

THE GEORGIA HIGH SCHOOL ASSOCIATION

“Serving the Student-Athletes of Our Member Schools”



CONTEST OFFICIALS HANDBOOK & ACCOUNTABILITY PROGRAM

GHSA MISSION STATEMENT

The Georgia High School Association promotes the total educational experience by encouraging participation in school sponsored interscholastic activities, while providing the leadership necessary to insure equitable opportunities for all student-athletes.

GHSA OFFICIALS CODE OF ETHICS

Officials shall possess thorough knowledge of the rules of the game and understand the spirit and intent in which the rules are written.

Officials shall display a high level of integrity by administering each contest in an impartial, ethical and fair manner without compromising the assigned duties of an official.

Officials shall display a spirit of cooperation with the decisions and directions implemented by the GHSA Office, and work with fellow officials in a spirit of harmony.

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

Officials shall present themselves both physically and mentally in a manner consistent with the high standards required in sports officiating.

Officials shall fulfill all the contractual obligations outlined when accepting officiating assignments.

Officials shall administer each contest in a manner consistent with maintaining a safe environment for competing student-athletes.

Officials shall continue to develop an acceptable level of competency through participation in the required training and educational programs sanctioned by the GHSA and their respective local association.

Officials shall uphold the By-laws, Constitution, and Policies and Procedures of the GHSA.

GHSA OFFICIALS STANDARDS OF CONDUCT

Officials shall not use his/her position as a GHSA Contest Official for private gain, exclusive to the payment of contest fees.

Officials are not allowed circumvent GHSA Policies & Procedures when making decision related to GHSA sanctioned events.

Officials shall not seek to influence a coach or administrator for the purpose of promoting personal officiating opportunities.

Officials shall not accept assignment to a school where he/she is currently employed, has relatives enrolled or employed at, or has attended in the previous 10 years.

Officials shall not publicly criticize fellow officials, coaches, administrators, or players.

Officials shall not engage in criminal, dishonest, disgraceful, or immoral conduct that jeopardizes the integrity of officiating or the GHSA.

Officials shall not engage in any behavior that can be considered sexual harassment by a reasonable person.

Officials shall not consume/ingest any substance prior to the assigned contest that may impair his/her physical or mental abilities.

In the event of violations of the GHSA Code of Ethics and/or Standards of Conduct, the Executive Director has the authority to invoke penalties involving fines, probation, and/or suspension. Individuals receiving penalties from the GHSA Office have the right to appeal their case before the Officials Advisory Committee.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. I would like to become a high school game/contest official in Georgia. What steps do I need to take?

Answer: All registrations for the renewal of, or new, officials is done through local associations. That information can be obtained in two ways:

- a. Go to the GHSA Website @ ghsa.net to obtain contact information for local associations.
- b. Call the GHSA Office and ask for Pam Thompson, Officials' Registrar @ 706-647-7473 Ext. 30

2. I am moving to Georgia from another state in which I am registered. How do I transfer my registration and years of service information?

Answer: Call your former state association and ask them to transfer your officiating records (years of service, classification status, previous year test scores, and rules clinic attendance records) to the GHSA Office.

- a. Fax information to the GHSA Office @ 706-647-2638

3. Do my years of service and my rating from another state carryover when I register in Georgia?

Answer: When the GHSA Office receives your records, an assessment of your officiating history will be made and a classification status will be assigned.

4. Is completion of the annual rules clinic mandatory?

Answer: Yes, each year in the sport you are registered to be eligible for varsity level assignments and post-season consideration.

5. Is it mandatory to take the annual rules exam?

Answer: Yes, each year in the sport you are registered to be eligible for varsity level assignments, and each sport has a specific minimum score to be considered for post-season assignment.

6. If I have taken the rules exam and attended the rules clinic in another state, do I receive credit when I transfer to Georgia?

Answer: Yes, if you have taken the NFHS Exams and your previous state association forwards your scores to the GHSA Office.

7. I have some concerns about my schedule, promotion, and level of games assigned. Should I call the GHSA Office to resolve these issues?

Answer: No, GHSA game/contest officials are "independent contractors" and matters of this nature should be resolved at the local association level. If the issues cannot be resolved in that manner, then the GHSA Office may become involved in settling the matter.

GHSA POLICIES & PROCEDURES FOR CONTEST OFFICIALS

OFFICIALS ASSOCIATIONS

Officials' associations are voluntary associations of "independent contractors", who are allowed to officiate GHSA competition. Officials' associations are established, and approved as needs are determined, by the GHSA Executive Director. The Executive Director, at his/her discretion, approves additional associations or removes their GHSA charter.

1. Associations and their membership shall adhere to the rules and authority of the GHSA, as specified in the GHSA By-Laws.
2. Associations shall require their membership to register with the GHSA Office and comply with all requirements of the GHSA Policies and Procedures guidelines for contest officials.
3. Associations are required to comply with all reporting procedures and deadlines.

REGISTRATION

Officials are to register with (1) local association, and each local association will register its membership with the GHSA Registrar.

1. Individuals are not permitted to register with more than (1) local association in the same sport, during a current school calendar year.
2. Officials are not allowed to officiate contests until his/her registration is completed and submitted to the GHSA Office. Associations that allow non-registered officials to work GHSA sanctioned contests are subject to penalties and fines.
3. Non-registered officials are not covered under the GHSA Officials' Insurance Policy.
4. Registration with the GHSA Office entitles individuals to; GHSA insurance coverage, NFHS rules publications, GHSA insignias, and additional training material produced by the GHSA Office.
5. Officials who are inactive (not registered) for a period of (3) consecutive years will be move to a lower classification rating until GHSA requirements are met at that level for (1) year.

REGISTRATION FEES

A registration fee is charged for each sport in which an individual registers. The registration fee covers the expense for NFHS publications, GHSA training materials, GHSA evaluation programs, and insurance coverage package.

1. The registration fee is established each year, and is to be collected by the local association.
2. The local association is to remit (1) payment for the registration fees of the entire association.
3. The GHSA will NOT accept registration fees from individual contest officials.
4. The Executive Director has the authority to periodically implement fee increases.
5. Registration fees are non-refundable and non-transferable between associations, once they have been processed by the GHSA Office.

YEARS OF SERVICE

To receive credit for years of service, and to qualify for a GHSA Service Plaque, an official merely must;

1. Register with a local association
2. Work GHSA sanctioned contest for the local association
3. GHSA Service Plaques are issued after (15) years, and every (5) year increment after that

The GHSA Service Plaque is given by the GHSA as gratitude for service to GHSA member schools and student/athletes.

TRANSFER OFFICIALS

When an official transfers to Georgia and wishes to officiate in the GHSA, he/she must contact their previous state(s) to have their officiating service records forwarded to the GHSA Office. Upon receipt of said records a determination will be made on the official's status. Until said records are received, the official will retain a status of "registered".

EXAMINATIONS

1. Officials are required to take the required exam(s) each year to qualify for "varsity" level assignments, and must score a minimum of (85) to qualify for post-season consideration.
2. Football, wrestling, and baseball officials are required to take both the Part I (open book) and the Part II (closed book) exams. Football officials are also required to take the Mechanics Exam (open book) each year.
3. All other sports have a single rules exam.
4. Part II exams will be conducted by a GHSA assigned monitor.
5. Association secretaries are required to submit the exam answer sheets (Part I & Mechanics) to the GHSA Office by an established deadline. The GHSA Office will NOT accept answer sheets from individual officials. Upon completion of the grading of all exams the answer sheets will be returned to their respective associations.

ANNUAL RULES CLINICS

The GHSA Office requires ALL officials to complete the annual GHSA/NFHS Rules Clinic(s) for each respective sport officiated. Verification of completion will be distributed to each local association following the published deadline.

INSIGNIAS/PATCHES

Beginning in the 2008-09 school year the official GHSA logo patch will be worn by ALL officials on the left arm of the respective officiating shirt/top. The GHSA patch will be ordered by each local association through the GHSA Office and then distributed by each association to their membership. "Certified" patches are available for individuals who achieve the criteria designated for the "Certified" level and if worn are to be placed above the GHSA logo patch on the left arm. No other insignias/patches will be allowed on GHSA officiating uniforms, unless approved by the designated GHSA sport coordinator. American flag insignias are permitted on the back of the officiating shirt just below the neckline.

GAME REPORT POLICY

All game incident reports MUST be submitted electronically to the GHSA Office within (48) hours of the incident date. To set up an electronic reporting program, contact Jim Bullington (GHSA I.T. Coordinator) at jbullington@ghsa.net The following is the policy for submitting game incident reports to the GHSA Office:

1. **EJECTIONS** – Require the name of the individual, uniform number if a player, respective school, specific violation, rule book reference, and a brief and professional summary of the action. Game reports resulting in an ejection MUST be submitted within (24) hours of the incident date.
2. **SPORTSMANSHIP** – Submit a brief and professional summary of any "sportsmanship" issue involving players, coaches, and/or spectators prior to, during, or after the game/contest.
3. **GAME MANAGEMENT** – Submit any incident related to failure of the host school to provide a Game Manager, adequate security personnel, secure and private officials' dressing area, or problem issues with playing venue.
4. **INJURY REPORTS** – Submit a report on any "major" injury that requires a player(s) to be taken to an emergency medical facility.

GHSA Fax: 706-647-2638

CLASSIFICATION RATING SYSTEM

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

REGISTERED

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

APPROVED

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

CERTIFIED

1. Meet the requirements for a registered official for 2 years and for an approved official for 2 years.
2. Make a score of at least 85 on the Part II rules examination (and the mechanics exam for football).
3. Complete the GHSA rules clinics each year.
4. Officiate the minimum number of contests in that sport.

GAMES WORKED CREDIT

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

(A) Approved and Certified officials may earn one-half the required number of contests working JV games [i.e., 2 JV games = 1 Varsity game].

(B) Registered officials may earn all their credit working sub-varsity games

(C) The minimum number of varsity games/meets required in each sport is:

Baseball	[8]	Football	[5]	Soccer	[5]	Swimming	[5]	Wrestling	[5]
Basketball	[10]	Gymnastics	[5]	Softball	[8]	Volleyball	[8]		

UNIFORM POLICY

Officials are required to adhere to the uniform policy of the respective sport/contest in which they are involved. Officials should always dress in an appropriate manner to and from each game assignment. Officials are expected to adhere to acceptable grooming standards and are not allowed to use tobacco of any fashion upon arrival to the game site, during the game/contest, and until they are away from the venue.

BASKETBALL

1. Shirt – Standard black/white, collarless, short sleeve shirt with vertical stripes. The GHSA logo is mandatory.
2. Trousers – Pleated or non-pleated solid black trousers
3. Shoes – Black shoes with black laces. Black shoes with manufacturers logo are permitted
4. Socks – Solid black
5. Belt – Solid black if trousers require a belt. (Preferably no belts)
6. Jacket – Solid black (Black CCA jacket preferred)

BASEBALL

1. Shirt – Navy blue or powder blue pullover. The GHSA logo is mandatory.
2. Trousers – Pleated or non-pleated heather gray trousers
3. Shoes – Solid black with black laces
4. Socks – Black or navy blue
5. Belt – Solid black
6. Jacket – Black or navy blue
7. Sweater – V-neck black or navy blue
8. Cap – Navy blue (caps are mandatory by all crew members)
9. Undershirt – Navy blue if worn
10. Ball Bag – Navy Blue

CHEERLEADING

1. No specific uniform required, but judges are expected to be attired in a professional manner.

FOOTBALL

1. Shirt – Black/white, collared, vertically striped with long or short sleeves. The GHSA logo is mandatory.
2. Trousers – Standard solid white knickers with no more than a 4' overlap below the knee
3. Shoes – Solid black with black laces
4. Socks – Standard one-piece black/white stockings
5. Belt – Solid black
6. Jacket – Standard black/white vertically striped jacket
7. Cap – Referee - solid white cap. All other officials – black with white piping
8. Equipment – Standard equipment package should include whistle, penalty marker (15' X 15" gold flag), game card, pencil, rubber bands, down marker, white bean bag, and 1st down clipping device

GYMNASTICS

1. No specific uniform required, but judges are expected to be attired in a professional manner.

SWIMMING/DIVING

1. Shirt – Solid white long or short sleeve
2. Trousers – Solid white
3. Shoes – Solid white
4. Socks – Solid white

SOFTBALL

1. Shirt – Powder blue pullover. The GHSA logo is mandatory.
2. Trousers – Pleated or non-pleated heather gray trousers
3. Shoes – Solid black with black laces
4. Socks – Black or navy blue
5. Belt – Solid black
6. Jacket – Navy blue
7. Sweater – V-neck navy blue
8. Cap – Navy blue (caps are mandatory by all crew members)
9. Undershirt – White
10. Ball Bag – Navy blue

SOCCER

1. Shirt – Standard gold with black stripes, black with white stripes, or red with black stripes. The GHSA logo will be mandatory in 2008-09.
2. Trousers/Shorts – Solid black
3. Shoes – Black
4. Socks – Standard black with white cuffs
5. Equipment - Whistles (2), coin, yellow and red cards, pencil, scorecard, and timing device

LACROSSE

1. Shirt – Black/white, collared, vertically striped with long or short sleeves. The GHSA logo is mandatory.
2. Shorts – Solid white with 5' inseam and belt loops
3. Shoes – Solid black with solid black laces
4. Socks - Standard one-piece black/white stockings
5. Belt – Solid black
6. Cap – Solid white

VOLLEYBALL

1. Shirt – Solid white, collared, short sleeves, and GHSA logo on right chest area
2. Trousers – Solid navy
3. Shoes – Solid white
4. Socks – Solid white
5. Belt – Solid black or navy

WRESTLING

1. Shirt - Standard black/white, collarless, short sleeve shirt with vertical stripes, or gray with black pinstripes. The GHSA logo is mandatory.
2. Trousers – Solid black (no shorts)
3. Shoes – Solid black with black laces
4. Socks – Solid black
5. Belt – Solid black

NOTE: All officials/umpires shall be dressed alike when optional parts of the uniform are being used. This includes jackets, caps, and required insignias/patches.

OFFICIALS INSURANCE PROGRAM

Note: Insurance coverage is included in the GHSA registration fee

LIABILITY

Comprehensive General Liability	\$1,000,000
Participant Legal Liability	\$1,000,000
Products	\$1,000,000
Personal and Advertising Injury	\$1,000,000
Each Occurrence	\$1,000,000
Directors and Officers Coverage	\$1,000,000
*No Deductibles	

CATASTROPHIC

Catastrophic Accident Coverage (Subject to \$25,000 Deductible)	\$1,000,000
Accidental Death & Dismemberment	\$10,000

DISABILITY

Officials Disability (3 Game Deductible)	\$50 per game \$500 limit
---	--------------------------------------

ACCIDENT

Accident Medical Coverage (\$250 Deductible) (Full Excess Coverage)	\$25,000 limit
Dental Benefit	\$2,000

For more information call Scott Boatright at 1-800-260-8121

ACCOUNTABILITY PROGRAM

PRINCIPLES OF ACCOUNTABILITY

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

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

RESPONSIBILITY

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

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

LOCAL ASSOCIATION ACCOUNTABILITY

TRAINING

1. Selection of a "Training Director"
 - A. Should be an individual assigned for his/her ability to organize and oversee an annual training program
 - B. Should be an individual with the ability to identify and best utilize association personnel in an effort to build a credible training staff
2. Training Schedule
 - A. Develop an agenda that will address the variance in the level of competency among officials within your group (beginner, fast track, veteran, etc.)
 - B. Schedule "guest speakers" who offer information that will enlighten the members of your association on a variety of subjects relevant to officiating
 - C. Develop a training schedule that will allow for the effective presentation of required material
3. Annual Rules Clinics
 - A. Require all association members to attend annual NFHS/GHSA Rules Clinics
 - B. Require all "mentors" and "evaluators" to attend an annual NFHS/GHSA Rules Clinics, even if they are no longer active officials
4. Off-Season Enhancement Opportunities
 - A. Provide information about off-season training camps/clinics
 - B. Follow GHSA criteria for off-season camp participation
 - C. Recognize/reward individuals who attend off-season camps/clinics
 - D. Participation at a GHSA sanctioned camp is required on a bi-yearly basis

ASSIGNMENT OF GAMES

1. Each local association shall have an "Assignment Coordinator".
 - A. Ideally, this should be an assigned position, in an attempt to remove any political bias from the position.
2. Develop criteria for ranking games based on their level of competition.
3. Develop criteria for the ranking of officials based on their level of competency.
4. Develop an "availability" system that is kept current.
5. Develop a system for handling "turn-backs" of games.
6. Do not assign officials who are alumni of, employed by, or have immediate family attending or employed at a competing school. An oversight by the Assignment Coordinator, in an assignment of this nature, should be turned back by the official immediately.
7. Officials shall not be assigned to varsity level games if they have not attended the current year rules clinic and taken the current year rules exam.
8. Officials shall not be assigned to work the same school's games more than (4) times during the regular season.
9. Assignment criteria for "regular season" contests
 - A. To be eligible for assignment to "varsity" level contests, officials must complete the current year NFHS/GHSA Rules Clinic and current year NFHS/GHSA Rules Exam.
 - B. To be eligible for assignment to "sub-varsity" level contests, officials must complete the current year NFHS/GHSA Rules Clinic.
10. The GHSA Office will make ALL post-season assignments of officials.

NOTE: Violation(s) of GHSA assignment policies may result in fines/penalties to the offending association.

MENTORING

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

ESTABLISHING A MENTORING PROGRAM

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



EVALUATION OF PERFORMANCE

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

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

Step 1 – Develop a staff of individuals who can perform the task of evaluating officials without bias or a self-serving agenda. These individuals may be active or inactive officials, but must have credibility in the respective sport/activity. They should also be required to attend annual rules clinics.

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

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

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

Comportment – Presence, attitude, appearance, courage, interaction

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

NOTE: It is crucial to communicate your performance standards to your membership, so they are aware of the expectations of the program. In an attempt to accomplish positive results make sure your evaluations follow these guidelines:

PRESENT YOUR EVALUATIONS "ONE-ON-ONE" – When you criticize an official in front of other officials, he/she tend to become very defensive and argumentative. Once the evaluation gravitates to that level, positive results are impossible to attain.

BE OBJECTIVE – Don't beat around the bush with your criticism or praise. When you simply imply something you leave it up to the interpretation of the individual, and it may be taken the wrong way.

DON'T SHARE YOUR EVALUATIONS WITH OTHERS – Evaluations are personal, and should be handled as such. When you share your criticism with others it appears you are doing it behind the back of the official. Now, you have lost the trust and respect of the named official.

BE POSITIVE WHEN POSITIVE THINGS OCCUR – Evaluations are not designed to be totally negative. When an official does good things let them know about it.

BE SELECTIVE WITH CRITICISM – Even though there may be a multitude of areas the official needs to improve upon, don't present them all at the same time. Prioritize and pick the most important issues to address. If you choose to lay out the entire menu of concerns, the official may become confused and/or feel like a complete failure.

FEEL THE INTERACTION – Develop the ability to read the official's acceptance to your critique. If you feel an immediate negative reaction, stop the interaction and inform him/her that you will mail the evaluation. Although this type of reaction usually comes from the officials who never improve, just end it because he/she doesn't respect your opinion.

The process of evaluating is critical to raising the level of competency in sports officials. The method in which the evaluation is presented and accepted usually makes the difference is a productive evaluation program, or not. The bottom line to productive evaluating is a level of mutual respect between those evaluated and those evaluating.

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

RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION OF OFFICIALS

1. Establish an internal committee to address these issue;
 - A. Evaluate current game fee structure
 - B. Provide semi-annual game fee raises
 - C. Contact local colleges/school career days
 - D. Expand the number of GHSA sanctioned training camps to provide state-wide geographic opportunities
2. Work with the GHSA Office to address these issues;
 - A. Communication between the GHSA Office and GHSA chartered officials associations
 - B. Address the issues regarding sportsmanship by players, coaches, and spectators at GHSA contests.
 - C. Security/safety of game officials at GHSA contests.
 - D. Game administration at GHSA contests.

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

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

POST SEASON ASSIGNMENT PROCESS

- I. Post-Season Nominee Recommendations
 - A. Each association will submit a list of recommended officials/umpires to be considered for post-season assignment
 - B. The list should contain individuals who have achieved a high level of competency in their respective sport
 - C. The list should contain individuals who are quality veteran officials as well as younger officials who display a high level of potential
 - D. The officials on the lists will be given “priority” consideration for evaluation during the regular season
 - E. The number of officials nominated, and subsequently selected, may be determined by the size of the association, and the percentage of Approved & Certified officials in the association
 - F. A “game assignment sheet” must be submitted for each nominee to be used to assign evaluators
 - G. The nomination list should reflect gender, racial, and ethnic diversity.
 - H. Being nominated by the respective association does not guarantee selection to post-season games
 - I. To be considered for post-season play an official must work a minimum number of regular season assignments (by sport), completed the annual rules clinic, scored a minimum of (85) on the rules exam, and have attended a GHSA sanctioned development camp within the previous two years
- II. Post-Season Nominee Committee
 - A. The GHSA Associate Director will oversee a committee with the sole purpose of evaluating the state-wide nominees for post-season play
 - B. The committee will be racially diverse and selected from the following;
 1. Active GHSA officials
 2. The GHSA sport specific Officials Advisory Board member(s)
 3. Current GHSA officiating evaluators/assessors
- III. Weighted Evaluation Process
 1. 25% regular season evaluations by GHSA assigned evaluators
 2. 50% Post-Season Nominee Committee
 3. 25% GHSA Associate Director (Sport Specific)
- IV. Assignment(s) and Advancement
 - A. Final determination of assignments, and advancement throughout the State Tournament, will be the sole responsibility of the sport specific Associate Director and the GHSA Executive Director
 - B. Early round game assignments will be made in advance of the beginning of the State Tournament
 - C. Semi-final and Final game assignments will be made during post-season play and will be based on, but not limited to, availability and performance evaluations during previous post-season games
 - D. All assignments are subject to change, based on performance evaluations and availability issues

DISCIPLINE

1. Due Process at the Local Level

An unpleasant part of leadership is dealing with situations involving penalties to members of your association. Although this is a difficult task, associations can lessen the issue of repercussions by following a “due-process” procedure. Local association issues are the responsibility of the respective local associations. The GHSA may be used to mediate matters by request.

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

2. Fines and Penalties

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

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

3. Standards of Game Accountability

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

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

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

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

These simple *standards of game accountability* should be followed: **Game Context**, Officials should be held accountable for "high-profile" mistakes (errors that have an impact on the outcome of the game). **Repeated Mistakes**, Officials should be held accountable for mistakes that have a reoccurring theme (they don't learn from their mistakes). **Attitude Issues**, Officials should be held accountable for a display of poor attitudes during contests, training, and evaluations (their "ego" is a detriment). **Unprofessional Behavior**, Officials should be held accountable for behavior or acts of misconduct that do not uphold the level of integrity required of the position.



INDENTIFYING QUALITY OFFICIALS/UMPIRES

A. Officiating Skills

1. Knowledge of the Rules of the Game
 - a. Proper Mechanics
 - b. Proper Signals
2. Good Judgment
 - a. Consistency of calls
 - b. Quality of calls
3. Game Awareness
 - a. Scoring and timing issues
 - b. Feel for the Game
 - c. Bench Decorum
4. Professional Appearance
 - a. Physique
 - b. Manner of dress
 - c. Good movement
 - d. Look natural on the court/field
5. Good People Skills
 - a. Communication skills
 - b. Confidence without arrogance
 - c. Integrity and Honesty
 - d. Positive Attitude
 - e. Conflict management

B. Ability to Grow as an Official

1. Willingness to accept correction
 - a. The desire to know more
 - b. The absence of excuses
 - c. Application of necessary changes
2. Willingness to Learn
 - a. Willingness to incorporate change
 - b. Good listening skills
 - c. Quick learner

C. Personal Value

1. Is a hard worker
2. Ability to resolve conflict
3. Availability and commitment
4. Art of Cooperation
5. Courage to make tough calls

D. Negative Factors

1. Arrogant and political in nature
2. Not receptive to criticism
3. Desire to move up too quickly
4. Poor physical conditioning
5. Too "literal" in approach to officiating
6. Excuses for poor performance
7. Questionable character (honesty/integrity)
8. Lack of cooperation and conformity to change
9. Lack of dependability

CONFLICT RESOLUTION FOR OFFICIALS

Controversy is inevitable whenever there is competition. Competition creates a high level of emotion. This high level of emotion often leads to controversy. The basic definition of these words (controversy – conflict) paints a picture of the possibility of potentially volatile situations during a contest or game.

Controversy – A difference in viewpoints or opinions.

Conflict – Confrontational behavior (words or actions) that develop from controversial situations.

The primary responsibility of officials is to facilitate the contest/game in a manner within the rules of the game. Therefore, officials must have the ability to deal with conflict and controversy during the contests/games they officiate. Officials also have the added responsibility of displaying a positive approach in dealing with conflict and controversy to the coaches, players, and spectators.

Officials must be able to find a way to lessen the occurrence and severity of the conflict and controversy that develops during competition. The following are key issues in effectively dealing with potentially volatile situations:

- C. Internal Issues
 1. Officials must be aware of their own “hot buttons” and how to control them
 2. Officials must be able to exhibit self-control with all other aren’t
 3. Officials must be prepared to deal with the unexpected
- D. Situational Issues
 1. Officials have the ability to reflect credibility by portraying a professional appearance (uniform, physical condition, composure, etc.)
 2. Preventive officiating often minimizes the potential of controversy escalating into conflict
 3. Officials should not become an obstacle to the contest/game flowing smoothly
 4. Officials should not should not “split hairs” on issues not related to the administration of the game
 5. Officials should manage the game with the “lightest touch” possible to provide a balance in competition
 6. Officials must always effectively deal with issues related to safety and sportsmanship
- C. Resolving Conflict With Coaches
 1. Think through your options when dealing with conflict
 2. Appear to be receptive and respectful
 3. Keep all communication professional and calm
 4. Focus on game related issues
 5. Emphasize “what” is the right thing to do, not who is “right”
 6. Avoid prolonged eye contact and finger pointing
 7. Attempt to allow the discussion to take place facing away from the bench area and spectators (shoulder-to-shoulder rather than face to face)
 8. Be a good listener, but know when it is time to end the discussion
 9. Allow a coach to vent in a professional manner and allow the coach to disengage
 10. Don’t insist on having the “last word”

The performance of an official is often judged by how they were able to deal with controversy and conflict. A great performance can be derailed by the inability to deal with difficult situations that present themselves during competition.

THE ROLE OF THE HIGH SCHOOL OFFICIAL

The #1 purpose for the education system in the United States is to educate children. As part of the system, schools provide sports competition and other extracurricular activities, because of their added value to the overall education experience children receive. The added value is received in the form of “Favorable Messages”. Some, but certainly not all, of the “Favorable Messages” are:

- Good Sportsmanship
- Fair Play
- Setting and Achieving Goals
- Dealing with Success and Failure
- Adhering to Established Policies, Procedures, and Standards
- Working with Others as a Team or Group
- Respect for Individuals in Authority Positions
- Self-Control and Discipline

More important than individual achievement and team success is the guarantee that school administrators, teachers, coaches, players, spectators, and contest officials all play an active role in insuring that students are provided the best possible environment to receive these and other “Favorable Messages”.

Everyone involved in an athletic contest has the responsibility to uphold certain acceptable standards in order to maintain the integrity of the game. As such, coaches and officials become a vital part of the educational process. They both serve the student/athletes, and the schools, in their respective roles. If there is a breakdown in cooperation, or a level of unacceptable criticism, it sends an “Unfavorable Message” and in turn a breakdown in the educational experience for the student/athlete.

Every coach and official has accepted the responsibility to monitor and enforce the rules of the game with an emphasis on good sportsmanship. A clearly defined “Coaches Code of Ethics” and an “Officials Code of Ethics” are outlined in the NFHS Rule Book and GHSA By-Laws. By virtue of their duties, coaches and officials are “role models”, whether they want to be or not. It goes with the territory.

As “Guardians of the Game”, every contest official has an obligation to assist the schools in carrying out their Mission Statement of providing an experience with “Favorable Messages” that teaches positive “Lifetime Values” to the student/athletes.



WHAT MAKES A GOOD OFFICIAL?

Just as players need a blend of physical and mental skills to perform well, officials need a wide range of skills to be competent in their jobs. To the outsider those skills may seem contradictory at times. As an example, to be a competent official one must possess the ability to blend into the background of the contest, yet have the presence to be omnipresent and authoritative when the situation calls for it. A good official understands the importance of allowing the players to ultimately decide the outcome of the game, while maintaining control within the framework of the rules of the game.

A common mistake of sports officials is the attitude that their main responsibility is to make the calls. While it is vitally important that an official enforce the rules of the game, it's equally important to understand the spirit and intent in which the rules are written. Officials should make the calls necessary to administer the game fairly, enhance the safety of the competitors, and attempt to establish a flow to the game. Remain professional at all times, regardless if others aren't. Keep in mind that the players, coaches, and fans did not come to the game to watch you officiate.

Athletic competition creates a high level of emotion from players, coaches, and fans. The mere elements of scoring and timing within the geographic confines of the playing field/arena generate excitement and disappointment. While everyone else has the propensity to lose their heads (emotionally), officials are expected to maintain a high degree of composure and emotional control. Inevitably, officials make mistakes. Good officials learn from their mistakes and make an effort to prevent them from occurring in future contests. Good officials attain success through a process of precise preparation and a commitment to the sports(s) they are involved in. Good officials have a checklist of prerequisites that will elevate them to the top level in their chosen sport(s). Make your own checklist from the following:

- Maintain good physical conditioning
- Know the rules of the game
- Know the game mechanics
- Stay focused at all times
- Hustle at all times
- Shut out distractions
- Make the calls in your area of responsibility
- Be a good crew member
- Don't draw attention to yourself
- Call them as you see them



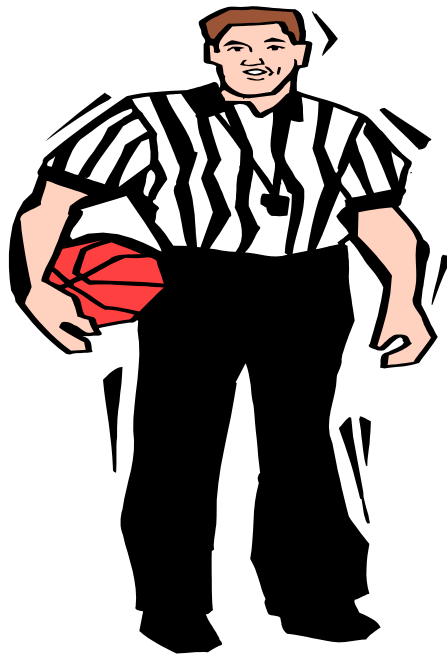
THE LEADERSHIP ROLE IN SPORTS OFFICIATING

The importance of *leadership* in local sports officiating cannot be overstated. *Leadership* is defined in many ways, but significant leaders are individuals who possess some distinguishable characteristics; knowledgeable, good communicators, honest, loyal, and confident to name a few. Strong leaders have the ability to influence others because they stand by their convictions and aren't afraid to admit when they make a mistake. Strong leaders also have a clear vision of the "big picture" in officiating and are willing to do what best serves the entire group, without a personal agenda attached.

Since the mid-90's sports officiating has taken an aggressive approach to education, training, and accountability. Game fees at all levels have increased dramatically over the past 15 years. As such, the contest officials of today are presented with many more challenges, and opportunities, to elevate their level of competency. Local *leadership* is critical to the successful pursuit of these challenges.

We have an abundance of people who would rather sit back and complain about the every-changing complexion of officiating rather than provide positive input. There are others who choose to be highly "political" in an effort to better position themselves. What we need in Georgia are individuals who are willing to step up and affect the changes necessary for growth at all levels of officiating. Sports officiating needs real LEADERS who have a contagious presence that is centered on what can be done to make high school contests better for everyone involved, and want to be a part of the positive solutions to problems not merely a constant voice of discontent.

Everyone has the ability to be a leader in some capacity. You can be a leader by taking advantage of the opportunities you are presented with to improve your officiating skills. You can be a leader by making a contribution by assisting in the development of another officiating comrade. While you may not want to sit in a position of *leadership* within your local association, you have the capacity to decide who the individuals are that sit in those positions. *Leadership* may be a trait that cannot be taught, but it is certainly one that can be learned.



THE “GOOD OLD BOY NETWORK”

It is pointed out in *Referee Magazine* that while many officials stop officiating due to age, physical problems, or job restrictions, many more give it up because of the “lack of advancement”. Some officials never advance because quite honestly they don’t possess the skills to do so. But, the sad truth is that many officials never advance, or don’t advance as rapidly as they deserve to, due to what is commonly called the “Good Old Boys Network”.

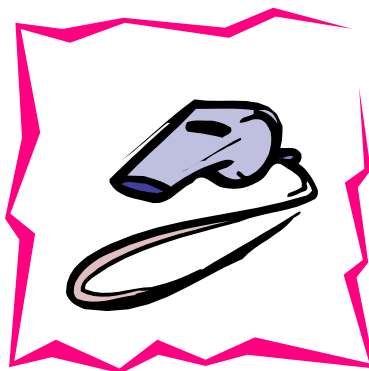
The appearance of favoritism in local associations can become a cancer. Valid or not, the perception is that individuals in positions of leadership, or closely aligned with leadership, receive preferential treatment in the assignment of games, partners, and post-season games. All of these factors have a negative affect on the ability to recruit and retain quality officials.

The state office has taken measures to eliminate this perception by instituting an officiating “Accountability Program”, required GHSA officiating development camps, an officiating “Partnership Program”, and an aggressive evaluation program. The implementation of these programs allows individuals committed to becoming quality high school sports officials to prosper and advance.

Ask yourself, and ask your leadership to do the same, if these common traits of the “Good Old Boy Network” exist in your local association. If the resounding answer is “true”, then become active in correcting the problem in your local association.

- My association’s “game assignor” still works games.
- Games are assigned based on who you know, rather than what you know.
- I have advanced further and faster at the college level than I have in my local high school association.
- Assignments in my group are based on years of service rather than ability.
- Some officials receive game assignments above their level of competency, because of who they are politically aligned with.
- A credible line of communication doesn’t exist between my leadership and the membership.
- There is no ongoing advisement of my game performances, or the areas I need to improve on to advance.
- The officers of my local association seem to always have the biggest and the most games on their schedule.

The bottom line is, it is the responsibility of each local association to assign the most competent officials available each night to work GHSA contests, period!



ARE YOU A SCRATCH LIST CANDIDATE?

The NFHS recently conducted a survey of states that have “Exclusion Systems” (scratch lists, red lines) of contest officials. The GHSA does not allow the exclusion of officials, but the data submitted by those who do echoes many of the concerns shared by many of the coaches at GHSA member schools.

The following are the major points of emphasis used by coaches in states where an “Exclusion System” exists:

#1 – Communication and Game Control

- Exhibits a willingness to communicate with coaches/players
- Approachable not confrontational
- Confident, but not arrogant
- Communicates the action on the court clearly

#2 – Rules Knowledge and Consistency

- Demonstrates a clear and accurate knowledge of the rules of the game
- Applies the rules in a consistent manner throughout the contest
- Knowledge and application of rule changes each season

#3 – Professionalism

- Maintains good physical conditioning
- Wears the approved uniform and is neatly groomed
- Displays composure, even in pressure situations
- Makes an ongoing commitment to improve

#4 – Mechanics and Positioning

- Uses approved signals
- Is in the proper position to call or no-call correctly
- Communicates clearly with the benches and table crew

#5 – Personal Issues

- Perceived conflict of interest (alumni, employee, family, etc.)
- History of problems with school/coach
- Geography/travel issues

While we may choose to disagree with the order of importance, the issues listed validate what the GHSA training staffs have been attempting to impress upon every contest official in Georgia. While we do not support an “Exclusion List”, look over these issues and yourself if we did, would you be a candidate?



PRIDE IN OFFICIATING

“Develop and demonstrate PRIDE in your officiating”

First Impressions Last a Long Time! Take PRIDE in the clothing you wear during the game, and to and from the game.

Don't get into shape for the season, stay in shape! Take PRIDE in your physical condition and appearance.

Arrive well in advance of your game time! Take PRIDE in being reliable to arrive on time for your games.

Good judgment is always based on your rules knowledge! Take PRIDE in your knowledge of the rules.

The ability to be in the right place to make the call is one indicator to your level of competence! Take PRIDE in your floor mechanics.

Good communication skills indicate confidence! Take PRIDE in using approved signals.

Eliminate the hurdles to success! Take PRIDE in the development of good habits while ridding yourself of the bad ones.

Be professional at all times! Take PRIDE in a commitment to conduct yourself in a professional manner on and off the court/playing field.

“Control what you can and don't be overly concerned with what you can't”

Only you can control your appearance.

Only you can control your level of reliability with your fellow officials.

Only you can control your effort to learn the rules of the game.

Only you can control your use of proper floor mechanics.

Only you can control your use of approved signals.

Only you can control your desire to become a better official.

Only you can control your attitude as it relates to officiating.

Only you can control your level of cooperation with local and state policy.



THE SECRET TO CONFIDENCE IS PREPARATION

*There can be no level of courage
When there is no level of confidence.*

*Half the battle lies in the level of conviction
You commit to the accomplishment you desire.*

*Through preparation you develop a level of competence
In which you are able to achieve your goals.*

*Confidence is the result of hard work and dedication
To become the very best you can be.*

*The process of preparation enables you
To perform with a high degree of confidence.*

Confidence doesn't happen by accident. It is the result of countless hours of a committed effort to an ongoing pursuit of excellence. The well-prepared official is a confident official.



GHSA OFFICE STAFF

Contest Responsibility

Office Phone: 706-647-77473

Dr. Ralph Swearngin, Executive Director (Ext. 7)

res@ghsa.net

Volleyball – LaCrosse

Gary Phillips, Ass't. Executive Director (Ext. 6)

garyphillips@ghsa.net

Cross Country – Wrestling – Track – Golf

Joyce Kay, Associate Executive Director (Ext. 5)

joycekay@ghsa.net

Cheerleading – Riflery – Debate – Literary

Ernie Yarbrough, Associate Director (Ext. 27)

ery@ghsa.net

Softball – Basketball – Soccer

Dennis Payne, Associate Director (Ext. 23)

dpayne@ghsa.net

Football – Swimming – Baseball

Steve Figueroa, Media Director (Ext. 4)

stevefig@ghsa.net

Tennis

Pam Thompson, Officials' Registrar (Ext. 30)

pamthompson@ghsa.net

Jim Bullington, GHSA Website Technology (Ext. 33)

jbullington@ghsa.net

GHSA Website – ghsa.net