school may participate in cheerleading tryouts at the member high school serving the student's area of residence. Such a student must be pre-enrolled at that member high school, and once pre-enrolled, the student has established eligibility at that high school.
- h. Eighth grade students who attend a feeder school for one member high school may **NOT** participate in any sport or activity practice at a different member high school.
- i. All eighth grade students should be reported on Eligibility Form D, available on the GHSA web site.
- j. Once an eighth grade student is reported on Eligibility Form D, participates in tryouts, participates in spring practice, or otherwise participates in sub-varsity events for a member school, the student will be deemed a migrant if the student subsequently is enrolled at another member school subject to the exceptions set forth in By Law 1.62.

5. Forfeiture of Games and Records (GHSA Office)

1.13 If a student ruled ineligible by the GHSA, competes interscholastically due to the terms of a **court restraining order or injunction** against his/her school and/or the GHSA, and then has the court order vacated, stayed, reversed, or ruled unjustified; the Executive Director shall take one or more of the following actions against the school involved in the interest of restitution and fairness to the competing school(s):

- a. Require that individual and/or team records and performances achieved during participation by the ineligible student be vacated or stricken.
- b. Require that team victories be forfeited to the opponent(s).
- c. Require that team awards earned by the school or individual awards earned by the ineligible student be returned to the GHSA.

6. Amendment to By Law 2.84 (GHSA Office)

2.84 GHSA Media rules and regulations for State Playoff events:

- a. Broadcast rights and copyright privileges to all state playoff events (i.e., after region winners have been determined) belong to the Georgia High School Association, and the GHSA has the right to determine if any of these events may be broadcast, televised, webcast, tape recorded, filmed or photographed for any purposes. NOTE: Participating schools may NOT sell tapes of state playoff events or provide copies of tapes to third parties for resale without written consent from the GHSA office.
- b. The GHSA shall grant media access at all state playoff events to properly identified representatives of newspapers, radio stations (with broadcast contract) and television outlets ONLY. Proper identification is interpreted to mean an identification card given by the media outlet, or written documentation on the letterhead of the media outlet specifying that the bearer is working for that outlet at the GHSA event.
- c. Any media entity wishing to broadcast or telecast (including Internet reproduction) any state playoff event must execute a written contract with the GHSA for that event. Contact the GHSA office for a contract, which shall contain specific rules and requirements.
- d. Advertising utilized during a broadcast shall not include alcohol or tobacco products.
- e. Announcers shall not criticize coaches, officials, or schools, and shall be fair and impartial in their descriptions.
- f. Broadcast fees are listed in a chart that follows. The fees are “per event” except for football, basketball and soccer, which are per game. NOTE: a baseball playoff series is one event; a softball tournament is one event.
- g. Television and Video Webcast rights and fees must be negotiated with the GHSA office on a case-by-case basis, except for those stations or schools having long-term contracts with the GHSA.
- h. Video production for authorized school “coach’s shows” are exempt from these rules and fees. However, schools may only tape, photograph or film events in which their team is participating.
- i. NFHS Network is the exclusive post-season video streaming platform of the GHSA. Members of the NFHS Network School Broadcast Program (SBP) do not pay rights fees for post-season playoffs. Non-SBP schools can request to carry a playoff contest subject to GHSA rights fees & NFHS Network schedule. Requests should be sent to Marvin James at marvin.james@ghsa.net. For more information on joining the School Broadcast Program (nfhsnetwork.com/sbp) contact Matt Abramson at matt.abramson@playonsports.com.

**Amendment to Article IV Governance – Section 3 Board of Trustees – Paragraph A
(GHSA Office)**

**SECTION 3
BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

- A. Membership of the Board of Trustees shall be composed of the President, Vice President, and Executive Director, plus one member from each classification (as selected by a vote of the SEC representatives in that respective classification) and a total of four (4) at-large members (three (3) of which shall be appointed by the BOT) that must include at least two (2) females and two (2) private school representatives, and all four must be approved by a vote of the State Executive Committee. The term of office for members of the Executive Committee serving on the Board of Trustees shall coincide with the length of the reclassification cycle.

AMENDMENT TO GHSA CONSTITUTION

ARTICLE IV- GOVERNANCE

SECTION 3 BOARD OF TRUSTEES

PARAGRAPH A

ARTICLE IV SECTION 3 PARAGRAPH A of the GHSA Constitution is hereby amended as follows:

By deleting the current language of Paragraph A in its entirety and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

Membership of the Board of Trustees shall be composed of the President, Vice President, Executive Director, one member from each classification and four at-large members.

The members from each classification shall be selected by majority vote of the Executive Committee representatives of each respective classification.

-One female at-large member shall be selected by majority vote of the representatives of the State Superintendent of Schools, Georgia School Boards Association, Georgia School Superintendents Association, Georgia Association of Secondary School Principals, Georgia Athletic Directors Association, and the Executive Director of the Georgia Athletic Coaches Association.

Three at-large members (one of whom must be female and two of whom must be representatives of private schools) shall be selected by majority vote of the newly selected members of the Board of Trustees.

The four at-large members must be approved by majority vote of the State Executive Committee.

The term of office of the Trustees shall coincide with the current GHSA reclassification cycle or until their successors are selected as set forth above.

BASEBALL COMMITTEE

6. In the event that a State Playoff game is suspended prior to becoming a legal game, or if it is suspended after becoming a legal game without a winner being able to be determined, it shall resume from the point of interruption on the next available date. If that date can not be agreed upon by the competing schools, the GHSA Executive Director shall determine the playing date. If a State Playoff games is suspended at a point where a winner can be determined, it shall be considered an official game.

SOFTBALL COMMITTEE

1. The suspended game rule will be used.
 - a. When a game is stopped before it becomes a legal game, it is considered to be “no contest” and any replay will begin from the first inning.
 - b. When a game is stopped after it becomes a legal game and a winner can be determined, the game is completed.
 - c. When a game is stopped after it becomes a legal game and a winner can not be determined, any replay will begin from the point of interruption.
 - d. Exception: If a State Tournament game is suspended at any point, it shall resume from the point of interruption on the next available date. If that date can not be agreed upon by the competing schools, the GHSA Executive Director shall determine the playing date.