



## GEORGIA ATHLETIC DIRECTORS ASSOCIATION



**Vol 15 No 7**

**February 2024**

You make an impact!

Hello Don,

Just a quick reminder that our [annual conference](#) will be held in Athens this year because of scheduling. Our great conference provides a platform for directors to hone their leadership skills, fostering a shared vision that aligns with the department's overarching goals. By engaging in discussions on leadership principles and challenges, our directors emerge as catalysts for positive change.



**Networking:** The conference creates a vibrant ecosystem for networking and collaboration. Athletic directors from diverse backgrounds converge to share experiences, ideas, and solutions. This collective synergy strengthens the bonds within our athletic community, enhancing collaborative efforts towards common objectives. Innovation In an ever-evolving landscape, our athletic identity is grounded in innovation and adaptability. The Conference spotlights emerging trends, technological advancements, and evolving strategies in the sports industry. This focus on staying ahead of the curve ensures that our department remains at the forefront of athletic excellence. Please join us and also reach out to another Athletic Director that you know that



[GHSA February 2024  
Newsletter](#)

[GHSA 2023-2024  
Deadline Dates](#)

has not attended our great conference and invite them to attend.

[Register Now](#)

Let's Go To Work

Maurice Freeman  
GADA President



We are 5 weeks from our conference. Our block of rooms at the **Hyatt and Hilton Garden Inn** are very close to being booked. Friday night is not available at these sites. When booking a room at the Hilton and



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Hyatt do not try to book Friday night as it may not allow you to book Saturday or Sunday nights. Other options at a higher rate are Homewood suites 706-548-3500 , Graduate Athens 706-549-7020 and Spring Hill Suites 706-850-2072, Friday night might be available at these sites. Looking forward to seeing you.

Thanks for all you do.

Joe Sanfilipo, CMAA

GADA Executive Director

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**GADA Requesting NIAAA Award Nominations**

President Maurice Freeman received our 103% NIAAA MEMBERSHIP banner for 2023 during our conference in Orlando. This is a great accomplishment.

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[Georgia Athletic Job Postings](#)

The GADA awards committee is looking for nominees for the following NIAAA recognitions to be presented at the spring conference. If you have any nominations, please send them to [ralph.neeley@barrow.k12.ga.us](mailto:ralph.neeley@barrow.k12.ga.us).



### **NIAAA State Award of Merit**

The State Award of Merit may be selected and presented annually in each state. It is an award presented by the state to an NIAAA member who demonstrates outstanding leadership and meritorious service and achievement in the vocation of interscholastic administration.

### **NIAAA Frank Kovaleski Professional Development Award**

The Frank Kovaleski Professional Development Award is presented annually to an NIAAA member who has made significant contributions and demonstrated excellence in professional development at the local, state and national levels.

### **NIAAA Distinguished Service Award**

The NIAAA Board of Directors, at the recommendation of the NIAAA Awards Committee, annually selects a number of individuals to receive the NIAAA Distinguished Service Award. Recipients of the NIAAA Distinguished Service Award are selected from persons nominated by their respective state athletic director associations. Each state may nominate one DSA candidate each year.

### **NFHS Citation Award**

NFHS Citations are awarded to individuals whose contributions have impacted high school activity programs through their association with one of the following groups of professionals: state associations and NFHS staff, athletic directors, coaches, officials, music adjudicators and directors, and speech, debate and theatre directors.

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## **Membership Information**

Please remember to pay your NIAAA/GADA dues. Also, please update your profiles as needed especially when you change jobs.

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#### Simplifying Communication

One of the best ways you can plan ahead for your next season is to communicate early and often with all of your parents, players and coaches.

- Set deadlines for registration and fees and communicate those deadlines via email or text.
- Make sure you have a management program that integrates an email function to send invoices, payment reminders and notifications for any failed payments.

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**Simplify Your Team's  
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## **GHSA Director says education for new NIL policy 'was coming sooner or later'**

By Travis Joudon, ConnectSavannah.com

Earlier this month, the Georgia High School Association (GHSA) announced a partnership with Triple Threat Leadership LLC, a leader in high school focused Name, Image, and Likeness (NIL) education.



The partnership, announced through a Jan. 9 press release, came after the GHSA State Executive Committee's approval of updated language to its NIL policy on Oct. 2, 2023. School administrators were guided through the NIL policy in a Jan. 25 webinar hosted by Triple Threat Leadership founder Dr. Scott Grant and GHSA Executive Director Dr. Robin Hines.

Both men spoke with Connect Savannah prior to the webinar to talk about NIL and its potential impact only a few months into this new era of Georgia high school sports.

GHSA Director says education for new NIL policy 'was coming sooner or later'

"My role with Doctor Hines and the GHSA is to support them and what I do is, I build educational services and support in educational policy. I'm more of a support person for NIL high school educational policy," said Grant.

"I help build tools to support schools and school administrators and associations in understanding NIL in general, and what it looks like in their specific state. Our policy guide is taking the GHSA policy and making it very easily digestible for school administrators on what it actually means."

Hines has been the Executive Director of the GHSA since 2017 and he is retiring after this academic year. But since 2021, he has been persistent in his plea to schools to be ready for the arrival of NIL.

"I felt this was coming to Georgia one way or another," said Hines. "We were able to get ahead of it, but we certainly weren't the first at the party when it comes to states with NIL policies already in place."

If the GHSA did not preemptively adjust the language in its constitution and bylaws regarding NIL, state legislation would've surely forced it to happen at some point, argues Hines.

"We've been talking about name, image, and likeness for about two years now and the flow of states doing this is up to 32 or 33 states now maybe," he said. "It was coming sooner or later. People look at NIL and they think that it's paying kids to play football, basketball or whatever. This is far from the truth. It's built on the premise that everyone has a right to their own publicity. To deny students who happened to participate in athletics the same opportunity as every other student in their school or district would be discriminatory on my part. That's what people don't understand."

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## **Wheeler Inducts 15th Athletic Hall of Fame Class**

**By Cobb County**

On Saturday, January 20, friends and family gathered in the cafeteria at Wheeler High School to celebrate the newest class of inductees into the school's Athletic Hall of Fame. The Wheeler Athletic Hall of Fame was started in 2008 and now contains 15 classes of athletes, teams, and coaches.

This year's class consisted of five Wheeler grads: Dale Carey, Jermareo Davidson, Matt Haynes, Terry Poor, and Ray Stang. A delicious breakfast was served beforehand courtesy of nearby J. Christophers, which allowed the inductees and their guests to greet each other and reminisce before the ceremony began at 10 AM.

Wheeler Athletic Director Brittny Jones served as Master of

## **Three Gwinnett County schools win Esports state titles**

**By Staff, [GwinnettDailyPost.com](http://GwinnettDailyPost.com)**

Three Gwinnett County high schools – Peachtree Ridge, Brookwood and Seckinger – made history in December by winning the GHSA's inaugural fall Esports state championships.

At the state championships, held at the University of West Georgia in Carrollton, Peachtree Ridge won in the League of Legends championship, Brookwood won the Smash Brothers Ultimate (Classes AAAAA to AAAAAA) title and Seckinger won the Smash Brothers Ultimate (Classes A to AAAA) crown.

Peachtree Ridge defeated Brookwood 2-0 to win League of Legends, a multiplayer online battle arena game in which two teams of five battle to destroy the

Ceremonies and started the event by introducing Principal Paul Gillihan, who gave a short welcome to the guests and Hall of Fame members.

“Wheeler may look different than when you were a student here, but our students still excel. We had the most Governor’s Scholars in the state last year and the second-highest number of National Merit Scholars in the county. We’re going to find those other two because we want to be number one in everything,” Principal Gillihan said with a smile.

The first of the five inductees was Dale Carey, who played baseball for four years and football for three for the Wildcats. He was Georgia’s #2 high school baseball prospect his senior year and was drafted by the Pittsburgh Pirates, but Dale took a scholarship at the University of Miami instead. While playing for the Hurricanes and earning his Liberal

opposition’s base. Brookwood beat Valdosta 3-1 in Smash Brothers Ultimate, finishing the season undefeated and winning its third consecutive state championship. Seckinger bested Landmark Christian School 3-1 in Smash Brothers Ultimate, a “fighting” game in which the objective is to knock out an opponent by attacking them.

“Esports is the youngest athletic program in GCPS and it has taken off by storm,” said Jason Holcombe, Gwinnett County Public Schools’ director of athletics, in a news release. “This is evident by the student engagement and success the district’s programs have had in just three short years.

“Esports offers GCPS students another opportunity to be more engaged with their school. This is especially true for students more interested in technology and tactics required to be a successful Esports team.”

Arts degree, Dale was named the ACC second team, the All-Atlantic Team, and the ACC All-Tournament Team. While at Wheeler, he was named to Team Georgia twice, played in the Sunbelt Classic in Oklahoma, was a member of Team USA, and was recognized by the Atlanta Braves 400 Club as one the top players in the state. In 2010, he was named Player of the Year and was selected to the Georgia Dugout Club All-State Team.

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## New Job? Don't miss out on the newsletter!

We don't want to you to miss an issue! Please let us know about your new AD position so that we can keep you up to date about important GADA news!

Email us [HERE](#) with your new email address and job information

Often school systems block our emails. To ensure you receive our newsletter it helps to sign up with both a work and personal email.

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## National top 25 high school wrestling rankings for every weight class (2/2/2024)

By Billy Buckheit, [HighSchool.SI.com](https://www.HighSchool.SI.com)



**Blair Academy tops Delbarton in New Jersey; state tournaments set to get underway in Georgia and Illinois; state and regional duals taking place in several other states**

We were putting the finishing touches on the rankings update when we paused to watch the big dual meet in New Jersey with No. 9 Delbarton visiting No. 2 Blair Academy (team rankings by Mat Scouts). Blair won the dual 30-25 when Carter Neves registered a teach-fall at heavyweight over Connor Martin, 19-4.

Going into the final bout, it was tied at 25 all. The largest lead of the night was enjoyed by Blair, twice, the first after Paul Ognissanti posted a major decision over C. J. Betz at 157 to put his squad out front by six, 19-13.

Alessio Perentin decked Barry Norman at 165 to draw the score even at 19. Blair would win two in a row by William Henckel (175) and Peter Snyder (190) for another six-point lead, which was erased by another Delbarton fall, this one from Vincent Lee over Cale Mielnik at 215.



There were no upsets in the dual, the only real surprise was the undersized PJ Terranova giving Blair's Mikey Batista all he could handle at 113 before falling 6-5. The announcers were heard saying Henckel weighed in at 174, which would push him to 175 for the National Prep Tournament, because his descension plan will not allow that big of a drop by February 17th (the day of Blair's NP qualifier).

That brings us to this point; we are keeping an eye on wrestlers who have been wrestling up a weight class from earlier in the season. Once they enter the state tournament series and are locked into a weight, we will move them as needed.

As the regular season winds down, we are tightening up the rankings. We removed more inactive wrestlers and moved some guys to the weights they have been at the most. Anyone removed for inactivity will be added back in if/when they resurface.

Because of weight class movement we have a new No. 1 at 165 in Joe Sealey (Wyoming Seminary, Pennsylvania). Angelo Ferrari (Melissa, Texas) takes over the top spot at 175, where he has been competing since Ironman.

Henckel's likely move to 175 pushes National Prep Champ Peter Snyder to 190, where he slots in ahead of Robert Kucharczk (Lake Highland Prep, Florida). Snyder owns two wins over Kucharczk from the Journeymen Fall Classic and the North East Regional in the Junior Freestyle division.

The guess work about weights is coming to an end for some states this week and has already happened in Indiana where they are at the regional portion of their postseason series. The Semi-States are next week, followed by the state tournament for all the marbles as Indiana is a single class state, which means they crown one state champion per weight.

Georgia and Illinois begin their state series, which consists of three levels for both, this weekend. Georgia has seven divisions and Illinois is a three-class state.

Iowa and Tennessee are having their state dual meet tournament this weekend. Ohio is having regional dual meets, while Pennsylvania is in the district stage.

Before we get to the rankings, we'd be remiss if we didn't include the box score from the Blair/Delbarton match.

For complete rankings

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## Anger Management Expert Mitch Abrams Sounds Off on Coach Bullying Allegations

By Paul Steinbach, AthleticBusiness.com

Mitch Abrams credits former college basketball coach Bob Knight for almost single-handedly building his career as “the anger management guy in sports,” an unofficial title he insists he holds by default. “I’m the only person who really will say something out loud about it,” says Abrams, a nationally recognized sport psychologist, expert on sport-related trauma and author of [Anger Management in Sport \(Human Kinetics, 2010\)](#). Given a recent wave of bullying allegations against collegiate coaches, including those that this

year alone led to the terminations of Cal swimming coach Teri McKeever and Northwestern baseball coach Jim Foster, as well as a plan of corrective action for Utah gymnastics under coach Tom Farden, AB senior editor Paul Steinbach asked Abrams to say something out loud about the dynamics at play when adult athletes feel emotionally abused by their coaches.

**How can coaches know how to identify the line between tough coaching that seeks to inspire athletes to exceed their own perceived performance limits and then abusive behavior? Is that a fine line to walk for coaches today?**

I think you just captured the whole thing in a nutshell. It's not just a fine line, it's a blurry line. And it's difficult. I mean, there are some coaches out there who are a\*\*holes, but the bulk of them aren't. I think that's part of what gets missed here. First off, there's not enough coaching education. That's a big issue. Coaches tend to coach the way they were coached, and the culture has changed. Athletes are more sensitive. Coaches are more sensitive. Sometimes, coaches are just as insensitive as they were all along, but I think that most often when this happens, the coach doesn't even realize they're bullying. It's a different dance when you have someone who's sadistic, who's like this draconian drill sergeant idiot. There are some of those guys out there. And women, for that matter. There's also the issue that different athletes respond to different things. There are some athletes that you're not going to get the most out of them unless you give them the metaphorical kick in the a\*\*. And where is too far? Sometimes, it's very hard to tell. From a coaching perspective, we would always prefer to incentivize more than punish, right? You always want to reward good behavior. There's still this draconian, antiquated theory among a lot of coaches of using physical exertion as a way to punish bad behavior. And they think that that's good coaching.

**Do you have a feel for how many coaches bully their athletes?**

I have no statistics on this, because people generally don't self-identify, "Yes, I'm the bully coach." I have no idea what the real numbers are, but my guess would be less than 5

percent, probably less than 2 percent, of coaches are actually like that, that they're really sadistic, like bad people that you're like, "Why would anyone let their kids around them?" Of course, at the college level, parents have less impact on who that can be. I think for most of them, it's a coaching education issue. They don't even realize that what they're doing, they could do better, if they didn't use those tactics.

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## **Line Judge Procedure Modified in High School Volleyball** **By NHSF.org**

Line judges will be required to change sides of the court between sets when teams remain on the same bench. The change in officiating procedure highlights the 2024-25 high school volleyball rules changes.



In all, four rules changes were recommended by the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) Volleyball Rules Committee at its annual meeting January 7-9. All rules changes were reviewed and approved by the NFHS Board of Directors.

Rule 5-9-2b, which outlines line judge responsibilities, includes the new note requiring that they switch sides of the court when, by state association adoption, teams remain on the same bench throughout the match. The corresponding item on the state association adoption chart was also amended to add the requirement, which was added to promote fair officiating.

“Since the pandemic many state associations have adopted the rule to require teams to remain on the same bench throughout the match,” said Lindsey Atkinson, NFHS Director of Sports and liaison to the Volleyball Rules Committee. “The unintended consequence of this adoption is that the same line judge officiates the same lines for the same teams throughout the match. This change allows teams to see both line judges and promote equity in officiating.

In other rules changes, Rule 11-4-1b now allows teams to substitute for a replacement player during a referee’s time-out when the libero is injured or ill, allowing the team to avoid playing the replacement out of position

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**Related**

[Standard Procedure Added for Penalty Corners in High School Field Hockey](#)

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**Vote: Who is the best small-school girls basketball player in the nation in 2024?**

By Mike Swanson, [HighSchool.SI.COM](http://HighSchool.SI.COM)



Last week was loaded with high school basketball news surrounding the selection of the East and West rosters in the McDonald's All-American Game.

This week, SBLive Sports turned its attention to featuring players who star at small schools. [We started with the boys](#), and now we'll shine the spotlight on 20 of the [top small-school girls basketball players](#) in the nation.

### [Meet 20 small-school girls basketball stars across the nation in 2023-24](#)

Read about the candidates in the link above and then vote in the poll below to choose the best small-school girls basketball player in the country.

**The voting will conclude Friday, Feb. 9, at 11:59 p.m. Eastern.**

[Click Here to Vote](#)

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**AJC's all-state football teams for 2023**

By Todd Holcomb, [AJC.com](http://AJC.com)



All-classification player of the year: Sammy Brown,  
Jefferson

### **Class 7A**

Offensive player of the year: Luke Nickel, Milton

Defensive player of the year: Eric Brantley Jr.,  
Valdosta

Coach of the year: Ben Reaves, Milton

QB - Jeremy Hecklinski, Walton, 6-0, 180, Sr.

QB - Luke Nickel, Milton, 6-2, 205, Jr.

RB - Cameron Robinson, Mill Creek, 5-9, 190, Sr.

RB - Zion Johnson, Newton, 5-8, 180, Jr.

TE - Landen Thomas, Colquitt County, 6-3, 245, Sr.

WR - Ny Carr, Colquitt County, 5-11, 165, Sr.

WR - C.J. Wiley, Milton, 6-4, 195, Jr.

OL - Aidan Banfield, Mill Creek, 6-4, 285, Sr.

OL - Daniel Calhoun, Walton, 6-7, 350, Sr.

OL - Waltclaire Flynn, Grayson, 6-1, 300, Sr.

OL - Juan Gaston Jr., Westlake, 6-8, 330, Jr.

OL - Cortez Smith, Parkview, 6-3, 300, Jr.

ATH - Mike Matthews, Parkview, 6-3, 190, Sr.

PK - Davis Little, South Forsyth, 6-0, 165, Sr.

### **Defense**

DL - Eric Brantley Jr., Valdosta, 6-1, 245, Sr.

DL - Kendall Farmer, Westlake, 6-1, 280, Sr.

DL - RyShawn Perry, Newton, 6-3, 275, Jr.



DL - Eddrick Houston, Buford, 6-4, 235, Sr.  
LB - Tyler Atkinson, Grayson, 6-2, 190, So.  
LB - Jadon Perlotte, Buford, 6-4, 215, Jr.  
LB - Jacorey Stewart, Milton, 6-1, 210, Sr.  
LB - Ashton Woods, Walton, 6-4, 220, Sr.  
DB - K.J. Bolden, Buford, 6-1, 185, Sr.  
DB - Trajen Greco, Mill Creek, 6-1, 180, Sr.  
DB - Antonio Molder, Norcross, 5-9, 165, Sr.  
DB - Ja'Marley Riddle, Camden County, 6-0, 175, Sr.  
P - Reed Chandley, Cherokee, 6-2, 180, Sr.

**Honorable mention**

ATH Nick Bliss, Richmond Hill, Sr.  
ATH William Wallace, Archer, Sr.  
DB DeMarius Hines, Westlake, Sr.  
DB Dorian Barney, Peachtree Ridge, So.  
DL Cole Funderburk, North Gwinnett, Jr.  
DL Andre Fuller, Grayson, Jr.  
DL Aidan Maddox, North Paulding, Sr.  
DL A.J. Pigford, South Gwinnett, Sr.  
DL Deuce Geraldts, Collins Hill, So.  
LB Montreze Smith, Carrollton, Sr.  
LB Branson Brooks, Lambert, Jr.  
LB Wendell Gregory, Walton, Sr.  
LB Nick Pace, Colquitt County, Sr.  
OL/DL Leon Wesley, McEachern, Sr.  
OL Brayden Jacobs, Buford, Jr.  
QB Dylan Raiola, Buford, Sr.

QB Julian Lewis, Carrollton, So.  
QB Neko Fann, Colquitt County, Sr.  
QB Jeff "J.D." Davis, Grayson, Sr.  
QB A.J. Watkins, Norcross, Sr.  
RB Kimauri Farmer, Carrollton, So.  
RB David Eziumume, North Cobb, Sr.  
TE Elyiss Williams, Camden County, Jr.  
WR Debron Gatling, Milton, Sr.  
WR Travis Smith Jr., Westlake, Jr.

Click below for all Classes

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## **SEHS Grad Wins 200th Career Game in GA High School Boys Basketball**

**By Scott Nickerson, [Elmoreautauganews.com](http://Elmoreautauganews.com)**

Millbrook native Jon-Michael Nickerson, a 2003 graduate of Stanhope Elmore High School, recently won his 200th career game as a boy's high school basketball coach in the state of Georgia in his 9th year of coaching. The milestone comes a season after winning his first state championship at Sandy Creek High School, a public school in Tyrone, Georgia, that competes in Class 3A in the Georgia High School Athletic Association.



Despite the lower classification, the Patriots frequently compete in early season matches against the best competition in the state of Georgia, and even the southeast. Heading into January, the 2023-2024 Patriots team is 10-2, to include wins over three teams in Georgia's highest classification (Buford, East Coweta, and Milton) and a one-point loss to Class 7A power Grayson High.

The Patriots most recently competed in a National Invitational Tournament in Arkansas, where they went 2-1, to include a win over Pinson Valley, a 6A school in Alabama, despite playing without Micah Smith, one of the team's top players that will play basketball next season at James Madison University, a Division 1 team that is currently undefeated and ranked #20 in the nation.

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## Resource Information

### **Your February AD Checklist**

- Schedule and disseminate agendas for upcoming athletic coaches meetings.
- Recheck spring sports eligibility forms.
- Attend scheduled region meeting.
- Have completed academic and residency checks for upcoming spring sports for eligibility purposes.
- Host spring sports picture day.



- Schedule meetings with spring sports booster clubs.
- Review and audit concessions receipts and revenues.
- Attend weekly administrative meetings.
- Inform faculty on upcoming athletic events. Talk about the positive things that are

happening in the athletic program. Mention teams and students by name.

- Update your athletic website.
  - Finalize fall sports schedules for next year.
  - Finalize wrestling weight class rosters for upcoming area traditional meet.
  - Update transportation of all scenarios with basketball region tournament travel schedules.
  - Begin paying outstanding invoices from winter sports.
  - Attend region basketball seeding meeting. Review region standings for seeding possibilities for upcoming basketball tournaments.
  - Review spring sports schedules and confirm all schedules.
  - Forward spring sports schedules and assignments to all school faculty and media outlets.
- 
- Secure medical personnel and ATC's at spring sports events.
  - Confirm necessary security at spring sports events.
  - Finalize plans for football equipment reconditioning.
  - Make plans to attend the GADA State Conference in Athens in March!

[Download February Checklist](#)

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## **Title IX Regulations Checklist**



On May 6, 2020 the United States Department of Education released new Title IX Regulations with expectations for districts to be compliant by August 14, 2020. Although there aren't major changes in athletics, in your role you should be aware of the new requirements.

While working with colleagues of yours, I shared the attached K12 Title IX Checklist. This is a great resource to help reach compliance. Feel free to share with your team.

[Click here for the checklist](#)

Best,

Christopher Simmons, Ph. D.  
Director of Business Development  
[ICS Solutions](#)

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Thank You

Maurice Freeman  
President  
Georgia Athletic Directors  
Association

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