GEORGIA MIDDLE SCHOOL ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION

VOL. 1 ISSUE NO. 17

CONSTITUTION and BY-LAWS 2015

www.GMSAA.net

TABLE OF CONTENTS

GMSAA CONSTITUTION ---------- 3
BY-LAW SECTION 1.00 – STUDENT ---------- 10
By-Law 1.10 – Certification of Eligibility ---------- 10
By-Law 1.20 – Enrollment and Team Membership ---------- 11
By-Law 1.30 – Age ---------- 11
By-Law 1.40 – Limits of Participation ---------- 11
By-Law 1.50 – Scholastic Standing / Scholarship ---------- 11
By-Law 1.60 – School Service Areas / Transfer / Migrant Students ---------- 12
By-Law 1.70 – Recruiting / Undue Influence ---------- 13
INTERPRETATIONS, Section 1.00 ---------- 14
BY-LAW SECTION 2.00 – SCHOOL ---------- 17
By-Law 2.10 – School Membership to GMSAA ---------- 17
By-Law 2.20 – Administrative Responsibilities ---------- 18
By-Law 2.30 – Eligibility Reports Filed By the School ---------- 18
By-Law 2.40 – Intentionally left blank ---------- 19
By-Law 2.50 – Qualifications to Coach ---------- 19
By-Law 2.60 – Interscholastic Contests and Practices ---------- 20
By-Law 2.70 – Sportsmanship ---------- 21
By-Law 2.80 – Media and Filming Regulations ---------- 23
By-Law 2.90 – Regulations of Competitions ---------- 23
INTERPRETATIONS, Section 2.00 ---------- 24
BY-LAW SECTION 3.00 – REGION ---------- 26
By-Law 3.10 – Region Manager ---------- 26
BY-LAW SECTION 4.00 – STATE ---------- 26
By-Law 4.10 – GMSAA Administrative Responsibilities to Member Schools ---------- 26
By-Law 4.20 – Intentionally left blank ---------- 26
By-Law 4.30 – State Association Contest / Event Responsibilities ---------- 26
By-Law 4.40 – State Passes to GMSAA Events ---------- 27
By-Law 4.50 – Certification of Athletic Officials ---------- 27
By-Law 4.60 – Intentionally left blank ---------- 27
By-Law 4.70 – Open Meeting / Open Records Policy ---------- 28
By-Law 4.80 – Intentionally left blank ---------- 28
By-Law 4.90 – Policy on Penalties ---------- 28
INTERPRETATIONS, Section 4.00 ---------- 28
ATHLETIC AUTHORITY ---------- 29
Football ---------- 29
APPENDIX B – Brackets for State Playoffs ---------- 40
APPENDIX C – GMSAA Committees and Officers ---------- 42
APPENDIX F – Fee Chart for Officials ---------- 43
APPENDIX P – Fine Structure for Rule Violations ---------- 44
APPENDIX R – Classification of Schools ---------- 45

CONSTITUTION

ARTICLE I - NAME OF THE ORGANIZATION

This organization shall be known as the Georgia Middle School Athletic Association.

ARTICLE II - OBJECT OF THE ORGANIZATION

The objective of the organization shall be the promotion of athletics in Georgia from a mental, physical, and moral viewpoint, to standardize and encourage participation in athletics, to promote sportsmanship and the interest in sports at the respective high school districts.

ARTICLE III — MEMBERSHIP

SECTION 1
SCHOOLS ELIGIBLE FOR MEMBERSHIP

The membership of the Georgia Middle School Athletic Association shall consist of public middle schools in the state of Georgia.

SECTION 2
CLASSIFICATION OF SCHOOLS

A. The Reclassification Committee of each Athletic Authority shall place member schools in classifications and regions based on the geographic proximity and the GHSA regions, respectively.

B. The number of classifications and the number or regions will be determined by the Reclassification Committee.

C. The realignment plan of the Reclassification Committee shall be ratified by a simple majority vote of the full Executive Committee.

SECTION 3
STRUCTURE OF REGIONS

A. After reclassification, the Schedule Committee from each Athletic Authority will meet and submit a season game schedule to the Executive Officers.

B. In the event that any member school has a complaint with the structure of a region, it shall so advise the Executive Director of such complaint in writing within five (5) days after the GMSAA meeting following the final reclassification vote. The Executive Director shall then convene a meeting of the Reclassification Committee to review the present and proposed region structure and to attempt to arbitrate the differences and, failing that, to make a recommendation to the Executive Committee.

C, In the event that any member school has a complaint regarding their game schedule, it shall so advise the Schedule Chairman and/or Schedule Committee. The Schedule Chairman and/or Committee will attempt to rectify the conflict or scheduling issue. If the issue cannot be rectified to the satisfaction of the member school, the member school may appeal to the Executive Director for intervention. The Executive Director's decision will be final.

C. All member schools in the subject region shall be advised of the meeting of the Reclassification Committee by the Executive Director and shall have the right to present evidence to the committee.

SECTION 4
MEMBERSHIP IN ANOTHER ASSOCIATION

A school is not eligible for membership in the Georgia Middle School Athletic Association if it is or becomes a member of an association whose Constitution and/or By-Laws are in conflict with the Constitution and/or By-Laws of the Georgia Middle School Athletic Association.

SECTION 5
INDIVIDUAL MEMBERSHIP

Individual membership in the GMSAA is available to a person who serves as a school representative, assistant coach, sponsor, and/or a previous officer within the past two years, or any person who has continuously maintained his/her individual membership. The individual shall pay to the GMSAA a one-time fee of ten ($10) dollars. Any person holding an individual membership shall be eligible for election. The Executive Director shall appoint a person with an individual membership as an at-large member or committee chairman. No voting rights are conveyed to an individual membership.

ARTICLE IV – GOVERNANCE

SECTION 1
STATE EXECUTIVE OFFICERS

The State Executive Officers of this Association shall consist of an Executive Director (President), a Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer.

SECTION 2
STATE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

A. Membership of the Executive Committee shall be composed of the Executive Officers, each Athletic Authority Officer, and various at-large members as appointed by the Executive Director.

B. Terms of office for at-large members of the Executive Committee shall be the length of two years.

SECTION 3 / SECTION 4
SECTION INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK (left available for future consideration)

SECTION 5
APPEAL COMMITTEE

A. The Appeal Committee shall be composed of the Executive Officers.

B. The Appeal Committee shall perform the duties as set forth below in Section 5 and in accordance with the Appellate Procedure in Section 9.

C. There shall be no appeal of eligibility related to age restrictions set forth in the by-laws.

D. The Appeal Committee shall have the authority to set aside the effect of the migratory rule upon an individual student when in its opinion the rule works an undue hardship upon that student.
    1. The Appeal Committee shall meet at a location and on a date established by the Executive Director. Requests will be considered to have a rule or rules set aside for the benefit of individual students and shall consider such requests at the meetings held for that purpose, but not at any other meetings of the committee. If conditions upon which a request is based develop after April 1, the Executive Director is authorized to set a date for a special meeting to be held to consider such case or cases.

    2. The Athletic Authority Officer from a member school who has filed requests to have the effect of a rule set aside for individual students shall be notified of the time of the meeting at which such requests will be considered not less than five working days before such meeting.

3. A request will be considered at a meeting only if complete information concerning the case is filed in writing with the Executive Director at least ten days prior to the date of the meeting and if a representative of the school, along with the student, is present at the meeting to furnish the Appeal Committee with information. Complete information includes a transcript.

4. The conditions which cause the student to fail to meet the eligibility requirements must have been beyond the control of the school, the student, and/or his parents, and such that none of them could reasonably have been expected to comply with the rule. Ignorance of the rule on the part of any or all of them shall not be considered sufficient cause for setting aside its effects.

5. The decision of the Appeal Committee **must be unanimous** to set aside the effects of the rule in each individual case, and such decision shall not be considered as setting a precedent for other cases of a somewhat similar nature.

6. The decision of the Appeal Committee shall be appealable to the Executive Committee by compliance with Section 9 of the Constitution.

E. 1. The Executive Director shall have the authority upon receiving an application by a member school to set aside the effect of any eligibility rule upon an individual student within the jurisdiction of the Appeal Committee and to grant the same without necessity of the appearance of the student or a representative of the school before the Appeal Committee when, in the judgment of the Executive Director, the circumstances regarding the application are such that:

(a) The conditions which cause the student to fail to meet the eligibility requirements are beyond the control of the school, the student, and/or his parents and such that none of them could reasonably have been expected to comply with the rule; and,

(b) The conditions which cause the student to fail to meet the eligibility requirements work an unjust, unfair, and unforeseeable hardship upon the student; and

(c) The facts are clear, undisputed, and supported by appropriate documentation.

2. The Executive Director shall not have the authority to deny an application for hardship status and shall be required to either grant the application or to schedule the application for hearing by the Appeal Committee.

SECTION 6
ATHLETIC AUTHORITY OFFICER

A. Each Varsity Head Coach shall annually appoint an Athletic Authority Officer by March 1.

B. The Athletic Authority Officer shall represent each member school and is required to attend any regular or called meeting of the Georgia Middle School Athletic Association. The specific duty of the Athletic Authority Officer is to seek at all times to educate and communicate with the head coaches, assistant coaches and member school officials directly under their jurisdiction.

C. If the designated Athletic Authority Officer is unavailable to attend the regular or called meeting, he/she may transfer the responsibility to the Varsity Head Coach, Athletic Director, Principal, Booster Club President or Middle School Head Coach from the program. The Athletic Authority Officer must notify an Executive Director or Secretary via email with the name of the representative attending the regular or special meeting. The Varsity Head Coach, Athletic Director, Principal, Booster Club President or Middle School Head Coach shall have voting authority

D. If the Varsity Head Coach, Athletic Director, Principal, Booster Club President or Middle School Head Coach is unable to attend the regular or special meeting; the Athletic Authority Officer may designate a school program coordinator, booster club officer, assistant coach or equivalent to attend. The school program coordinator, booster club officer, assistant coach or equivalent is present for communication purposes only, without voting authority.

E. The Athletic Authority Officer of each school may submit to the Executive Officers such recommendations for the improvement of the Georgia Middle School Athletic Association as he/she may deem necessary. These

recommendations must be submitted to the Executive Director at least thirty (30) days prior to the meeting of the Executive Committee.

SECTION 7
DUTIES OF THE STATE EXECUTIVE OFFICERS

The duties of the Executive Officers shall be those usually devolving upon such officers and committees. It is specifically the duty of the Executive Officers to seek at all times to educate the Executive Committee, Athletic Authority and school officials under their jurisdiction, and at the same time, to check vigorously any practice or violation of the Georgia Middle School Athletic Association Constitution and By-Laws.

Executive Director shall preside over the member schools, the officers and at-large members. The Executive Director shall preside over the meetings and initiate and direct discussion in an unbiased manner. The Executive Director shall provide leadership and manage the incorporated business of the Georgia Middle School Athletic Association, Inc. The Executive Director is authorized to interpret the rules of the GMSAA Constitution and By-laws and to impose the proper penalty for their violation. The Executive Director shall appoint the at-large members for the State Executive Committee and make the necessary appointments to fill any Executive Officer vacancy for the remainder of the term. The Executive Director shall in cooperation with the Treasurer, administer the operating and foundation funds. The Executive Director shall approve all expenditures. The Executive Director shall delegate authority to the Vice President during his/her absence or to another Executive Officer in the absence of the Vice President. The Executive Director will act as the liaison between Georgia Middle School Athletic Association and the High School, Varsity Head Coach, Athletic Director and the Principal. The Executive Director shall pre-interview all new membership requests. The Executive Director shall not coach on the coach staff for a member school.

Vice-President shall manage one Region and oversee the administrative duties and daily operation of the Region Managers. The Vice President shall with the help of the Region Manages oversee certification of the member school coaches and also oversee the background checks. The Vice-President shall be responsible with registration of the student athletes for each member school. The Vice President shall with the help of the Region Managers oversee the operation of member school certification for each student athlete participating on each team. The Vice President is responsible to conduct any necessary eligibility investigation, and provide a written report to the Executive Director for presentation to the Executive Officers. In the absence of the Executive Director, the Vice-President will conduct the same duties and authority of the Executive Director. In the case of a vacancy in the office of Executive Director, acts as Executive Director until a new Executive Director is elected.

The Secretary shall maintain and provide access to the records of the GMSAA as required by O.C.G.A. ''1601 and 1602; record and distribute the minutes of all meetings. The Secretary shall record all business conducted at GMSAA meetings including motions, seconds of motions, and disposition of motions. The Secretary shall provide communication between the Executive Officers, the GMSAA, Athletic Authority Officers and membership. The Secretary shall make available the minutes from prior meetings. The Secretary shall distribute information in the preparation of forms, reports, mailings, emails, copies and flyers. The Secretary shall generate and maintain a current list of head coaches, high school varsity head coaches, high school athletic directors, voting members, GMSAA membership and the referee official association representatives. The Secretary shall submit the request for nominations and oversee the election process. The Secretary shall keep an official copy of the Constitution and By-Laws and modifications and revisions. The Secretary shall hold the official seal.

Treasurer shall collect all monies and, as appropriate, issue receipts for the same. The Treasurer shall deposit all income into the GMSAA operating bank account. The Treasurer shall deposit all fundraising monies into the GMSAA Foundation bank account. The Treasurer shall maintain the financial records of the GMSAA and record the deposits and payments of the GMSAA. The Treasurer shall prepare and distribute the annual budget during the opening meeting. The Treasurer shall prepare and distribute the Profit and Loss statement, Income and Expenses Report and the Balance Sheet providing the association's financial condition at the final meeting of year. All such reports shall be in writing and shall be put before the membership for approval. The Treasurer is responsible for the state, federal and local financial reports along with the submission of financial information to the approved certified public accountant.

SECTION 8
ELECTION OF OFFICERS

A. The election and term of office of the Executive Director shall be for a term of two years and shall be authorized to execute a contract in the name of and for the Georgia Middle School Athletic Association.

B. The election and term of the office of Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer shall be for a term of two years.

C. Should the Executive Director become disqualified by death, resignation, or otherwise, the Vice President shall assume the office immediately and shall act as Executive Director until the vacancy is filled.

D. Only members of the Executive Committee shall be entitled to vote in elections.

E. Any vacancy which may occur in the office of Executive Director, Vice President, Secretary or Treasurer shall be filled at the next meeting of the Executive Committee

F. The Athletic Authority Officer shall hold a one year term. The annual appointment is made by the Varsity Head Coach. The Varsity Head Coach from each member school shall submit to the Executive Director the name of the Officer by March 1.

SECTION 9
AUTHORITY OF EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
APPELLATE PROCEDURE

A. The-Executive Director shall be authorized to interpret the rules of the Georgia Middle School Athletic Association and to impose the proper penalty for their violation. The Vice President shall, upon the absence or at the direction of the Executive Director, have all the powers and responsibilities of the Executive Director as provided under this Constitution and the By-Laws of the GMSAA. The Executive Director shall make all arrangements for holding and conducting State Meets and Tournaments.

B. All questions pertaining to eligibility or any other matters under the rules of the Georgia Middle School Athletic Association must first be submitted to the Vice President. If the question concerns a violation of any of the rules of the GMSAA, the Vice President shall notify the Executive Director and the member school(s) involved and advise them of the charges, advise them of their right to submit evidence, and advise them of their right to request a hearing. The Executive Director, after hearing or examining the evidence of the party or parties concerned, shall render a decision.

C. Should any member school not be satisfied with the decision, appeal may then be made to the Appeal Committee by filing a written notice of appeal through the Executive Director within five (5) days of the date of the decision. The notice of appeal shall clearly state the decision appealed and the reasons for such appeal. The Executive Director shall notify the Appeal Committee and all other parties of the appeal. Provided however, that if the only issue under appeal is to request modification of the penalty imposed by the Executive Director, then the member school may appeal directly to the Executive Committee.

D. Appeal Committee meetings shall be set on a date established by the Executive Director.
   1. Any request to the Appeal Committee must be in the hands of the Executive Director five (5) days before the scheduled meeting date.
   2. Any other appeal requested (other than regularly scheduled dates) must be accompanied by a $250.00 fee to defray the cost of bringing the Appeal Committee into session.
   3. All requests for appeals must be in writing with the stated reasons for an appeal, and signed by the head coach of the individual school.
   4. If no appeals are filed with the Executive Director, the meeting date will be abolished via telephone at least two (2) days before the scheduled date of the meeting.

E. The Appeal Committee, after hearing or examining the evidence submitted by the party or parties, may affirm or reverse the decision of the Executive Director. In order to sustain an appeal, the vote of the Appeal Committee shall be unanimous.

F. Should any member school not be satisfied with the decision of the Appeal Committee, they may appeal to the Executive Committee by filing a written notice of appeal to the Executive Committee through the Executive Director within five (5) days of the date of the decision. The notice of appeal shall clearly state the decision being appealed and the reasons for such appeal. Such notice of appeal shall be accompanied by a $1000.00 fee sufficient to pay the entire expenses of the Executive Committee when such appeal is required to be heard at a time other than regularly scheduled meetings of the Executive Committee.

G. The Executive Committee, after hearing or examining the evidence submitted by the party or parties concerned, shall render a decision to affirm, reverse, or modify the decision under appeal.

H. No other method of appeal shall be held valid and any appeal must begin with the first step outlined and not eliminate any step until reaching the final court of appeal, the Executive Committee. When the decision by the Executive Committee is in favor of the appealing party or parties, the Executive Committee, at its discretion, may reimburse the appealing party or parties for a portion or all of the appeal fees paid. Members of the Appeal Committee will not be eligible to vote (those members who have heard a specific case) as a member of the Executive Committee when an appeal goes before the full Executive Committee.

SECTION 10
VOTE

Each Athletic Authority Officer and the Executive Committee excluding the Executive Director shall have one (1) vote in a Georgia Middle School Athletic Association regular or special meeting. In the event of a tie, the Executive Director shall cast a tie-breaking vote.

SECTION 11
AMEND CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS

A. To amend the Constitution, it shall take a two-thirds vote of the Executive Committee who are present at a regular or properly called meeting at which a quorum is present. Blank ballots, abstentions and pass votes are excluded.

B. To amend the By-Laws, it shall take a majority vote of the members of the Executive Committee who are present at a regular or properly called meeting at which a quorum is present. Blank ballots, abstentions and pass votes are excluded.

C. The effective date of any changes in the Constitution & By-Laws will be the next school year unless otherwise provided by the change.

D. Proposed changes to the Constitution must be adopted at two separate meetings of the Executive Committee to be held not less than 30 days apart.

SECTION 12
QUARTERLY MEETING

A. The Executive Committee of the Georgia Middle School Athletic Association shall hold a meet in the spring, summer, fall and winter of each year on such dates as may be designated by the Executive Officers.

B. In addition to these meetings, special meetings may be called by the Executive Officers or Executive Director at any time or place upon giving reasonable notice to the members of the Committee.

C. The Treasurer is required to present an itemized statement of the income and expenditures of all funds to the Executive Committee upon each quarterly meeting.

SECTION 13
VIOLATION OF RULES

A. Each school is required to abide by all rules of the Georgia Middle School Athletic Association as promulgated by the Executive Committee, Executive Officers and interpreted by the Executive Director.
B. The Executive Director is authorized to make such investigation as may be necessary and to judge whether or not a school has violated a rule. When a school is adjudged guilty, the Executive Director is authorized to direct the penalty or penalties.

C. A school violating any rule, whether it be due to carelessness, willfulness, ignorance or any other cause, may be subject to a fine of not more than five hundred dollars ($500.00) for each offense, and/or probation in the sports(s) in which the violation has been made, and/or suspension from the Georgia Middle School Athletic Association up to a full calendar year, and/or forfeiture of games and/or contests involved. (NOTE: See Appendix "P" at the end of this publication for more details)

D. PROBATION - placing a school on probation permits a school to compete in regular season games and/or contests, but bars that school from competing for any championship during the period of probation.

E. A school which, after investigation, is adjudged guilty of violating the rules of the Georgia Middle School Athletic Association shall pay the costs incidental to such investigation; such cost to be in addition to fines or penalties assessed. Failure to pay the cost shall result in suspension or in lengthening the period of probation or suspension.

SECTION 14
CODE OF ETHICS

The Georgia Middle School Athletic Association recognizes its responsibility with respect to the promotion of honesty, truthfulness, and accuracy in record-keeping and reporting. Therefore, the professional personnel of the member schools are charged with upholding the Code of Ethics adopted by the Professional Standards Commission as accepted and approved by the State Board of Education.

ARTICLE V — GENERAL PROVISIONS

SECTION 1
CONTESTS

A. Each Athletic Authority may hold annual contests in athletics and other forms of contests designed to promote the cause of education and as authorized by the State Executive Committee.

B. Such contests must be held on dates to be announced in this Constitution and By-Laws under the rules governing State contests.

SECTION 2
ORGANIZATION PURPOSE

A. The purpose for which the Georgia Middle School Athletic Association is organized is exclusively educational within the meaning of IRC 501 (c) (3) or the corresponding provisions of any future United States Internal Revenue Code or law.

B. Notwithstanding any other provisions of these articles, the Georgia Middle School Athletic Association shall not carry on any other activities not permitted to be carried on by an organization exempt from Federal income tax under IRC 501 (c) (3) or the corresponding provision of any future United States Internal Revenue Code or law.

C. In the event of dissolution, the residual assets of the organization will be turned over to one or more organizations which themselves are exempt as organizations described in sections 501 (c) (3) and 170 (c) (2) of the Code or corresponding sections of any prior or future Internal Revenue Code, or to the Federal, State, or local government for exclusive public purpose.

BY-LAWS

The Georgia Middle School Athletic Association recognizes that local boards and/or governing bodies may place more stringent requirements as they deem appropriate. The Association encourages all boards of education and/or governing bodies to extend the same rules and regulations to all extra-curricular activities under their jurisdiction.

These rules establish the provisions governing student eligibility to participate in interscholastic activities.

A. The word "student" used in these By-Laws refers either to a boy or girl participant in interscholastic athletics. Therefore, according to correct grammatical usage, since the antecedent "student" can involve persons of both sexes, the masculine pronouns he, his, or him used throughout said By-Laws will refer to either male or female participants.

B. The word "principal" used in these By-Laws refers either to a male or female head of a secondary school. Therefore, according to correct grammatical usage, since the antecedent "principal" can involve or refer to persons of either or both sexes the masculine pronouns, he, him, or his, will refer to a male or female head of a secondary school.

C. The abbreviations GMSAA used throughout these By-Laws refer to the Georgia Middle School Athletic Association.

BY-LAW 1.00 – STUDENT

1.10 – CERTIFICATION OF ELIGIBILITY

1.11 Students gain eligibility to practice or compete for the school in which they are enrolled, and after the students have met the standards of:

(a) age
(b) residence in the school's service area
(c) continuous residency
(d) relocation rules
(e) transfer rules

1.12 The **certification of eligibility for each member school team** shall be

(a) submitted initially by the GMSAA date located in the Athletic Authority Calendar.
(b) the final certification of eligibility for each member school team shall be submitted on the Wednesday following the second contest in that sport.

Failure to meet the eligibility deadline or submit the correct certification of eligibility to the Vice President for certification, may lead the Executive Director to:

(a) Assess a fine to the member school that is delinquent.
(b) Issue forfeiture of games
(c) Suspend the membership of a school that does not file eligibility reports.
(d) Disqualify a student from participation in games until their certification is attained

Reports not filed properly will be returned to the school for resubmission.

1.13 If a student is ruled ineligible by the GMSAA, yet competes interscholastically due to the terms of a **court restraining order or injunction** against his/her school and/or the GMSAA or otherwise competes; 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) whether or not the court order of injunction is upheld:

(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 GMSAA.

1.20 – ENROLLMENT AND TEAM MEMBERSHIP

1.21 To be eligible to participate for a sport, a student must be enrolled full time inclusive at the middle school representing the school service area (high school district) in which the student resides (with the exception in by-law 1.67)

(a) The student may only play athletics for the program representing the school service area (high school district) in which the student resides with the parent(s), custodial parent(s), legal guardian or court appointed foster parent(s)

(b) A student may be enrolled in only one (1) middle school at a time.

(c) A student shall not become certified for a GMSAA team while participate for another GMSAA sanctioned team or for a team outside of the GMSAA during the concurrent year. (with the exception in by-law 1.60)

.

1.30 – AGE

1.31 To be eligible to participate in interscholastic activities, a student must not have reached the following age:

(a) The student must not have reached his **fifteenth (15th) birthday prior to May 1**, preceding his year of participation on the **eighth grade team**.

(b) The student must not have reached his **fourteenth (14th) birthday prior to August 1**; preceding his year of participation on the **seventh grade team**.

(c) The student must not have reached his **thirteenth (13th) birthday prior to August 1**, preceding his year of participation on the **sixth grade team**.

1.40 – LIMITS OF PARTICIPATION

1.41 Students must have a certificate of an **annual physical examination on file** at the school program prior to participating in any athletic try-outs, practices or games that indicate the students are physically approved for participation.

(a) Physical examinations will be good for twelve (12) months from the date of the exam. EXCEPTION: Any physical examination taken on or after April 1 in the preceding year will be accepted for the following GMSAA school year.

(b) The physical exam must be conducted by a licensed medical physician, doctor of Osteopathic medicine, nurse practitioner or a physician's assistant.

(c) The exam must be signed by an M.D. or D.O., but the doctor's stamp is acceptable if it is in script, and if information appears elsewhere on the form identifying him/her as a medical doctor.

(d) The GMSAA requires that member schools use the latest edition of the pre-participation physical evaluation form approved by the Varsity Head Coach or the high school district.

1.42 Girls may participate **on boys' teams** when there is no girls' team offered in that sport by the school. Boys are not allowed to play on girls' teams even when there is no corresponding boys' sport.

1.43 Students must refrain from dual participation in the same sport when the seasons run concurrently.

1.50 – SCHOLASTIC STANDING

1.51 Loss of Eligibility: If the Principal, Athletic Director or Varsity Head Coach officially submits a student's name to a GMSAA official stating that the student is academically ineligible to participate in interscholastic activities or the student is assigned to an alternative school or placed on out-of-school suspension for disciplinary reasons, the student will be suspended from GMSAA activities. The suspension will be lifted when the school official notifies the GMSAA informing it that the student's eligibility has been restored or when the student is physically readmitted to the classroom.

1.52 The GMSAA encourages all students regarding the importance of academics at all levels

1.60 – SCHOOL SERVICE AREAS / TRANSFER / MIGRANT STUDENTS

1.61 School service areas for member public schools are those attendance boundaries established by local boards of education from which a school normally draws its students. The school service area represents the high school district boundaries established by the local boards of education.

1.62 A **transfer student** who has established eligibility at a former school shall be **immediately eligible** at the new school **if**:

(a) The student moved simultaneously with the entire parental unit or persons he/she resided with at the former school, and the student and parent(s) or persons residing with the student live in the service area of the new school, this is known as a **"bona fide move."**

(1) The student may choose the public school serving that area.

(2) It must be apparent that the parent(s) or the persons residing with the student and the student have relinquished the residence in the former service area and have occupied a residence in the new service area.

(3) Relinquishment of the former residence may be met by one of the following procedures: selling the residence; having the residence listed with a real estate agent for sale at a fair market value; having a contract with a buyer; having a lease agreement at a fair market value; or abandoning the house and shutting off unnecessary utilities. When a family claims multiple residences, the residence for which they apply for a homestead exemption will be declared the primary residence.

(4) The bona fide move is validated when the student's family maintains the new residence for at least one calendar year. A return to the previous residence within that year renders the student to be a migrant student. All appeal processes are available.

(b) The student was enrolled in a **private school or a magnet school** and has a bona fide move from one public school service area to another public school service area. A student in this situation may attend either the public school serving his area of residence.

(c) The student was enrolled in a **non-member public or private school in Georgia or was boarded at a school out of state** and, without a bona fide move, transferred to a GMSAA-member school that serves his area of residence as long as:

(1) The student was enrolled at the middle school serving his/her area of residence in grades 6-8 before attending the non-member school, OR

(2) The student has not yet established eligibility at a member school serving his area of residence, OR

(3) The student has previously established his attendance at a school other than the school serving his area of residence, and chooses to return to that school, AND

(4) It is the initial move of the student from a non-member school to a member school serving his area of residence.

(d) If one of his/her parents or the custodial parent is a certified teacher or administrator teaching at the receiving school. This opportunity is available one time only at any given school.

(e) The student has one of the following family-related situations that produce a **waiver of the bona fide move rule:**

(1) There is a Superior Court or Juvenile Court awarded **change of permanent custody** and the student moves to the residence of the parent receiving custody.

(a) The student must attend the member school serving that area of residence.

(b) A copy of the court order must accompany the eligibility forms.

(2) There is a Superior Court or Juvenile Court final order awarding permanent **joint custody** to the parents and the student moves to a residence of his or her parent outside the service area of the previous school.

(a) This waiver may be made one time during a calendar year.

(b) A copy of the court order must accompany the eligibility forms.

(3) There is a **death of a custodial parent** and the student moves to live with the other natural parent in a new school service area.

NOTE: A copy of the death certificate shall be submitted with the eligibility papers.

(4) There is a military transfer of one or both custodial parents that creates a change of residence that is not a bona fide move. NOTE: A copy of the deployment order shall be submitted with the eligibility form.

(f) Students who are U.S. citizens **returning from a foreign country** shall be eligible as long as they meet all other requirements of eligibility.

(g) Students who are transferred from one school attendance area to another school attendance area by a **mandate of the local board of education** maintain their eligibility.

1.63 A **"migrant student"** is a student who transfers into a GMSAA school without a bona fide move or without one of the exceptions listed in by-law 1.62.

1.64 A student who is not eligible because of GMSAA rules at the former school, and then transfers to a new school, cannot regain eligibility by the transfer.

1.65 Students whose transfers from member school to member school have been approved by the GMSAA-after the end of regular season play or during post-season play are not eligible for participation in GMSAA sponsored tournaments and/or playoffs in that particular sport for the school year of transfer.

1.66 A student who is not eligible at one school because of **suspension or expulsion** and then transfers to a member school cannot regain eligibility by such a transfer, for the length of the suspension or one calendar year, whichever is less.

1.67 A **mandate transfer** is defined as an authorization from the local board of education for the student and/or parents to attend school without regard to the location of residency. The following authorization shall establish eligibility:

(a) The teacher/employee privilege shall authorize the student to enroll in a school outside of their school service area. The student may participate in that member school's program provided the member school is a feeder school for the high school district.

1. County Board of Education Regulations: All requirements of the member school's County Board of Education Regulations must be met to qualify for the mandate transfer.
2. Varsity Coaches' Children: Students whose parent is a varsity coach will be allowed to play for the respective member school at which the parent is a varsity coach

(b) The sibling policy shall allow the out of school service area student eligibility if the student has an older sibling currently attending the associate high school. The sibling policy does not apply to "No Child Left Behind" students. Requirements are:

1. Older sibling is legally approved GHSA student that is eligible for athletics under GHSA rules.
2. To qualify, the younger sibling must be in a grade such that would attend high school simultaneously with the older sibling.
3. Once the sibling policy has been enacted the applicant or player is ineligible to transfer within that season without meeting the "bona fide" move eligibility requirements.

1.68 Hardship Applications may be filed with the Appeal Committee to attempt to establish eligibility in the following situations:

(a) A student who changes schools because of a **temporary custody transfer** from a parent to a guardian, or from one guardian to another (See Article IV, Section 5, in the GMSAA Constitution).

(b) A student whose transfer is based upon his being **emancipated**, homeless, a child from a broken home, a **ward of the DFACS**, or a **ward of a Court** (See Article IV, Section 5, in the GMSAA Constitution).

1.70 – RECRUITING/UNDUE INFLUENCE

1.71 Recruiting and Undue Influence is defined as the use of influence by any person connected directly or indirectly with a GMSAA school to induce a student of any age **to transfer** from one school to another, or **to enter** the grade at a member school for athletic competition purposes, whether or not the school presently attended by the student is a member of the GMSAA.

(a) The use of undue influence to secure OR retain a student for competitive purposes is prohibited, and shall lead to penalties being assessed against **either school.** NOTE: This violation may cause the student to forfeit eligibility for one year from the date of enrollment.

(b) Evidence of undue influence includes, but is not limited to, personal contact by coaches and sponsors in an attempt to persuade transfer, gifts of money, jobs, supplies, clothing, free transportation, admission to contests, invitation to attend practices and/or games, or free tuition.

(c) Complaints or reports of violations of this rule will be investigated and handled on a case-by-case basis. If **coaches** are found to be in violation of the recruiting rule, a copy of the investigation will be forwarded to the Varsity Head Coach, and/or the Athletic Director, and/or the Principal.

1.72 A student athlete transferring from one member school to another shall be ruled ineligible for one year because of "undue influence" if it is proven that:

(a) the coach of the receiving school coached an out-of-school team on which the athlete played prior to the transfer; OR

(b) the coach at the receiving school acted as a private athletic instructor for the transferring athlete, regardless of whether the coach was paid for his services and/or expertise

INTERPRETATIONS, 1.00 SECTION

BY-LAW 1.10 – CERTIFICATION OF ELIGIBILITY

 SITUATION: A student athlete and his parents move from the service area of School A to School B, and meet all eligibility requirements. When may he participate in interscholastic activities at School B?

INTERPRETATION: The student is eligible as soon as he is enrolled at School B and certified as being eligible by the GMSAA. Academic eligibility must be certified before the student may try out or practice.

BY-LAW 1.20 – ENROLLMENT AND TEAM MEMBERSHIP

 SITUATION: An eighth-grade student desires to try out in the fall for the football team at a member school. Is this legal if the school the student is attending is a feeder school for the member school?

INTERPRETATION: Yes. Also, an eighth grade student in a private school that does not offer football may try out at the public school serving that student's area of residence. NOTE: This procedure also applies to participation in spring football practice.

BY-LAW 1.30 – AGE

 SITUATION: A student becomes 15 years of age on April 30, prior to his eighth grade year. May the student participate on the eighth grade team?

INTERPRETATION: No. May 1 is the cut-off date.

BY-LAW 1.40 – LIMITS OF PARTICIPATION

NON-SCHOOL PARTICIPATION

 SITUATION: A student is a member of a GMSAA middle school football team and a traveling football team whose seasons run concurrently. Is this permissible?

INTERPRETATION: No, The student is not allowed to participate in the same sport during the concurrent season.

GIRLS ON BOYS TEAMS

 SITUATION: A girl wants to be on the middle school football team made up of boys. If she meets eligibility requirements, may she do so?

INTERPRETATION: Yes. Girls may participate on boys teams when there is no girls' team in that sport at that school.

BY-LAW 1.50 – SCHOLASTIC STANDING

 SITUATION: The principal of a member school notifies the Athletic Sports Authority Officer that a student is assigned to attend alternative school for the next six (6) weeks for disciplinary reasons. May the student participate on the football team during the six (6) weeks he will be attending the alternative school?

INTERPRETATION: No. The GMSAA Officer was notified by the principal of the member school. Students assigned to an alternative school for reasons of misconduct or who are in out-of-school suspension may not participate until they have returned physically to the regular classroom.

BY-LAW 1.60 – SCHOOL SERVICE AREAS/TRANSFER STUDENTS/MIGRANT STUDENTS

SCHOOL SERVICE AREAS

 QUESTION: What is a public school's service area?

ANSWER: A school service area is the geographic boundary established by local boards of education that determine the public school a student must attend. NOTE: The service area is also referred to in this book as the "attendance area" and "area of residence."

FIRST-TIME ENROLLMENT

 SITUATION: A county has a school for students living in the county, and a separate school for students living in the city. The local boards of education allow students to choose whichever school they wish to attend (with or without tuition payments). A student and his parents live in the city, and the student is enrolled for the first time in grade at the county school. Will he be able to participate in interscholastic activities?

INTERPRETATION: Yes. On a first-time entrance into the grade, a student may enroll in the school of his choice if the local board of education gives approval. Once that choice is made, any other transfers must be accompanied by a corresponding move by the student and his parents. If the student transferred back to the school that serves his area of residence, the student would be ineligible for varsity competition for one year.

BONA FIDE MOVE DEFINED

 QUESTION: What is meant by the term "bona fide move?"

ANSWER: A "bona fide move" is defined as the actual physical relocation of all immediate family members residing in the previous residence, with the intent to reside indefinitely, and to relinquish the previous residence.

THE TRANSFER RULE

 SITUATION: A student attends School "A" while living in that school's attendance area. He and his parents move into the service area of public School "B," and the student enrolls in School "B." Is the student eligible to participate in interscholastic activities?

INTERPRETATION: Yes. This is a classic example of a bona fide move.

 SITUATION: A student and his parents reside in the service area for a county school. The student enters the sixth grade at a non-member private school. At the middle of the sixth grade year, the student wishes to transfer from the non-member school to the middle school that serves his area of residence. Will the student be eligible at the member school?

INTERPRETATION: Yes. A student may transfer from a non-member school to a member school serving his area of residence one time in his middle school career as long as all other eligibility criteria are met.

 SITUATION: The school system grants a school employee a mandate transfer for the student to attend the school that is outside his area of residency. Is this a mandated transfer, and is the student eligible at the new school?

RULING: This is a mandate transfer and does carry GMSAA eligibility. The member school receiving the student would have eligibility for this student to participate immediately.

CHOICE OF PUBLIC OR PRIVATE MEMBER SCHOOLS

 SITUATION: A student and his parents reside in the service area of School "A" and attend that school. The parents and the student have a bona fide move into the service area of public School "B" and private School "C." Does the student have a choice about which school he may attend and remain eligible?

INTERPRETATION: Yes. When a student moves into a new service area, he may choose to attend the public school that serves his new area of residence, or a private school as long as football is not available for participation in that assigned new area of residence within the service area.

 SITUATION: A school system grants a permissive transfer for a student to leave the school that serves his area of residence to go to a school that offers a course he cannot get at his home school. Is this a mandated transfer, and is the student eligible at the new school?

RULING: This is a permissive transfer and does not carry GMSAA eligibility. The receiving school would have to file for a hardship in order for this student to have any chance of being eligible.

MIGRANT STUDENT RULE

 SITUATION: A student enrolls in School "A," is certified eligible, and participates in athletic contests. Then it is discovered that the student's parents do not live in the service area of School "A." After the school forfeits all contests it won when the student played, what is the status of this student's eligibility if:

(a) student remains in School "A," and the parents do not move into the service area of School "A?"
(b) The student remains in School "A," and the parents move into the service area of School "A?"
(c) the student transfers to the school that serves his area of residence?

INTERPRETATION:

(a) The student is ineligible from the date of entry to School "A."
(b) The student becomes eligible on the date the parents move into the service area of School "A."
(c) The student is ineligible for one (1) year from the date of entry to the school of his service area.

 SITUATION: A student who has been living with his mother in another state moves in with his grandparents and enters a member school. The grandparents go to a Probate Court and get a Letter of Temporary Guardianship. Will this student be eligible for interscholastic activities?

INTERPRETATION: Yes. This student is considered a migrant student that has documentation of guardianship that justifies his school transfer.

 SITUATION: A school system has a policy that the children of teachers may attend the school where the parent teaches regardless of where the family lives. The high school hired a teacher, who has a seventh-grade student, and the family lives outside the service area of that school. If the student attends the school where the parent teaches, will he be immediately eligible?

INTERPRETATION: Yes, as long as the parent is a certified teacher or administrator at the receiving school.

SUSPENDED OR EXPELLED STUDENT

 SITUATION: A student is expelled from a member private school for behavioral problems. The student and his parents move to a different service area and the student enrolls in a member public school. Is the student eligible to participate in interscholastic activities?

INTERPRETATION: No. The student will not be eligible until the time frame of the suspension at the first school is complete or one calendar year – whichever is shorter.

UNFINISHED HOME

 SITUATION: A family has purchased a new home in a school district other than the one where the student has been attending school. However, the new home will not be available for occupancy until six weeks after the start of the semester. In the meantime, the new local board of education allows the student to begin attendance in anticipation of the family move when the home is available. When will the student be eligible at the new school?

INTERPRETATION: The student will be eligible immediately upon the date the parents physically occupy the residence in the new district.

 SITUATION: A family has purchased a new home in a school district other than the one where the student has been attending school. However, the new home will not be available for occupancy until six weeks after the start of the semester. The parents desire the student to begin and complete the semester at the original school, before transferring to the new school. How will this affect the student's eligibility?

INTERPRETATION: The GMSAA-By-Laws permit students to complete the current semester in a given district if their parents move from that district after school has commenced. Therefore, the student in this case may remain in his original district for the remainder of the semester and be eligible in respect to residence. If the student continues to attend school in that district in the succeeding semesters, he will continue eligibility. If he begins the next semester and then decides to transfer to the school in his area of residence, he would be ineligible for varsity competition for one (1) year.

RECRUITING/UNDUE INFLUENCE

QUESTION: What factors are involved in the determination of "undue influence?"

ANSWER: In addition to the specific statement of the By-Laws, "undue influence" shall be determined by considering the following issues as factors:

(a) personal contact by a coach, teacher or administrator
(b) offer or award of any part of the student's tuition, books, and/or fees based on athletic performance or potential
(c) other privileges or considerations not accorded to other students similarly situated

BY-LAW 2.00 – SCHOOL

2.10 – MIDDLE SCHOOL MEMBERSHIP TO GMSAA

2.11 The Georgia Middle School Athletic Association is a voluntary association available to any Georgia High School Feeder program that has been authorized to seek membership by the local board of education, high school varsity head coach, high school athletic director, principal or similar governing body of control.

(a) Member school agrees to **conform to the Constitution and By-Laws of the GMSAA.**
(b) Member school agrees to **conform to the rules of the GMSAA**.
(c) Member school agrees to maintain general liability insurance with the minimum requirements set by the GMSAA
(d) Should a conflict arise between GMSAA rules and GHSA rules, the **GMSAA rules always take precedent.**

2.12 Procedure for Membership:

(a) The local board of education, high school athletic director, varsity head coach, principal or similar governing body of control must submit in writing an **authorization for membership** for the middle school program by March 1, of the year the program is requesting to join the GMSAA.
(b) Membership is on-going based on the original GMSAA vote as long as the school program is in good standing with the GMSAA

2.13 Dues for Membership:

(a) The amount of the dues is **set annually** by the Executive Committee of the GMSAA.
  (1) Dues must be paid prior to April15 of each year.
  (2) Schools failing to meet the dues-payment deadline are not eligible to participate in any contest until membership dues are paid.

2.14 If a school, school system, booster club or organization initiates litigation against the association and the court rules in favor of the association, the school, school system, booster club or organization shall be responsible for paying all court costs and attorneys' fees.

2.15 If the association conducts an investigation of a member school in reference to a possible violation of association rules and the member school is found to be in violation, the school shall be assessed the cost of the investigation in addition to any fines.

2.16 On a case by case basis and under extreme circumstances, a dues extension may be requested in writing to the Executive Director and the Executive Officers.

2.20 – ADMINISTRATIVE RESPONSIBILITIES

2.21 The administrative responsibility of each school shall have on file for each student the certificate of eligibility, Georgia Middle School Athletic Association waiver form and an **annual physical examination** given by a licensed medical physician, a doctor of Osteopathic medicine, nurse practitioner or a physician's assistant indicating the student is approved for participation in athletic activities before that student may try-out, participate in practice or conditioning drills, or participate in interscholastic contests (see By-Law 1.41). The physical exam form must be signed by the physician or osteopath after reviewing the data from the examination and the student's health history on the form.

2.22 The person(s) responsible for each school must be a person who believes in fairness, integrity and honesty as evidenced by their **strict adherence to all rules** and regulations in regards to eligibility of contestants representing his/her school.

2.23 The member institution has a responsibility to educate student-athletes, coaches, and other appropriate persons on GMSAA rules and procedures that could affect them. Further, the member school should monitor its compliance with GMSAA guidelines.

2.24 Member schools that fail to follow stated procedures and deadlines may be assessed a fine for each violation.

2.25 Schools that need to cancel appointments scheduled with the Appeal Committee must do so at least 24 hours before the appointment. Failure to cancel properly will result in a fine.

2.26 Member schools are expected to fulfill their responsibilities for a sports season once they have committed to play that sport.

(a) If a school enters the competitive structure that qualifies it to advance in postseason competition, that school is expected to advance if it qualifies. Schools that drop out of competition after qualifying may be penalized with fines or probation.

(b) Appeals for emergency circumstances may be filed with the Executive Director.

2.30 – ELIGIBILITY REPORT FILED BY THE MEMBER SCHOOL

2.31 An **eligibility report is** required for participation by each student.

1. The student must submit to the administrative person(s) of each school the following forms for the official team roster. The GMSAA certification of eligibility is mandatory for the participation of each student.

(a) The GMSAA eligibility form must contain the following information.

1. student's full name
2. date of birth
3. current grade level
4. attending middle school name
5. student's continuous residency address

(b) The parent/legal guardian must sign and submit the GMSAA Waiver along with a contact email address

(c) The parent/legal guardian must submit a copy of the student's original birth certificate

2.32 The GMSAA shall hold the head coach of each team responsible for the eligibility of each student.

2.33 The team administrative person(s) for each school program shall submit the eligibility forms for **certification of eligibility.** Each team will submit the forms to the Vice President initially no later than the GMSAA certification date located at the Athletic Authority Calendar. The date and location is set by the GMSAA. Failure to meet the eligibility deadline, may lead the Executive Director to:

(a) Assess a fine to the school that is delinquent.

(b) Issue forfeiture of games

(c) Suspend the membership of a school that does not file eligibility reports.

(d) Reports not filed properly will be returned to the school for resubmission.

2.34 The final certification of eligibility shall be submitted and received by the Vice-President by the Wednesday following the second game of the season for each school member team. The final eligibility report of each member school team shall include the following forms for By-Law 2.31.

2.35 Any student not certified during the first certification of eligibility must receive approval from the opposing head coach before participating during the first or second game of the season. The member school must submit the final eligibility report to the Vice President for final certification following By-Law 2.34. Schools **playing interscholastic contests before certifying the eligibility** of one or more participating students may be subject to one or more of the following penalties imposed by the Executive Director:
(a) a fine per game or contest in which one or more participants had no eligibility report filed.
(b) forfeiture of any game in which one or more participants did not have eligibility report filed.
(c) restriction from competition in any sport if the fines assessed are not paid within ten (10) days of notification.

2.36 Once a student has been certified eligible and has been processed by the GMSAA, **eligibility is assumed to be continuing,** and no further eligibility report is necessary for that student during the school year.

2.37 Changes of the Eligibility Record: When a school discovers that incorrect information has been given on an eligibility report, the following procedures shall be followed to correct errors:
1. Contact the Vice President immediately and submit a new eligibility report on which you have written "Corrected Copy" NOTE: the Vice President may contact the middle school to verify data.
2. Give the date of the original eligibility submission.
3. Failure to meet the eligibility deadline, see By-Law 2.33

2.38 The Falsified Eligibility Record, may lead the Executive Director to:
(a) Assess a fine per game or contest in which one or more falsified participants.
(b) Suspend the head coach and/or the membership of the school.
(c) Suspend the eligibility of the student.
(d) forfeiture of any game in which one or more falsified participants.
(e) restriction from competition in any sport if the fines assessed are not paid within ten (10) days of notification.

2.39 Requests to investigate a student's eligibility must be filed with the Executive Director or the Vice President at least twenty (20) calendar days before the end of the regular season in order for any penalties to be applied before the end of the playoffs. NOTE: the Vice President may contact the middle school to verify data.

2.40 – BY-LAW INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK
(left available for future consideration)

2.50 – QUALIFICATIONS TO COACH

2.51 An athletic coach must be certified and registered with the GMSAA. The online application will require the applicant's name, address, contact number, email address, prior experience and personal references.
(a) Schools may have to add members to their coaching staff. It is the responsibility of the member school to register these additions in a timely manner.
(b) Failure to comply with these procedures could result in punitive actions including, but not limited to, fines, forfeitures and other penalties assessed to the member school.

2.52 The Vice President shall have final approval concerning any new athletic coach application. Each new coach must submit to a background check to be conducted by an accredited agency chosen by the GMSAA. The background check is valid for two years from the original date. The GMSAA will not require a background check for the following; Active Police, Active Military and a Member School Employee.

2.53 The head coach must participate in both the **GMSAA Coaches Education Program and Testing Program. The assistance coach must choose to participate in one of the two GMSAA programs.** The GMSAA Executive Officers shall determine and provide an adequate site for the GMSAA Coaches Education Program and Coaches Test.

2.60 – INTERSCHOLASTIC CONTESTS AND PRACTICES

2.61 All **practices** (team and individual) and all regular-season interscholastic **contests** for GMSAA-member schools shall be **conducted outside the school day of the participants' school.**

(a) The **"school day"** is **defined** as: that period of time between when students are required to report to school and the time of dismissal of the host school. EXCEPTION: When the host school is not in session on a given day, competitions may be scheduled earlier than normal dismissal time for that school. However, any school that is in session on that day may not compete in that event before the normal dismissal time of the host school.

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

(a) Member schools shall **compete, practice or scrimmage only against other member schools** or against schools who are affiliated with the State Association in their respective states. NOTE: When a member school competes out of state, the host state's adaptations of NFHS playing rules will be enforced, and all GMSAA by-laws regarding sportsmanship, eligibility and game times will be enforced.

(b) The Executive Director has the authority to approve competition between GMSAA schools and **private schools in which membership in the GMSAA is not allowed.** These nonmember schools must meet or exceed the GMSAA standards in order to compete with GMSAA schools.

(c) I**nterscholastic scrimmage** (two teams meeting head-to-head) is allowed twice in the sport of Football.

(d) These scrimmage games may be scheduled anytime between the beginning of practice as set by the GMSAA and the first regular season game for each team.

(e) These scrimmage games shall be played with normal timing and/or scoring rules except as noted in individual sports sections.

2.63 Forfeiture and Restitution Policy

(1) If a team does not arrive at the game site for any contest without notifying the host opponent of a late arrival, that contest will be forfeited 30 minutes after the scheduled game-time. If the second game or contest was to be played by a different team (EXAMPLE: sixth grade at 9:00 AM followed by the seventh grade at 11:00 AM), then a decision to forfeit that game will be made 30 minutes after the scheduled beginning of the second game.

(2) If a school fails to show up for a game or cancels a game within four (4) hours of the scheduled starting time without an emergency condition or weather-related conditions, that school shall pay a forfeiture fee to the host school equivalent to the cost of the officials.

(3) If a school fails to show up for a game or cancels within four (4) hours of the scheduled game time without emergency reasons or weather-related reasons for a second time, that school must make restitution again and must show cause to the Executive Director as to why they should not be placed on probation by the GMSAA.

(4) The minimum penalty for allowing an ineligible athlete to participate in an interscholastic contest is forfeiture of the game(s). Fines or other penalties may also be imposed. NOTE: If it is determined by the Executive Director that the school has exercised every reasonable precaution and has been deceived regarding the student's data, any or all penalties may be set aside.

2.64 Weekday Contests: Only one day and/or night preceding a school day per week may be used for a contest or activity with a starting time of 6:00 pm or later.

(a) State playoffs are exempt from this rule.

(b) The Executive Director has the authority to set aside this rule upon request when there are extenuating circumstances.

2.65 Practice Policy for Heat and Humidity:

(a) Each member school shall follow the high school written policy for conducting practices during times of extremely high heat and/or humidity.

The policy shall include, but is not limited to:

(1) the time of day the practices are to be scheduled at various heat index levels

(2) the ratio of workout time to time allotted for rest and hydration at various heat index levels

(3) the heat index level that will result in outdoor practices being terminated

2.66 All athletic events hosted by GMSAA-member schools shall be officiated at all levels of competition by **officials** who are members of associations that are approved by the GHSA.

2.67 **Legal practice dates** are established for the season (see the Athletic Authority at the end of this publication), and schools shall not conduct or allow an **illegal practice.**

(a) **Illegal practices** are **defined** as practices involving three or more students participating in any extracurricular activity in the presence of, or under the direct or indirect supervision of, any coach of the school program. At any given point in time, only one (1) coach in a sport may work with up to two (2) athletes in skill-building drills.

(1) Any practice occurring **before the opening of the designated season** is an illegal practice.

(2) Any practice occurring **after the end of the season** for that team and the end of the school year for students in that school is an illegal practice.

(3) **During the summer** (i.e., between the ending of one school year and the beginning of the next) the only restrictions on practices and competition are that all activities must be strictly voluntary, and the "**Dead Week**" must be observed, as follows: Schools are prohibited from participating in voluntary workouts, camps and/or clinics, weight training or competitions during the week (Sunday through Saturday) in which the Fourth of July falls each year.

(4) It is illegal for a team to go to a competitive or instructional camp or clinic during the school year other than in-season events designed for that team alone.

(a) If the event is held out of season, it would constitute an illegal practice.

(b) If the event is held in-season, it would involve illegal coaching.

(c) This prohibition does not apply to the summer months.

(5) Neither coaches, former coaches nor any other school personnel shall suggest, require, or otherwise **attempt to influence students** to participate in or practice for a sport outside the GMSAA-designated season.

(6) The following activities are **examples of illegal practices:**

(a) interscholastic scrimmages competitions not in compliance with By-Law 2.62e

(b) practices involving alumni or students who presently are not eligible at the member school at any time in the school year

(c) practices against a non-school program team at any time in the school year

(d) practices of any kind outside the season designated by the GMSAA.

(7) Coaches are allowed to be spectators or "fellow competitors" at non-school events out of season as long as no coaching occurs.

(8) Schools found guilty of having illegal practices will be subject to **penalties** that may include a fine, warning, probation, and/or suspension by the Executive Director.

2.68 **GMSAA Concussion Policy**: In accordance with Georgia law and national playing rules published by the National Federation of State High School Associations, any athlete who exhibits signs, symptoms, or behaviors consistent with a concussion shall be immediately removed from the practice or contest and shall not return to play until an appropriate health care professional has determined that no concussion has occurred. (NOTE: An appropriate health care professional may include, licensed physician (MD/DO) or another licensed individual under the supervision of a licensed physician, such as a nurse practitioner, physician assistant, or certified athletic trainer who has received training in concussion evaluation and management.

(a) No athlete is allowed to return to a game or a practice on the same day that a concussion (a) has been diagnosed, OR (b) cannot be ruled out.

(b) Any athlete diagnosed with a concussion shall be cleared medically by an appropriate health care professional prior to resuming participation in any future practice or contest. The formulation of a gradual return to play protocol shall be a part of the medical clearance.

(c) It is mandatory that every coach in each GMSAA sport participate in a free, online course on concussion management prepared by the NFHS and available at www.nfhslearn.com at least every two years – beginning with the 2013-2014 school year.

(d) Each school will be responsible for monitoring the participation of its coaches in the concussion management course, and shall keep a record of those who participate.

2.70 – SPORTSMANSHIP

2.71 GMSAA-member schools are required to conduct all relationships with other schools in a **spirit of good sportsmanship.**

(a) It shall be the responsibility of a member school to use every means at its disposal to impress upon students, team members, coaches, and spectators the **values of sportsmanship** in preparation for the management of interscholastic contests.

(b) The Executive Director shall have the authority to assess penalties against schools and/or coaches for conduct unbecoming a professional educator or coach committed by coaches or other member school personnel at GMSAA events. Penalties against schools may include fines, probation or suspensions; and penalties against coaches and other school personnel may include suspension from GMSAA events.

(c) It shall be the **responsibility of the home or host school** to take the following precautions at all interscholastic athletic events:

(1) take proper steps and precautions to ensure crowd and spectator control, including having an administrator (or designee) from the host school to function as **"game manager"** at all GMSAA sanctioned events.

(2) take steps to ensure the **comfort and security** of all players, coaches, and officials

(3) have in place sufficient **security personnel** to handle any crowd-control problems that might reasonably be expected. A security escort must be provided to game officials by the host school at all GMSAA sanctioned contests, before, during and following the contest - including to their vehicles.

(d) Each school must develop a **plan to handle fight situations** that may occur during an athletic contest.

(1) Attention must be given to keeping **substitute players** out the fight, and to keeping **spectators** away from the competitive area.

(2) All players who are involved in a fight and any substitute players who go to the area during a fight and are **ejected** from the current contest, will be subject to the sit-out rule.

(e) Players and coaches are expected to exhibit good sportsmanship before and after a contest, even if the game officials do not have jurisdiction. Behaviors such as taunting, fighting, etc., are forbidden.

(f) No coach may remove his team from competition before the end of the contest unless it is done in accordance with the playing rules of that sport.

(g) The "game manager" (see Section 2.71 (c)(1) will be identified to the referee before each home game. He or she should escort the game officials at half time and following the end of the contest. He or she should use his or her best judgment in determining, in conjunction with game officials, whether play should be suspended, whether utilization of a lightning detector is possible. The game manager is responsible for notifying the guest school head coach of the availability and location of safe shelter options. Rules for suspension and termination of games due to inclement weather are outlined in Section 2.93.Each school must have a severe weather plan in place for the safety of the participants, coaches and spectators. Such plan must address how weather-related information may be obtained while at the school (internet service through cell phones and other such up-to-date weather reports), designate a safe place to gather in the event of lightning or other severe weather (locker room, gym, etc.), specify how to gain access to such area.

2.72 Any **player, coach, or team attendant** who is **ejected** from a GMSAA contest shall be suspended from all levels of competition in that sport or activity (regular season or playoffs) until the period of suspension has expired.

(a) Ejections are based on judgment calls by an official and are not reviewable or reversible.

(b) An ejected coach shall have no role nor be in attendance at pre-contest warm-ups or activities, and shall not be in attendance at contests until the period of suspension has expired.

(c) An ejected player or team attendant may not be on the competitive area during any contest until the period of suspension has expired.

(d) The **period of suspension** resulting from an ejection will expire as follows:

(1) **Football:** after the individual has been withheld from the next-scheduled game at the level at which the ejection occurred (and all contests at any other level).

(e) To satisfy the penalty of the sit-out game(s), those games must have been scheduled at the time of the ejection, and must be played to completion.

(f) When a player, coach, or team attendant has a **second ejection** in the same activity during a school year, that individual shall be withheld from competition for twice the time period of the normal suspension.

(g) In the event that a player, coach, or team attendant is **ejected three (3) or more times** in the same activity during the school year for a sportsmanship violation, the individual will be withheld from competition until:

(1) The member school presents a written response to the circumstances involved in that individual's unsportsmanlike behavior, AND

(2) The Executive Director establishes a penalty which may include suspension in all GMSAA activities for up to twelve (12) months.

(3) Penalties imposed by the Executive Director may be appealed as described under Section 9 of Article IV, in the GMSAA Constitution.

(h) If the ejection occurs in the last game of the season, the penalty carries over to the first game of the next season.

(i) When a coach is ejected, his school program will be fined.

2.73 Any student who **intentionally injures or intentionally attempts to injure** another student, coach, official, spectator, or other person immediately before, during, or immediately after any GMSAA-sponsored activity, may be declared ineligible to participate in future GMSAA activities by the Executive Director. NOTE: The notice, hearing, and appellate procedures set forth in the GMSAA Constitution shall be applicable to such rulings.

2.74 Coaches, administrators, or players are not to make **comments to the media** that are **critical of officials** and/ or their calls in a game. Penalties that could be imposed by the Executive Director for breach of this rule include fines and/ or suspensions.

2.75 The **use of fireworks** at any GMSAA approved event shall be in strict compliance with the licensing and application procedures of Georgia law and under permit of the probate court in which the event is held.

2.76 The public address announcers at any GMSAA approved event shall maintain a professional demeanor. The public address announcer should exhibit good sportsmanship and remain neutral toward the member schools, athletes, parents, officials and coaches. The announcer should refrain from speaking during athletic activities or make interruptions during the field of play. If the Executive Director determines that there has been a violation, the member school could receive a fine and additional penalties

2.80 – MEDIA AND FILMING REGULATIONS

2.81 The host or home school has the **right to determine** whether or not its **regular-season** activities may be **broadcast**, televised, webcast, tape recorded, filmed or photographed for any "commercial" purposes.

(a) Either school involved in the event shall have the right to video tape the event or to copy said tape.

(b) The host school must execute a **written contract** with the broadcast entity that complies with the GMSAA rules and regulations for broadcasting.

2.82 GMSAA Executive Officers have the **right to determine** whether or not **state tournament** (post regular-season) events may be broadcast, televised, webcast, tape recorded, filmed or photographed for any "commercial" purposes.

(a) The GMSAA must execute a **written contract** with the broadcast entity that complies with the GMSAA rules and regulations for broadcasting.

2.83 FLASH PHOTOGRAPHY: Flash photography at outdoor GMSAA state playoff events is at the discretion of the onsite game officials.

2.84 Parents and/or fans connected with a member school will be allowed to use video or still cameras to tape or photograph GMSAA state playoff events in which that member school is participating under the following condition.

(a) The cameras must be hand-held and their use cannot interfere with another fan's view of the event. Site administrators shall have the authority to halt photography if, in their opinion, this rule is being violated.

(b) Anyone else filming or photographing GMSAA state playoff events for commercial purposes must have approval of the Executive Director.

2.85 Visiting Schools or other member schools desiring to bring filming personnel shall film another member school during a GMSAA sanctioned event, scrimmage or official game. Access to the press box for the purpose of filming is at the host school's discretion.

2.86 Practice session filming or attendance by anyone affiliated with another member school is prohibited. The penalty for violation of this rule shall be determined by the Executive Director.

2.87 Game film exchange by member schools before competition is encouraged by the GMSAA. The film exchange will increase quality coaching among the member schools.

2.90 – REGULATIONS OF COMPETITIONS

2.91 Sunday Competition: Sunday competition is prohibited for GMSAA regular season or playoff contests, unless approval is made under emergency circumstances from the Executive Officers. Sunday practices are regulated by local school policy.

2.92 Contest Rules: All athletic competitions are to be played according to the rules published by the National Federation of State High School Associations, using officially-dressed officials who are registered with the GHSA or another State Association.

2.93 Interrupted Games: Any GMSAA competition may be interrupted due to human, mechanical, or natural causes when it is necessary to protect the safety of players and spectators. The Executive Director shall have the authority to postpone GMSAA events and to direct the procedure for rescheduling when deemed necessary.

(a) The GMSAA requires lightning detectors at all outdoor athletic activities.

(1) When a lightning detector indicates a dangerous situation, the game manager will notify the head official. At that point, the official will suspend play and all participants will go to a place of safety (NOTE: If officials spot lightning before being notified, they may suspend play). **Thirty-Minute Rule** – Once lightning has been recognized, the recommended wait time is at least 30 minutes after the last flash of lightning is witnessed or thunder is heard. Given the average rates of thunderstorms travel, the storm should move 10-12 miles away from the area. This significantly reduces the risk of local lightning flashes. **Any subsequent lightning or thunder after the beginning of the 30-minute count should reset the clock and another count should begin.**

(2) When the detector indicates that it is safe to resume play, the contest may resume

(b) **Postponed games** are games that are terminated before they actually begin because of weather problems, emergency situations, or mechanical failures.

(1) The host school should notify the opposing team, officials and the Executive Director as early as possible when a contest is postponed.

(2) The host school is responsible for determining whether an event is to be postponed until the time that game rules turn that responsibility over to game officials

(3) School personnel will agree on the rescheduling of the contest.

(c) **Suspended and/or Terminated Games -** When game officials suspend a game due to weather issues, the following procedures are in place:

(1) Football contests will be up to a one-hour delay (cumulative) before the contest will be terminated.

(a) If the Football contest is terminated after it has reached the halfway point, the score at the point of termination is final.

(b) If the Football contest is terminated before it has reached the halfway point, the contest is declared a "no contest" or the losing team can declare the game final at the point of termination.

(d) **Paying Officials** in shortened/postponed games:

(a) In the event a scheduled contest cannot be started due to weather-related conditions, officials who have arrived at the contest site will be paid one-half the regular game fee.

(b) If a game is interrupted by weather or darkness before it becomes a completed game, the officials will be paid fees in full .

(c) If a game is an official game at the point of interruption, the officials will be paid full fees.

(d) Beyond these conditions, no officials group(s) may hold the schools responsible for weather-related postponements.

2.94 All championship contests that end in a tie will have that tie resolved by means of the procedures that are used to resolve ties in preceding rounds of the playoffs.

2.95 Absence of Officials: In the unlikely event that game officials do not arrive for a contest, both schools should agree on one of the following procedures:

(a) Delay the game, contact the Executive Director and wait until a new set of officials can arrive

(b) Agree to play the game on another date except a Sunday

2.96 All-Star Teams:

(a) In accordance with state law, member schools shall not permit their teams or players to participate in "All Star" games during the GMSAA regular season. Players selected to participate in out-of-season all-star games must adhere to GMSAA rules

2.97 Admission Fees for State Playoff Contests are set by the host school and shall not exceed $7 for the adult admission.

INTERPRETATIONS, 2.00 SECTION

BY-LAW 2.60 – INTERSCHOLASTIC CONTESTS AND PRACTICES

 SITUATION: When do out-of-season practice restrictions begin?

INTERPRETATION: The beginning of out-of-season practice restriction will start upon the end of the season and continue through until the start of the new season. During this time, all restrictions about camps, clinics, and participation of coaches go into effect.

 SITUATION: May a coach in any extracurricular activity conduct voluntary, individual instruction with a student outside a team or competitive setting and outside the designated season for that activity?

INTERPRETATION: Yes, even if the instruction is in the activity that the coach coaches during the designated activity season as long as the instruction is voluntary and is outside a team or competitive setting. At any given point in time, only one coach in a particular sport may be working with one or two athletes in skill-building drills.

 SITUATION: May the coaches organize, but not require, a voluntary out-of-season weight-lifting program?

INTERPRETATION: Yes, but students must not be required to attend as a requirement for making the team. Coaches shall use caution not to suggest that participation in such a program is mandatory, or that their failure to participate could adversely affect their opportunity to make the school team. Such weight-lifting program must be open to all students in the school, and physical examinations for each participant must be on file at the school. The program shall not be sport-specific.

 SITUATION: A coach at a member school gives instruction and/or coaches in a nonschool summer program. What are the restrictions on the coach?

INTERPRETATION: The Summer activity is unrestricted as long as the students' participation is voluntary.

BY-LAW 2.70 – SPORTSMANSHIP

 SITUATION: A coach is ejected on Friday, and sits out the next scheduled game on Monday. The Monday game is called because of lightning. Does this game satisfy the "sit-out rule?"

INTERPRETATION: No, since the game was called before it was considered a completed game, the coach may not count it as a sit-out game.

 SITUATION: A school has several players and most of its substitute players ejected for a fighting incident. At the time of the next scheduled game, the school does not have enough players to field a team, and they forfeit to their opponent. Does this satisfy one game of the sit-out rule?

INTERPRETATION: Yes. The acceptance of a loss in a forfeiture situation is equated to playing a game to its completion.

 SITUTATION: A coach, who works with both the seventh grade and the eighth grade team, is ejected from the eighth grade game on Saturday afternoon. What are the conditions for his "sit-out" game?

INTERPRETATION: The coach must sit out the next game at the level at which he was ejected and any games in between. In this case, the coach could not coach at the 7th grade game on Saturday nor at the next scheduled 8th grade game.

2.90 – REGULATIONS OF COMPETITIONS

 SITUATION: The Lightning Detector indicates a dangerous situation 2 minutes into the beginning of the game. Do you call the game?

INTERPRETATION: No, You should remove participants to a safe location and wait thirty minutes before resuming play. The contest is terminated once you have a cumulative a one-hour delay.

BY-LAW 3.00 – REGION

3.10 REGION MANAGER

3.11 - The Executive Director shall annually appoint a manager for each region. Each region manager shall have the authority to:
(a) Assist the Vice President with the member school certification of the coaches and the students.
(b) Act as a liaison between the GMSAA and the Member Schools / Head Coaches.
(c) Enforce the GMSAA Constitution and By-Laws
(d) Oversee the operation of the region contests
(e) Certify the winners in all region tie-breakers to the GMSAA Executive Director.

3.12 - In case a Region Manager vacancy, the Executive Director shall divide the region among the other Region Managers until a new Region Manager is appointed.

BY-LAW 4.00 – STATE

4.10 – GMSAA ADMINISTRATIVE RESPONSIBILITIES TO MEMBER SCHOOLS

4.11 The GMSAA shall meet bi-annually to review By-Laws, policies and procedures of the Association, and to make additions, deletions, and modifications as necessary.
(a) The GMSAA meetings shall be conducted according to the latest edition of "Roberts Rules of Order" except:
(1) "Pass" votes are not considered "No" votes
(2) Any Voting member may request a roll-call vote on any question before the Board of Directors without the requirement of a majority vote.
(b) The GMSAA Executive Officers shall consider recommendations at its bi-annual meetings from member schools that are submitted in writing to the GMSAA at least thirty (30) days prior to the meeting.

4.12 The GMSAA shall provide an official receipt for all dues and fees received from any source, and shall provide for an annual audit of finances by a firm of auditors or a certified public accountant.

4.13 The GMSAA shall provide all necessary forms on the GMSAA web site

4.14 The GMSAA shall provide an annual calendar that notes:
(a) the beginning and end of the season for all activities
(b) dates for-State Playoff and All Star contests

4.15 The GMSAA shall use various forms of communication as follows:
(a) the primary form of communication between the GMSAA and member schools is via email
(b) the website will contact pertinent information, updates and important dates from the GMSAA

4.20 – BY-LAW INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK
(left available for future consideration)

4.30 – STATE ASSOCIATION CONTEST/EVENT RESPONSIBILITIES

4.31 The Executive Committee shall determine the location in which a **State Playoff** is to be held.

4.32 The Executive Committee shall determine the location **site for all State Championships.** Tournament sites will not be available to participating teams for practice prior to the tournaments.
(a) The GMSAA shall have full rights to the use of the GMSAA logo at these events, and shall have full and complete rights to the sale of championship merchandise at the venue. The GMSAA will also have the right to display signage of corporate partners and to restrict the use of goods in the competitive area that promote a competitor of GMSAA corporate partners.

4.33 The GMSAA shall provide team **trophies** for State Champions and Runners-Up
4.34 The GMSAA shall assign game **officials** for all State competitions, and the fees will be as shown in the chart in **Appendix C**.
(a) Football - crew of 6 officials

4.40 – STATE PASSES TO GMSAA EVENTS

4.41 The GMSAA shall issue **a pass or badge** for regular season and post-season events annually to:

(a) Coaches. The quantity of passes for the coaches is determined by the member's Athletic Sports Authority
(b) GMSAA officers

4.42 GMSAA passes are **non-transferrable** and may not be used by persons other than the individual to whom it was issued.
(a) The individual's name shall be typed on the pass
(b) Picture Identification is required for the user of the pass at all GMSAA post season events
(c) A pass that is used illegally is to be confiscated and the individual to whom the pass was issued forfeits the right to receive a pass in the future.

4.43 In the event a pass is **destroyed or lost**, the school administrator should notify the GMSAA in writing, and should include the payment of $25.00 with a school check to have the pass replaced.

4.44 When a school member who was issued a GMSAA pass leaves the position that entitles them to that pass, the pass should be voided and returned to the GMSAA.

4.45 The following high school and enforcement personnel are to be granted free admission to all GMSAA events with high school or official identification:
(1) Principal and Assistant Principal(s)
(2) Varsity Head Coach
(3) Athletic Director (s)
(4) School resource officers
(5) Other law enforcement personnel in uniform

Additionally, Principals and Assistant Principals for GMSAA member middle schools are to be granted free admission to all GMSAA events upon presentation of official identification.

4.50 - CERTIFICATION OF ATHLETIC OFFICIALS

4.51 The approved officials association shall require all its **members to be registered** with the GHSA, and to comply with all requirements of the GHSA Policies and Procedures Manual.
(a) The GMSAA expects every officials association to operate in a manner that does not discriminate on the basis of race, sex, color, disability, religion, national origin or age.

4.52 Contest officials and officials' associations are independent contractors and not employees of the GMSAA or its member schools.

4.53 All decisions of the Executive Director in regards to officials shall be subject to the **appellate procedures** as set forth in the GMSAA Constitution.

4.54 **Universal contest fees** shall be charged for all scheduled, regular-season interscholastic contests (including scrimmages). The universal fee schedule shall be as shown in the chart in **Appendix F**. Schools and officiating associations may not reduce or increase game fees from those listed in this section. Penalties may be imposed for those violating this rule.

4.60 – BY-LAW INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK
(left available for future consideration)

4.70 – OPEN MEETING / OPEN RECORDS POLICY

4.71 The GMSAA shall comply with the requirements of Article 4 of Chapter 18 of Title 50, relating to the inspection of public records, and Chapter 14 of Title 50, relating to open and public meetings, to the extent that such records and meetings relate to the association's activities with respect to public middle school and high schools; provided, however, that such association shall not be required to comply with such statutes or to conduct open and public meetings or provide inspection of records where the sole subject of such meeting or record pertains to the academic records or performance of an individual student or the eligibility of an individual student to participate or to continue to participate in sponsored events or contests based on academics; provided. however, where a meeting or record of such association is devoted in part to matters excepted in the preceding proviso, any portion of the meeting or record not subject to such exception shall be open to the public.

4.80 – BY-LAW INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK
(left available for future consideration)

4.90 – POLICY ON PENALTIES

4.91 In accordance with the GMSAA Constitution, the Executive Director is empowered to make a determination as to whether a violation of GMSAA rules has occurred, and to assess the appropriate penalty which may include a fine and/or probation. A non-exhaustive list of violations and fines is published in **Appendix P** of the Constitution & By-Laws.

INTERPRETATIONS, 4.00 SECTION

 SITUATION: A school that is hosting a GMSAA event wants free admission for all people who normally are given free admission at any high school season event. Is this permissible?

RULING: Yes, each school program can set the level of permissible free admission types. The school program must allow the GMSAA pass holders.

ATHLETIC AUTHORITY

(NOTE: State Playoff Brackets in Appendix B at the end of this publication)

FOOTBALL

GMSAA FOOTBALL CALENDAR

Sunday, March 8, 2015 ----------2015 Opening / Membership Meeting

Sunday, March 15, 2015 ---------- Game Schedule Conflicts

Wednesday, April 15, 2015 ---------- GMSAA Annual Fee Due

Monday, April 20, 2015 ---------- GMSAA Spring Meeting

Monday, June 15, 2015 ---------- GMSAA Summer Meeting

Saturday, July 11, 2015 ---------- GMSAA East Clinic

Saturday, July 18, 2015 ---------- GMSAA West Clinic

Sunday, July 26, 2015 ---------- Fall Practice – First Day

Friday, August 28, 2015 ---------- Official Fees Payment – Full Balance Due

Saturday, August 15, 2015 ---------- Kickoff Classic Event

Sunday, August 23, 2015 ---------- Member School's Team Certification

Saturday, August 29, 2015 ---------- Regular Season – First Game Day

Wednesday, September 9, 2015 ---------- Final Team Certification

Saturday, October 24, 2015 ---------- Regular Season – Final Game Day

Sunday, October 25, 2015 ---------- GMSAA Fall Meeting

Saturday, October 31, 2015 ---------- State Playoff – First Round

Saturday, November 14, 2015 ---------- 5A State Championship – All Star Games

Saturday, November 21, 2015 ---------- 6A State Championship – All-Star Games

TEAM COMPOSITION

Grade Level Limitations: A student may participate on a team representing a higher interscholastic grade level other than that in which the student is legally enrolled. The student must receive the approval of the member school's Athletic Authority and the student's parent(s), custodial parent, legal guardian or court-appointed foster parent(s). No student may participate on a member team representing a lower interscholastic grade than the enrolled scholastic grade level for the student. The student shall not move interscholastic grade levels within the same member school once the student is certified eligible for a particular team.

Participating Grade Levels: Only students with scholastic enrollment in the sixth, seventh and eighth grade are eligible for interscholastic participation. The student's age shall abide by the By-Laws 1.30. Member school may submit a special exemption request to the Executive Director for approval of a fifth grade student to participate with the sixth grade team.

Team Requirement: Member schools who are members of the GMSAA shall field a sixth grade, seventh grade and eighth grade team.

GMSAA MEMBER SCHOOL DUES – FOOTBALL

Association Dues for the 2015 school year for each member school = $525.00 per team
The member school shall abide by the By-Law 2.13

DUTIES OF COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN

The Executive Director shall appoint the following Committee Chairman. The Chairman shall represent the at-large members of the State Executive Committee. These are non-voting positions for the purpose of fulfilling duties of the Georgia Middle School Athletic Association and the Athletic Sports Authority.

The Chairman shall successfully operate under the Athletic Authority with direct involvement within the football organization. The Chairman shall oversee the committee meetings and operate within the guidelines of the Executive Director, the Executive Officers and under the GMSAA Constitution and By-Laws.

The duties of the Chairman positions are as follows:

Fundraising Chairman shall in cooperation with the Treasurer, coordinate all fund raising events, programs and activities including sponsorships, the selling of program advertisements, vendor contributions, and additional fund raising ventures. The Fundraising Chairman shall submit to the Executive Officers for approval, all fund raising proposals with supporting data; consisting of sales goals, associated costs, logistic facts, and/or donation requests.

The Fundraising Chairman shall submit an annual sponsorship program to the Executive Committee. The annual sponsorship program shall include sponsorship pricing, benefits to prospective sponsors, and the cost of such benefits. The Fundraising Chairman shall receive all sponsorship, advertising and other fundraising monies. The Fundraising Chairman shall transfer all monies immediately to the Treasurer for deposit into the separate GMSAA Foundation bank account. The Fundraising Chairman shall maintain accurate records and transfer all itemized receipts along with the financial records to the Treasurer.

The Fundraising Chairman may appoint, subject to the Executive Officers approval, assistants or sub committees to help coordinate a fund raising event, program and/or activity. The Fundraising Chairman shall coordinate the ordering and distribution of the sponsorship banners, awards and plaques.

Kickoff Classic Chairman shall in cooperation with the Fundraising Chairman and the Treasurer, coordinate the annual fundraising benefit, the "Kickoff Classic". The purpose of this annual fundraising benefit is to support the GMSAA Foundation.

The Kickoff Classic Chairman shall in cooperation with the Executive Officers, coordinate the selection of the Kickoff Classic Committee. The Kickoff Classic Chairman shall hold a meeting with the Kickoff Classic Committee to arrange the annual

benefit. The Kickoff Classic Committee shall select the host member school(s), select the game format and the event schedule. The Kickoff Classic Committee shall find additional sponsors and vendors for the event.

The Kickoff Classic Chairman shall submit to the Executive Officers for approval the sales goals, associated costs and logistic facts. The Kickoff Classic Chairman shall submit the annual fundraising benefit, the "Kickoff Classic" to the Executive Committee.

State Championship Chairman shall distribute information regarding the State Championship hosting site requirements. The State Championship Chairman shall, in cooperation with the Executive Officers, coordinate the selection of the State Championship Committee. The State Championship Chairman shall in cooperation with the State Championship Committee submit the quantity, style and associated cost of the plaques and/or trophies for the State Championship Teams and the State Runner-up Teams. The State Championship Committee shall select the host location. The State Championship Chairman shall submit to the Executive Officers for approval the host location, associated costs and logistic facts. The State Championship Chairman shall submit the State Championship location to the Executive Committee.

The State Championship Chairman shall work directly with the host member school to coordinate the State Championship and All-Star Games. The State Championship Chairman shall submit the GMSAA hospitality guest list to the host member school. The State Championship Chairman shall work with the host member school to select locations for sponsor banners, corporate signage and the award presentation. The State Championship Chairman shall maintain an inventory of unused plaques and/or trophies from the previous season.

East and West Clinic Chairman shall select the host school locations. The chosen school locations shall host the GMSAA Coach Education Program. This program will take place annually before the start of the football season.

The East Clinic Chairman will help coordinate the eastern location with the referee association and the Executive Director. The East Clinic Chairman will prepare the meeting space with appropriate seating, audio and video equipment along with the preparation of printed materials.

The West Clinic Chairman will help coordinate the western location with the referee association and the Executive Director. The West Clinic Chairman will prepare the meeting space with appropriate seating, audio and video equipment along with the preparation of printed materials.

Schedule Chairman shall in cooperation with the Executive Officers, coordinate the selection of the Reclassification Committee and the selection of the Schedule Committee.

The Reclassification Committee shall come together for the classification of the member schools. The Schedule Chairman in cooperation with the Reclassification Committee will hold a meeting and separate the member schools into regions, based on the geographic proximity and the GHSA regions, respectively. The Schedule Chairman shall submit the region reclassification to the Executive Officers. Upon approval from the Executive Officers, the Schedule Director shall submit the approved region reclassification to the Executive Officers.

The Schedule Chairman, in cooperation with the Schedule Committee, shall request the schedule conflicts from each member school along with the request for home game times. The Schedule Chairman shall hold a meeting with the Schedule Committee to arrange the game schedule. The Schedule Chairman shall maintain an eight game schedule for each team. The Schedule Chairman shall submit the game schedule to the Executive Officers. Upon approval from the Executive Officers, the Schedule Chairman shall submit the approved game schedule to the Executive Committee.

East and West All Star Chairman shall distribute information to each member school concerning the requirements for the sixth, seventh and eighth grade All-Star Teams.

Each All Star Chairman will recruit a head coach from a member school and help the head coach organize his coaching staff for each all star team. Each All Star Chairman will submit the practice location and the practice schedule for each team. Each All Star Chairman shall inventory the remaining all star jerseys and, in cooperation with the Vice President, submit the necessary quantity, and associated cost of ordering new All-Star jerseys.

FOOTBALL REGIONS

The Schedule Chairman and the Reclassification Committee must follow the GMSAA Constitution, Section 2 Classifications of Schools and Section 3, Structure of Regions.

If necessary, the Reclassification Committee shall realign the member school regions every year.

STRUCTURE OF GAME SCHEDULE

The Schedule Chairman in cooperation with the Schedule Committee shall request the schedule conflicts from each member school along with the request for home game times. The member schools will verify schedule conflicts and request the home game times from the varsity head coach, high school athletic director or principal. The deadline of the 15th of March is the final day to make your submission.

The Schedule Committee must spell out any bye week, any schedule conflicts and the request for home game times. When the Reclassification Committee has submitted the same region alignment for the second year, the game schedule will remain the same with a rotation of the home and away games from the previous season.

Upon approval from the Executive Officers, the Schedule Chairman shall submit the approved game schedule to the Executive Committee. The game schedule shall be ratified by a simple majority vote of the Executive Committee.

FOOTBALL BADGES

The GMSAA shall issue badges for the regular football season and post-football season:

(1) No more than ten (10) certified GMSAA coaches per team

(2) No more than three (3) team volunteers

The member schools must follow in accordance with By-Law 4.40 State Passes to GMSAA Events.

Each cheerleading team and the two adult instructors should receive free admission. All cheerleaders must be in uniform.

FOOTBALL PRACTICE

Football practice may begin Sunday, July 26, 2015.

1. In the first week of practice for any student, the practice may not last longer than two (2) hours, and the student may wear no other protective football equipment except helmet and mouthpieces. NOTE:
   (a) The time for a session shall be measured from the time the players report to the practice or workout area until they leave that area.
2. During acclimatization practices, the student must practice in helmet only for a minimum of three (3) days in the first week.
3. Beginning August 1st, any student may practice in full pads and practice may not last longer than two (2) hours in full pads:
   (a) A student must have participated in three (3) conditioning practices wearing no other protective football equipment except helmet and mouthpieces before being allowed to practice in full pads.
   (b) These procedures are derived from recommendations by the GHSA By-Laws and created by the Inter-Association Task Force for Preseason Secondary School Athletics Participants in the paper "Preseason Heat-Acclimatization Guidelines for Secondary School Athletes."
4. All practice sessions, including spring practice, pre-season, and during the regular season, shall be limited to two (2) hours per day.
5. A control scrimmage, game or jamboree scrimmage shall count as one (1) day of a two (2) hour practice.
6. Full contact should be limited during games and practices as well as during activity outside of the traditional fall practice. (Note: No limitation is placed on activities defined below as "AIR, BAGS or CONTROL" contact.
   (a) For purposes of this by-law, the following definitions shall apply:
      (1) AIR - Players run a drill unopposed without contact;
      (2) BAGS - Players run a drill against a bag or another soft-contact surface;
      (3) CONTROL - Players run a drill at assigned speed until the moment of contact and one player is pre-determined the "winner" by the coach. Contact remains above the waist and players stay on their feet;

(4) THUD – Players run a drill at competitive speed through the moment of contact with no pre-determined "winner." Contact remains above the waist, players stay on their feet and a quick whistle ends the drill;
(5) LIVE ACTION - Players run a drill in game-like conditions and is the only time that players are taken to the ground;
(6) FULL CONTACT - Contact which meets the definition of Live Action or Thud.

(b) Pre-Season Practice:
1) Full contact shall be allowed in no more than 2 consecutive practice days per week;
2) Full contact during practice shall be limited to not more than 45 minutes per day;
3) Full contact during practice shall be limited to not more than 135 minutes per week; and
4) During any twice-daily practice, only one session per day shall include full contact.

(c) Regular & Post Season Practice:
1) Full contact during practice shall be allowed in no more than three (3) practice days per week;
2) Full contact during practice shall not be allowed on more than two (2) consecutive days;
3) Full contact during practice shall be limited to not more than 30 minutes per day;
4) Full contact during practice shall be limited to not more than 90 minutes per week.

(d) Written Practice Plans: A written practice plan in compliance with this by-law shall be prepared in advance by the head coach prior to the start of the pre-season practice. Such practice plans shall be made available to the GMSAA Region Manager by Sunday, July 27, 2015.

(e) Violations: The penalty to be imposed upon any member school found to have violated this by-law in any substantial manner shall be as follows:
1) First Offense: A fine of not less than $100 nor more than $1000 per violation at the discretion of the Executive Director.
2) Second Offense: The school shall be placed on probation and shall not be eligible to participate in post season play.

4. From the end of school in the spring until the first day of preseason practice, players may wear no other protective football equipment except helmets and mouthpieces for all voluntary workouts and passing league games. Institutional heat policies are also in effect for voluntary workouts supervised by school personnel.

5. All applications for team summer camps at member schools or other facilities must be submitted to the GMSAA Executive Director and all subsequent correspondence must be completed by May 15. Coaches for these players must verify that the participants have had acclimatization practices for five weekdays immediately preceding the camp.

6. Equipment allowed in summer (contact) camps is limited to helmets, shoulder pads and mouthpieces. Compression-style shorts that have thigh pads and/or girdle pads are NOT allowed.

The member schools must follow in accordance with By-Law 1.40 Limits of Participation and in accordance with By-Law 2.60 Interscholastic Contests and Practices

Spring Football Practice for each school year may be held for a maximum of three (3) consecutive weeks-from February 1 until the end of the school year, with a maximum of two (2) hours for each day of practice and shall be limited to five (5) per week. A control scrimmage, game or jamboree scrimmage shall count as one day of the two (2) hour practice time. At school workouts from the end of school in the spring until the first day of practice in the fall, players may wear no other protective football equipment except helmets and mouthpieces for all voluntary workouts and passing league game.
NOTE: Any modification of this equipment rule in summer camps requires the approval of the Executive Director

JV FOOTBALL

JV Football is an optional game format for each sixth grade, seventh grade and eight grade football team from within the GMSAA member schools. JV Football is not a state championship sport. The JV Football format is designed to help with the continuing development of certified athletes within a member school team that is participating with a large number of athletes. The spirit of JV Football will offer a live game format for certified athletes who do not fully participate during a Saturday GMSAA regular season game.

1. A student athlete participating in JV Football games must meet the GMSAA By-Laws 1.00 Student section for student and team certification.
2. The number of JV football games allowed is a maximum of six (6) games within the GMSAA member schools.

3. All member schools must submit an email by August 1, notifying the GMSAA JV Chairperson of your participation in the JV Football format. In addition, participating member schools must submit the participating grade level(s).
4. Only one football game may be played per week by the same JV team. Games will take place on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday evening with the preferred game time kickoff at 7:00 pm.
5. All games will be played with 8-minute quarters with no overtime permitted.
6. Football players playing on both the varsity and one sub-varsity team are limited to six quarters of competition in any seven (7) day period beginning with the varsity game. The penalty for violation of this rule will be forfeiture of the varsity game in which the violation occurred and a $1,000.00 fine.
7. No jersey number rule shall be in effect during the JV game. Each athlete should remain in the same jersey number that they wear on Saturday game day.
8. All football games shall be played with a minimum of four (4) officially-dressed field officials who are registered under the GHSA plan for registering officials. The officiating crew also shall have an electric clock operator whose <u>only</u> duty is to operate the game clock.
9. Additional official fees apply for participation. Each team participating in the JV Football program shall be responsible to pay for the official fees at 50% of the games played regardless of the location of each game. The GMSAA shall pay for one official to run the clock.
10. No admission fees allowed for JV games. Host location is allowed to open concession stand.
11. Each member school with a participating JV team must submit to the GMSAA JV Committee Chairperson the name and contact information of their JV Coordinator. This person shall be the main point of contact in an effort to maintain communication between the GMSAA and each JV team.
12. Each member school must submit by email the member school and grade participating to the GMSAA JV Committee Chairperson by August 1.
13. Chain crew shall remain on the home side of the football stadium.
14. JV Game Cancellation must be made by noon on Sunday prior to the game. If the cancellation occurs after Sunday, the official fees shall be charged to the member school. Only exception shall be made for inclement weather.

REGULAR SEASON

A. Football is a state championship sport and schools are aligned on a region basis.
   1. Each school must file its football schedule conflicts with the Schedule Chairman no later than March 15, of each year.

B. All GMSAA football games must be played according to the rules as published by the National Federation of State High School Associations, and any other rules found in this section.

C. The number of football games allowed (excluding state playoffs) is a maximum of nine (9) games.
   1. Only one football game may be played per week by the same team except in the case of the GMSAA Tie-Breaker Playoff or make-up games due to special circumstances that have been approved by the Executive Director.
   2. The football season ends for a team or individual when that team, having completed its regular-season schedule, is eliminated from playoff competition or wins the State Championship.
   3. All games will be played with 10-minute quarters.
   4. Football players playing on both the varsity and one sub-varsity team are limited to six quarters of competition in any seven (7) day period beginning with the varsity game. The penalty for violation of this rule will be forfeiture of the game in which the violation occurred and a $1,000.00 fine.
   5. The football season ends for a team or individual when that team, having completed its regular-season schedule, is eliminated from playoff competition or wins the State Championship.
   6. All JV games will be played with 8-minute quarters.

D. All football games shall be played with a minimum of four (4) officially-dressed field officials who are registered under the GHSA plan for registering officials. The officiating crew also shall have an electric clock operator whose <u>only</u> duty is to operate the game clock.
   1. In all games, the host school must provide some type of dressing facilities for officials at or near the game site
   2. The host school is responsible for providing a crew to work the sideline chains. These individuals must be the responsible age of 15 years or older.

3. In accordance with By-Law 2.71-c, the host school is responsible for providing security escorts for the officials at all regular season and playoff games.

E. The following regulations are in place for GMSAA football games.

1. All GMSAA-football games will have a halftime period of ten (10) minutes.
2. Artificial noisemakers, except air horns and whistles, are legal at football games. Illegal noisemakers are to be confiscated when visible and/or used.
3. Bands are not to play during live-ball situations.

NOTE: This includes the situation in which there is no timeout and the teams are in a huddle.

(a) If, during a football game, a team claims interference with communications due to band noise, the Referee shall give a warning to one or both head coaches and the bands must cease playing.

(b) If there is a second offense by the same school's band, an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty will be imposed against that school's team.

4. During the state playoff series, a crew of five (5) on field officials will be used. The officiating crew also shall have an electric clock operator whose <u>only</u> duty is to operate the game clock.
5. Fans shall not be allowed to enter the playing field either before the game or at halftime to form a tunnel for players to run through.

F. The following regulations are in place for called games or loss of game field.

1. In case of a game being called in the first half (suspended game), By-Law 2.93-b must be followed.
   NOTE: Football games played between schools from the same classification must be played to completion. Any interrupted game must be replayed from the point of interruption. The school that is behind in the score may choose not to continue the game. NOTE: Teams will not be allowed to play two football games in the same week, except when making up a suspended game with the permission of the Executive Director.
2. In case a school is told of a loss of the game field, the school may elect to find an alternate field. The field must meet GHSA/NFHS guidelines for an official playing field. If a field that meets the aforementioned guidelines cannot be found, the home team must offer the game to the visiting team. If the visiting team cannot host, the GMSAA will reschedule the game at the earliest possible date.

G. The GMSAA teams will have a fifteen (15) minute pregame warm up on the football field before each game. During warm ups before the game and at halftime there shall be a division of the field, and neither team shall enter the other team's portion of the field. That division shall be as follows:

1. Before the game: each team shall occupy the space from their own 45-yard line to the end line of their goal line. Neither team shall occupy the area between the 45-yard lines.
   EXCEPTION: When kicking, each team shall have the area between the opponent's 45-yard line and kicking team's end zone in the side zone area on the same side of the field as their bench. Kickers shall kick toward their end zone.
2. Re-entering the field before the game and at halftime: each team shall have the portion of the field between their bench and the near edge of each goal post - i.e., field divided lengthwise.

H. The GMSAA Overtime Procedure will be used whenever **two schools are tied** at the end of regulation play.

1. This procedure involves giving both teams opportunities to score from the 15-yard line until the tie is broken.
2. Overtime games are exempt from the 11:30 p.m. GMSAA curfew.

I. MERCY RULE: The mercy rule shall go into effect at any time in the game when the score reaches a 30 point margin. The head coach on either team shall not have a choice to revoke the mercy rule. Quarters will remain at ten (10) minutes.

1. If the in the first half and the point differential goes below 30 points, the mercy rule will remain in effect with the running clock using "TIPS". The third quarter will start with the game clock operation with the running clock using TIPS. In the fourth quarter, the game clock will not stop for TIPS. The head coach on either team shall not have a choice to revoke this rule.
2. A running clock means the clock will be stopped only by "TIPS" in the first, second and third quarter:
   (a) T = timeout – during charged timeouts or official's timeouts
   (b) I = injury – during an on field injury
   (b) P = penalty – during deliberations for penalty administration.
   (c) S = score – after a touchdown and until the ball is kicked off.

3. The fourth quarter will go to a TIP-less running clock. No choice from either head coach. A game that is reduced in time by use of a running clock shall constitute a "completed" game to meet other by-law considerations.

GMSAA OVERTIME PROCEDURE

1. There will be a 3-minute intermission between the end of regulation play and the coin toss to start the overtime procedure.
2. The captains will meet for the coin toss, and the winner may choose one of the following:
   (a) Be on offense first
   (b) Be on defense first
   (c) Choose the end of the field on which to play
3. The ball is placed on the 15-yard line and the offense keeps the ball until:
   (a) The ball is turned over on downs NOTE: The team on offense can gain a first down.
   (b) The defense gains possession of the ball (ball is dead immediately)
   (c) The offense scores a touchdown or field goal
   (d) The offense misses a field goal
4. After the first offensive team completes its possession, the opposing team gets its opportunity from the 15-yard line.
5. If the game remains tied after each team has had an offensive possession, there will be a 2-minute intermission and the team that lost the first coin toss has the first option for the second possession.
6. For each additional overtime period (i.e., an offensive possession by each team) the original coin toss options are alternated.
7. Beginning with the third overtime period, a team must attempt a 2-point try after a touchdown.
8. Each team is allowed one timeout per overtime period. No timeouts may be carried over from regulation play.
9. Penalty enforcement is handled the same way in overtime as in regulation play.

GAME BALL

The game ball shall meet the general specifications as found in the NFHS Football Rule 1-3 section 3 Game Equipment on page 14, 15 and the Ball Specifications on page 15, table 1-3-1 for 8th grade and below.

Sixth Grade: The official size game ball should be a “Junior” or “Youth” size (i.e. Wilson TDJ or TDY Traditional or Composite Football)
Seventh Grade: The official size game ball should be a “Junior” or “Youth” size (i.e. Wilson TDJ or TDY Traditional or Composite Football)
Eighth Grade: The official size game ball should be a “Youth” or “NFHS” size ball (i.e. Wilson TDY or NFHS Traditional or Composite Football)

JERSEY NUMBERS

The GMSAA uses the National Federation of High School Rules regarding the jersey numbering system and colors.

GAME SCORE REPORTING

The **winning team** shall be responsible for reporting the official game score for all regular season and playoff games to the GMSAA.

You have three (3) score reporting options: report your score via email gmsaafootball@yahoo.com *or* submit your score online at www.GMSAA.net (must use login/password) *or* submit your score to our voice message service (telephone number will be provided before the start of the football season).

Failure to report game score by 6:00 pm (EST) on the day following the game will result in the Executive Director issuing a fine for the offending head coach and the member school. The second offense will result in the forfeiture of the game by the winning team.

ON FIELD COMMUNICATIONS

Each team shall be responsible for providing their own communications during games if they desire to use field phones or other types of communications. The use or non-use by either team shall not affect what the other team may do. Use of computers shall not be used for coaching purposes during the game or between periods. NFHS Rule 1-6-1.

FOOTBALL ADMISSION RATES

The maximum allowable admission rate to be charged at regular season football games shall be $5.00 per adult and $3.00 per student.

Each member school has the right to set admission rates at their venue for regular season football games provided that those rates are not higher than the maximum allowable rates set by the GMSAA.

The maximum allowable admission rate for playoffs is in accordance with GMSAA By-Law 2.97.

PLAYOFF QUALIFICATION & TIE BREAK PROCEDURE

To qualify for state playoffs, the top four (4) representatives from each region will enter the post season playoffs. The first place region team shall represent a number one seed, the second place region team shall represent a number two seed, the third place region team shall represent a three seed and the fourth place region team shall represent the fourth seed.

The following tie-breaking procedures will be used:

(a) If the teams played during the regular season, the winner of the game will have the higher placement.
(b) If the tie cannot be broken with head-to-head competition, then the percentage of wins in all games with teams in the same classification will be considered with the higher percentage team having the higher placement.
    (1) Region games are added into this consideration.
    (2) Wins are divided by the total number of games.
(c) If the tie remains after both “a” and “b” has been considered and both teams have qualified for a playoff spot, the region will determine the placement of the teams that are tied.
(d) If the tie remains after both "a" and "b" has been considered and there is a playoff spot for only one team, the two teams that are tied will meet in a GMSAA Tie-Breaker Game.
    (1) The schools shall meet at a site selected by the Executive Director for a playoff on the Monday night after the end of the regular season.
    (2) The two teams will play a GMSAA Tie-breaker Mini-game, and the winning team will have the higher placement.

In case there is a tie between three or more teams and there are spots for all the teams in the playoffs, the drawing shall decide the seeding of the tied teams.

In case there is a tie between three or more teams and there are not spots in the playoff for all three teams, the following tie-breaking procedures will be used. NOTE: At any point in this process where a tie can be broken so that only two teams remain tied, consideration of head-to-head competition will be invoked. If the tie is completely broken for all teams involved at any step in the process, the tie-breaker process is completed. EXAMPLE: Teams A, B and C is tied for the 3rd and 4th playoff positions. No team has beaten the other two in head-to-head competition. When going to winning percentage against all teams in the classification, Team A is 75 %, Team B is 67% and Team C is 60%. The tie, therefore, has been broken and there is no need to go back to any head-to-head consideration. If Teams B and C had been tied with winning percentages of 67%, then head-to-head consideration would have been used to break that tie.

(a) If the teams that are tied have played during the regular season game and one team has defeated the others, the undefeated team has the highest placement.
(b) If one team has not beaten all other tied teams, the school with the highest percentage of wins against the tied teams will have the highest placement. If the percentages leave two or more teams still tied, then revert to head-to-head records.

(c) If the tie cannot be broken with head-to-head competition, then the percentage of wins in all games with teams in the same classification in Georgia (including region games) will be considered with the higher percentage team having the higher placement.

(d) If the tie remains after both steps "b" and "c" have been considered, the two teams that are tied will meet in a GMSAA Tie-breaker Mini-game.

GMSAA TIE-BREAKER MINI-GAME PROCEDURE

The schools shall meet at a site selected by the Executive Director for a playoff on the Monday night after the end of the regular season. The officials will be assigned by the GMSAA and the expense will be split between the tie-breaker mini game teams.

1. The games will consist of two five-minute halves. The play begins for the first half with a free kick, and standard game rules and scoring are used.
2. There will be a two-minute intermission between the two halves. Play begins for the second half with a free kick.
3. Each team will be given two (2) timeouts in the first five (5) minutes and one timeout in the second five (5) minutes. Unused timeouts in the first five minutes may be carried over to the second five minutes.
4. If the score is tied at the end of two overtime periods, the teams will go to the GHSA 15-yard overtime procedure.
5. A drawing will determine the order of play.
   a. When three teams are tied for one open spot, the team winning the toss gets a bye -and then plays the winning team of the first Tie-Breaker game.
      Example: Team "C" gets a bye
      Team "A" plays Team "B"
      Team "C" plays the winner of game 1
      Winner of game 2 qualifies for the playoffs
   b. When three teams are tied for two open spots, the following format will be used.
      Example: Team "C" gets a bye
      Team "A" plays Team "B" and the winner qualifies
      Team "C" plays the loser of game 1 and the winner qualifies
      If Team "C" wins game 2, the regular season winner between Team "C" and the winner of game 1 will have the higher placement
   c. When four teams are tied for one open spot, the pairings will be determined by draw and the following format will be used.
      Example: Team "A" plays Team "B" in game 1
      Team "C" plays Team "D" in game 2
      Winner of game 1 plays winner of game 2
      Winner of game 3 qualifies
   d. When four teams are tied for two open spots, the pairings will be determined by draws and the following format will be used.
      Example: Team "A" plays Team "B" in game 1 and the winner qualifies
      Team "C" plays Team "D" in game 2 and the winner qualifies
      The winner of the regular season game between the two winning teams will have the higher placement
6. When teams play a mini-game tiebreaker on a Monday, their first round playoff game will be scheduled for the following Saturday.

STATE PLAYOFFS

All rounds of games after the end of the regular season are considered part of the state playoff structure.

(a) In all rounds but the Finals, the higher seeded team will host.

(b) In all rounds except the Finals, game time will be set by higher seeded team. If an Athletic Authority Officer or member school representative does not attend the meeting at which the playoff game time is set, the Executive Director will finalize the game time.

In the Quarterfinal Round and Semifinal Round, if both teams have the same seeding, a coin toss will determine the host site.

STATE CHAMPIONSHIP AND ALL-STARS

The State Champion Chair will submit a site location for the State Championship and All-Star Games. The State Championship location will be ratified by a simple majority vote of the Executive Committee.

The 5A State Championship and All-Star Games will take place on Saturday, November 14, 2015 at the host site location of Sprayberry High School. The 6A State Championship and All-Star Games shall take place on Saturday, November 21, 2015 at the host site location of Lassiter High School.

HOST MEMBER SCHOOL RESPONSIBILITIES – STATE CHAMPIONSHIP

The member school shall host the Championship and All-Star Games for a two year term.

The host member school shall pay the following expenses:

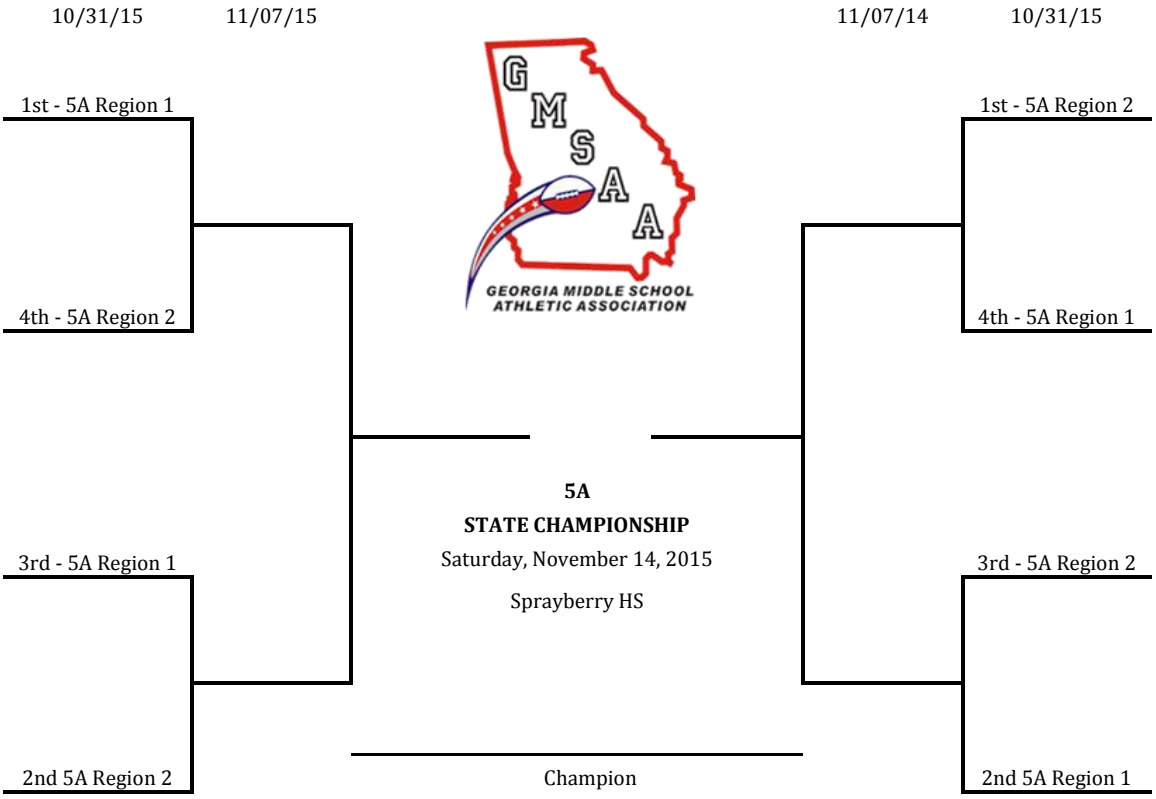
A. Host fees of $3000.00 will be made payable to the GMSAA.
B. The Official Fees for the Championship and All-Star Games shall be paid by the host member school.
C. The host member school shall provide final payment to the GMSAA no later than twenty eight (28) days following the event.

The host member school shall provide the following:

A. A private hospitality area for the GMSAA football coaches, GHSA varsity football coaches, AOFAA referees, GMSAA / host location sponsors and the invited GMSAA guests. The GMSAA will submit a list of the football coaches, referees, sponsors and invited guest s to the host member school. The GMSAA coach may accompany one guest into the private hospitality area

APPENDIX 'B'

5A
2015 State Championship Bracket



6A
2015 State Championship Bracket

1st - Region 1

3rd Seed
Region Team

4th Seed
Region Team

1st - Region 2

3rd Seed
Region Team

4th Seed
Region Team

vs

6A

STATE CHAMPIONSHIP

Saturday, November 21, 2015

Lassiter HS

2nd - Seed
Highest Rank
Region Team

2nd Seed
Region Team

4th Seed
Region Team

1st - Region 3

2nd Seed
Region Team

4th Seed
Region Team

Champion

APPENDIX 'C'

GMSAA EXECUTIVE OFFICERS 2015

GMSAA EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE & AT-LARGE MEMBERS

Executive Director	J. L. Brooks	404-557-3565	
Vice President	Fred Larson	678.231.7067	
Secretary	Matt Schoeb	678-758-1261	
Treasurer	Nick Kavadellas	678-428-2367	
6A Region 1 Manager	Fred Larson	678.231.7067	
6A Region 2 Manager	Martha Cobb	678-910-2064	
6A Region 3 Manager	Scott Collins	770-605-4623	
5A Region 1 Manager	Shawn Lee	404-295-3458	
5A Region 2 Manager	Flip Berry	770-365-2424	
5A Region 2 Manager	Mark Flanagan	678-592-1077	
Schedule / JV Program Manager	Alex Rahm		
Kickoff Classic	Thomas Hobbs		
All Stars - FBU Director	JL Brooks		
Webmaster	Jeff Stern		
AAFOA Booker	David Hudson		
	Email address available at	www.GMSAA.net	

GMSAA Inc
5454 Malone Ct
Powder Springs, GA 30127
FAX: 770-424-3016

APPENDIX 'F'

OFFICIALS FEE CHART

Football-Crew of five or six officials = $60.00 per official

SIXTH GRADE - One regular season home game with four on field officials and one in the box per game = $300.00 per game, $1200.00 for the four home game season for the sixth grade
SEVENTH & EIGHTH GRADE – One regular season home game with five on field officials and one in the box per game = $360.00 per game, $2880.00 for the four home game season for the seventh and eighth grade.

Four regular season home games for the sixth, seventh and eighth grade teams = $4080.00

The playoff games will have five on field officials and one in the box per game. The hosting school is responsible for the officials fees = $360.00 per game.

The GMSAA will directly pay the official association for regular season games and JV games. The member schools will pay the official fees directly to the GMSAA.

Request for officials during a preseason scrimmage game will receive an invoice directly from the AAFOA. Each host member school is responsible for payment directly to the AAFOA.
Each hosting school requesting officials is responsible for the official fees:
Regular season game = $60.00 per official.
Preseason scrimmage game = $60 per official.
JV game fee = $50 per official

APPENDIX 'P'

GMSAA FINES STRUCTURE FOR RULES VIOLATIONS

In accordance with Section 13 of Article IV of the Constitution of the GMSAA, member schools are required to abide by all the rules of the Georgia Middle School Athletic Association. The Executive Director is empowered to make a determination as to whether a violation of GMSAA rules has occurred, and to assess an appropriate penalty that may include:

1. a fine of not more than $500.00 per offense, and/or
2. probation in the sport(s) in which the violation occurred, and/or
3. suspension from the GMSAA for up to a full calendar year, and/or
4. forfeiture of games and/or contests.

Pursuant to such authority, the GMSAA, by and through its Executive Director and with the approval of the Executive Committee, such fines are in addition to the other penalties set forth above. The amount of such fines and the imposition of other penalties shall be determined by the Executive Director upon consideration of the facts and circumstances of the violation and shall include, but not be limited to, the following factors:

1. Whether the violation was the result of carelessness, willfulness, or ignorance.
2. The length of time the violation continued.
3. Whether the offense was self-reported or resulted from a complaint by another school, and the extent of cooperation by school officials in the investigation of the violation.
4. The number of violations involved.
5. The result of the violation (i.e.:
    a. injury to a person
    b. financial gain of the offending school or financial loss to another school and the amount thereof
    c. damage to the reputation of the GMSAA
    d. whether the violation substantially contributed to winning or losing a game or contest
6. Whether the school involved has had similar or other violations within the past three (3) years.
7. Any other factors deemed by the Executive Director to merit a more or less severe fine and/or penalty. The Executive Director shall have the authority to assess penalties that he deems appropriate. In addition, the Executive Director may issue a severe warning to a member school which places the school on notice that further violations of GMSAA rules will result in increased fines and/ or penalties.

APPENDIX 'R'

MEMBER SCHOOLS

3-AAAAAA

Campbell Spartans	Pebblebrook Falcons	South Cobb Eaghles

4-AAAAAA

Harrison Hoyas	Hillgrove Hawks	Kennesaw Mountain Mustangs	Marietta Blue Devils
McEachern Indians	North Cobb Warriors	Osborne Cardinals	North Paulding Wolfpack

5-AAAAAA

Cherokee Warriors	Etowah Eagles	Lassiter Trojans	Milton Eagles
Pope Greyhounds	Roswell Hornets	Walton Raiders	Wheeler Wildcats
Woodstock Wolverines			

6-AAAAAA

Alpharetta Raiders	Centennial Knights	Chattahoochee Cougars	Johns Creek Gladiators
Northview Titans			

5-AAAAA

Allatoona Buccaneers	East Paulding Raiders	Hiram Hornets	Paulding Patriots
South Paulding Spartans			

7-AAAAA

Cambridge Bears	Creekview Grizzlies	Kell Longhorns	North Springs Spartans
River Ridge Knights	Riverwood Raiders	Rome Wolves	Sequoyah Chiefs
Sprayberry Yellow Jackets			

2015 REGIONS

Class 6A		
Region 1	**Region 2**	**Region 3**
Harrison	Cherokee	Alpharetta
Hillgrove	Etowah	Campbell
Kennesaw Mountain	Lassiter	Centennial
Marietta	Pope	Chattahoochee
McEachern	Roswell	Johns Creek
North Cobb	Walton	Milton
North Paulding	Wheeler	Northview
South Cobb	Woodstock	Pebblebrook

Class 5A	
Region 1	**Region 2**
Allatoona	Cambridge
East Paulding	Creekview
Hiram	Kell
Osborne	North Springs
Paulding County	River Ridge
Rome	Riverwood
South Paulding	Sequoyah
	Sprayberry