



GHSA
WELCOMES
YOU BACK!

— TO THE —
2026-27
ACADEMIC AND ATHLETIC SCHOOL YEAR



**STUDENTS
FIRST.**



**STRONG SCHOOLS.
STRONGER TOGETHER.**



**ONE TEAM.
ONE GOAL.**

September 2026 (Items of Interest - Vol. 46 No. 1)

Welcome Back to a New School Year On behalf of the Georgia High School Association, welcome back! I hope everyone had an enjoyable summer and is looking forward to another outstanding year of high school athletics and activities.

Congratulations to our student-athletes, coaches, athletic directors, administrators, officials, and support personnel on a great start to the fall seasons. Volleyball, softball, football, cross country, and cheerleading are underway, and flag football will begin soon. It has been exciting to see the preparation, enthusiasm, and school spirit displayed throughout our state.



As we move forward, let us remain committed to providing a positive and safe environment for everyone involved. Good sportsmanship should be at the center of every contest. We encourage our coaches, student-athletes, parents, and spectators to represent their schools and communities with pride, respect, and class.

I want to thank our student athletes, school administrators, athletic directors, coaches, officials, game-management personnel, and countless volunteers whose leadership, professionalism, and unwavering commitment set the standard for high school athletics across the nation. Because of your exceptional work, Georgia continues to be recognized as a national leader in providing outstanding opportunities and championship experiences for student-athletes. Simply put, our people are what make high school athletics in Georgia among the very best in the country. Thank you for all you do for our students!

We look forward to an exciting fall filled with outstanding competition, memorable moments, and championship experiences. Best wishes to all our member schools for a safe, successful, and rewarding season.

Let's have a great year!

Tim Scott
Executive Director
Georgia High School Association

September is Fall Sports Cancer Awareness Month

September is official fall sports "CANCER AWARENESS MONTH" in the Georgia High School Association to help fight all types of this dreaded disease. Teams may wear colored jerseys, socks, wristbands, and headbands during a home event to show support for their chosen cancer fundraiser.

As part of September Childhood Cancer Awareness Month, the GHSA is partnering with, [Rally Foundation](#) and [CURE Childhood Cancer](#) dedicated to funding targeted research while supporting patients and their families.

Please visit their websites, to learn how to Go Gold at one of your upcoming games.

In observance of Breast Cancer "Pink" awareness, the GHSA allows member schools to wear "Pink" at their HOME event. January (winter) and April (spring) are additional "cancer awareness" months throughout the GHSA scholastic season.



Thank you to everyone in advance for your enthusiasm and action to fight back against cancer.

GHSA Staff & Responsibilities

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TIM SCOTT - Executive Director - (ext. 141) Administration, Interpretation of GHSA Rules, Hardship Applications, Appeals, Coaches Education Program, Swimming (Andy Cowart) Wrestling (Bud Hennebaul) tim.scott@ghsa.net



GHSA's Trusted Payment Partner for Coaches, Teams & Boosters

The Fall Season Playbook

Cheerleading, cross country, flag football, football, one act play, fast-pitch softball, volleyball. Whatever fall sport you're running, every coach, team parent, booster club, and volunteer gets access to all of Cheddar Up's premium features. One place to run registrations, fundraising, and spiritwear sales before the fall season gets away from you.

Collect everything in **one** place:



Fundraising

Sponsorships, car washes, donut sales. Track every dollar without a spreadsheet.



Team Fees and Membership Dues

Set up tiered levels for booster club memberships, or collect team fees. Payments and receipts track themselves.



Spirit Wear

Launch an online store in minutes with item variations, shipping, and inventory tracking.



Banquets and Senior Night

Collect RSVPs, payments, and contributions for banquets, senior night, or coach gifts.

Coaches & ADs: Share this with your booster club



BIG DEAL ALERT: GHSA Members get Cheddar Up's Team plan and premium features worth over \$420.00 per year — for FREE! Just follow the QR code or go to getcheddarup.com/ghsa and start collecting today. Try a sports template to set up your collection in minutes!



Getting started is easy: getcheddarup.com/ghsa

GHSA Celebrates Student Athletes Every Thursday

Beginning this school year, GHSA will celebrate former student athletes across our social media platforms every Thursday. So if you have any student athletes from the past that you'd like to nominate, please send your request to marvin.james@ghsa.net









DON'T BE FOOLED BY THE *FAKES!*

IT'S ONLY


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GHSA

STAY CONNECTED. STAY INFORMED. TRUST THE OFFICIAL.



GHSA SPORTSMANSHIP STATEMENT:

The GHSA and its member schools have made a commitment to promote good sportsmanship by student/athletes, coaches, and spectators at all GHSA sanctioned events.

Profanity, degrading remarks, and intimidating actions directed at officials, competitors, or other spectators will not be tolerated, and are grounds for removal from the event site.

Spectators are not allowed to enter the competition area prior to, during, or after the conclusion of the contest. Violators are subject to removal from the venue.

Thank you for your cooperation in the promotion of good sportsmanship at today's event.

TEAMWORK. RESPECT. INTEGRITY.

Order Your 2026 ASPIRE Awards Tickets Today!



2026 ASPIRE Awards - AdaptED Sports

2026 AAASP ASPIRE Awards Sunday, September 27, 2026 at Locust Grove Event Center 280 Mose Brown Dr, Locust Grove, GA from 4-6PM Interested in AAASP Sponsorship? Buy 2026 ASPIRE Award Tickets The AdaptED Sports Programs in Recreation and Education (ASPIRE) Awards honor outstanding contributions to the advancement of adapted sports nationwide. Nominees—including student-athletes, coaches, volunteers, advocates, officials, and organizations—are recommended by peers and the community and selected ... [Read More](https://adaptedsports.org/2026-aspire-awards/)

adaptedsports.org

Programs Honored at GADA Directors Cup Celebration



DULUTH, Ga. – The Georgia Athletic Directors Association celebrated the state's top high school athletic programs Tuesday evening during the annual GADA Directors Cup Awards Celebration in Duluth.

The Directors Cup recognizes excellence across an entire athletic program, honoring schools whose student-athletes and coaches

have consistently excelled in GHSA competition throughout the school year. Awards were presented to the top overall, girls and boys athletic programs in each classification.

In Class 1A Division II, Lake Oconee Academy earned both the Overall and Girls Directors Cups, while Trion High School captured the Boys Cup.

Wesleyan swept Class 1A Division I, earning the Overall, Girls and Boys Directors Cups.

In Class 2A, Columbus High School claimed the Overall and Girls honors, while Hebron Christian Academy earned the Boys Cup.

Jefferson High School captured the Class 3A Overall Directors Cup. Greater Atlanta Christian earned the Girls Cup, while Oconee County High School took home the Boys honor.

In Class 4A, Marist School completed a clean sweep, winning the Overall, Girls and Boys Directors Cups.

Pope High School accomplished the same feat in Class 5A, capturing all three Directors Cup honors.

In Class 6A, Buford High School earned the Overall Directors Cup, Walton High School captured the Girls Cup and Carrollton High School earned the Boys Cup.

Congratulations to all of the student-athletes, coaches, athletic directors, administrators and school communities whose work throughout the year made these accomplishments possible.

These programs represent the best of their respective classifications and the tremendous tradition of excellence throughout Georgia high school athletics.

Special thanks to GADA Executive Director Joe Sanfilippo and GADA President Kevin Grooms for their leadership and for celebrating the outstanding accomplishments of athletic programs across

the state.

GHSA 2026-27 Media Protocols, Procedures and Processes

GHSA Media Protocols, Procedures and Processes for the 2026-27 athletic season.



Welcome the NEW GHSA Student Athlete Advisory Committee

2026-2027 GHSA Student-Athlete Advisory Council | GHSA.net

Introducing the 2026-27 Student-Athlete Advisory Council (SAAC), who represent all classifications and at-large members. The SAAC organizes the Student Section Spirit Challenge, Inspiration Award and host the annual Student-Athlete Leadership Conference in April. SAAC was begun in 2019, by GHSA Associate Directors, Penny Pitts-Mitchell and Tanya Anderson.

ghsa.net

GHSA 2026-27 Student-Athlete Advisory Committee (SAAC)



Opioid Misuse in Georgia: Find Help, Hope and Healing

Opioid and fentanyl addiction has become a crisis that touches families in every corner of Georgia. According to the CDC, more than 650,000 Americans have died from opioid abuse over the past 20 years.

If you need help, or know someone who needs assistance with opioid misuse, call the Georgia Crisis & Access Line at 1-800-715-4225. Help is available 24/7.

For an immediate overdose or medical emergency, call 911. You can also call or text 988 for mental health or substance-use crisis support.



WSB-TV 2 ATLANTA

OPIOID MISUSE AWARENESS

One pill can change everything.
KNOW THE RISKS. SAVE LIVES.

 KNOW Understand the risks.	 TALK Start the conversation.	 LOCK Secure medications.	 SAVE Help prevent overdoses.
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IF YOU NEED HELP, OR KNOW OF ANYONE WHO NEEDS ASSISTANCE WITH OPIOID MISUSE,
PLEASE CALL (GEORGIA)
1-800-715-4225
Help is available 24/7.
For immediate help in a crisis, call or text 988.
For a life-threatening emergency, call 911.

THIS YEAR'S SPECIAL
IS SCHEDULED TO AIR ON

WSB-TV 2 ATLANTA

AT 7PM ON SUNDAY, 9/20

 **2** **COVERAGE YOU CAN COUNT ON**

 **SAFE COMMUNITIES. STRONGER GEORGIA.**

For resources and information, visit dph.georgia.gov/opioids



GHSA REQUESTING THOSE AFFECTED BY

OPIOID ADDICTION

— YOUR STORY MATTERS. —

The Georgia High School Association is seeking members of the GHSA community whose lives have been impacted by **opioid addiction**.



STUDENT-ATHLETES



COACHES



ADMINISTRATORS



PARENTS &
FAMILY MEMBERS



SUPPORTERS

Whether you are directly impacted or a loved one has been, your experience can help bring awareness to an issue affecting families and communities across Georgia.



IF OPIOID ADDICTION HAS TOUCHED YOUR LIFE
OR THE LIFE OF SOMEONE YOU LOVE,
WE WOULD LIKE TO HEAR FROM YOU.



SHARE YOUR STORY.
WE'RE HERE TO LISTEN.



CONTACT **MARVIN JAMES**
marvin.james@ghsa.net



FOR FREE AND CONFIDENTIAL SUPPORT, 24/7

CALL, TEXT OR CHAT

988

Gatorade Spring Players of the Year

GATORADE **GHSA** PLAYERS OF THE YEAR 2025-2026!





Etowah High School Student-Athlete Named 2025-2026 Gatorade Georgia Baseball Player of the Year | GHSA.net

CHICAGO (June 1, 2026) — In its 41st year celebrating the nation's best high school athletes, Gatorade today announced Trevor Condon of Etowah High School is the 2025-26 Gatorade Georgia Baseball Player of the Year.

ghsa.net



Buford High School Student-Athlete Named Gatorade Georgia Softball Player of the Year | GHSA.net

CHICAGO (June 5, 2026) — In its 41st year celebrating the nation's best high school athletes, Gatorade today announced Caroline Stanton of Buford High School is the 2025-26 Gatorade Georgia Softball Player of the Year.

ghsa.net



Johns Creek High School Student-Athlete Named Gatorade Georgia Boys Soccer Player of the Year | GHSA.net

CHICAGO (June 12, 2026) — In its 41st year celebrating the nation's best high school athletes, Gatorade today announced Ryan Gottschalk of Johns Creek High School is the 2025-26 Gatorade Georgia Boys Soccer Player of the Year.

ghsa.net



Carrollton's Khaleen Pinkard Named 2025-2026 Gatorade Georgia Boys Track & Field Player of the Year | GHSA.net

Carrollton High School senior Khaleen Pinkard has been named the 2025-26 Gatorade Georgia Boys Track & Field Player of the Year after a dominant season that established him as one of the nation's premier horizontal jumpers.

ghsa.net



Landmark Christian's Melanie Doggett Named 2025-2026 Gatorade National and Georgia Girls Track & Field Player of the Year | GHSA.net

Landmark Christian School freshman Melanie Doggett has been named the 2025-26 Gatorade National Girls Track & Field Player of the Year, while also earning Georgia Girls Track & Field Player of the Year honors after one of the most remarkable debut seasons in high school track history.

🔗 ghsa.net



Congratulations to Harrison High School's Sydney Snow, the 2025-26 Gatorade Georgia Girls Soccer Player of the Year! | GHSA.net

Snow capped an outstanding senior season with 25 goals and nine assists, helping lead the Hoyas to the Class 6A state semifinals. She finished her Harrison career with an incredible 66 goals and 39 assists.

🔗 ghsa.net

Piedmont Orthopedics | OrthoAtlanta Comeback Athletes of the Year



Kennedy “Kady Mac” Moon — Mary Persons High School

After suffering a traumatic arm injury during a cheer stunt in October 2025, Kennedy “Kady Mac” Moon faced six surgeries, permanent nerve damage and a long road to recovery. Despite losing movement in her dominant arm, Kady Mac never lost sight of her goal to return to sports. Through daily rehabilitation, relentless determination and a positive attitude, she earned spots on both the Mary Persons varsity soccer and varsity cheer teams — even scoring twice in a recent soccer game. Kady Mac’s ability to overcome adversity while continuing to lead and inspire those around her embodies the true spirit of a comeback athlete. Her perseverance and refusal to give up have made her a role model for her teammates and her entire school community.



Isaiah Respert — Howard High School

Isaiah Respert entered his senior football season as a three-year starter and highly recruited offensive lineman before suffering two devastating knee injuries that sidelined him for much of his final football season. Rather than step away from his team, Isaiah continued to serve as a captain and support his teammates from the sidelines, earning his school's Servant Leadership Award for his dedication to the program. Determined to finish his athletic career on the court, Isaiah worked tirelessly through rehabilitation and returned for his senior basketball season as a captain. He went on to earn All-Defensive Team honors and later signed to play football at Northeast Mississippi on a full scholarship. His leadership, perseverance and dedication make him a true example of what it means to be a comeback athlete.

Reminder: Practice Policy for Heat and Humidity

GHSA Reminds Coaches and Student-Athletes to Stay Safe During Fall Practices

As we enter the conditioning and fall practice period, the Georgia High School Association (GHSA) urges all coaches and student-athletes to prioritize safety.

Please remember that the **GHSA Heat and Humidity Policy** applies to **all sports**, not just football.



A scientifically approved Wet Bulb Globe Temperature (WBGT) monitor must be used at every outdoor practice to ensure compliance with GHSA policy. WBGT readings must be taken **at least every 30 minutes**, beginning **30 minutes prior to the start of practice**.

Important Policy Clarifications

- Once a WBGT reading reaches a specific range and remains there for **15 consecutive minutes**, the practice restrictions for that range must be followed for the remainder of that practice. Schools **may not revert to a lower restriction level**, even if the WBGT reading later decreases.
- If, during the same practice, the WBGT increases into a higher range and remains there for **15 consecutive minutes**, the restrictions for the higher range must immediately be implemented. Schools **may not return to a lower restriction level** if conditions improve later during that practice.
- If **practice has not yet begun** and the WBGT reading is **above 92.0**, **no outdoor workouts are permitted**. Schools should delay the start of practice until WBGT conditions improve.
- Schools must use a **scientifically approved WBGT monitor**. If your school has a **Perry Weather** station on campus, it meets GHSA requirements and may be used. **Phone applications are not approved** for WBGT measurements at this time.
- All WBGT monitors must be **calibrated at least once every two (2) years**, or sooner if recommended by the manufacturer.

Some useful links:

[Practice Policy for Heat and Humidity](#)

[GHSA Heat Index Measurement & Record Chart](#)

[Frequently Asked Questions Re: GHSA Heat Policy](#)

Thank you for your continued commitment to the health and safety of Georgia's student-athletes.

Stay safe. Stay hydrated.

One place to collect it all for your team



Cheddar Up



GHSA Basketball State Championships Headed to Atlanta in 2027

The Georgia High School Association has announced that the GHSA Basketball State Championships will be played at the Georgia State Convocation Center in Atlanta for the next two seasons.

GHSA Executive Director Dr. Tim Scott said the decision reflects the association's commitment to providing student-athletes with the best championship experience possible.

"We always look for the best facilities available for our student-athletes," said Scott. "With Macon currently undergoing construction for its new facility, we felt this was the right time to make the move. We chose Georgia State because we've had tremendous success working with them over the past several years as the host of our basketball semifinal games. We know they will provide a first-class championship experience."

Scott also expressed appreciation for the partnership with Macon.

"We are grateful for our time in Macon and appreciate the community's support of the GHSA Basketball State Championships over the years. We look forward to the progress in Macon and reevaluating our future championship plans after the next two seasons."

Additional information regarding championship schedules, ticketing, and event logistics will be announced by the GHSA at a later date.





GHSA SEPTEMBER

DATES TO REMEMBER

- | | | |
|----|---|--|
| 7 |  | GHSA OFFICE CLOSED -
LABOR DAY |
| 7 |  | EARLIEST DATE FOR
FLAG FOOTBALL PRACTICE |
| 7 |  | ESPORTS - FALL 2026 -
PRESEASON BEGINS |
| 8 |  | HARDSHIP/APPEAL MEETING |
| 14 |  | EARLIEST DATE FOR
FLAG FOOTBALL CONTEST |
| 19 |  | EARLIEST DATE FOR
GAME DAY CHEERLEADING CONTEST |
| 21 |  | ESPORTS - FALL 2026 -
REGULAR SEASON START |
| 22 |  | HARDSHIP/APPEAL MEETING |

ONE TEAM. | ONE GOAL. | STUDENT-ATHLETE SUCCESS.



GHSA CELEBRATES SPORTSMANSHIP!

-  PLAY **HARD**,
-  PLAY **FAIR**,
-  AND PLAY **WITH HEART.**

ALWAYS **RESPECT** YOUR OPPONENT!

RESPECT • INTEGRITY • CLASS • LEADERSHIP



Marvin James

September 2026 "Wishing you a great start to your SCHOOL YEAR!!!"

