



# Athletic Guidelines

## Middle/High School

(Revised August 2019)

Dear Parent/Guardian and Prospective Athlete:

Welcome to the *Forsyth County High School and Middle School Athletic Programs*. (Revised 2019)

This handbook is designed to provide information about the Forsyth County High School and Middle School Athletic Programs. It also serves as a guide for all athletes, parents, and coaches who represent the Forsyth County School System by participating in extra-curricular activities.

The athletic departments at Forsyth County High Schools and Middle Schools have a strong commitment to integrity, dedication, scholarship, sportsmanship and leadership. Athletics provide the venue through which leadership, problem solving, goal setting, decision making, and perseverance are learned, practiced, reinforced, and rewarded.

High school and middle school athletics are not just participation and a team picture. A *true* athlete is someone of high moral character who possesses a genuine work ethic. He/She contributes to the team in many different roles and always strives for improvement and efficient execution of skills, in practice as well as in competition. An athlete has fun! It is fun to go beyond perceived limitations, set new goals, and achieve them. The amount of work it takes is immense, but the difficult road to success is well worth the effort!

We challenge you to make the commitment to build your future through athletics. Be a student-athlete and be supportive of our student-athletes.

With Forsyth County Pride,

Nathan Turner  
Athletics & Activities Coordinator  
Forsyth County Schools

Middle School Principals and Athletic Directors  
High School Principals and Athletic Directors

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# **I. PHILOSOPHY**

Athletics can play a vital role in personal growth. Athletics teach, reinforce, and refine the attributes necessary for success in life. Forsyth County high schools and middle schools invite all students to grow into adulthood by learning to compete at their own age and appropriate skill level. Through its partnership with the Forsyth County Park and Recreation, the Forsyth County School System strives to provide opportunities for students of all ages to participate in extra-curricular activities.

A student's responsibility lies first in the classroom and secondly in the athletic arena. In all aspects of an athlete's life – academic, athletic, or citizenship in the community - the individual's commitment, execution, behavior and appearance should be exemplary. The coach's responsibility is to the student, team, coaching staff, program, school, and community.

Forsyth County teams should always strive to maintain a competitive level of success with other schools of comparable size in the state of Georgia. The athletes comprising these teams will be determined by an orderly selection process that is developed by the coaching staff of each program and follows the athletic philosophy of the individual school as established by the principal and athletic director.

All high schools in the Forsyth County School System are members of the Georgia High School Association. "The GHSA is a voluntary organization composed of public and private high schools. It strives to promote good sportsmanship and a cooperative spirit among its member schools. It endeavors to maintain high standards so that each pupil competing in each school is on the same basis. In the field of athletics its interest is the safety of the participants; it is on this principle that its athletic rules are based.

The GHSA operates under a Constitution and By-Laws which outlines the scope and purpose of the Association. It contains the standards of eligibility to be met by high school pupils for attaining the privilege of participation in inter school contests, and rules controlling the participation among schools. By adoption of the Constitution and By-Laws through its membership, member schools have by their initiative acted to operate and discipline their interscholastic activities and contests." (GHSA Constitution and By-Laws)

All Forsyth County School System high schools adhere to GHSA guidelines as well as Forsyth County policies and athletic guidelines. Forsyth County middle schools adhere to the local board policies as well as the Forsyth County athletic guidelines. Middle schools adhere to GHSA Constitutions and By-Laws as closely as possible (the nature of middle school athletics require some modification of GHSA). For questions, contact any local athletic director or the system athletic director.

# **II. COUNTY ATHLETIC DIRECTOR/ EQUITY COORDINATOR**

A. Athletic Administrators and Coaches are expected to be responsive to and attend all meetings called by the County Athletic Director or receive advanced approval for absences.

1. The County Athletic Director will assist in coordinating all athletic activities for the school system. However, the coaches' immediate supervisors are the administrators at the high school.
2. When region affairs are in question, it is imperative that FCSD Schools understand that they are members of the region and are ethically responsible to help formulate the best situation for all schools in the region including non-county member schools. Prior to the region meeting, it is recommended that principals meet with members of their local school staffs in order to bring to the discussion meeting any positions to be taken, or recommendations to be made, on behalf of their particular school.
3. When the region meeting is held, it is suggested that each principal attend, and when this is not possible, that they appoint a designee to be the official school representative at the meeting. Each school has one vote.
4. The County Athletic Director will act as the system equity in sports coordinator. He is located at Hill Center Safety Office 136 Elm St, Cumming GA 30040, 770-888-3466 x 310268.

### **III. ADMINISTRATIVE RESPONSIBILITY**

The administrative head of each school shall have on file in the school a certificate of an annual physical examination by a licensed medical physician, a doctor of Osteopathic medicine or a physician's assistant indicating the student is approved for participation in athletic activities before that student may try-out, participate in practice or conditioning drills, or participate in interscholastic contests (See the county athletics webpage for most recent forms).

The administrative head of each school shall operate all interscholastic contests and activities under direct and complete control of the school administration or designated school personnel. These responsibilities are not to be delegated by the Board of education, superintendent, or principal to any person or persons who are not a part of the school staff. These responsibilities shall include the handling of all finances, including capital outlay, the purchase of equipment and supplies, and the employment and payment of salaries to all personnel connected with the activity. The administrative head of each school shall be a person who believes in fairness and honesty as evidenced by the strict adherence to all rules and regulations in regard to eligibility of contestants representing his/her school. The administrative head of each school shall employ those persons who exemplify fairness and honesty. Any certified person who violates rules in regard to student eligibility, or illegal practices, or knowingly misleads a member school and/or the Forsyth County Athletic Director or Forsyth County School System will have a report of that behavior sent to The Professional Standards Commission. The administrative head of each school shall submit to the Forsyth County Athletic Director and Forsyth County School System such recommendations for the improvement of the Forsyth County Athletics as he/she may deem necessary. These recommendations must be submitted to the Forsyth County Athletic Director prior to the next county meeting (meetings are usually scheduled at the beginning of each season). The member institution has a responsibility to educate student-athletes, coaches, and other appropriate persons on Forsyth County Athletic Guidelines and Forsyth County School System rules and procedures that could affect them. Further, the member school should monitor its compliance with State Association guidelines. Member schools are expected to fulfill their responsibilities for a sports season once they have committed to play that sport.

### **IV. QUALIFICATIONS TO COACH**

#### **A. Certification:**

An athletic coach must be a professional teacher meeting the teaching requirements and be employed by only one board of education or similar governing authority within the GHSA membership, regardless of whether or not they are paid for their services (note: Forsyth County does not employ coaches from other systems to coach in the Forsyth County School System), AND:

be employed for 20 or more hours per week on a regular basis in a professional, contracted position and must hold a teaching certificate or leadership certificate issued by the State of Georgia, OR

1. be assigned as a student intern in a practice teaching situation under the guidance of a college or university teacher training program, OR
2. be a retired teacher teaching or supervising less than one-half time (forty hours considered full time), OR
3. be a certified teacher or administrator at a member school on medical leave governed by the "Family Medical Leave Act" and/or the "Georgia Teacher Maternity Leave of Absence" policy.

#### **B. Community Coaches:**

Member schools may employ persons who are not professionally certificated teachers as assistant coaches in their athletic programs. These individuals are referred to as "community coaches" or "lay coaches."

1. Community Coach (lay coach) is defined as a person who may have less than professional-level certification, who relates in role and function to a professional and does a portion of the professional's job or tasks under the supervision of the professional, and whose decision-making authority is limited and regulated by the professional. Community coaches are not allowed to function without the immediate supervision of a professional.

2. Licensed para-professionals may not coach in Forsyth County.
3. Community coaches may coach for only one board of Education annually, regardless of whether or not they are paid for their services.
4. All community coaches must complete the GHSA Coaches Education Training and Testing Program in “Sports First Aid” and “Principles for Coaches” (Middle School Community Coaches refer to schools Principal and Athletic Director for proper procedure). See [ghsa.net](http://ghsa.net)
  - a) ALL prospective coaches must be approved by the principal and subject to a criminal background check before they are registered for the GHSA coach’s education program.
  - b) Courses are offered at various times each school year throughout the state.
  - c) Prospective coaches are registered with the County office by the school hiring them.
  - d) No community coach may do any FCSS coaching until he/she has been notified that the GHSA Coaches Education program had been completed successfully.
5. It is recommended that the following priority for employment be used:
  - a) Certified employees in the local system (secondary, middle, elementary, central office, etc.)
  - b) Retired certificated personnel
  - c) Community coaches who have completed the GHSA Coaches Education Program.

After August 1, schools will have occasion to add members to their coaching staff. It is the responsibility of the member school to register these additions in a timely manner. A football coach on the payroll of one school district, but under contract to another school district for the following year, may help with spring practice at the new school if arrangements are satisfactory with both systems.

Failure to comply with these procedures could result in punitive actions including, but not limited to, forfeitures and other penalties assessed to the member school.

## **V. DIVISION OF SKILL**

Seventh and Eighth grade students enrolled in the Forsyth County School district and one of its participating middle schools will be considered for middle school athletics. The focus is on developing individual and team skills, developing safe practice and play habits, practicing sportsmanship, and enjoying the sport.

Freshmen teams are available for the ninth grade students. The focus is on developing individual and team skills, practicing sportsmanship, and enjoying the sport.

Junior Varsity teams are an advanced developmental program available for students in grades 9-11. The focus is on learning new skills, improving ability, and practicing at a more advanced level so the athlete can transition to the varsity level. Exemplary sportsmanship is a high priority, and winning is a goal.

Varsity teams are advanced programs for grades 9-12. Skill and ability are at a high level. These athletes are the leaders of each program in and out of the athletic arena. Exemplary sportsmanship and winning are high priorities.

All members of the Forsyth County Athletic Departments are dedicated to excellence. Integrity, commitment, sportsmanship and leadership are the cornerstones upon which we build our success.

Winning is important, as long as the lessons learned along the way contribute to the development of the *whole person – a person of integrity*. This is what we call exemplary sporting behavior.

## **VI. GENERAL ELIGIBILITY RULES FOR HIGH SCHOOL**

### **A. Participation:**

A student is eligible to represent Forsyth County High Schools if they meet the following specific requirements:

1. Student must be a bona fide undergraduate member of a Forsyth County High School.
2. In the judgment of the principal and athletic director, the student must be a representative of the school's ideals in matters of conduct and sportsmanship on and off school campus.
3. During the period of participation, student must be enrolled in a full academic load.
4. Student must be eligible in accordance with the Constitution and By-laws of the Georgia High School Association (GHSA) and Georgia Rule 160-5-1-.18  
See [www.ghsa.net](http://www.ghsa.net) > Constitution and By-Laws

### **B. Age and Attendance Requirement:**

1. A student is eligible to enter interscholastic competition when he/she enters the ninth grade and have not obtained the age of 19 by May 1.
2. A student is allowed eight consecutive semesters of competition at the high school level. Cases involving unusual circumstances should be submitted in writing to the Athletic Director.
3. In order to participate in an extra-curricular event, a student must be present at least half of the school day according to the school attendance office. The principal has the authority to overturn this rule in individual cases.
4. Students suspended OSS or ISS are not permitted to participate in competition or practice until they return to school for one full academic day.
5. When a team is released from school for an event, it is the athlete's responsibility to inform the teachers of the classes he/she will be missing, and if at all possible, make up the work before the excused absence. If not possible, it is the athlete's responsibility to make up the time and work missed as soon as possible so as not to jeopardize his/her own academic eligibility or the success of the team.

### **C. Transfer Rule:**

1. In the case of a bona fide family move from one district to another, the student shall be eligible for athletic competition after applying for and receiving clearance through the GHSA.
2. If a student transfers schools without a bona fide family move to another district the student is INELIGIBLE for varsity competition for a full calendar year. See [ghsa.net](http://ghsa.net) (Constitution and By-Laws). The student could be eligible for junior varsity competition, while waiting to become eligible for varsity competition.
3. If by domicile outside Georgia, an athlete is or becomes ineligible; he/she cannot become eligible by transferring to Georgia.
4. A student who would be ineligible in a GHSA member school because of expulsion may not become eligible by transferring to another member school.

### **D. Recruiting and Undue Influence:**

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

1. The use of undue influence to secure or retain a student for competitive purposes is prohibited, shall cause that student to forfeit eligibility for one year from the date of enrollment, and shall lead to other penalties being assessed against the school doing the recruiting as allowed by the GHSA Constitution.
2. Evidence of undue influence includes, but is not limited to, personal contact by coaches and sponsors in an attempt to persuade transfer, gifts of money, jobs, supplies, clothing, free transportation, admission to contests, invitation to attend practices and/or games, or free tuition.

Complaints or reports of violations of this rule will be investigated and handled on a case-by-case basis. If coaches are found to be in violation of the recruiting rule, a copy of the investigation will be forwarded to the Professional Standards Commission of the Department of Education.

## **VII. GENERAL ELIGIBILITY RULES FOR MIDDLE SCHOOL**

### **A. Enrollment:**

To be eligible to participate in athletic extracurricular activities for a season, a student must be enrolled in the school for which he or she will participate, be in the seventh or eighth grade, meet academic requirements, meet the age requirement, and have not exceeded four semesters of participation.

### **B. Classes Passed:**

The Forsyth County School System will recognize eligibility rules established under Georgia Law 160-5-1-.18 and the Georgia High School Association. Please see [www.forsyth.k12.ga.us/athletics](http://www.forsyth.k12.ga.us/athletics). Students participating in interscholastic activities shall pass a minimum of 70% of courses (5 classes out of 6 or 5 classes out of 7) carrying credit toward grade promotion in the semester immediately preceding participation.

### **C. Grading Periods:**

The grades from the previous semester will determine eligibility for the current semester- (Ex) grades from spring of 2018 will determine eligibility for fall of 2018. Students who are not eligible during a semester may not tryout for sports that occur in the following semester if the tryouts occur during the semester of ineligibility. However, students may tryout for the sport if they become eligible at the completion of the semester at the discretion of the coach.

### **D. Incomplete Grades:**

If a student has more than two incomplete semester grades, he or she will not be eligible to participate in athletic extracurricular activities until those grades have been finalized (See GHSA Student Recovery).

### **E. Virtual Classes:**

Students who take courses away from the home school for part or whole day programs but are still enrolled in the home school will be eligible to participate in athletic extracurricular activities at the home school.

### **F. Age Requirements:**

Students who turn 15 prior to May 1 of their seventh grade year are not eligible to participate in athletic extracurricular activities.

### **G. Semester Rule:**

Students will be limited to four consecutive semesters of eligibility for participation in athletic extracurricular activities beginning in the fall of their seventh grade year.

### **H. Retention:**

Retention of students for athletic purposes is prohibited. If a school chooses to retain a student in grades 6, 7, or 8 who has passing grades, the school shall document the educational reasons for the retention. Written documentation shall be maintained in the student's permanent record and shall include the following information.

1. A parent/guardian written request outlining the reasons for requesting the retention and /or a school-initiated written request with the accompanying written approval of the request by the parent/guardian.
2. Statements from two professional sources from outside the school justifying the retention for educational purposes.



3. Written approval of the retention request and justification of the retention for educational purposes by the principal, the superintendent and by two teachers (other than athletic coach) who have taught the student.

#### **I. Eligibility Reporting:**

All eligibility forms should be completed on the county approved eligibility form (found on the county website under resources) and turned in to the local school athletic director. The forms should be on file at all times.

#### **J. Attendance and Absences:**

1. In order to participate in an extra-curricular event, a student must be present at least half of the school day according to the school attendance office. The principal has the authority to overturn this rule in individual cases.
2. Students suspended OSS or ISS are not permitted to participate in competition or practice until they return to school for one full academic day.
3. When a team is released from school for an event, it is the athlete's responsibility to inform the teachers of the classes he/she will be missing, and if at all possible, make up the work before the excused absence. If not possible, it is the athlete's responsibility to make up the time and work missed as soon as possible so as not to jeopardize his/her own academic eligibility or the success of the team.

## **VIII. ATHLETIC PARTICIPATION REQUIREMENTS FOR MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS**

A student may participate in athletic programs in the Forsyth County High/Middle Schools provided the following requirements are met:

#### **A. Eligibility:**

A student must be listed as eligible to participate on the appropriate form that is completed by the Athletic Director and submitted to the GHSA (for high school) and the school level Athletic Director (middle school). Athletic Directors are responsible for appropriate filing of reports in the home school. Middle schools playing interscholastic contests before the filing of an eligibility report on one or more participating students may be subject to the following penalty imposed by the Forsyth County School System: Forfeiture of any game in which one or more participants did not have eligibility report filed. Students enrolled in alternative placement are not eligible.

#### **B. Exemplary Sporting Behavior/Sportsmanship:**

*Sporting behavior* means active demonstration of competitive integrity and ethics, respect for opponents and officials, fair play, understanding of the rules, appreciation for all performances regardless of school, personal and school pride, and gracious acceptance of results. Exemplary sporting behavior is a requirement of all athletes, coaches, parents, and students. The Forsyth County athletic teams, fans, and community will set a standard far above that of the behaviors seen at the collegiate and professional levels in current society. Forsyth County Schools Athletics and the Forsyth County community will adhere to the following values of sporting behavior:

1. During the National Anthem and/or Pledge of Allegiance, students, athletes, and fans will remove caps, stand at attention, face the flag and participate in honoring our country.
2. We will treat all opponents, officials, and fans as guests in our school. We will extend to them a welcoming atmosphere conducive to healthy competition that supports the educational mission of athletics.
3. Only positive cheers will be used. No profanity or personal attacks from players, coaches or the crowd will be tolerated.

4. Cheer and tumbling routines must be performed in front of our own student body or adult crowd.
5. Homemade banners are allowed if they display only positive statements. Banners must not block the view of others.
6. Drums, whistles and bleacher kicking are prohibited.
7. Only cheerleaders on the floor may use megaphones.
8. Bands may play only during a dead ball. No instruments of any kind may be used during a live ball.

### **C. Insurance Coverage:**

The student must provide insurance coverage information on the physical/parent permission form (GHSA and County approved ONLY). If a family wishes to purchase student accident insurance for their child, a form can be obtained from the Athletic Office. The Forsyth County School District does not pay for medical expenses related to injury during competitions or practices. Personal insurance or purchased school insurance is required. It is the parent/guardian's responsibility to obtain the appropriate insurance coverage.

### **D. Physical Examination and Parent Permission:**

The student must have on file, with the home school Athletic Office, the provided GHSA form (NO substitutes will be accepted) signed by his/her parents certifying that the student has permission to participate in the school athletic programs. Also, on this form will be the results of a physical examination conducted by a practicing physician, physician's assistant or nurse practitioner. One examination per year is required and is conducted at the student's expense. It is strongly recommended that all athletes obtain physicals during the scheduled time provided through the High Schools or Middle Schools. Forms are available at the Forsyth County Athletic webpage. Students must file with the Athletic Office a parent permission form, proof of insurance, and a physical exam prior to taking part in any school-sponsored practice or clinic/camp. Additional forms may be required. Physicals that expire in the middle of any sport season will be considered expired prior to its beginning.

### **E. Athletic Transportation\Participation Fee:**

Each athletic program/sport will determine the transportation cost for the season, and the total amount will be divided equally among the team members. Transportation fees are collected for each individual athletic program in which a student participates (set by individual school based on travel). For example, if a student participates in basketball and track and field, he/she would be required to pay the transportation fee for each sport, (i.e., basketball fee and track and field fee). The Transportation Department bills the high schools and middle schools for transportation fees at the end each season:

- Fall - December 1<sup>st</sup>
- Winter - March 1<sup>st</sup>
- Spring - May 1<sup>st</sup>

### **F. Transportation:**

1. All team members will ride to an event in school provided transportation with the team. Any athlete, who arranges independent transportation to an event, without permission from the coach and the Athletic Director in advance, will be ineligible to compete in that event.
2. All team members will return to their High/Middle School in the Forsyth County provided transportation unless a Travel Release form is completed by a parent/guardian.
3. Athletes will only be released to their own parent/guardian from a contest. A parent/guardian must sign out the athlete from the coach at the contest site.
4. In the event that extra curricular activities have been cancelled by the FCSS for ANY reason, no athlete is permitted to enter an athletic event and participate as a school representative. Athletes entering events during a time of cancellation for the FCSS will be subject to dismissal from the team. Coaches will not encourage the athlete's independent participation and will not attend the event during the period of time that activities have been cancelled.

## **IX. REGULATIONS OF COMPETITIONS AND PRACTICE**

### **A. General Practice:**

An athlete may practice only if all of the following requirements have been met:

1. Current physical, health history, FCSS Participation form, proof of insurance is turned in to the coach or on file in the Athletic Office.
2. All equipment from a previous season of participation is turned in or has been paid for.
3. Transportation fee has been paid.
4. Current season Athletic Contract has been read and signed by both parent/guardian and athlete and is turned in to the coach or on file in the Athletic Office. (Optional- school by school)

### **B. Sunday Competition:**

Sunday competition is prohibited for GHSA regular season or playoff contests. Sunday practices are regulated by local school policy with county AD permission only and are strongly discouraged.

### **C. Contest Rules:**

All athletic and literary competitions are to be played according to the rules published by the National Federation of State High School Associations, using officially-dressed officials who are registered with the GHSA or another State Association (Golf is played according to the rules of the USGA).

### **D. Postponed, Suspended, or Terminated Contest:**

Any GHSA competition may be interrupted due to human, mechanical, or natural causes when it is necessary to protect the safety of players and spectators. The host school shall have the authority to postpone GHSA events and to direct the procedure for rescheduling when deemed necessary. Middle school principals may agree to alter start times.

### **E. Suspended Games:**

The official in charge may suspend a game for up to one hour when interrupted by events beyond his/her control. The one-hour interruption is cumulative with the exception of time between periods. The game shall be terminated after the one-hour (cumulative) delay. If it is not a complete game, administrators of the schools involved (or their designees) should decide about replaying the game.

### **F. Terminated Games:**

Games terminated after one-hour delay shall count as “no contest” if less than half the game is complete or there is a tie. Games terminated after one half has been completed shall be considered a completed game and the team leading in the score shall be declared winner.

### **G. Severe Weather (Lightning):**

The GHSA requires lightning detectors at all outdoor athletic activities. When a lightning detector indicates a dangerous situation, the host school will notify the head official. At that point, play will be suspended and all participants will go to a place of safety (NOTE: If officials spot lightning before being notified, they may suspend play). When the detector indicates that it is safe to resume play, the contest may resume.

### **H. Absence of Officials:**

In the unlikely event that game officials do not arrive for a contest, both schools should agree on one of the following procedures: (High School will follow GHSA guidelines)

1. Delay the game until a new set of officials can arrive
2. Agree to play the game on another date except a Sunday
3. Use registered officials who might be in attendance at the contest
4. Use coaches or school personnel from both schools
5. Use formerly registered officials who might be in attendance at the contest.

### **I. Use of School Athletic Equipment and Uniforms:**

School-owned athletic equipment is not to be issued to individuals or groups outside the dates of the normal school year or formal practice season of each respective sport during the school year. Athletes will compete in school issued equipment. Uniforms are to be worn only in relationship to team events, and never casually around school or in the community without permission of the principal or athletic director and only as a display of school spirit and unity.

### **J. Activity Conflicts:**

Where sports or other school activity conflicts occur, the following policy will apply:

1. The athlete will have first made prior arrangements with the coach and activity sponsor to participate in both activities under mutually agreed upon conditions.
2. The *performance*, i.e., the athletic game or meet in sports, or concert in music, or performance in drama has priority over any practice or extra rehearsal. In the event a practice, extra rehearsal or even final dress rehearsal is scheduled at the same time an athletic game or meet occurs in which the student is participating, the game or meet has priority and the music member is excused without penalty. Conversely, in the event the music performance conflicts with an athletic practice (even a final practice), the performance takes priority.
3. In the event practice occurs at the same time in both music and sports, the practice time is divided equally between the two activities.
4. In the event a drama performance conflicts with a game, both being scheduled at the same time, the student is permitted a choice without penalty. But this conflict must be resolved at least 2 weeks prior to the events. In the event of a dispute, the Athletic Director will act as arbitrator.
5. In the event that a club sport or outside activity conflicts with participation on a school sponsored team, the coach and/or athletic director will have the authority to remove the athlete from the team for failure to support his/her commitment to the school sponsored program.

### **K. Dual Sports - One Season:**

The athlete will make arrangements with the coaches of both sports to be a member of two teams simultaneously. This meeting must take place before the competitive season begins for each sport and will include: the athlete, a parent/guardian, both coaches and the athletic director. In order for an athlete to become a member of both teams, all team expectations must be upheld for each sport /team involved. The athlete must, at that meeting, declare a primary sport of participation. In cases of conflict, the athlete will then adhere to the policies of the primary sport.

### **L. Reporting and Committing to a Sport:**

Students are expected to report for sports at the beginning of each sport season. Those who report late may jeopardize their chances for participation. Once the athlete decides to join a team, he/she must conduct himself/herself in such a way that he/she will reflect the athletic department standards of integrity, dedication, and sportsmanship. Practice keeps the proper mental attitudes and physical attributes needed to produce champions. Any athlete missing a practice session or contest must present his/her excuse to the coach. If the athlete knows in advance that he/she will miss, he/she must inform the coach in person, and request to be excused. Excused and unexcused absences will be addressed by each coach involved. All athletes are expected to report on the first scheduled practice day and for the duration of the try-out period as well as the entire season of sport. It is ultimately the responsibility of the coach to maintain a disciplined athletic environment. Coaches may remove players they feel are not in keeping with the philosophy of the team. Coaches are encouraged to inform the local school athletic director and administration before making a decision to remove a player. A player that quits a team at any time during the season or playoffs is not eligible to practice or play with any other team until the completion of the season of the sport that the player quit.

### **M. Selecting a Team/Cut Policy:**

Selecting the members of any particular squad within a program is the sole responsibility of the coaching staff of that program. However, he/she must stay within the guidelines determined by the league rules, athletic director and head coach; members must be selected in accordance with the philosophy of the athletic department. The Athletic Departments and Forsyth County High/Middle Schools encourage students to participate at their respective skill and ability levels. Accordingly, situations arise wherein coaches must evaluate student athletes to determine the appropriate level of participation. The selection process is to be done in a systematic manner. The coach will share the selection criteria and process with the athletes as part of the orientation of the sport. Students not selected may contact the head coach for selection questions.

### **N. Summer Participation:**

Participation in summer leagues or summer camps can be encouraged but cannot be used as a prerequisite for participation in an athletic or performance type activity.

1. From the beginning practice date of the first GHSA sport until the last day of school no coach is allowed to work in a camp or clinic in which members of their team are participants unless it is during their designated season as established by GHSA.
2. The school employee is also cautioned not to require or expect participation in an activity in which the employee receives compensation beyond his/her contracted salary. For further clarification, the following is from GHSA regarding Summer Activities:
  - (a) **Dead Week:** All schools are prohibited from participating in voluntary workouts, camps and/or clinics, weight training or competitions during the week (Sunday through Saturday) in which the fourth of July falls each year.
  - (b) Please be aware that GHSA insurance does not cover summer camps, clinics, or practices!!
  - (c) Catastrophic Insurance expires when school is out and does not resume until the first day of football conditioning. Normally any school insurance that a student has obtained also expires with the end of school.
  - (d) Non-mandatory practices may be held during the summer months in any activity.
  - (e) Students may attend camps, clinics, and practices from the first day schools are out until the beginning practice date of the first GHSA sport. Students may participate in football passing leagues, basketball leagues, baseball leagues, etc. They may not represent a school during the summer months.
  - (f) These camps, clinics or practices may not be exclusive, i.e., any student who wishes to attend must be allowed to attend.
  - (g) Camps, clinics or practices may occur on or off school property. If they occur on school property, arrangements must be made with the proper school authorities for the use of school facilities. See local athletic directors for camp fees to be paid to facilities.
  - (h) Students may play on a summer league team that is coached by the high school coach after the last day school is out until the beginning practice date of the first GHSA sport.
  - (i) Coaches may coach teams consisting of participants not on their high school team prior to the end of school.

### **O. Rules of Conduct for Athletes:**

Athletes are representatives of the school, the community, and the league. As leaders in the school, athletes are expected to conduct themselves in a manner prescribed by the athletic department and the school. This conduct shall continue throughout the year and not just for a particular sports season. The athlete shall display good sportsmanship at all times. Inappropriate behavior or language, failure to follow the instructions of the coach and/or officials may lead to suspension from contests and/or the team. A neat, clean and well groomed appearance is expected at all times from every member of the athletic department: athletes, coaches, and administrators.

## **P. Training Rules:**

Basic training rules are necessary for the health and safety of all athletes. The head coach shall establish basic rules approved by the athletic director which are necessary to the particular sport (i.e., diet, sleep, body conditioning, language, grooming, etc.). It shall be the responsibility of each coach to make sure that the team is aware of the training rules at the beginning of the season and a copy of those training rules is given to the athlete, parents, and athletic director. The head coach shall have the prerogative to discipline athletes who violate training rules. Violation of training rules for athletes will be subject to a penalty ranging up to a five-day suspension and/or a recommendation for the athlete to be expelled from the athletic program.

## **Q. Ejections from games for coaches or players:**

Forsyth County schools are required to conduct all relationships with other schools and officials in a spirit of good sportsmanship. It shall be the responsibility of a member school to use every means at its disposal to impress upon faculty, students, team members, coaches, and spectators the values of sportsmanship in preparation for the conduct and management of interscholastic contests. Any player ejected from a contest will be subject to discipline outlined by the GHSA policies as well as additional discipline from their coach, athletic director, principal, or district athletic director. All ejections are reported (in writing) to the System Athletic Director within 24 hours. A full explanation as well as disciplinary action taken by the coach/administration should be included in the statement.

1. Any high school player, coach, or team attendant who is ejected from a Forsyth County contest for a sportsmanship violation shall be suspended from competing in all levels of competition in that sport or activity (during regular season or championship game or tournament) until the period of suspension has expired.
  - (a) Ejections are based on judgment calls by an official and are not reviewable or reversible.
  - (b) A coach shall have no role nor be in attendance at pre- Contest warm-ups or activities, and shall not be in attendance at contests until the period of suspension has expired.
  - (c) A player or team attendant may not be on the competitive area or in the team bench area during any contest until the period of suspension has expired.
  - (d) The period of suspension resulting from an ejection will expire as follows (GHSA time lines apply to high school activities):
    - i. Football: after the individual has been withheld from the next scheduled game at the level at which the ejection occurred.
    - ii. All other Activities: after the individual has been withheld from the next two (2) scheduled contests at the level at which the ejection occurred.
2. Middle schools players are suspended a minimum one game. The administration may require additional suspension time or permanent removal from the athletic team.
3. To satisfy the penalty of the sit-out game(s), those games must have been scheduled at the time of the ejection, and must be played to completion.
4. When a player, coach, or team attendant has a second ejection in the same activity during a school year, that individual shall be withheld from competition for twice the time period of the normal suspension.
5. In the event that a player, coach, or team attendant is ejected three (3) or more times in the same activity during the school year for a sportsmanship violation, the individual will be withheld from competition until:
  - a) The member school presents a written response to the circumstances involved in that individual's unsportsmanlike behavior, AND
  - b) The school Principal and Forsyth County School System establish a penalty which may include suspension in all Forsyth County activities for up to twelve (12) months.
6. If the ejection occurs in the last game of the season, the penalty carries over to the first game of the next season. If the student is a eighth grader, the penalty carries over to the next activity in which the student participates.
7. Any student who intentionally injures or intentionally attempts to injure another student, coach, official, spectator, or other person immediately before, during, or immediately after any Forsyth County

sponsored activity, may be declared ineligible to participate in future Forsyth County activities by the Forsyth County School System. These situations will be immediately reported to the System Athletic Director.

### **R. Officials' Security:**

The officials' dressing area is "off limits" to coaches and administrators for the discussion of game decisions either at halftime or after the game. Officials should be granted a one-hour time limit before the game, the length of halftime, and 30 minutes after the game, where the facilities are secured. Home schools are responsible for safe passage for all officials while on their campus.

### **S. Lettering (High School Only):**

1. In order to letter, a player must have maintained athletic and academic eligibility for the duration of the season (including the post season). They must also have adhered to all training rules and additional lettering criteria set forth by his/her coach and the administration.
2. A letter may be awarded to an athlete at the recommendation of the coach, with the approval of the Athletic Director in manifest hardship cases.
3. A player must successfully complete the entire season at his/her school including post-season play.
4. Specific requirements for lettering in each varsity sport are available from the head coach of each sport.

## **X. NCAA Eligibility Requirements**

### **A. Preparation:**

All student athletes who, by the end of their sophomore year of high school, are hoping to continue athletic participation at the collegiate level must make an appointment with their high school counselor to review courses and check credits. All NCAA colleges and universities have certain course requirements of entering freshmen.

### **B. NCAA Clearinghouse:**

All student athletes who have a realistic opportunity to continue their athletic participation at the collegiate level at a Division I or Division II institution must register for the NCAA Clearinghouse. You may pick up a registration form in the counseling office. You will need to register near the end of your junior year of high school. There is a small processing fee that the athlete must submit with the registration form.

Please see the NCAA web-site for more information: [www.ncaa.org](http://www.ncaa.org)

## **XI. Policy on Illegal Drugs**

The Forsyth County School System strongly oppose the abuse of any illegal drugs including the abuse of anabolic steroids and other performance enhancing substances by middle/high school student-athletes. The Forsyth County School System believes that such usage violates legal, ethical and competitive-equity standards and imposes unreasonable long-term health risks on the user. Schools are encouraged to supply educational materials about this issue to students. Disciplinary action will be taken against any player that participates in the use of, distribution of, or association with other persons in use of or possession of any illegal drugs (or substances deemed to be "look alike" drugs) including anabolic steroids and other performance enhancing substances. Discipline will range from suspension to permanent dismissal from the Forsyth County Athletic Program and all sports associated with the Forsyth County School System.

## **XII. County Badges and GHSA Passes**

### **A. Forsyth County Athletic Pass/Badge:**

Only the bearer of this pass/badge plus one family member will be admitted to high/ middle school games held within Forsyth County (unless other arrangements are made through the region). Passes/Badges are not valid at region or state playoff contests. Photo I.D. may be requested.

### **B. Georgia High School Association Passes:**

Only the bearer of this pass plus one will be admitted. Photo ID will be required. Those persons whose names appear on a list which has been approved in advance by the principal or his/her designee may be admitted free of charge for regular season events.

## **XIII. Forsyth County Athletic Regulations for Broadcasting**

### **A. Building Administrator Authority:**

The building administrator shall have the authority to determine what school event may or may not be broadcast on television. Written approval must be obtained from the building administrator for profit or nonprofit broadcasting of any event on the school campus.

### **B. GHSA Approval:**

Broadcasting of Georgia High School Association activities must adhere to all GHSA rules concerning the broadcasting of athletic events on radio, TV or other media.

### **C. School System Liability:**

School personnel must be aware that the signing of agreements obligating a local school to become responsible for performing specific duties and holding harmless any entity from any and all liability places the school, school personnel, and the system in a very precarious situation.

### **D. Coaches:**

Coaches should not sign any agreement or contract without the principal's prior approval which may include the legal advice of the school system attorney.

### **E. Fan Video Taping:**

Fans who tape from the general seating area for personal use are permitted to do so, with local school approval. However, the following criteria must be met prior to video taping for profit or non-profit from the sidelines, press-box, or designated media areas:

1. Request and receive permission from the local school principal in advance.
2. Be a representative from the media which is FCC licensed, OR
3. Be under contract with the local school for video yearbook production, OR
4. Be an individual booster club using video taping for fundraising purposes, with principal approval.



## **XIV. MIDDLE SCHOOL SPECIFIC SPORT REGULATIONS**

(Middle schools will follow GHSA By-Laws. Rule exceptions should be discussed with the System AD)

### **A. Football:**

1. Spring practice may take place last full week of April (unless detailed by the scheduling committee) until the last day of student attended school. Spring practice is limited to ten consecutive student attended school days. Each school may decide if they want to practice in full pads, helmets/shoulders pads, or just T-shirts and shorts.
2. Schools may participate in specified regular season games plus the county championship. Coaches may also schedule scrimmage games as outlined by the schedule. Schools will have the option to schedule one pre season scrimmage where all players may participate. In addition, schools have the option to schedule scrimmage games. These scrimmage games are set aside for players that do not receive playing time during the regular games.
  - a) Schools may play scrimmage games with the permission of the principal and county AD.
  - b) Players may not participate in scrimmage game if they played in the regular week day game unless the player was inserted in relief during a one-sided competition and does not receive regular playing time (5<sup>th</sup> quarter excluded).
  - c) 8<sup>th</sup> graders are not allowed to play in scrimmage games unless both coaches agree that it is in the best interest of a player that may not receive regular season playing time.
  - d) Games are to be approved by the school's principal.
  - e) Regular officials are to be scheduled for each game.
  - f) Game times will follow the regular middle school format unless otherwise agreed by both coaches.
  - g) Game times may not be increased.
  - h) Scrimmage games will start no earlier than 9am and will finish no later than 1pm.
  - i) Records will have no bearing on the official regular season.
  - j) If coaches choose, one coach at a time may be present on the field to assist their team. Coaches may not be present in the huddle.
3. Schools not having enough players to schedule on Saturdays may continue their 5<sup>th</sup> quarter play.
4. Football practice may begin on the schedule-defined start date. Regardless of when a school begins practicing, posted start date will be the final call each year. The posted schedule will provide yearly start dates. Summer practice is limited to three hours (daily) of football conditioning or activities. This does not include "team building" fun events.
5. Football teams may attend a week long camp between the last day of school and the first day of practice. Teams will not practice in full pads and shall not participate in full contact drills or scrimmages. Teams may wear helmets.
6. Football teams may participate in a 7 on 7 passing league. The passing league is a non contact competition. Helmets may be worn if both teams are wearing them. Limit one contest per week.
7. The schedule will be set by the County Athletic Director.
8. Game quarters will be TEN minutes. Half-time will be eight minutes.
9. Teams may participate in a 5<sup>th</sup> quarter for players not playing in the regular game. The length of time will be the decision of both coaches based on light conditions.
10. Football overtime procedures: (The overtime procedure will be used whenever two schools from the county are tied at end of regulation play).
  - a) Teams will have the opportunity to score from the 15-yard line until the tie is broken.
  - b) Schools not in the Forsyth County league may use the overtime procedure if agreement is reached and communicated to the Referee before the beginning of the game.
  - c) Overtime games are exempt from the Forsyth County curfew.
  - d) There will be a 3-minute intermission between the end of regulation play and the coin toss to start the overtime procedure. The captains will meet for the coin toss, and the winner may choose one of the following:
    - i. Offense first

- ii. Defense first
- iii. Choose the end of the field on which to play
- f) The ball is placed on the 15-yard line and the offense keeps the ball until:
  - i. The ball is turned over on downs NOTE: The team on offense can gain a first down.
  - ii. The defense gains possession of the ball (ball is dead immediately)
  - iii. The offense scores a touchdown or field goal
  - iv. The offense misses a field goal
  - v. After the first offensive team completes its possession, the opposing team gets its opportunity from the 15-yard line.
  - vi. If the game remains tied after each team has had an offensive possession, there will be a 2-minute intermission and the team that lost the first coin toss has the first option for the second possession.
  - vii. For each additional overtime period (i.e., an offensive possession by each team) the coin toss options are alternated.
  - viii. Beginning with the third overtime period, a team must attempt a 2-point try after a touchdown.
  - ix. Each team is allowed one timeout per overtime period. No timeouts may be carried over from regulation play.
  - x. Penalty enforcement is handled the same way in overtime as in regulation play.
- 11. Forsyth County Championship Game Procedure:
  - a) Championship tournament information will be decided prior to the season beginning and may change in format from year to year or during the season as necessary. The system athletic director may make adjustments in the schedule as deemed necessary by the Forsyth County School System and member principals.
  - b) In case of a tie the following criteria will be used for tournament placement:
    - i. Head to Head
    - ii. In case of a three-way tie- The three teams that have created a perfect triangle will have the total points allowed in the first half of every regular season game added. The team allowing the least amount of points in the first half of the regular season will be declared the regular season champion and #1 team in the championship game. The #2 team will be the head-to-head winner of the remaining two teams. #1 and #2 will play for the county championship.

**B. Football/Basketball/Competition Cheerleading:**

1. Football, Basketball, and Competition Cheerleading Tryouts may take place as scheduled by the middle school scheduling committee and are limited to ten consecutive student attended school days. Schools may have a clinic before May 1 (see athletic director and principal); however, the clinic may only last five days and no cuts may be made.
2. Basketball Cheerleading Tryouts- if not done in spring of previous school year may take place on the first complete week of September.
3. Schools may participate in 4 GHSA Cheerleading Competitions unless approved by the county AD.
4. Teams may attend two week-long camps (of consecutive days) between the end of the school and first day of practice. Teams may not have separate practices and call it camps.
5. The first day of practice may begin two weeks and two days (conditioning) before the first day that students report to school. Scheduling committee start dates may override this time.
6. Half-time routines can be up to three minutes in all sports that halftime applies to.
7. Tumbling and/or Stunting by cheerleading spirit squads may not take place at basketball games or on any hard surface. See GHSA Hand book for Stunting guidelines.
8. Cheer Championship- Host school will decide their place in the rotation and remaining schools will draw for position.

### **C. Basketball:**

1. Teams may offer one week of conditioning with basketballs as stated by the yearly schedule. No cuts may be made during this week. All activities during this week of conditioning must be voluntary.
2. Try-outs may begin as stated by the schedule.
3. The first day of team competitions will be set by the posted yearly schedules.
4. Schools may participate in approved season games plus the county championship tournament. Schools may schedule one scrimmage game between the first day of practice and the first regular season game.
5. Teams may attend two week long camps between the last day of school and the first day of practice. Teams may have one week of team camp preparation.
6. Teams may hold open gym at any time between the last day of school and the first day of school; however, there can be no coaching of any kind during open gym.
7. Half-times for basketball games will be eight minutes. In-between games will be eight minutes.
8. Game quarters will be seven minutes.
9. Basketball teams will bring their own water, water bottles, and other basketball related items. Basketballs will be provided by host school.
10. Basketball tournament may be scheduled Monday through Friday. The regular season will be completed before the Monday of tournament week.
11. The 7<sup>th</sup> Grade Tournament will be the first week and the 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Tournament will be the second week of the middle school championships. There will be a host school and a secondary school for each tournament. Brackets for the tournament will be posted at the end of the season.
12. The tournament host team can determine if players in the tournament get in free to games that they are not participating.
13. Tournament placement will be based on regular season record (see schedule for ranking games):
14. In all games where the game is 30 points or greater to start the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter we will NOT reduce time but just go to a running clock. You will still have 7 minute quarters but the clock will only stop on timeouts. At any point for the remainder of the game the score is reduced to UNDER 20 points the clock will go back to a stopped clock.
15. In case of a tie, the following formula will be used:
  - a) When two teams are tied in the standings based on regular season tournament placement play, regular season head-to-head results are used as the tiebreaker.
  - b) In the case of a perfect triangle:
    - i. Record against highest common opponents
    - ii. Overall record will be used
  - c) Coaches Vote
  - d) Coin flip

### **D. Golf**

1. Tryouts may begin as stated by the posted schedule. The first match may take place according to the posted schedule.
2. MS golf is a Co-Ed activity.
3. Schools may participate in nine matches to include the county championship match.
4. The county match must take place by the end of April and may be a two day event played over eighteen holes or otherwise defined by the county AD.
5. During the season- coaches may coach the golfers between holes. They WILL NOT coach them during play as it may distract other competitors. They may not coach them in the county championships. See GHSA/ NFHS for distance finder rules.

## **E. Track and Field**

1. Tryouts may begin according to the schedule. The first meet may take place in the last week of February. The schedule will be decided yearly and may result in start date changes- see posted schedule.
2. Schools may participate in six meets plus the county championship. Additional meets must be approved by the County AD.
3. The county meet may take place on two days during the week. If a two day event is required, the field events will take place on the first day, and the running events will take place on the second day. The county meet must take place by the end of April. Posted schedules will be final.
4. **\*All regular season meets begin at TBA...**
5. Admission to all meets: \$6.00 (Adult) \$4.00 (Student)
6. Maximum of 70 Athletes per regular season meet entry and maximum of 12 entries in the 800.
7. Hurdle Height at all meets- (Height of 30" for Girls 33" for Boys) (100m)
8. Shot- 8 lbs (Boys and Girls)
9. Disc- 1K (Boys and Girls)
10. All entries in the mile during the regular season will be at the discretion of the head coach. Coaches are encouraged to consider the students time during practice before entering him/her in a meet.
11. County Championships (Qualifying Information):
  - (a) Maximum of (2) two athletes per running event and (3) three per field event for all events.
  - (b) Qualifying times/distances:
    - i. 800- (Boys < 3 minutes) (Girls < 4 minutes) (2 entries per school)
    - ii. Mile- (Boys < 7 minutes) (Girls < 9 minutes) (2 entries per school)
    - iii. High Jump- (Boys minimum 4' 6") (Girls minimum 4' 2")
    - iv. Long Jump- (All competitors minimum 8')

## **F. Generic Information for all Middle Schools Sports**

1. Teams should refrain from excessive end-of-game celebrations on the field or floor.
2. Game Prices (unless specified above): Maximum \$6 for adults and \$4 for children/students and ½ price for Golden. Schools may charge less.
3. Games Times: 5:00 PM for basketball games, 5:30 PM start time for football games, 4:30 PM start time for golf matches and track meets (Times are subject to change- Changes in the start dates or times for middle school athletics must be approved by the System Athletic Director).
4. Host team at all football events will have an EMT / PT and Security. Security provided at other events.
5. All schools will take buses to all athletic events except weekend events. Athletes do not need to take the bus back to school after an event unless the individual school requires it. Athletes may be released to their parents with permission from the coach and appropriate notification and paperwork on file. Athletes may be required to take their own transportation to weekend athletic events unless the individual coach requires the team to ride the bus from school. Some sports may require parental transportation to events or practice during the week.
6. Each individual school may participate in fund raising. Each athletic team is allowed two fund raisers per sport per grade. This includes Athletics or Booster Clubs (Follow County Guidelines- refer to county athletic website or local athletic director).
  - a) Athletics/Booster Clubs-Four Fund Raisers
  - b) Cheerleading-Four Fund Raisers
  - c) Football-Four Fund Raisers
  - d) Basketball-Two Fund Raisers for each Team
  - e) Golf-Four Fund Raisers
  - f) Track-Four Fund Raisers
7. All-County Teams are based on the county record which includes regular season and post-season. The breakdown is as follows:
  - a) Football 5-5-4-4-3-3-2-2-1-1
  - b) Basketball 2-2-1-1-1-1-1-1-1-1

- c) The All-County Team will be based on each team's total overall record (including tournament games).
- d) In the event of a tie, the tie-breaker will be based on finish in the county tournament.
- e) Competition Cheerleading – each school turns in two members by squad.
- f) Track and Field – winner of the individual event at the county championship meet.
- g) Golf – top six finishers
- h) In the event of a tie, then all athletes that tied will make the all-county team increasing the number of members on the team.
- i) Cheerleading, Football, Basketball, Golf, and Track will have a rotating trophy that goes to the champion each year. The trophy will go to the next champion the following year. The champion will also receive a plaque or trophy that the school will keep.

## **XV. Booster Clubs**

Booster Clubs help promote, support, and improve the extra curricular activities of the schools in the Forsyth County School System. Each principal is responsible for the relationship between the school and its booster clubs and other parent groups. Since the public perceives Booster Clubs as also representing the school, it is necessary for them to follow these guidelines regarding their relationship with the school. The school administration will periodically meet with all Booster Clubs and Parent Groups to train and monitor their activity as it relates to the school. Please refer to the county athletic website or local athletic directors for specific booster club guidelines.

## **XVI. CODE OF ETHICS**

The Forsyth County Athletic Association and Forsyth County School System recognize their responsibility with respect to the promotion of honesty, truthfulness, and accuracy in record-keeping and reporting. Therefore, the professional personnel of the member schools are charged with upholding the Code of Ethics adopted by the Professional Standards Commission as accepted and approved by the State Board of Education. Violations of Forsyth County Athletic Guidelines, school policy, team policy, or GHSA rules shall be brought to the attention of the Athletic Director. Disciplinary action will be determined by the athletic director, principal, and head coach.

## **XVII. PERFORMANCE/ENHANCEMENT SUPPLEMENTS**

In order to minimize health and safety risks to student athletes, maintain ethical standards, and reduce potential liability for individuals and/or the School District, all School District personnel (including full-time, part-time, and lay coaches) are prohibited from recommending, encouraging or permitting the use of, or supplying to students, any drug, medication, or food supplement intended to enhance performance.

## **XVIII. CONCUSSION MANAGEMENT- FCSS Follows GHSA**

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

1. No athlete *is allowed* to return to a game or practice on the same day that a concussion (1) has been diagnosed OR (2) cannot be ruled out.

2. Any athlete diagnosed with a concussion *shall* be cleared medically by an appropriate health care professional prior to resuming participation in any future practice or contest. The formulation of a gradual return to play protocol *shall* be a part of the medical clearance.
3. It is mandatory that every coach in each GHSA sport (including Community Coaches, Student Teachers, and Interns) participate in a free, online course on concussion management prepared by the NFHS and available at [www.nfhslearn.com](http://www.nfhslearn.com) at least every two years - beginning with the 2013-14 school year.
4. Each school will be responsible for monitoring the participation of its coaches in the concussion management course, and shall keep a record of those who participate.
5. Each school must distribute to every athlete and his/her parent/guardian an information sheet that includes: the dangers of concussion injuries, the signs/symptoms of concussion, and the concussion management protocol outlined in this by-law. This sheet must be signed by the parent/guardian of each athlete and a copy kept on file at the school.

## **Outdoor Heat Policy- GHSA**

**Revise GHSA By-Law 2.67 - "Practice Policy and Heat and Humidity"** as follows:

Schools must follow the statewide policy for conducting practices and voluntary conditioning workouts in all sports during times of extremely high heat and/or humidity that will be signed by each head coach at the beginning of each season and distributed to all players and their parents or guardians. The policy shall follow modified guidelines of the American College of Sports Medicine in regard to:

1. The scheduling of practices at various heat/humidity levels
2. The ratio of workout time to time allotted for rest and hydration at various heat/humidity levels
3. The heat/humidity level that will result in practice being terminated

A scientifically approved instrument that measures Wet Bulb Globe Temperature (WBGT) reading must be utilized at each practice to ensure that the written policy is being followed properly.

### **WBGT READING ACTIVITY GUIDELINES & REST BREAK GUIDELINES**

**Under 82.0** Normal activities--Provide at least three separate rest breaks each hour of minimum duration of 3 minutes each during workout

**82.0 - 86.9** Use discretion for intense or prolonged exercise; watch at-risk players carefully; Provide at least three separate rest breaks each hour of a minimum of four minutes' duration each

**87.0 - 89.9** Maximum practice time is two hours. For Football: players restricted to helmet, shoulder pads, and shorts during practice. All protective equipment must be removed for conditioning activities. For all sports: Provide at least four separate rest breaks each hour of a minimum of four minutes each

**90.0 - 92.0** Maximum length of practice is one hour, no protective equipment may be worn during practice and there may be no conditioning activities. There must be 20-minutes of rest breaks provided during the hour of practice

**Over 92.1** No outdoor workouts; Cancel exercise; delay practices until a cooler WBGT reading occurs

## GUIDELINES FOR HYDRATION AND REST BREAKS

1. Rest time should involve both unlimited hydration intake (water or electrolyte drinks) and rest without any activity involved
2. For football, helmets should be removed during rest time
3. The site of the rest time should be a "cooling zone" and not in direct sunlight
4. When the WBGT reading is over 86:
  - a. ice towels and spray bottles filled with ice water should be available at the "cooling zone" to aid the cooling process
  - b. cold immersion tubs must be available for practices for the benefit of any player showing early signs of heat illness.

## DEFINITIONS

1. **Practice:** the period of time that a participant engages in a coach-supervised, school-approved sport or conditioning-related activity. Practices are timed from the time the players report to the field until they leave the field.
2. **Walk Through:** this period of time shall last no more than one hour, is not considered to be a part of the practice time regulation, and may not involve conditioning or weight-room activities. Players may not wear protective equipment.

## FOOTBALL PRESEASON PRACTICE REGULATIONS:

1. Football practice may begin five consecutive weekdays prior to August 1.  
In the first five days of practice for any student, the practice shall not last longer than 2 hours, and the student shall wear no protective gear except for helmet and mouthpiece. Note: The time for a session shall be measured from the time the players report to the field until they leave the field.
2. Beginning August 1, any student may practice in full pads and may practice two times in a single calendar day under the following stipulations:
  - a. A student must have participated in five conditioning practices wearing no protective gear other than helmet and mouthpiece before being allowed to practice in full pads
  - b. If multiple workouts are held in a single day:
    - (1) No single session may last longer than 3 hours
    - (2) The total amount of time in the two practices shall not exceed 5 hours
    - (3) There must be at least a 3-hour time of rest between sessions
    - (4) There may not be consecutive days of two-a-day practices. All double-session days must be followed by a single-session day or a day off.

\* Start dates for Middle School Football are established by the scheduling committee. However, all heat restrictions are in place as well as practice lengths and restrictions on allowed time limits.

## HEAT AFFLICTION SYMPTOMS AND TREATMENTS

Recommendations from the National Athletic Trainers Association

<u>Heat Affliction</u>	<u>Symptoms</u>	<u>Treatment</u>
<u>Heat Cramps</u>	-Muscle spasms caused by an imbalance of water and electrolytes in muscles -Usually affects the legs and abdominal muscles	-Rest in a cool place -Drink plenty of fluids -Proper stretching and massaging -Application of ice in some cases

<u>Heat Exhaustion</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Can be precursor to heat stroke</li> <li>-Normal to high temperature</li> <li>-Heavy sweating</li> <li>-Skin is flushed or cool and pale</li> <li>-Headaches, dizziness</li> <li>-Rapid pulse, nausea, weakness</li> <li>-Physical collapse may occur</li> <li>-Can occur without prior symptoms, such as cramps</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Get to a cool place immediately and out of the heat</li> <li>-Drink plenty of fluids</li> <li>-Remove excess clothing</li> <li>-In some cases, immerse body in cool water</li> </ul>
<u>Heat Stroke</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Body's cooling system shuts down</li> <li>-Increased core temperature of 104°F or greater</li> <li>-If untreated it can cause brain damage, internal organ damage, and even death</li> <li>-Sweating stops</li> <li>-Shallow breathing and rapid pulse</li> <li>-Possible disorientation or lose consciousness</li> <li>-Possible irregular heartbeat and cardiac arrest</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Call 911 immediately</li> <li>-Cool bath with ice packs near large arteries, such as neck, armpits, groin</li> <li>-Replenish fluids by drinking or intravenously if needed</li> </ul>

### NATA FLUID REPLACEMENT GUIDELINES DURING EXERCISE

1. Drink 16-24oz. of fluid 1 or 2 hours before the workout or competition.
2. Drink 4-8oz. of water or sports drink during every 20 minutes of exercise.
3. Drink before thirst develops. Thirst indicates that needed fluids are already lost.

### NATA FLUID REPLACEMENT GUIDELINES AFTER EXERCISE

<u>Weight Lost During Workout</u>	<u>Fluid Amount Needed to Refuel</u>
2 pounds	32oz. (4 cups or one sports drink bottle)
4 pounds	64oz. (8 cups or two bottles)
6 pounds	96oz. (12 cups or three bottles)
8 pounds	128oz. (16 cups or four bottles)

### III. Guidelines for Extremely Low Temperatures

- A. The local school principal, or designee, will make the final decision as to whether outdoor practice will be allowed. The health, safety, and welfare of the students should be the determining factors.
- B. The wind chill factor should be used to determine the severity of the cold temperature, NOT just the temperature alone.
- C. Warm-up and stretch properly up until immediately before the competition or practice.
- D. Clothing should be selected for comfort. Do not overdress. Multiple layers provide good insulation.
- E. Properly cover the head, neck, legs, and hands. Much of your body heat is lost through these areas.
- F. Extreme cold blocks some sensations of pain. Thus, frostbite can easily affect the fingers, toes, ears, and facial areas. Check these areas regularly.
- G. Hypothermia is a dangerous and severe level that can occur in cold temperatures. Add extra clothing and move to a warm environment immediately after exercising or practice. Drink warm fluids if possible. Hypothermia has occurred in air temperatures of 50°-65°F.
- H. Early signs and symptoms of hypothermia include shivering, euphoria, confusion, and behavior similar to intoxication. Severe signs include lethargy, muscular weakness, disorientation, depression, hallucinations, and even combative behavior.



**WIND CHILL CHART**  
(Reading=Apparent Temperature)

<b>Temperature (F°)</b>	<b>Wind Speed (Miles/Hour)</b>			
	<b>0</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>30°</b>	30	16	4	-2
<b>20°</b>	20	4	-10	-18
<b>10°</b>	10	-9	-25	-33
<b>0°</b>	0	-24	-39	-48
<b>-10°</b>	-10	-33	-53	-63
<b>-20°</b>		-46	-67	-79

- The following are reminders as to how to handle inclement weather with snow/ice, lightning, possible tornadoes and severe thunderstorms in conjunction with practices and games.
  1. Athletic Cancellations during the day by the district
    - Adhere to all specific instructions from school administration.
    - Athletes are to go home when school dismissal occurs.
  2. School Closings Prior to School Commencing
    - No practices or games each day that school is out. No meetings either.
  3. After Practices or Games Have Started
    - Any principal or coach may cancel when individual situations warrant such. Get all athletes, coaches, fans, etc. to safety immediately.
  4. During Holiday Vacations
    - Principal and coach- use best judgment.
  5. School Cancellations with Practices and Games Resuming
    - Sometimes school may be cancelled but practices and games may resume at a certain time. These directives **MUST** come from the Central Office. Do not resume practices or games, even if the weather turns nice, without Central Office approval.
- Any directives from the Central Office must be strictly followed.

## **XVIII. Extra-Curricular Activity Cancellation Protocol**

- **The presence of or impending possibility of inclement weather that poses a threat to extra-curricular activities will be addressed in the following manner:**
  1. The Superintendent, Director of School Safety and Discipline, Director of Transportation, and System Athletic Director will work together to obtain information from the National Weather Service as well as local law enforcement officials pertaining to the possibility of severe weather and its impact on travel conditions.
  2. A final decision will be made by the Superintendent, Director of Transportation, and the Director of School Safety and Discipline on the status of all extra-curricular activities.
  3. The System Athletic Director, Director of School Safety and Discipline, Director of Public Information and Communications, or Superintendent will notify all local Athletic Directors, Middle School Principals, and High School Principals (via email) of the decision to allow or cancel extra-curricular activities. A time frame for cancellations will be included in this notification. This time change may not be altered by local schools. The System Athletic Director will notify the Director of Transportation of the final decision.
  4. Extra-curricular activities may not resume until the Superintendent, Director of School Safety and Discipline, or System Athletic Director clears schools to resume activities **or** the cancellation deadline has passed with no notification of an extension of the cancellation time frame. Local school athletic

directors should maintain continued communication with the System Athletic Director as the time frame for continuing activities approaches. If there is any question locally, do not resume activities until you have communicated with the System Athletic Director or the Director of School Safety and Discipline.

- **Protocol for special situations:**

1. Teams that are already at a location of competition OR may be in route- The Director of School Safety and Discipline, Director of Transportation, and System Athletic Director will evaluate each situation after speaking with the local school principal and receiving his/her recommendation. It is the responsibility of the local school principal or activities coordinator to communicate these special situations to the System Athletic Director for consideration. These decisions will be reviewed based on the groups distance from the home school, approximate return time, predicted conditions upon return, and current location accommodations. Individual team/group sponsors may be required to make additional accommodations if road conditions do not improve and the length of stay is extended. These accommodations will be made at the cost of the team/group.

- **Cancellations apply to:**

1. All school sponsored teams, clubs, or groups that represent our local school and the Forsyth County School System. No coach or sponsor shall make a call to compete or participate in an activity that requires transportation to the event during the time of school and activity cancellation. This transportation includes all forms of transportation to the event including but not limited to student drivers and parent drivers. Individual students may not represent the school and Forsyth County School System in competitions that have been canceled. Individual students or teams participating in activities that have been canceled are subject to disciplinary action and will have any qualifying scores or points rendered void.
2. All forms of practice including but not limited to non-mandatory practices.

## **Forsyth County Middle/High Schools**

### **Lakeside Middle School**

2565 Echols Rd  
Cumming, GA 30041  
Phone: 678-455-7311

### **Liberty Middle School**

7465 Wallace Tatum Road  
Cumming, Ga. 30028  
Phone: 770-781-4889  
Fax: 678-513-3877

### **Little Mill Middle School**

6800 Little Mill Road  
Cumming, Ga. 30041  
Phone: 678-965-5000  
Fax: 678-965-5001

### **North Forsyth Middle School**

3645 Coal Mountain Drive  
Cumming, Ga. 30028  
Phone: 770-889-0743  
Fax: 770-888-1210

### **Otwell Middle School**

605 Tribble Gap Road  
Cumming, Ga. 30040  
Phone: 770-887-5248  
Fax: 770-888-1214

### **Piney Grove Middle School**

8135 Majors Road  
Cumming, Ga. 30041  
Phone: 678-965-5010  
Fax: 678-965-5011

### **Riverwatch Middle School**

610 James Burgess Road  
Suwanee, Ga. 30024  
Phone: 678-455-7311  
Fax: 678-455-7316

### **South Forsyth Middle School**

2865 Old Atlanta Road  
Cumming, Ga. 30041  
Phone: 770-888-3170  
Fax: 770-888-3175

### **Vickery Creek Middle School**

6240 Post Road  
Cumming, Ga. 30040  
Phone: 770-667-2580  
Fax: 770-667-2593

### **DeSana Middle School**

625 James Road  
Alpharetta, Ga. 30004  
Phone: 770-667-2591  
Fax: 770-667-2592

### **Forsyth Central High School**

520 Tribble Gap Road  
Cumming, Ga. 30040  
Phone: 770-887-8151  
Fax: 770-781-2289

### **Lambert High School**

805 Nichols Rd  
Cumming, GA 30024  
Phone: 678-965-5050

### **North Forsyth High School**

3635 Coal Mountain Road  
Cumming, Ga. 30028  
Phone: 770-781-6637  
Fax: 770-888-0934

### **South Forsyth High School**

585 Peachtree Parkway  
Cumming, Ga. 30041  
Phone: 770-781-2264  
Fax: 770-888-1224

### **West Forsyth High School**

4155 Drew Road  
Cumming, Ga. 30040  
Phone: 770-888-3470  
Fax: 770-888-4371

### **Denmark High School**

645 Mullinax Road.  
Alpharetta Ga. 30004  
Phone: 470-533-2521  
Fax: T.B.A