

GEORGIA ATHLETIC DIRECTORS ASSOCIATION



Photo from the Section 3 Meeting Atlanta May 2024

Vol 15 No 10 - May 2024

You make a difference!

Congratulations to Rhett Howard of Allatoona High School and Neva Miller of Blessed Trinity Catholic High School for being selected as the scholarship winners by Section 3 at the May meeting held in Atlanta. These two student athletes will move on to represent Section 3 in the selection of the national male and female scholarship winners which will be presented at the NADC in Austin, TX this December.

Also, Congratulations to our region and classification Regions Bank Director's Cup winners! This is a great honor to these coaches and their players as well as their communities.

As the school year comes to a close, I hope everyone had a successful spring with all of your sports. Make sure you take time for yourself to get some rest with your family and friends this summer. I know it is a busy time for your coaches during the summer preparing for their upcoming seasons, but make sure they are also taking some time for themselves because the next school year will be here before you know it.

As we enter into the summer and are coming off the first dead week please be reminded that we have a 2nd dead week from July 1 - July 7. The summer is a great time to start preparing for the upcoming school year. Click on this link for the June/July checklist that will help make sure your athletic business is handled for the beginning of the school year.



Please remember GADA is your professional association and if you ever need anything or have any questions feel free to contact any member of your Board of Directors.

Sincerely,
Ricky Turner
GADA President
Athletic Director
Blessed Trinity Catholic High School

Another school year is in the books and it was a banner year for GHSA. Our membership is at an all time high. Past President Maurice Freeman accepted our banner recognizing this accomplishment at our National conference this past December in Florida. We finally got our new website going and our cup points system in house thanks to Don Baker, Josh Mathews and Kevin Petroski. Our conference moved to Athens after many years in the Savannah area. Josh Mathews and the board spent many hours making this happen. AD Insider is a new addition to our conference and we will continue to build on this new partnership. Last spring the board got together to adopt our new strategic plan. Carter Wilson played a major role in getting this off the ground. Several changes have come from our new plan, one area being our board structure. We opened all board positions and committee positions to our membership. Many of you asked to be part of a committee and we tried to place you on the committee you requested. If you are interested in getting involved please contact me. You can find our strategic plan on our website. These are a few of our highlights from the last school year. As always, I want to thank the board and you for your continued dedication and endless work effort.



Joe Sanfilippo, CMAA
GADA
Executive Director

2024 Georgia Athletic Directors Awards

NIAAA Award of Merit

Kelli Smith

NIAAA Distinguished Service

Ricky Turner

Distinguished Service (non-member)

Dr. Robin Hines

NFHS Citation

Joe Sanfilippo

Frank Kovalski Professional Development

Kevin Grooms

NIAAA Hall of Fame

Carter Wilson

GADA Bob Stinchcomb Athletic Leadership Award

Don Baker

GADA State Athletic Directors of the Year

GHSA State- Kirk Barton- Norcross

MS- Rendell Jackson – APS

GIAA- Charles Parker- LaGrange Academy

A DI- Craig Hargrove- Social Circle

A DII- Chuck Sanders- Jenkins County

AA- Andre Taylor- Central

AAA-Lloyd Collins- White County

AAAA- Michelle Ahmad- Luella

AAAAA- Jon Ward- Clarke Central

AAAAAA- Brad Hayes- Jackson County

AAAAAAA- Paul Fitz-Simons- Carrollton

GIAA C1- Roy Brown- Harvester Christian Academy

GIAA C2- Aaron George- Trinity Christian

GIAA C3- Jake Copeland- The Heritage School

GIAA C4-Mark Whitely- George Walton Academy

2023-24 Region Athletic Directors of the Year

8-AAAAAAA Travis Techo Mill Creek

7-AAAAAAA Kirk Barton Norcross

6-AAAAAAA Dan Kaplan Forsyth Central

5-AAAAAAA Matthew Williams North Cobb

4-AAAAAAA Tim Watkins Archer

3-AAAAAAA Wesley Ellis Harrison

2-AAAAAAA Paul Fitz-Simons Carrollton

1-AAAAAAA Reginald Mitchell Valdosta

8-AAAAAA Brad Hayes Jackson County

7-AAAAAA Ben Sutter Roswell

6-AAAAAA Amie Howard Allatoona

5-AAAAAA Randy Robbins Newnan
4-AAAAAA Andre Regan North Atlanta
3-AAAAAA Dwayne Davis Mundy's Mill
2-AAAAAA Marty Jackson Grovetown
1-AAAAAA Chris Martin Tift County

8-AAAAA Jon Ward Clarke Central
7-AAAAA Brock Holley Calhoun
6-AAAAA Chris Short Chattahoochee
5-AAAAA Mekia Troy Creekside
4-AAAAA Pamela Johnson Lithonia
3-AAAAA Leon Hammond McIntosh
2-AAAAA Stephen Phillips Locust Grove
1-AAAAA Steve Wight Coffee County

8-AAAA Mike Haynes Madison County
7-AAAA Chuck Robinson Central Carrollton
6-AAAA Kathy Richey-Walton Southwest Dekalb
5-AAAA Michelle Ahmad Luella
4-AAAA Andrew Calhoun Troup County
3-AAAA Wade Marchman Burke County
2-AAAA Art Billings Perry
1-AAAA David Mackey Bainbridge

8-AAA Eli Connell Monroe Area
7-AAA Lloyd Collins White County
6-AAA Chris Woods Coahulla Creek
5-AAA Wendy Golston Carver, Atlanta
4-AAA Rodney Holder Harlem
3-AAA Nicols St. Louis St. Vincent's Academy
2-AAA Robert Lindsey Mary Persons
1-AAA Jimmy Hughes Crisp County

8-AA Mandy Hunter Union County
7-AA Blake Lawson Murray County
6-AA Nadine O'Connor Coretta Scott King Academy
5-AA Scott Queen ELCA
5-AA Marcus Salter McNair
4-AA Brandon Tull Glenn Hills
3-AA Brandon Jernigan Pierce County
2-AA Andre Taylor Central
1-AA Roger Metts Jeff Davis

8-ADI Kendall Love Commerce
7-ADI Debra Pourquoi The Dalton Academy
6-ADI Andrew Tulowitzky Galloway
5-ADI Craig Hargrove Social Circle
4-ADI Shane Lasseter Heard County
3-ADI Terry Markovcic Screven County
2-ADI Roger Holmes Dublin
1-ADI Sug Parker Bacon County

8-ADII Jim Melton Towns County
7-ADII Hal Lamb Christian Heritage
6-ADII Gabe Theiss Schley County
5-ADII Andrew Grodecki Georgia Military
4-ADII Jason Brooks Treutlen
3-ADII Chuck Sanders Jenkins County
2-ADII Winston Peterson Clinch County
1-ADII Jake Page Seminole County

GIAA AAAA Mark Whitley George Walton Academy
GIAA AAA Jake Copeland The Heritage School
GIAA AA Aaron George Trinity Christian
GIAA A Roy Brown Harvester Christian Academy

[Download the awards list](#)

7 Simple Steps to Streamline Your Athletic Clearance Process

Author: Clay Burnett, CEO of FinalForms



7 Simple Steps to Streamline Your Athletic Clearance Process

It's never been more important to make sure only eligible athletes suit up and take the field. Fielding ineligible players comes with serious penalties at the department, district, and state level; not to mention the public relations and legal nightmares. Unfortunately, "eligibility" is becoming increasingly complex due to evolving, required consent, compliance, and waiver forms.

Suffice it to say that athletic clearance is complex — and it's even harder when you're relying on outdated systems. That being the case, optimizing athletic

clearance needs to be a top goal for every district in order to keep kids safe and avoid negative outcomes.

With that in mind, let's take a look at some of the ways you can streamline your athletic clearance process and ensure only eligible athletes play.

1. Examine your current process

Before you change anything about your program, take a hard look at your current process. Document what's working and what needs improvement.

For example, it's possible your school has a stellar system in place for collecting information and preventing ineligible athletes from taking the field. If your district never has any issues with eligibility, it may just be a matter of further optimizing your system and digitizing your operations. On the other hand, if you're constantly running into problems, you may need to scrap your current system and start fresh.

Click [HERE](#) to download the article



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If making a purchase by CC via our site, please use the following discount code during check-out: **GADA10**

If making a purchase by PO, please [contact our team](#) and we will apply the discount for you.

Membership Information

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

Click the link below

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NIAAA Leadership Training Institute

Webinars

In an effort to meet the needs of individuals who desire to enhance their knowledge of interscholastic athletic administration and cannot attend the national conference or state conference, the NIAAA seasonally offers selected courses in a webinar format. Our webinars offer the opportunity to take courses from the comforts of the office or home and receive the same quality instruction, interaction and networking opportunities as is provided in a classroom setting. Each webinar costs \$125 for members and \$210 for non-members. The course fee includes the digital course manual and an



acknowledgment of course completion. Each course is taught by trained and experienced faculty.

In preparation of taking a webinar, please review all of our [webinar policies](#) and expectations. By purchasing a webinar, you are indicating that you agree with the policies.

Webinar Schedule

Webinars will be offered on Eastern Standard Time - EST. Attendees must register for a webinar by 12 p.m. EST one business day before the scheduled course date. **Webinar registration will open on June 10.**

Summer 2024

All classes will be 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. EST.

LTC 799 – Monday, July 15

LTC 617 – Wednesday, July 17

LTC 701 – Thursday, July 18

LTC 726 – Monday, July 22

LTC 633 – Tuesday, July 23

LTC 707 – Wednesday, July 24

LTC 626 – Thursday, July 25

LTC 715 – Monday, July 29

LTC 703 – Tuesday, July 30

LTC 723 – Wednesday, July 31

LTC 700 – Thursday, August 1

[Click HERE for more information](#)



THE TIME TO START PLANNING IS NOW

Pickle Juice can help you. Let us make your life easier.

Pickle Juice streamlines the registration process for your team, club or league by placing all of your forms and registrations in one place, but we're also continually updating and enhancing features like fundraising and messaging. We are also allowing you to customize your site with Team Logos.



Simplifying Registrations

Pickle Juice simplifies registrations for you. The online registration platform gives you the ability to customize your registration and include special events. Since that's taken care of, you can focus on streamlining the registration process for yourself by:

- Offering incentives for early registrants like early-bird discounts and referral discounts.
- Setting up registrations online and sending hyperlinks to parents, taking them directly to where they need to register.



Simplifying Payments

Sports are expensive, and that's understandable. But you can take care of athletes, parents and coaches by taking some of that burden away from them.

- Set up custom payment plans for your teams: Give your parents and players the options to pay in full or over multiple payments. These can be set up in advance of the season and ready to go when the season starts.
- Make sure you have a system capable of accepting all types of payments and managing all forms of payment.

If you allow Pickle Juice to help simplify your registrations and payments, then you'll have access to a secure card and chip reader that allows you to accept payments on your smartphone, and we have an application you can download to your phone that makes the process even easier.



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.

Pickle Juice makes communicating across your team, league or club easy with its messaging center that's managed from one centralized location.



**Built on premier competition,
GHSAA flag football is ascending**

By Hayden Gilbert, ScoreAtl.com

Flag football in the GHSAA has grown tremendously since its introduction during the 2020 season. Every year, more and more schools are giving girls new opportunities to play in one of the fastest-growing sports in the state.

In the upcoming weeks, flag football will be a part of the Corky Kell + Dave Hunter 7-on-7 Tournament, with the event being held at West Forsyth. Flag football will also have its own Classic in October.

Playing its first season in 2020, flag football started out small. Due to it being a new sport during



**Joe Burns among 30 named
to Georgia High School
Football Hall of Fame**

By Becky Taylor, gafnews.com

ATLANTA — Former Thomas County Central running back Joe Burns was among 30 elected into the third Georgia High School Football Hall of Fame class announced this week.

A four-time Player of the Year on Associated Press and Atlanta Journal-Constitution All-State lists, Burns' Yellow Jackets teams went 29-1 and won two titles for Ed Pilcher his junior and senior seasons. Burns turned in 5,006 rushing yards for his high school days

the COVID-plagued 2020 season, only 87 schools fielded teams in two divisions with 43 schools in Division 1 and 44 schools in Division 2. In year one, West Forsyth won the first-ever Division 2 championship, defeating Hillgrove 26 to 25, while Calvary Day became the first team to win the Division 1 championship, defeating Portal 6 to 0.

In the sport's second year, flag football added nearly a hundred schools, getting up to 181 schools while also adding a third division. The playoffs saw Southeast Bulloch beat Portal 20 to 0 to win the Division 1 championship. The Division 2 title was won by Dodge County, which beat Lithia Springs 6-0. Hillgrove avenged its 2020 championship loss, defeating Marietta 20 to 6, winning the first Division 3 championship.

In 2022, 41 schools joined the sport, pushing the number of schools competing in flag football up to 222. Southeast Bulloch became the first two-time champion, defeating Harris County 13 to 0 to claim its second Division 1 championship. Lithia Springs won the Division 2 title to get over the hump with its first championship after losing in the finals the year before, defeating Central Carroll 14 to 0. Blessed Trinity held off Milton 19

and an average yards per carry of 9.3. No slouch in other roles, he returned four kicks for touchdowns and had 68 total touchdowns.

At Georgia Tech, Burns was named first team All-ACC in 2001 and had 2,634 career rushing yards. Though undrafted, Burns played four NFL seasons with the Buffalo Bills.

Other Southern Georgia players making the Class of 2024 are George Atkinson (Sol C. Johnson), Thomas Davis (Randolph-Clay), Lauren Hargrove (Fitzgerald), Tommy Hart (Ballard-Hudson), Len Hauss (Wayne County), Kent Hill (Americus), Leonard Pope (Americus), Demaryius Thomas (West Laurens) and Ben Zambiasi (Mount de Sales).

Valdosta State was the collegiate home of another selection, Jessie Tuggle.

An all-time great for the Atlanta Falcons, then-Valdosta State College signed Tuggle out of Griffin High for VSC's second ever season playing football. With the Blazers, Tuggle was named All-America as a senior. He was inducted into the Chick-fil-A College Football Hall of

to 13 to win its first championship in Division 3.

Last season, another 24 schools joined the sport. With 246 schools competing in the sport, the Divisions grew to unprecedented sizes with the biggest Division 2 having 92 members. These massive Divisions led to more competitive play and exciting playoffs. In Division 1, Southeast Bulloch cemented its dynasty and won its third straight championship, defeating North Oconee 14 to 0. In Division 2, Greenbrier stopped Lithia Springs' bid for a second straight title, winning 14 to 6. Pope won a nail-biter in the Division 3 championship, defeating Allatoona 14 to 13.

[Read More →](#)

Fame in 2007. Tuggle's No. 88 is retired by VSU.

Undrafted out of Valdosta State, the Falcons signed Tuggle, where all he did was lead the NFL in total tackles four times and make five Pro Bowls. Tuggle played in Atlanta's first Super Bowl appearance. He was in the inaugural class of Atlanta's Ring of Honor.

Hargrove earned Wigwam Wiseman All-American in 1948 at Fitzgerald, scoring more than 60 touchdowns as a Purple Hurricane. Until recently, the 1948 team was the only football state champion in Fitzgerald history.

[Read More →](#)

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We don't want 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.

The GADA respects your privacy. We do not sell or share your information.

Ga. AG Chris Carr files lawsuit against Title IX changes by Biden administration

By WALB News



ATLANTA, Ga. (WALB) - Georgia Attorney General Chris Carr has filed a lawsuit, joining other state's attorneys general, to oppose aspects of the Biden administration's expansion of Title IX.

The expanded guidelines of Title IX offer measures to stop schools from banning transgender students and teachers from using restrooms that match their gender identities,

according to [NBC News](#). The Title IX rules also allow transgender athletes to compete in sports that fit their gender identity.

Those measures are part of the focus of Carr's lawsuit.

"The Biden administration is destroying women's sports by gutting commonsense provisions that protect female athletes and demanding that biological males be allowed to compete against females," Carr said in a statement. "Today we have taken action to defend women's rights to fair competition, and we will keep fighting until we end this absurdity once and for all."

Carr previously pushed back against Biden's administration updates to Title IX in 2022.

Three other attorneys general are also a part of the lawsuit including those from Alabama, Florida and South Carolina.

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Unacceptable Behavior at High School Sporting Events – It's Still Happening

By Dr. Karissa Nihoff, NHSF.org



Unacceptable behavior at high school sporting events – it's still happening. And much of this deplorable behavior continues to be directed at the thousands of individuals who VOLUNTEER to serve as contest officials.

While many states have reported an increase in the number of individuals signing up to officiate high school sports – particularly in the past few years of recovery from the pandemic – surviving the constant questioning of calls, name-calling, profane language and even violent attacks remains a challenge for new officials.

This is supposed to be EDUCATION-BASED SPORTS. Yet, the NFHS has heard reports of coaches – and even student-athletes themselves – disrespecting officials on the court and field.

We have to do better. We must do better. As the slogan for our Bench Bad Behavior campaign says, Enough is Enough.

One of our sport directors attended a state basketball tournament a few weeks ago. The games were action-packed, the skill level was superb, the stands were packed. Two outstanding teams advanced to the championship game. The

tournament was a great success – except for the behavior. In high school sports, however, that is an unacceptable exception. Coaches and players in the final game were constantly on the officials, questioning calls. Does winning, in and of itself, define success in high school sports? The answer should be a resounding NO!

Since the NFHS started its Become an Official campaign about seven years ago, more than 125,000 people have applied to become a high school official. These are individuals who had a desire to give up time on weeknights and weekends – for not much money – so that millions of high school students could be involved in sports.

These individuals officiate to give back to high school athletics. Do they get every call right every night? Absolutely not, just like coaches and student-athletes make mistakes at times.

High school sports need to be different than the college and professional levels, where players and coaches tend to complain about almost every call. High school sports are also different than non-school youth travel teams, where the emphasis is on individual accomplishments and winning. While we wish the behavior of coaches and athletes at other levels presented a better role model, behavior in education-based high school sports must be different.

[Read More →](#)

Leadership Spotlight: Sarah Bridenbaugh, KHSAA Assistant Commissioner NFHS.org

Age is just a number. KHSAA Assistant Commissioner Sarah (Van Horn) Bridenbaugh is proof of that. In the opposite direction of what most people think when hearing this phrase, she never lets her young age stop her from being the leader she was destined to be.



Early in her high school career, her coaches recognized her skills and leadership abilities, placing heavy responsibilities on her shoulders to guide the team through a difficult division. She rose to the occasion, getting her first varsity minutes in the postseason as a freshman. From

there, she was a presence on the floor for Morgan High School and earned all-state honors in her junior and senior seasons.

Bridenbaugh garnered the attention of several colleges, including West Virginia Wesleyan College, where she signed and shined.

In her freshman season, she was named to the All-WVIAC Freshman Team and was First Team All-WVIAC the remaining three seasons. In her senior season, she was WVIAC Player of the Year.

She averaged 20 points and more than 10 rebounds per game for her career. Bridenbaugh graduated as the all-time leading scorer for WVWC with 2,087 points, was a finalist for the State Farm All-American team and was a two-time Honorable Mention on the NCAA II All-American team. These accomplishments made her a natural selection for the 2023 WVWC Hall of Fame Class, barely 15 years removed from her playing days.

At 24, she was tabbed as Paul Laurence Dunbar's girls' basketball head coach (Kentucky), after starting her career coaching two seasons at Lewis County, WV. At Paul Laurence Dunbar, she guided the Lady Bulldogs to the KHSAA Girls' Sweet 16® semifinals and compiled a four-year record of 92-37. She was hired by KHSAA as assistant commissioner in August of 2015.

In her ninth year, she is currently the lead contact for six championships – cross country, competitive cheer, dance, swimming and diving, and outdoor track and field – and was the lead in starting the first-ever indoor track and field state championships.

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Garrett Greenberg
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Corrie Collier
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CAA

Brian Montgomery
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Eric Collins
Jeffrey Battles
Nicholas Gast
Cameron Prather
Peter Mullvain
Michael Edwards



Daryl Brooks

RAA

Lorenzo Sewell

Marcus Rice

Christopher Ratliff

Dowyn Lyles

Kirk Call

Alexas Durr-Terry

Jason Carrera

Dustin Cordell

John Patrick

Samuel Bennett

Jason Holcombe

Nikki Fowler

Mary Bargo

Jermaine Christian

Antwain Turner

Kimberly Mixon

Marquez Martin

Nathan Bradley



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Sports Team**

Resource Information

Your June/July AD Checklist

- Update Coach Manual
- Update all policies & procedures
- Review annual financial data
- Send out Coaches Manual
- Pre-Planning Coaches Meeting
- Check Pre-Participation Documentation
- Update School Roster (MIS-GHSA)
- Confirm GHSA Eligibility
- Football initial eligibility due 7/24
- Register for NADC-Austin
- Update school website
- Transportation requests Fall Sports
- Athletic Trainer Schedule and order supplies for Training Room
- All Coaches complete pre-coaching acknowledgements
- Schedule CPR class for initial and re-certification
- Renew Concussion Certification
- Rules Clinic Dates reminders
- Indoor/Outdoor Checklist completion and submit work orders
- Add games to event calendar
- Secure fall sports officials
- Oversight of all facilities for fall sports



[Download June/July Checklist](#)

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](#)