

# GEORGIA HIGH SCHOOL ASSOCIATION



## CONTEST OFFICIALS HANDBOOK AND ACCOUNTABILITY PROGRAM

## ***“Should sports officials be held to the conventional principles of accountability”? ABSOLUTELY!***

*Accountability* is often viewed as a method through which punishment is considered. While the term “everyone is accountable” is usually associated with a serious matter, sports officials can reap the benefits of a good system of *accountability* that has a clear set of “standards”, a comprehensive “evaluation program”, and established “rewards/consequences” policies.

*Accountability* in all sports contests has been heightened in recent years because of the “scrutiny” that recording and playing back every contest has created. The performances of players, coaches and game officials are being viewed and reviewed. As such, game officials must maintain a high level of competency, and expect to be held accountable for their performance and behavior. The Georgia High School Association’s *Accountability in Officiating Program* will attempt to institute a program in which the level of competent high school officiating will be enhanced in every contest sanctioned by the GHSA.

**MISSION STATEMENT** – The purpose of this program is to establish a heightened level of accountability in sports officials working Georgia High School Association sanctioned contests, to better serve the student/athletes and member schools throughout the state.

## ***PRINCIPLES OF ACCOUNTABILITY***

The most successful *Principles of Accountability* programs are based on a concept that *accountability* can be best achieved when the goals of accountability are based on improvement rather than punishment, and only when individual responsibility is accepted.

- Guidelines
  - Reasonable guidelines for acceptable performance
  - Strict guidelines for appropriate behavior
  
- *Evaluation*
  - Stimulate Improvement
  - Discover Excellence
  - Address Weakness
  
- *Rewards/Consequences*
  - Quantity/Quality of contest assignments
  - Advancement in post-season contests
  - Public acknowledgement of accomplishments
  - Probationary/Penalty Policies

*“Accountability comes in bite-sized portions that include the goals, rules, suggestions, responsibilities, expectation, and penalties that make up a complete meal.”*

JOHN WOODEN

## RESPONSIBILITY

There are four major elements involved in the implementation of a successful sports officiating *accountability* program. Each holds an equal degree of responsibility to ensure the success of the program.

- The ***governing organization (GHSA)*** is responsible to the student/athlete and member schools in Georgia to:
  - Establish statewide standards of training, performance and evaluation
  - Establish a statewide structure for game fees
  - Assign member schools' schedules to local associations
  - Assign associations/officials to post-season competition
  
- The ***local association*** is responsible to the governing organization to:
  - Adhere to statewide standards in officiating training and performance
  - Adhere to GHSA Policies and Procedures
  - Assign officials to sanctioned competition
  - Attend required meetings and submit required paperwork to the GHSA office
  
- The ***host institution*** is responsible to the governing organization to:
  - Provide a safe and secure venue for all competition
  - Provide game management personnel at all competition
  - Hold institution representatives (coaches, players, administrators, fans) responsible for their conduct
  - Insure prompt payment of contest fees
  
- The individual ***sports official*** is responsible to the governing organization and the local association to:
  - Adhere to statewide standards of training and performance
  - Administer all sanctioned contests within the rules and procedures established by the NFHS and the GHSA
  - Adhere to a higher standard of behavior on and off the playing field, court, pool, etc. as a registered sports official in the GHSA
  - Not accept games at which there could be a perceived conflict of interest. (I.e. an alumnus, employee, immediate family member attendee or employee, etc.)

## ASSOCIATION MANAGEMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY

### CHAPTER 1 – TRAINING

1. Selection of a "Training Director"
  - A. Should be an individual assigned for his/her ability to organize and oversee an annual training program
  - B. Should be an individual with the ability to identify and best utilize association personnel in an effort to build a credible training staff
2. Training Schedule
  - A. Develop an agenda that will address the variance in the level of competency among officials within your group (beginner, fast track, veteran, etc.)
  - B. Schedule "guest speakers" who offer information that will enlighten the members of your association on a variety of subjects relevant to officiating

- C. Develop a training schedule that will allow for the effective presentation of required material
- 3. Annual Rules Clinics
  - A. Require all association members to attend annual NFHS/GHSA Rules Clinics
  - B. Require all “mentors” and “evaluators” to attend an annual NFHS/GHSA Rules Clinics, even if they are no longer active officials
- 4. Off-Season Enhancement Opportunities
  - A. Provide information about off-season training camps/clinics
  - B. Follow GHSA criteria for off-season camp participation
  - C. Recognize/reward individuals who attend off-season camps/clinics
  - D. Participation at a GHSA sanctioned camp is required on a bi-yearly basis

## **CHAPTER 2 – ORGANIZATIONAL MEETINGS**

- 1. Meeting Schedule
  - A. Address the quantity of meetings
  - B. Type (administrative/training/testing, etc.)
- 2. Have an Agenda
- 3. Establish meeting requirements (provide options)
- 4. Be organized, timely and purposeful

## **CHAPTER 3 – ASSIGNMENT OF GAMES**

- 1. Selection of an “Assignment Coordinator”
  - A. This should be an assigned position, in an attempt to remove political bias from the position
- 2. Develop criteria for ranking games based on their level of competition
- 3. Develop criteria for the ranking of officials based on their level of competency
- 4. Develop an “availability” system that is kept current
- 5. Develop a system for handling “turn-backs” of games
- 6. Do not assign officials who are alumni of, employed by, or have immediate family attending a competing school. Oversights by the Assignment Coordinator should be turned back immediately.
- 7. The GHSA Office will make ALL post-season assignments of officials.

## ***POST SEASON SELECTION PROCESS***

### **I. High Potential List**

- A. A list of “high potential” officials will be compiled from:
  - 1. GHSA sanctioned summer camp participation
  - 2. Association nominees
  - 3. Previous season evaluations
- B. This list will be used to identify post-season candidates for the upcoming season
- C. These officials will be given “priority” consideration for evaluation during early season games, and holiday tournaments

### **II. Post-Season Candidates**

- A. Candidates will be determined by using previous season evaluations, previous selections to post-season assignment, and the high potential pool of officials.
- B. A “game assignment sheet” must be submitted for each candidate
- C. Gender and racial status of each candidate must be indicated
- D. Being listed as a candidate does not guarantee selection to post-season games
- E. Each candidate must submit an “Availability” form to the GHSA Office

1. Availability of officials is a priority in consideration for post-season assignment
- F. To be a candidate for post-season assignment, an official must work a minimum number of regular season assignments (listed in sport specific section), have a status of Approved or Certified, attended the annual rules clinic, scored a minimum of (85) on the rules exam, and have attended a GHSA sanctioned camp within the previous two years

### III. **Post-Season Selection Committee**

- A. The GHSA Associate Director will appoint and chair a committee with responsibility of evaluating the state-wide candidates for post-season play
- B. The committee will be racially diverse and selected from the following;
  1. Active GHSA umpires/officials/referees
  2. The GHSA sport specific liaison
  3. Current GHSA contest evaluators

### IV. **Weighted Evaluation Process**

1. 25% Evaluations by Coaches
2. 50% Post-Season Selection Committee
3. 25% GHSA Associate Director

NOTE: Each group will use the same rating criteria

### V. **Assignment(s) and Advancement**

- A. Final determination of assignments, and advancement throughout the State Tournament, will be the sole responsibility of the Associate Director
- B. 1<sup>st</sup> Round and Sectional game assignments will be made in advance of the beginning of the State Tournament
- C. Semi-final and Final game assignments will be made following the Sectional Tournaments based on, but not limited to, availability and performance evaluations during previous post-season games .

## **MENTORING**

1. Identify individuals who have the desire and aptitude to assist in the development of younger or less experienced officials
2. Develop a scheduling program in which mentors are able to work with “protégés”
3. Require “protégés” to observe their mentors during the season
4. Require “inactive” mentors to attend training meetings and annual rules clinics

### **ESTABLISHING A MENTORING PROGRAM**

Establishing a “Mentoring Program” is not easy. It is very difficult to find veteran officials who are willing to accept that their skills have somewhat eroded with time, and that they can best serve the association by working with the very same young officials who will be “taking” their games in the future. The key is leadership and commitment. The solution is not always simple. You must first find inexperienced officials who have the capacity and desire to elevate their skills to a higher level, while learning from experienced officials who have the capacity to relate to and communicate with the inexperienced officials.

**Step 1** – Speak with potential *mentors* about the “Mentoring Program” you want to start in your association. Make them feel like they are a big part of the process.

**Step 2** - Collect information about how the program will best suit the needs of the local association and GHSA Office.

**Step 3** – Collect information from other groups who currently have successful programs. Application of previous successes, and avoidance of failures, can increase the likelihood of success.

**Step 4** – Make sure the “leaders” in your association are involved. They need to be the individuals with a high degree of commitment to the program, if they want the membership to follow.

**Step 5** – Provide the resources necessary to make the program successful. This may require an additional financial commitment.

**Step 6** – Build a diversified *team* with the ability to focus on the important elements of the program (leadership, development, recognition, etc.). Ask the team to be creative in developing the program.

**Step 7** – Develop the “Game Plan”. Meet with the *team* to brainstorm ideas, consider options and review successes and failures of other similar programs. Establish the criteria to be used in the program.

**Step 8** – Set out on a “trial run”. Use scrimmages to test your new program.

**Step 9** – Regroup and check for a pulse. Bring the *team* together to review how the “trial runs” went. Decide if the program will be effective as it stands, or if changes need to be made prior to the start of the regular season.

**Step 10** – Put it to use! Go forward with the deployment of the program. Have the capacity to meet and make adjustments throughout the season.

**Summary** - Building a successful “Mentoring Program” doesn’t happen over-night. Most humans are adverse to change, and reluctant to accept other individual’s opinions. Take your time, be flexible, adjust and adapt, but be persistent. The successful growth of your association depends on your commitment to this program.

*“Individual commitment to a group effort – that is what makes a team work, a company work, and a society work.” VINCE LOMBARDI*

## ***EVALUATION OF PERFORMANCE***

1. Build a staff of “credible”, unbiased evaluators (active or inactive) “Credible” is the operative term!
2. Establish evaluation criteria that is closely aligned with the GHSA evaluation process
3. Provide timely access to game evaluations
4. Establish “Policies & Procedures” for dealing with unsatisfactory game performance(s)
  - A. Misapplication of Rules & Regulations
  - B. Unacceptable behavior
  - C. Judgment, physical appearance, tardiness, etc.
5. The Evaluation Program

There is no question that officials benefit from an objective “Evaluation Program”. The successful evaluation of officials is critical to the mission of supplying competent individuals to insure that the contests are being administered according to the NFHS and GHSA rules and regulations.

**Step 1** – Develop a staff of individuals who can perform the task of evaluating officials without bias or a self-serving agenda. These individuals may be active or inactive officials, but must

have credibility in the respective sport/activity. They should also be required to attend annual rules clinics.

**Step 2** – Define officiating excellence and provide criteria for evaluation. There are three major components in officiating excellence; *Knowledge, Application, and Comportment*.

Knowledge - Rules, mechanics, feel for the game, understanding strategy of the game

Application - Judgment, consistency, game management, partnering, communication

Comportment – Presence, attitude, appearance, courage, interaction

**Step 3** – Provide evaluation tools. Explore ideas and methods used by other groups. Schedule meetings to provide the evaluation staff with direction and materials.

**Step 4** – Identify the individuals who need to be evaluated early in the season (new officials, transfer officials, high potential officials, veterans on the decline, etc.), and assign evaluators to their respective games.

**Step 5** - Establish a system that provides instant feedback for the officials. This will provide an opportunity for the official to correct the areas of concern listed on the evaluation before their next game.

**Step 6** - Allow the official an opportunity to respond to the evaluation. Even though most feedback from an official is defensive in nature or without merit, it still gives them an opportunity to have communication in the process.

**Step 7** – Develop an accounting system to keep evaluations updated. The improvement, or lack of improvement, is important to assess an official's development.

**Step 8** - Develop a system of rewards for positive evaluations (i.e. more games, bigger games, association proclamations, etc.).

**Step 9** – Develop a system of penalties for unacceptable performance (i.e. poor evaluations for judgment, misapplication of rules, unacceptable behavior, appearance, etc.).

NOTE: It is crucial to communicate your performance standards to your membership, so they are aware of the expectations of the program.

**Summary** – The process of evaluation is about assisting individuals to get better. While penalties for poor performance are necessary, the overriding goal of a successful "Evaluation Program" is to identify, educate, and reward individuals who possess the ability and aptitude to grow in sports officiating. Recognizing the need for ongoing evaluation is critical to the growth of an association.

## ***RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION OF OFFICIALS***

1. Establish an internal committee to address this issue
  - A. Evaluate current game fee structure
  - B. Provide semi-annual game fee raises
  - C. Contact local colleges/school career days
2. Work with the GHSA Office to address this issue
  - A. Present information/recommendations to the GHSA Officiating Committee of the Executive Committee

## ***LOOKING TO THE FUTURE***

1. Look at the current "make-up" of your association (leadership, members, demographics, etc.)
2. Identify the potential "make-up" of the association ten years in the future
3. Identify the potential leadership of your association ten years in the future
4. Reward those individuals who have been committed to the association for an extended period of time, but promote a "big picture" outlook for the future of the association

5. Begin to involve the potential future leaders of the association in the current process of leadership
6. Develop a long-range plan for your association

## ***DISCIPLINE***

### **1. Due Process at the Local Level**

An unpleasant part of leadership is dealing with situations involving penalties to members of your association. Although this is a difficult task, associations can lessen the issue of repercussions by following a “due-process” procedure.

- Have an association Constitution and/or By-laws that address procedures for handling punitive issues.
- Conduct a fair hearing that will represent both side of the issue, by concentrating on the “facts”. Conduct the meeting in a business-like fashion, with everyone present identified prior to commencement of the hearing.
- Prior to a hearing, any charge(s) that requires a hearing should be written in detail and presented to the member by certified mail, with a return receipt request.
- Take a friendly and constructive approach during the hearing (take the high ground).
- Put a board member in charge of the hearing that does not harbor any personal feeling for the member in question. If additional hearing members are required, they should also be impartial.
- All participants should be dismissed while the hearing committee discusses the issues and makes a ruling.
- Any penalty imposed should be consistent with the constitution and/or by-laws, and also consistent with how similar cases were penalized.
- The member in question should be provided with an opportunity to appeal the penalty if it is allowed by the constitution and/or by-laws.
- Regardless of the severity of the penalty, attempt to provide a positive course of action for the member and the association to move forward.

### **2. Fines and Penalties**

Keep in mind that whatever method you use for imposing penalties, they should be in writing and consistent. There should be no “star treatment” based on an official’s level of competency or position within the association. The following are samples of how to impose penalties for repeated unacceptable performance and/or behavior of a member official:

- Adjust their game schedule
  - Take games away
  - Exchange a “big game” with a game of lesser importance
  - Do not assign them to tournaments
  - Do not nominate them for post-season assignments
- Devise a system of fines
  - Fine them for missing association meetings
  - Fine them for arriving late a game sites
  - Fine them for missing game assignments
  - Fine them for failure to submit “game reports” for unsporting conduct issues
  - Fine them for “unsatisfactory officiating” reports submitted on them
  - Fine them for improper uniform issues
  - Fine them for unprofessional behavior

Use a scale that clearly identifies the degree of fine as it relates to the severity of the incident.

When asked to rank in order the important issues related to their officiating, officials ranked the following: #1 Post-season assignments, #2 Bigger games, #3 More Money, #4 More games, #5

Training opportunities, and #6 Awards. These issues can be used as a guideline to motivate and/or penalize the members of your association.

### 3. Standards of Game Accountability

Could standards of conduct ever be established in which officials would receive specified penalties for making mistakes in a game? It would be difficult to define those standards of conduct. The next hardest thing would be to define the numerous possibilities of mistakes that may be made. But the most difficult element of all would be for “objective” bodies to identify errors and then administer penalties.

Think of middle school and sub-varsity games. The players themselves make so many mistakes it makes officiating the games difficult. The idea of pinpointing officiating errors at the lower levels is neither feasible nor desirable. At the higher levels the issue becomes, what errors are important enough to note and what ones are not.

Given the notion that Professional Sports and NCAA Division I officials who make prominent or critical mistakes during a season are put on probation or sometimes released, what level of penalty is relative to high school officiating. High school officials are *independent contractors*, and as such are not employees of the GHSA. Furthermore, individuals wishing to register as a sport’s officials cannot be barred from doing so, unless the individual has a prior conviction for a crime that may be viewed as a moral or ethical issue in the minds of the public.

The registration itself does not guarantee that the official will be assigned to, or given a minimum number of games. Additionally, the number and level of games assigned to an official should be a direct reflection of their level of competency. The inability to perform at an acceptable level of competency should result in an adjustment to an official’s game assignments.

These simple *standards of game accountability* should be followed: **Game Context**, Officials should be held accountable for “high-profile” mistakes (errors that have an impact on the outcome of the game). **Repeated Mistakes**, Officials should be held accountable for mistakes that have a reoccurring theme (they don’t learn from their mistakes). **Attitude Issues**, Officials should be held accountable for a display of poor attitudes during contests, training, and evaluations (there “ego” is a detriment).

*“Teamwork and a vision of success are the only ways you can reach ultimate goals and create the meaningful breakthroughs that will define our careers and fulfill our future.” PAT RILEY*

## **GHSA OFFICIALS CODE OF ETHICS**

**Officials** shall possess complete knowledge of the rules of the game, understand the spirit and intent in which the rules were written, and shall administer the game in an impartial, firm and controlled manner.

**Officials** shall display a spirit of cooperation with the decisions made, and the directions implemented by the GHSA Office.

**Officials** shall conduct themselves in a professional manner when interacting with players, coaches, game management, colleagues, and the public.

**Officials** shall prepare themselves both physically and mentally, dress in an appropriate manner, and present themselves in a manner consistent with the high standards required in sports officiating.

**Officials** shall fulfill all the contractual obligations outlined when accepting officiating assignments, including communication with officiating partners and game management.

**Officials** shall perform the duties of the profession with integrity in an impartial and ethical fashion, and shall be aware that their conduct on and off the court will be a factor in their standing with the GHSA Office.

**Officials** shall be aware of the inherent risk of injury that competition poses to student-athletes, and shall administer the game in manner consistent to maintaining a safe environment for competition.

**Officials** shall be aware of, and inform game management of, possible hazardous conditions that may have an affect on the contest.

**Officials** shall take the necessary steps to continue to educate themselves in an effort to remain current on training techniques and rule changes.

**Officials** shall expose corruption and/or breaches of integrity whenever and wherever it is observed.

**Officials** shall work with fellow officials and the Georgia High School Association in a spirit of harmony and cooperation in spite of differences of opinion that may arise.

**Officials** shall uphold the By-Laws and the legal regulations of the GHSA - being aware that high School officiating involves a high level of public trust.

## ***GHSA OFFICIALS STANDARDS OF CONDUCT***

Each GHSA official must avoid any action, whether specifically prohibited by this code or not, which might result in or create the appearance of a violation of these standards of conduct which include - but are not restricted to:

1. Using one's position as a GHSA official for private gain - exclusive of payment for games worked [No official shall seek to influence a coach or administrator for the purpose of promoting personal officiating opportunities.]
2. Giving preferential treatment to any school or coach
3. Being involved in any action that gives the appearance of a loss of impartiality or neutrality. No official should accept any assignment at a school where he/she graduated within the last 10 years, at a school where he/she is employed, had player-coach contact previously with any coach involved, or has relatives affiliated with a school as a student or an employee.
4. Making a GHSA decision outside of official channels
5. No member will engage in criminal, dishonest, notoriously disgraceful, or immoral conduct or any other conduct adversely affecting the confidence of the public or member schools in the integrity of the Georgia High School Association
6. No member shall engage in any behavior that can be defined as sexual harassment by a reasonable person.

- (3) Use any substance prior to officiating a game/match that would impair his/her physical or mental performance. An official should not use alcoholic beverages at all on the day of a game/match.
8. While wearing any article of clothing that identifies the individual as a sports official, each member's speech and actions during or enroute to or from a game/match shall be above reproach and should always demonstrate a strong example of sportsmanship, courtesy and self-control.
9. No official shall criticize any other official or any association within the GHSA in the presence of coaches, administrators, players, spectators, or the media before, during, or after a game/match.
10. No official shall fail to honor an officiating contract

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***When there are violations of the Code of Ethics, the Executive Director of the GHSA may direct penalties involving fines, probation periods of varying lengths, and/or suspensions of varying lengths. Persons receiving such penalties have the right to appeal their cases before the GHSA Appeals Committee.***

## SPORT SPECIFIC MATERIAL

### GENERAL INFORMATION

1. No Association may use an official in a GHSA game or scrimmage unless that official has been registered with the GHSA. When the registrations are computer-processed in the GHSA office, insurance coverage begins. If 20 or more associations send in their registrations, it may take a day or two for this processing to be completed. Therefore, when you use people immediately after (or before) sending in the registrations, you are risking their insurance coverage. Associations may be fined for allowing officials to work GHSA contests before their registrations have been processed. Associations who utilize officials who have no insurance coverage may risk being found negligent in a liability lawsuit. **Note: Registration fees are non-refundable once processed by the GHSA and non-transferable from one association to another.**
2. *An official may register with only one GHSA association in a given season. If an official decides to register with another association after registering with the first group, the full registration fee must be paid again by the official, and the original association must write a letter of release and submit it to the GHSA office. Without a letter of release, an official will not be allowed to officiate with another association until the next season. It is also helpful for you to notify the GHSA office if you remove an official from your association for disciplinary reasons.*
3. Officials are to officiate contests only with the association they are registered with. Insurance coverage only applies when an official is assigned to a contest by the association they are registered with. The only time it is permissible for an official to work a contest outside his/her association contract is when an association has a shortage of officials and needs to borrow an official from another association. In this case, one association assignor must contact another association assignor for help in covering a contest.
4. Occasionally, the issue arises of criminal behavior by an official (before or after registering with an officials' association). This is a delicate matter and must be pursued carefully in order to balance the rights of the individual and the integrity of officiating. Generally speaking, an official who was convicted of a crime before becoming an official can not be barred from officiating except in matters such as child molestation, gambling, or other notorious crimes

that cloud the integrity of that individual in the minds of the public. When an official is arrested while registered as a GHSA official, that person is to be suspended until resolution of the matter -- either exoneration or completion of the sentence.

5. Widely held interpretations of independent contractor status indicates that membership in an association does not guarantee that the official has to be assigned to games. In fairness, however, it seems that communication between the association and an official should occur when an official is not assigned any games at all. When there are problems, thorough documentation of all events is essential.

6. The Secretary of the association is the official liaison with the GHSA. Therefore, all inquiries about years of service, plaques, test scores, etc., need to be processed through you. Individual officials should not be calling the GHSA about these matters. Please train your officials to follow the correct process. There are going to be times when various officers need to talk with the Associate Directors about important matters, and these individuals

## *REGISTRATION PROCEDURES*

1. Renewing existing members - Each year you will receive a renewal computer print out of the names of persons who were registered with the GHSA the previous year.
  - (A) **With a red pen**, you should check off the names of all persons you are registering (and sending in money) for the current year.
  - (B) Review each column for errors in the name, last four digits of social security number, address, and phone numbers. **With a red pen**, make all necessary corrections. This is crucial in order that our files may be updated and accurate.
  - (C) Cross out officials that you know will not be returning to your organization.
2. Registering new members - These are members who are not on your renewal list because they are new officials, or officials who did not register last year with your association.
  - (A) Have each new member fill out an "Application for Registration" form completely.
  - (B) Do not add these officials to your "Renewal Report".
  - (C) If these officials have officiated before in another state, they need to provide the following items to the GHSA office from the other State Association(s):
    - (1) Number of years worked in that state in that sport
    - (2) Ranking in that state (Registered/Approved/Certified or their equivalent)
    - (3) Most recent test scores and clinic attendance record
  - (D) Officials who were certified officials in another state would be classified as second-year Approved officials until they have met the Georgia criteria for one year.
3. "Financial Report" - This form must be sent in every time you register officials.
  - (A) The form must be filled out completely.
  - (B) There should be one check drawn on the Association account that includes \$28.00 for every renewing official and every new official. The GHSA does not accept individual checks from officials.
  - (C) Any registrations received without proper payment will be returned to you.
4. Deadlines - Because of the large number of officials associations across the state, it is essential that all deadlines be met precisely.

- (A) There is an **initial registration deadline** by which the association should attempt to register as many officials as possible. **A \$25.00 fine will be assessed to any association failing to submit registration by this deadline date.**
- (B) There is also a **supplemental registration deadline** by which the association must register all of its officials.
- (C) There is a **late fee** of \$5.00 per official for any registrations received after the supplemental deadline. These registrations should be submitted along with a letter explaining why the official is registering late.

**Note: Any association failing to submit the association's registration by the supplemental registration deadline will be subject to additional fines and/or probation status. The Officials' Registrar will publish deadlines each year.**

5. Rule Books/Patches - All orders for books and patches must be handled through the Secretary and not by the individual officials.

- (A) Books - All rules books and manuals are processed in accordance with registrations.
  - (1) The initial delivery of rule books are sent out based on the number of officials you registered the past year.
  - (2) This usually results in a few books being left over. These may be given to new officials. If there is a decrease in officials registering, please return unused books to the GHSA.
  - (3) If there is a further need for books before the new registrations are processed, the Secretary should contact the Registrar of Officials in the GHSA office for guidance.
- (B) Patches – All patches must be ordered by the association secretary.
  - (1) New officials will automatically receive one patch after their registrations have been processed.
  - (3) First-year Certified officials will receive one Certified patch for sport of registration once their registrations have been processed.
  - (4) Secretaries should keep a supply of these patches on-hand so that officials can be dressed properly. Additional patches cost \$1.00 each and can be ordered on the “Financial Report”. Payment must be received before patches are issued.

**(Note: Basketball, Softball and Soccer officials no longer wear patches)**

## **EXAMINATION PROCEDURES**

- 1. There are significant differences with open-book exams and monitored exams.
  - (A) Part I Exams and Mechanics Exams (for Football) are open-book exams, but each official should be encouraged to do his or her own work initially. An official will not improve if he/she sponges off other people.
    - 1) These exams will be sent to the association Secretary early in the season to be handed out at the discretion of the Secretary.
    - 2) These exams shall be sent back so that they are received in the GHSA no later than the deadline date. Answer sheets returned later by individual officials will not be accepted.

- 3) NOTE: If a local association chooses to have the Part I exam be closed-book that is permissible.
- (B) In sports that only have one exam, that exam should be treated as a closed-book exam to be monitored by the local association.
- (C) Part-II Exams for Football, Softball and Basketball will be monitored by a GHSA representative, and these exams will be brought to the test site by the monitor.
- 1) Each football, softball and basketball association will notify the GHSA office as to the site they wish to use for the exam by the set deadline date. The site should be large enough to accommodate all the officials in a manner conducive to good concentration on the exam.
  - 2) Officials who cheat on the exam or who are disruptive to the testing environment will have their exams picked up and will not receive any credit for taking the exam. Further punishment, such as suspensions, are likely to occur.
  - 3) The GHSA monitors will send the answer sheets back to the GHSA office.
- (D) Part II Exams for Wrestling and Baseball are monitored by an association officer.
- 1) These exams should be closed-book exams and cannot be given earlier than the National Federation National Test Date for that sport.
  - 2) These exams will be sent to the association Secretary just before the specified test date.
  - 3) The association Secretary should return the answer sheets to the GHSA office no later than the posted deadline. No "straggling" answer sheets will be accepted later.
- (E) There are certain rules that must be followed when taking these exams and the Secretary should communicate this to the membership.
- 1) Since all exams are scored on a Scanmark machine, a #2 pencil must be used. Any exams taken in pen will not be graded.
  - 2) An official must bubble in his/her social security number accurately. An official's Social Security Number (not name) is the communication link between the Scanmark Grading Program and the Official's Program. The Social Security Number provided by the official on the answer sheet must be identical to his/her Social Security Number in the Officials Program in order for scores to transfer from the Scanmark program to the official's permanent officiating record in the Official's program.
  - 3) Part II exams in Football and Basketball may have test codes printed on them. If so, it is essential that this code be bubbled on the answer sheet as indicated in the exam instructions. The individual official is totally responsible for seeing that this is followed.

## GAME REPORT PROCEDURES

1. In order to get control of improper behavior on the part of players, coaches, and fans, GHSA Game Reports must be filed consistently.
  - (A) This has been a major problem throughout the state in recent years.
  - (B) Penalties will be given to associations and individual officials when these Game Reports are not filed in a timely manner.
  - (C) **Under no circumstances, shall an official decide not to file a game report that needs to be filed. The severest forms of punishment will be used against officials who deliberately choose not to file Game Reports.**
  - (D) Game Reports should be filed for Varsity contests and Sub-varsity contests at the High School level.
  - (E) Game Report forms will be sent to you and only those forms should be used. (A game report form is included in the back of this handbook for making additional copies if needed)
2. Game Reports from officials should be filed with the GHSA office **as soon as possible** for the following situations:
  - (A) Ejections - Be certain to cite the name, jersey number and school of the ejected player or the name and school of the ejected coach and specify the behavior involved in a brief, professional manner.
  - (B) All protest situations - be certain to indicate the time at which the formal protest was lodged and the rule application that was protested.
  - (C) Any pre-game or post-game problems involving players, coaches, and/or fans
  - (D) Any problems related to field/court conditions or crowd control situations
  - (E) Failure of host management to provide adequate security for officials at the game site
  - (F) Any major injuries requiring extraordinary attention

**NOTE:** It is not necessary to report sportsmanship violations that do not result in ejections. The Game Reports should be factual narratives without any editorial comments. The comments should be written professionally so that they thoroughly describe the behaviors involved without any editorial comments. These reports are sent to the Principal of the school involved along with a letter from the Executive Director of the GHSA. One copy of this report should be sent to the GHSA Office, and a second copy should be kept with the association's records.

**The GHSA fax machine is operative 24 hours a day, as is the voice mail of Dennis Payne and Ernie Yarbrough. E-mailing game reports is an option. If you are interested please contact the Officials' Registrar.**

3. In order to correct improper situations, it is essential that the GHSA be notified as soon as possible about the problem. This will require special coordination between your officials and yourself. The Game Reports should be filed with the GHSA office according to the following time table.
  - (A) Ejections - in the office within **24 hours** of the incident.
  - (B) Multiple-person fights or a deliberate attempts to injure an opponent - in the office the **next morning** after the incident.
  - (C) Severe crowd control problems or attacks on officials - in the office the **next morning** after the incident.

- (D) Protest or forfeiture - - in the office the **next morning** after the incident.
  - (E) Any time there is a problem meeting the deadline, a call to the GHSA office will be expected.
4. Since all Game Reports are sent to the school(s) involved along with a letter of penalty from the Executive Director of the GHSA, the following procedures should be followed:
- (A) It is recommended that one person write all game reports for the association to insure uniformity.
  - (B) It is demanded that only a factual account of the proceedings worded in a professional manner be used.
  - (C) There should be no emotionally charged words used against a player, coach, or school that might indicate any type of bias.

### ***GAMES WORKED REPORT***

(Applies to Football, Basketball and Softball Only)

1. Shortly before the end of the season, you will be sent a printout of all the officials who registered for that season. On that sheet you should note:
- (A) The number of Varsity games that each official worked
  - (B) The number of High School sub varsity games that each official worked
- Note:** If an official worked games with your association and is not listed on the games worked report, registration was not properly filed with the GHSA. Please call the Officials= Registrar immediately to discuss registration of official.
2. This Report needs to be submitted to the GHSA office by the established deadline date. In recent years, some associations have consistently been late or failed to submit this report.
3. Officials cannot be credited with a year of service until this data has been entered in the computer.

### ***END-OF-YEAR REPORT***

1. After all clinics, exam scores, and games-worked have been filed, you will receive an End-of-Year "Final" Report. Please check the following items for each official for discrepancies in posting.
- (A) Rating - i.e., Registered, Approved, Certified (current season)
  - (B) Clinic Attendance
  - (C) Test Scores
  - (D) Games Worked
2. This Report needs to be returned to the GHSA office **only** if there are errors discovered.
- (A) Errors discovered after the next officiating year has been opened cannot be corrected.
  - (B) Test scores cannot be changed unless the unaltered, original answer sheet is returned to the GHSA office along with the correct End-of-Year Report.

- (C) Please keep this Report so that you can answer questions that your officials might have about their current record.

## **CLASSIFICATION REQUIREMENTS**

Officials are classified into one of three categories when registered by the Georgia High School Association and requirements for advancement are listed below:

### **REGISTERED**

1. Be at least 18 years of age and a high school graduate or holder of a G.E.D.
2. File proper application and be accepted by a local, GHSA-sanctioned association.
3. Attend the GHSA rules clinics each year
4. Make a score of at least 75 on the Part I, Part II, and Mechanics Examinations each year (assuming these requirements are relevant to the sport in question)
5. Officiate the minimum number of contests required in the sport of registration.

### **APPROVED**

1. Meet the requirements for a registered official for two years.
2. Make a score of at least 75 on the Part I, Part II, and Mechanics Examinations for two years. (assuming these requirements are relevant to the sport in question)
3. Attend rules interpretation clinics as required by the Georgia High School Association each year.
4. Officiate the minimum number of contests required in the sport of registration.

### **CERTIFIED**

1. Meet the requirements for a registered official for 2 years and for an approved official for 2 years.
2. Make a score of at least 85 on the Part II rules examination (and the mechanics exam for football).
3. Attend rules interpretation clinics as required by the Georgia High School Association each year.
4. Officiate the minimum number of contests in the sport of registration.

### **TRANSFER OFFICIALS**

When an official who has been officiating high school athletics in another state moves to Georgia, he/she should contact the former state high school association to have them send a record of his/her current status, years of service, recent test scores, and a record of recent clinic attendance. After the GHSA receives this information, an assessment of the official's status will be made. Applicants will be rated "Registered" until records are received from the previous state. As a general rule, Certified officials will be listed as "second-year Approved" until they have met the Georgia criteria for one year -- then they will be moved to "Certified" status.

### **GAMES CREDIT**

The criterion of officiating the required number of meets or games is figured as follows:

1. Approved and Certified officials may earn one-half the required number of contests working JV games [i.e., 2 JV games = 1 Varsity game].
2. Registered officials may earn all their game credits working sub-varsity games.
3. The minimum number of varsity games/meets required in each sport is:  
Baseball [8] Football [5] Soccer [5] Swimming [5] Wrestling [5]  
Basketball [10] Gymnastics [5] Softball [8] Volleyball [8]

## UNIFORMS

### **BASKETBALL**

1. Shirt - standard black and white vertically striped knit shirt with short sleeves. Collarless, V-neck striped shirts shall be worn. **NOTE:** No Insignias.
2. Trousers - black (pleated or non-pleated)
3. Shoes - black shoes with black laces
4. Socks - all black
5. Belt - black (if trousers require a belt)
6. Jackets - black (if worn) CCA jackets may be worn at a GHSA game as long as all officials are wearing them. If every official does not have a jacket, no official should wear a jacket.

### **BASEBALL**

1. Shoes - solid black with black laces (safety variety for plate umpire)
2. Socks - black or navy blue
3. Trousers - heather gray (pleated or non-pleated)
4. Belt - 1 1/4 to 2 inches wide - black
5. Shirt - Two options: (a) navy blue pullover, or (b) powder blue pullover.
6. Cap - navy blue (mandatory to wear cap) - short visors for plate umpire - longer visor for base umpire
7. Jacket - black or navy blue (if worn) **NOTE:** Black or navy blue V-necked sweaters may be used also.
8. Undershirt (if worn and visible) - navy blue
9. Ball bag - navy blue

**NOTE:** All umpires on the field/arena must be dressed alike.

### **CHEERLEADING**

No uniform required. However, each judge is expected to be attired in a professional manner.

### **FOOTBALL**

1. Shoes - solid black with black laces
2. One-piece black-and-white stockings
3. Trousers - standard, all-white knickers with a short overlap below the knee (not more than 4 inches)
4. Belt - black leather 1 1/4 - 2 inches wide
5. Shirt - black and white vertically striped, long or short-sleeved knit shirt. The shirt shall have one inch stripes, a black knit cuff and Byron collar. All officials in a given game are to wear the same type shirt.
6. Cap - black with white piping. Referee shall wear solid white for identification purposes. All officials must wear sized caps.
7. Jacket - black and white vertically striped jacket.
8. Equipment - All officials must have a whistle, penalty marker, game card, pencil and rubber bands or some device to keep track of the down number. The penalty marker shall be a light gold flag (15" x 15") and a soft, covered weight may be attached. A white bean bag to mark non-penalty spots is mandatory. The linesman shall furnish a clipping device for use in measuring first downs.

### **GYMNASTICS**

No uniform required. However, each judge is expected to be attired in a professional manner.

## **LACROSSE**

2. One-piece black-and-white stockings
1. Shoes - solid black with black laces
3. Shorts - white - 5" inseam - must have belt loops and worn with a belt.
4. Shirt - black and white vertically striped, long or short-sleeved knit shirt. The shirt shall have one inch stripes, a black knit cuff and Byron collar. All officials in a given game are to wear the same type shirt.
5. Cap - solid white

## **SOCCER**

1. Shirt - Either gold with black stripes, black with white stripes, or red with black stripes.  
**NOTE:** All officials on the field shall have same color shirt. No insignias.
2. Trousers - black shorts or long black trousers
3. Socks - black with white cuffs
4. Shoes - black
5. Equipment - 2 whistles, coin, yellow card, red card, pencil/scorecard, and timing device

## **SOFTBALL**

1. Shirt - powder blue button-up or powder blue pullover **NOTE:** All umpires shall wear same color shirt.  
**NOTE:** No insignias.
2. Trousers - heather gray only [No shorts]
3. Belt - black
4. Shoes - solid black with black laces
5. Socks - navy blue
6. Jacket – navy blue with red and white trim (Item #GK18 on [www.ghsa.net](http://www.ghsa.net))
7. Sweater - navy blue
8. Cap - navy blue - long visor for all slow-pitch umpires. Plate umpires in fast-pitch will wear short-visor caps
9. Ball bag - navy blue
10. Undershirt - If visible, must be white

## **SWIMMING**

It is recommended officials dress uniformly. White trousers or shorts, a white shirt and tennis shoes are acceptable dress. The uniform must always be clean and unwrinkled.

## **VOLLEYBALL**

1. Shoes – all white, leather shoes
2. Socks- white
3. Shirt – white polo with GHSA insignia worn on right side of chest
4. Trousers - navy
5. Belt – black or navy

## **WRESTLING**

1. Shoes - solid black officials shoes with black laces
2. Socks - solid black
3. Trousers - full length black
4. Belt - black (if trousers require a belt)
5. Shirt - short-sleeved knit shirt with alternating black and white one-inch stripes

**NOTE: Officials in a game should be dressed alike when optional parts of the uniform are being used.**

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

The material contained in this booklet should not be taken lightly. The Executive Committee of the Georgia High School Association has made it clear that the acceptable standards of officiating in all sports must be taken to a higher level. In order to achieve these expectations, the local associations will be held to a higher level of accountability in regard to their member officials. Our desire is that the local associations, and their member officials, accept this challenge as a positive step to improve all aspects of high school competition.

We are very fortunate to have a strong pool of sports officials in Georgia. We need to not only utilize their talents on the playing fields, courts, or pools, but we also need to utilize their talents to assist in the development of sports officials throughout the state.

Dr. Ralph Swearngin, GHSA Executive Director  
Earl Etheridge, Chairman of the Officials Committee  
Ernie Yarbrough, GHSA Associate Director  
Dennis Payne, GHSA Associate Director  
Pam Thompson, GHSA Officials' Registrar

NOTE: Some of the material used in this booklet was gathered from articles published by *Referee Magazine*, *NASO*, *NFHS* and the GHSA.



***“Serving Georgia’s High School Student-Athletes”***