



# GHSAA

## "ITEMS OF INTEREST"

March 2021

### February Was Busier Than Ever With Extra Championships

While it's always busy around the GHSAA office, February has led the way with activity and more so than an average year. Swimming and Diving State Championships were held at Georgia Tech with no fans and, despite this adjustment, the meet was very successful and we appreciate GT making it work for our student athletes. I want to thank Andy Cowart, Franke Marsden and Matt Murphy for organizing and running the meet for over 2000 athletes, which is no small task.

Wrestling is now complete and the Traditional Champions have been crowned. As you know, wrestling had been a cause for concern when considering COVID-19 and our coaches and athletic directors were great all season long to mitigate the risks despite the challenges. Don Corr, Bud Hennebaul and the ATA were outstanding as they planned and executed the state meet. There were many changes along the way but a great event happened and I appreciate those mentioned earlier as well as those at the Macon Centreplex, who were great to work with as always.

Penny Mitchell was busy as she has directed the State Championships in Competitive Dance, Competition Cheerleading (moved from the fall along with One Act Play because of the pandemic) and Game Day Cheer all within a two week period. We hope the schedule returns to normal next year, but I'm proud of Penny for making these events memorable despite significant challenges. We were informed two weeks prior to the Competition Cheer final that the Columbus City Council decided we would not be allowed to have the championships in the Columbus Civic Center. After months of planning, Penny was forced to come up with another site and she delivered with help from the Macon Centreplex. We appreciate them allowing us to hold these championships on such short notice and I appreciate Penny and Pam Carter's leadership as well as the many volunteers who made it happen.

As of this writing, the Georgia General Assembly is at the halfway point of this year's session. Ernie Yarbough and I have spent quite a bit of time in Atlanta attending committee meetings and meeting with our elected representatives and I believe our relationship with both the House and Senate is the best that I've seen in my tenure at the GHSAA. Both sides have really worked to find common ground on the issues that affect our Association and I'm grateful for the collaboration. There are several bills currently working their way through the process. HB 276 is a bill that would prevent transgender girls from competing in girls competition. This has been a big issue throughout the country as transgender girls (born as biological males) have won numerous track championships in Connecticut. HB 276 would allow only athletes born female to compete in girl sports. The GHSAA does not want to discriminate against any group but wants the competition to be level and recognizes the physiological differences in males and females in terms of strength, speed and size. The GHSAA supports this bill.

There are home-school participation bills in both the House and Senate this year. SB 51 is a bill authored by Bruce Thompson and others, and HB 545 is authored by John Carson and others. Both bills are very similar and are vast improvements, from my standpoint, from earlier versions. I have been able to provide input on both bills and there are qualifying courses required for participation, discipline components and all eligibility requirements are the same for all students (units earned in prior semester, enrolled in 2.5 units, and accumulated units appropriate for year of high school). There are measures to prevent students from "gaming" the system as well as other items that I feel are improvements. I have asked for local districts to be able to decide to allow participation, but I don't expect this to appear in either version of the bill. However, I am encouraged with the communication and input we have enjoyed this session. I appreciate Senator Thompson and John Carson allowing us to be an active part of the process and there has been a great deal of compromise regarding this issue. At this time, SB 51 has passed the full Senate, and the Full Education Committee of the House will hear HB 545 on March 2, 2021. This has been going on for many years and this may be the year that a bill allowing home schoolers to participate passes. If so, I don't expect any adverse effect on the association.

Thank you for all you have done in this most difficult year in providing sports and activities for the youth of our state. It is my hope that as more are vaccinated we will return to normal sooner than later. Until then, stay safe and feel free to call me if I can do anything for you.

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

Join the conversation on social media @OfficialGHSAA on TikTok, Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and YouTube



**GEORGIA HIGH SCHOOL ASSOCIATION** Newsletter

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Administration, By-Law Interpretations, Hardship Rulings,  
Football Playoffs, Coaches Education Program

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**PENNY PITTS MITCHELL** (extension 22)

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Publication Orders

**ROBIN BULLINGTON** (extension 33)

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**GHSA Licensed Products**

This month's featured licensees are: **Honig's Whistle Stop** ([honigs.com](http://honigs.com))  
**Cliff Keen** ([cliffkeen.com](http://cliffkeen.com)), **Smitty Official's Apparel** ([smittyusadyesub.com](http://smittyusadyesub.com)),  
Officials apparel and equipment; **Nfinity**, official cheerleading footwear and  
apparel ([nfinity.com](http://nfinity.com)); **Print Mascot**, Printing plastic cards, magnets, decals, &  
apparel ([www.PrintMascot.com](http://www.PrintMascot.com)); **Snapphound**, event photo platform.  
([ghsa.snapphound.com/events](http://ghsa.snapphound.com/events)); **VNN**, Website software that helps athletic  
departments promote their programs online. ([vnnsports.net](http://vnnsports.net)); and **Thrive Spirit**  
provides high-intensity cheer and dance training ([cheerdancethrive.com](http://cheerdancethrive.com)).

**GHSA CHAMPIONS**

Congratulations to the following State Champions:

**SWIMMING and DIVING****Boys**

7A North Gwinnett High School  
6A Johns Creek High School  
4-5A Marist  
1-3A Westminster

**Girls**

7A Lambert High School  
6A Lassiter High School  
4-5A Marist  
1-3A Westminster

**DANCE**

7A Mill Creek High School  
5-6A Starr's Mill High School  
3-4A West Laurens High School  
1-2A Thomasville High School

**CHEERLEADING**

7A South Forsyth High School  
6A Carrollton High School  
5A McIntosh High School  
4A West Laurens High School  
3A Mary Persons High School  
2A Dodge County High School  
A Public Gordon Lee High School  
A Private Mount Paran

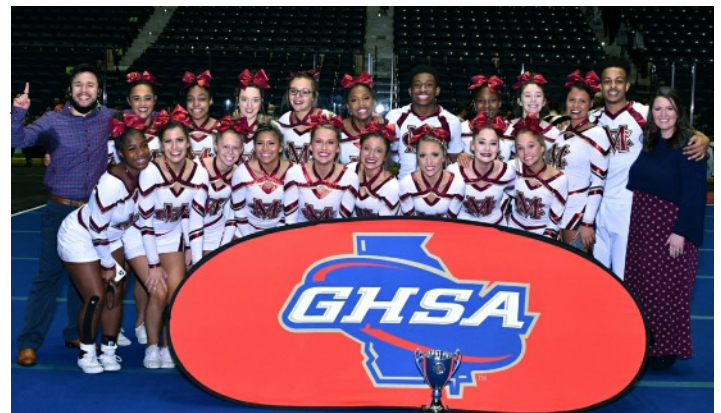
**GAME DAY CHEERLEADING**

7A North Gwinnett High School  
5-6A Lee County High School  
3-4A Morgan County High School  
1-2A Haralson County High School

**ONE ACT PLAY**

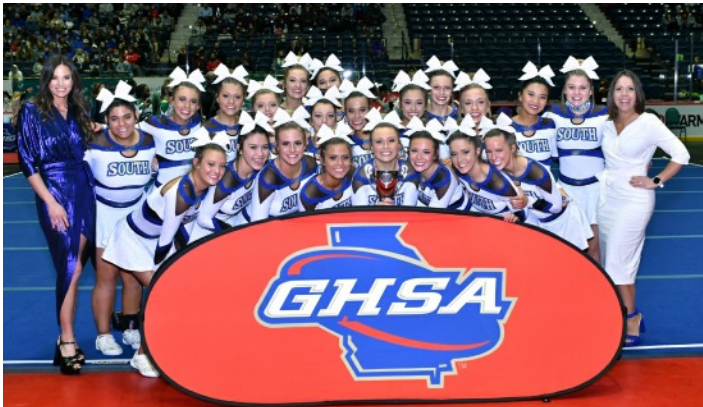
7A Denmark High School  
6A Buford High School  
5A Warner Robins High School  
4A Perry High School  
3A Lumpkin County High School  
2A Bremen High School  
A Public Lake Oconee Academy  
A Private Brookstone School

Winning a State Championship is an outstanding achievement for the GHSA member schools, their athletes and coaches, and a distinction that should create a great deal of pride in the school community.

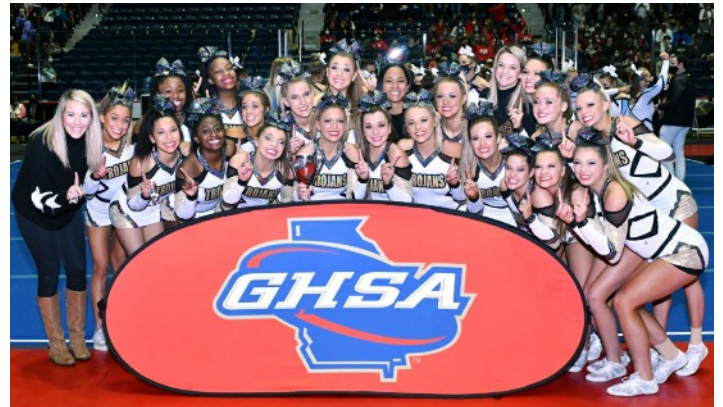


**2021 CoEd State Cheerleading Champions: Mill Creek**  
(The rest of the cheerleading champions are pictured on page 3)

# Cheerleading State Champions - 2020-21



**7A: South Forsyth**



**6A: Carrollton**



**5A: McIntosh**



**4A: West Laurens**



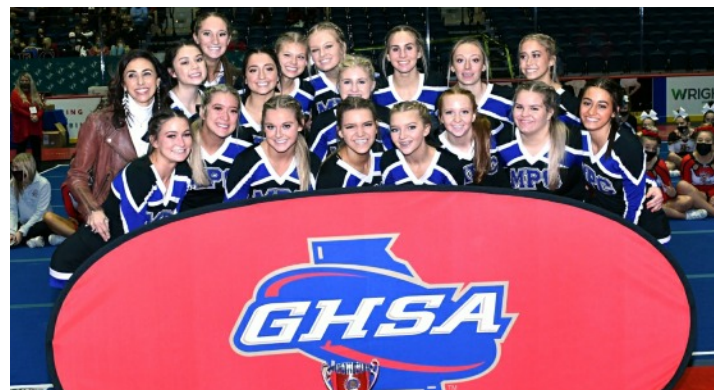
**3A: Mary Persons**



**2A: Dodge County**



**A Public: Gordon Lee**



**A Private: Mount Paran**

# Swimming & Diving State Champions - 2021



**7A Boys: North Gwinnett**



**7A Girls: Lambert**



**6A Boys: Johns Creek**



**6A Girls: Lassiter**



**4A-5A Boys: Marist**



**4A-5A Girls: Marist**



**A-3A Boys: Westminster**



**A-3A Girls: Westminster**

## Basketball Finals Again Feature Dunk & Three-Point Contests

For the second year in a row, the 2021 GHSA / Dr. Ralph Swearngin State Basketball Tournament will include 17 state championship matches along with Slam Dunk and Three-Point contests on March 10-13.

The four-day championship round, presented by Georgia Farm Bureau Insurance, will tip off on Wednesday, March 10 with

The Class girls get ed at followed by Private Then the and boys two games respectively.



four finals. A Private things start-noon, fol-the Class A boys at 2:30. Class 4A girls play the last at 5:00 and 7:30.

All games will be played at the Macon Centreplex again this year. Tickets are \$15 at the venue.

Thursday's schedule also begins at 12:00 p.m., with the Class 2A and then 5A championships.

Friday's action begins at 12:00 p.m., with the 3A girls and boys finals. Later that evening, the two Class 6A titles will be decided.

The action concludes Saturday beginning at 10:00 a.m., with first the A Public and then the 7A championships. In between, at 3:00 p.m., the 24th annual AAASP Wheelchair championship will be held.

The second ever GHSA Slam Dunk and Three-Point Shooting Contests, presented by BSN Sports, will conclude during the last two days of the State Finals.

In the girls Three-point Shooting Contest, the top two point scorers from each Semifinal round will advance to the Championship Final, which will take place Friday, March 12 after the 6A girls championship game.

The live Slam Dunk Championship will pit the three finalists against each other on Saturday, March 13 between the Class 7A Girls and Boys championship contests.



### 2021 GHSA / Dr. Ralph Swearngin State Basketball Championship Facts

**When:** March 10-13      **Where:** Macon Centreplex  
**Tickets:** \$15 per day at the site

#### Championship Schedule

<b>Wednesday, March 10</b>	<b>Thursday, March 11</b>
12:00 pm - Girls Class A Private	12:00 pm - Girls Class 2A
2:30 pm - Boys Class A Private	2:30 pm - Boys Class 2A
5:00 pm - Girls Class 4A	5:00 pm - Girls Class 5A
7:30 pm - Boys Class 4A	7:30 pm - Boys Class 5A
<b>Friday, March 12</b>	<b>Saturday, March 13</b>
12:00 pm - Girls Class 3A	10:00 am - Girls Class A Public
2:30 pm - Boys Class 3A	12:30 pm - Boys Class A Public
5:00 pm - Girls Class 6A	3:00 pm - AAASP Wheelchair
7:30 pm - Boys Class 6A	5:30 pm - Girls Class 7A
	8:00 pm - Boys Class 7A

All Championship Finals will stream live on the NFHS Network. A 30-day subscription is \$10.99 for an all-access, unlimited viewing pass on any device.

### GHSA SPORTSMANSHIP STATEMENT

Please insure that the following statement is read as a public address announcement prior to the start of every GHSA sanctioned contest:

"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 or competitors will not be tolerated, and are grounds for removal from the event site.

Spectators are not allowed to enter the competition area during warm-ups or while the contest is being conducted.

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

### Lacrosse Finals Now At Denmark

After a one-year absence due to the pandemic, the 2021 GHSA State Lacrosse Championships will be held at Denmark High School on May 15.

Tickets are \$14 and are available on GoFan. All four championship games will be live streamed on the NFHS Network. Defending champs from 2019 are Starr's Mill (girls A-5A), Milton (girls 6A-7A), Westminster (A-5A boys) and Walton (6A-7A boys).

The schedule has the A-5A Girls championship game at 10:00 a.m., followed by the A-5A Boys final at noon. Then the 6A-7A Girls take the field at 2:00 p.m., followed at 4:00 p.m., by the 6A-7A Boys title match.

Subscription to the Network for an all-access pass is the low price of \$10.99 per month per 30 days. DVDs can also be ordered at NFHSNetwork.com.

### Dance State Champions - 2021



**7A: Mill Creek**



**5A-6A: Starr's Mill**



**3A-4A: West Laurens**



**A-2A: Thomasville**

### Game Day Cheer Champs - 2021



**7A: North Gwinnett**



**5A-6A: Lee County**



**3A-4A: Morgan County**



**A-2A: Haralson County**

# One Act Play State Champions - 2021



**7A: Denmark**



**6A: Buford**



**5A: Warner Robins**



**4A: Perry**



**3A: Lumpkin County**



**2A: Bremen**



**A Public: Lake Oconee Academy**



**A Private: Brookstone**

*NFHS / GHSA Op-Ed***Anxiously Awaiting Return of Fans in Sports, Performing Arts**

By Dr. Karissa L. Niehoff, NFHS Executive Director  
and Dr. Robin Hines, GHSA Executive Director

The COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted everyday life for almost a year at this point. There is hardly anyone who would dispute the validity of that statement. In order to survive and continue moving forward during the past 12 months, we have been faced with finding new ways to accomplish our daily tasks.

Instead of meeting face to face with a group of people, we converse with people in rectangles on computer screens.

Instead of sitting together with family and friends in crowded restaurants, we pay someone to bring the food to our homes.

Instead of those shopping sprees at the nearest mall, we order online and provide more business for the army of overnight delivery vehicles in our neighborhoods.

In high school sports and performing arts, everyone from the students to coaches, officials, parents and administrators have had to adjust to new ways of doing things. In many cases, students must wear masks even in competition and isolate from their friends away from school in order to continue playing. And while students and others have been willing to do whatever it takes to provide participation opportunities, everyone is looking for that light at the end of the tunnel.

Hopefully, most of these protocols that limit interaction will vanish when the pandemic subsides, although some aspects of the "new norm" may continue, such as online meetings.



Dr. Karissa L. Niehoff



Dr. Robin Hines

However, there is one thing in the world of high school sports and performing arts that must return to normal as soon as possible at high schools throughout the state of Georgia and across the country – stadiums and auditoriums full of family, friends and other fans cheering for the 12 million-plus participants in high school activity programs.

While the cardboard cutouts and piped-in music have been creative attempts to make it feel like people are in the stands, nothing can replace parents, students and others in the community lending positive support to high school students involved in sports and performing arts.

We are grateful that the NFHS Network has allowed fans to watch high school events online during the past year. Many schools have taken advantage of the NFHS Network's High School Support Program that includes two free automated-production cameras (Pixellots). And while these units will continue to be used going forward as an option for watching events,

nothing can replace fans in the stands, gyms and auditoriums.

One of the key differences in education-based activities conducted within the school and out-of-school club sports is the support of fans in the community. Students in high school activities are playing for the love of the game and to be involved in positive programs with their peers.

On a normal Friday night prior to the pandemic, more than seven million fans attended high school football games weekly across the country. And it is estimated that about 350 million people attended high school sports annually prior to the pandemic. While we recognize it may take some time before those numbers are equaled again, things are trending in the right direction.

Recently, several states have increased the number of spectators allowed for winter sports, such as basketball, being conducted indoors. In Tennessee, attendance at games is limited to one-third of the gym's capacity; in Michigan, attendance is capped at 20 percent. In Arizona and West Virginia, however, the decisions can be made by individual schools with no set restrictions, although social distancing must be maintained.

These are great signs that we have at least reached second base in our return to normalcy, and one day soon one of the tenants of education-based high school sports and performing arts – parents and other fans – will be back in full force throughout the state of Georgia to support high school activity programs.

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## GHSA - March / April Calendar - 2021

### March

- 1 Deadline to submit Football Schedules to GHSA office
- 1 Deadline for notification of entry in ALL SPORTS for 2021-22
- 2, 3 Quarterfinal Round State Basketball Tournament
- 5, 6 Semifinal Round State Basketball Tournament
- 9 Hardship/Appeal Committee Meeting
- 10-13 Championship Round State Basketball Tournament
- 13 Complete Area Riflery
- 15 Report Area Riflery results by 9 a.m.
- 23 Hardship/Appeal Committee Meeting
- 27 Complete Riflery Sectionals
- 29 File reports of Riflery Sectionals with GHSA and State Meet Director

### April

- 2 **Good Friday**; GHSA Office Closed
- 10 Complete Riflery Semifinals and Area SP Softball
- 12 File reports of Riflery Semifinals and SP Softball winners with GHSA by 9 a.m.
- 14-15 Slow Pitch Softball Sectionals
- 15 Complete Region Tennis
- 16 Complete Region Soccer; Report region tennis results to GHSA office by 9 a.m.

### GHSA Sponsors

