

HENRY COUNTY MIDDLE SCHOOL ATHLETIC LEAGUE (HCMSAL)

BY-LAWS 2025-2026

SECTION I - MEMBERSHIP

- A. The league shall consist of middle schools within the Henry County School system, represented by the athletic director of each middle school in collaboration with their principal.
- B. Admission to the league is limited to only those schools created by the HCBOE and is automatic upon the opening of a new middle school.
- C. Each member school shall pay annual dues in the amount of \$400 no later than October 1st. This amount is subject to change depending on the annual expenses of the preceding year. Dues are currently set at \$400 per school.

SECTION II - ADMINISTRATION

- A. The County Athletic Director and/or Coordinator (or their designee) will be the final authority in all matters concerning the operations of the HCMSAL. This includes presiding at monthly meetings of all middle school athletic directors, managing league funds in an appropriate manner, ordering trophies and medals as needed each season, and anything else involved in HCMSAL operations.
1. Meetings of the HCMSAL will be monthly during the school year. The County Coordinator for Athletics will set the meeting schedule. Additional meetings may be scheduled as the need arises.
 2. League funds will be kept on deposit and managed by one of the league's member schools' bookkeepers. Kris Burgess at Hampton MS has these duties for 2025-26. Ms. Burgess receives a \$500 supplement from the HCMSAL each year for these services.
 3. Minutes of all meetings will be maintained by the County Athletic Director.
 4. A treasurer's report will be presented to the league's athletic directors annually for review. Necessary dues adjustments may be made for the ensuing year at that time.

SECTION III – AMENDING THE BYLAWS

A vote of at least eight (8) member schools is required to change the By-Laws (this is 2/3 of membership), with all 11 schools being required to register a vote. Proposed changes and the ensuing votes shall be recorded in the official meeting minutes and shall be a part of the

permanent league records. Voting will be conducted by the athletic director of each middle school in collaboration with their principal.

SECTION IV - SPORTSMANSHIP

A. HCMSAL member schools are required to conduct all relationships with other schools 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 management of all interscholastic events. A mandatory parent meeting will be conducted at the beginning of each season to discuss the standard for sportsmanship and behavior expectations for parents/spectators and student athletes. All HCMSAL teams should utilize a player/parent contract (requiring a player/parent signature) that outlines expectations and consequences.

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 management of interscholastic contests. Contest officials have the authority to have any and all individuals removed from the confines of the contest whose behavior has become a distraction and/or hindrance to the administration of the event. This may include, but is not limited to, verbal and visual gestures. (b) -The County Coordinator of Athletics shall have the authority to assess penalties against schools and/or coaches for conduct unbecoming of a professional educator or coach committed by coaches or other school personnel at HCMSAL events. Penalties against schools may include fines, probation, or suspensions, and penalties against coaches and other school personnel may include suspension from HCMSAL events.

B. Fines and penalties for excessive poor sporting behavior may be assessed by the District Coordinator of Athletics. In keeping with the HCMSAL alignment with GHSA by-laws, fines for game ejections will be in place effective for the 2025-26 season and forward. See Section VII.

C. Player Ejections: If a player is ejected from a competition, the athletic director for that school will notify the District Coordinator of Athletics. A one-game suspension will then be imposed against the ejected player with the possibility of further disciplinary action, including additional game suspensions. This suspension will be served during the next scheduled contest. The ejected player must also meet with the athletic director and the head coach on the first ejection and complete the free online sportsmanship course administered through the National Federation of High Schools (NFHS) at <https://nfhslearn.com/courses> prior to returning to competition.

If a player is ejected from a second contest during the same season, a three-game suspension will be imposed. The second ejection warrants a parent, player, and coach meeting with the principal and athletic director. In the event of a third ejection for a player, that player will be dismissed from the team and may be subjected to further school consequences.

- D. Coach Ejections: If a coach is ejected from a competition, the athletic director for that school will notify the County Coordinator of Athletics. A one-game suspension plus the completion of the NFHS Teaching and Modeling Behavior Course at the expense of the coach, and it must be completed before the coach returns from suspension.
<https://nfhslearn.com/courses/teaching-and-modeling-behavior> . This suspension will be served during the next same level scheduled contest. If a coach is ejected from a second contest during the same season, a \$100 fine **and** a three-game suspension will be imposed. The coaching supplement for that sport may also be affected. Fines are payable to the HCMSAL bookkeeper. In addition, a letter will be sent to both the principal and the school superintendent. Should further sanctions be deemed necessary, the County Athletic Director will coordinate with the school principal and/or other personnel.

SECTION V – PLAYER ELIGIBILITY

- A. A student is eligible to participate in sports once as a 7th grader and once as an 8th grader, not to exceed two (2) years, regardless of the number of schools attended.
- B. If a student is retained for any reason, he/she is considered ineligible for athletics during that school year.
- C. A player must not reach his/her 16th birthday prior to May 1st of his/her 8th grade year. A player must not reach his/her 15th birthday prior to May 1st of his/her 7th grade year. An appeals process is at the discretion of the County Coordinator of Athletics and HCMSAL members.
- D. To be eligible to try out or to participate in middle school athletics, students must meet the following academic criteria:

Must pass 5 out of 6 courses for the Spring 2025 Semester to be eligible for fall sports participation for the 25-26 school year.

Students with IEPs must meet all academic requirements to participate in athletics.

- E. Each school must submit a **signed** eligibility roster to the County Coordinator of Athletics at least one (1) week before the first scheduled competition date for the league. Failure to comply could result in forfeiture of contests and/or a \$25 fine. Rosters are to be uploaded into the school's Google Drive folder. Here is a link to the eligibility form (**please make a copy of the form for your school - do not use the original**):  HCMSAL Eligibility Form

F. An eligibility update will be sent at the beginning of the 2nd semester to validate the status of all winter sports team members. Second-semester eligibility is determined by the first day of school for the second semester. In cases of grade repair, a student is ineligible until/the grade is repaired and posted.

G. Sixth graders are not eligible to participate as players.

H. 8th graders may participate on a sub-varsity team with the high school if there is no middle school level team in that sport.

I. Eligibility with regard to **Residency**:

a. For athletic eligibility purposes, the student's school of residence as of the first day of school (July 31, 2025) **OR** as of the first day of enrollment in any Henry County middle school for the 2025-2026 year will determine the school for which the student is eligible for that entire school year (ending May 22, 2026) for purposes of participation on any athletic team. Unless there is a bona fide move.

EXCEPTION: Consistent with the Georgia High School Association (GHSA) definition of "***bona fide move***", if the student moves simultaneously with the entire parental unit or persons he/she resided with at the former school, and the student and parent(s) or persons residing with the student live in the established attendance zone of the new school, the student may be considered for eligibility at the receiving Henry County middle school.

b. For athletic eligibility purposes, the children of employees of HCS must meet the same enrollment rules as described in (a) above, with the only exception being a "***bona fide move***" as described above.

c. An appeal may be made to the HCS Coordinator of Athletics. Appropriate documentation may be required for any request to override the residency rule.

SECTION VI - SCHEDULES

A. As a guide, all sports will be allowed to participate in 60% of the GHSA varsity schedule for that sport in one year, plus one postseason tournament, not to exceed four (4) contests. Each school must follow the agreed-upon league schedule. Failure to follow the league schedule or to

reschedule by 2:00 on game day may result in forfeiture. The expectation is that ALL season-scheduled contests are to be completed regardless of the outcome on season-ending seedings. The decision to cancel/postpone a season-scheduled contest will require approval from the County Coordinator of Athletics. If the two schools reach an impasse on rescheduling the game, the HCS Coordinator of Athletics will reschedule the game.

- B. The HCS Athletics Coordinator will work with the AD group, representing each school/principal, to create league schedules. Football, softball, wrestling, and basketball schedules will be completed before the May league meeting. Volleyball and track schedules will be finalized by the first meeting of the next year.

C. Schools with sports that have flexibility in scheduling may include athletic events with teams outside the league on an individual school basis; the number of events may not exceed the limit set in "A". The school AD should consult with the HCS Athletics Coordinator. Any team seeking to play an opponent outside of the HCMSAL must get approval from the HCS Director or Coordinator of Athletics first.

D. Athletic practices held during school breaks will be non-mandatory. Regular practices may resume on the first regular school day after students return from breaks, and the first athletic competition may resume no earlier than the second regular school day after these breaks. Athletes must not be penalized for missing practices held during a break.

E. Rising 9th graders may condition with high school coaches, or try out for high school sports held in the spring, including participation in a spring football game. Middle school sports participation takes precedence over high school tryouts. High School coaches must collaborate with middle school coaches to mitigate conflicts for athletes.

F. Voluntary Summer workouts may be conducted throughout the Summer except for the GHSA "Dead Weeks" with the permission of the Principal and Athletic Director. These voluntary workouts are not inclusive of the standard acclimatization period for football. *All HCS Middle Schools will adhere to the GHSA "Dead Weeks". **The "Dead Weeks" for the 2025-2026 school year are Monday, May 26 through Sunday, June 1, 2025, and Monday, June 30 through Sunday, July 6, 2025.**

SECTION VII – RULES COVERING ALL SPORTS – Rules for all athletic contests are based on NFHS rulebooks. Exceptions are noted in each section of the By-Laws.

- A. Incidents of misconduct on school property by coaches, school personnel, spectators, or others that impact the safety and well-being of fans or participants shall be reported to the school

Athletic Director. Examples of misconduct could include, but are not limited to, illegal practices, running up the score, improper videotaping, etc.

- B. Each HCMSAL coach will sign a "Coaching Code of Ethics" by signing the electronic coach's acknowledgement forms.

C. All sports activities Monday through Thursday must be completed prior to 9:30 P.M. If the game is not completed by 9:30 PM, play may be halted by the home administrator, and the final score at that time will determine the winner. If there are circumstances that have caused a delay in play, the home administrator can seek guidance from the county athletics coordinator prior to ending play, but the decision is left to the home administrator. Practices or competitions are not allowed on Sundays, unless it is pre-approved tournament play agreed upon by parents, principal, and the county athletics coordinator. During tournament play, the 9:30 P.M. curfew is suspended.

D. When a student-athlete is injured to the point that the coach determines that a parent should be contacted to come and pick up the injured student (not an emergency 911 situation), said student should remain under the continued supervision of an adult who is appropriately involved with the athletic program at the school until the parent arrives and comes to the supervising adult for information and student release.

- E. The league shall provide 1st and 2nd place team trophies for all league championships. The league will pay for the trophies and medals for those sports in which individual medals are earned. Additional awards may be provided by the host school at the host school's expense.

F. All expenses associated with hosting a league championship shall be the sole responsibility of the host school. The host school shall retain all monies collected in conjunction with hosting such a championship. **Admission to regular-season middle school games is \$5.00 for all persons ages 5 and up. Tournament admission is \$6 for all persons, ages 5 and up. HCMSAL athletic directors have agreed to use GoFan for ticketing from 25-26.**

- G. The start date for fall sports will be determined based on the GHSA calendar. For 2025- 2026, the first **practice date** for **Fall Sports** will be **July 24th. Football acclimatization will begin on July 24th and may not last more than 2 hours. Use of the helmet during this period is optional.**

1. HCMSAL athletic directors will set conditioning and start-of-practice dates for the next year for all sports no later than the preceding May meeting.

2. As volleyball is a spring sport for the league, the start date will be the same as that for track.

3. Cheerleading tryouts for the upcoming school year may take place in the spring after the completion of all spring sports.

H. Official game day activities such as clock keeper, official books, etc., will be **performed by adults**, with the exception of mat assistants, who may be middle school students. Properly trained middle school and high school students may assist with game day support activities **when agreed upon by the opposing coaches**.

I. Officials must be certified by the GHSA in order to preside over any HCMSAL function.

J. All students participating in all athletic programs, including tryouts, must be eligible and must have current physicals on file per GHSA rule 1.41. If the physical is completed after April 1st of the preceding school year, it will remain valid for the duration of the school year.

K. Either school involved in an athletic event shall have the right to video said event and to copy said tape, but no third party (including, but not limited to other schools) shall have that right, not even the videographer. Violations will be reported to the school athletic director. Additionally, video review is not accepted to protest a call, outcome, or official ruling in any HCMSAL events.

L. If the visiting team is late, a warm-up time will be agreed upon by both coaches and officials. Coaches should have their team game ready when they get off the bus in regard to uniforms.

M. All other rules not covered by these By-Laws will be governed by the GHSA constitution.

N. Once committed to an event, a school/team/individual performer may not back out of the event. Should this occur, penalties may be imposed by the County Athletic Coordinator. See Appendix D

SECTION VIII– SANCTIONS AND APPEALS

NOTE: The resolution of any situation not specifically addressed by HCMSAL By-Laws will default to GHSA rules (tie breakers are one example; out-of-season coaching is another example).

A. Any violations of the rules covered under these HCMSAL By-Laws and GHSA rules (where applicable) will be reported to the County Athletic Coordinator, and fines/penalties will be assessed. See Appendix D.

B. If a second violation occurs within one school year in the same sport at one school **or** with the same coach, an administrator from that school will meet with the County Athletic Coordinator to determine further action including, but not limited to, suspension, team probation, letter to the

principal, letter to the superintendent, or possible suspension of that coach from the league for a period of time.

- C. Probation: If a school is placed on probation by the County Athletic Coordinator for rules violations, that school is ineligible for postseason play for that year if the season has not been completed, and for the next year in that sport if the season has been completed.
- D. Appeal procedure: HCMSAL Athletic Directors will serve as the appeals board. In the event of an appeal, Athletic Directors from the unaffected schools and the County Athletics Coordinator will hear the appeal. The County Athletics Coordinator will chair any appeal hearing. A school may appeal a decision by the County Athletic Coordinator in writing; the appeal must be accompanied by a check for \$100. An appeal will only be granted on the unanimous vote of the appeals board. If the appeal is granted, the fee will be returned to the member school.
 - 1. The appeals committee will be composed of five unaffected members determined by alphabetical rotation of school names.
- E. Any team that uses a player who is ineligible will forfeit any games for which that player was on the active roster.
- F. If at any time the HCMSAL rules conflict with GHSA rules, the HCMSAL rules will prevail.

SECTION IX – ACTIVITIES

NOTE: All regular GHSA/NFHS rules for all sports will apply; modifications are noted within each sport's section of the By-Laws. All uniforms must comply with NFHS number rules.

FOOTBALL

- A. Games should be scheduled to begin no later than 6:00 P.M.
- B. A minimum of two (2) GHSA registered officials from a GHSA registered officiating association is required for all games. In the event one official is running late, it will be the decision of both head coaches whether to proceed with the game or wait until that official arrives.
- C. A game will consist of ten (10) minute quarters with at least an eight (8) minute halftime.

- D. All middle school football games will be played with a youth-sized football.
- E. Home teams will wear their darker color jersey for home games unless otherwise agreed upon by both schools prior to game day.
- F. The official dates for starting both conditioning and practice will be determined yearly by the league committee and will be based upon the GHSA calendar for the upcoming year. The first practice date is July 24th. Acclimatization also begins on July 24th and is limited to helmets only.
- H. In all games, in case of a tie at the end of regulation play, the following rules apply.
1. A coin toss will determine the choice of offense or defense.
 2. The team losing the toss will choose which goal line to defend.
 3. The offensive team will take the ball at their opponent's 15-yard line and maintain possession until they score, run out of downs, or turn the ball over. First downs are possible.
 4. Both teams will receive alternating possessions.
 5. If either team scores or both teams have had their possession for the round, the team scoring the most points is the winner.
 6. If both teams score the same number of points or neither team scores, the procedure continues until a winner is determined.
- I. GHSA rules state there will be no forfeited ball games. Teams will wait 30 minutes for officials, at which time the coaches must agree on postponement or playing the game with either coaches or administrators officiating.
- J. Head-to-head tiebreaker system, followed by record against common opponents, will be used as needed to determine playoff teams. A coin toss will be used to determine playoff position if a tie still exists.
- K. The top six (6) teams will be in the playoffs. The higher-seeded team will be "home" for the semi-final games.
- L. Headsets must be available to both teams or may not be used at all.
- M. All games played between 2 HCMSAL teams count toward playoff seeding.

Acclimatization and Re-Acclimatization (prior to October 1st)

(1) Practice begins for the HCMSAL 25 season on July 24, however, the acclimatization begins on July 24th.

1. In the first five days of practice for any student, the practice may not last longer than two (2) hours, and the student may wear no other protective football equipment except a helmet and mouthpieces. NOTE: (a) The time for a session shall be measured from the time the players report to the practice or workout area until they leave that area. (b) During acclimatization practices, teams may hold a walk-through as long as there is at least a three-hour break between the two activities.

(2) Re-Acclimatization – Required for any athlete who misses five (5) consecutive days of practice for any reason.

a. Day 1: 1.5 hours conditioning - helmets only

b. Day 2: 2 hours practice - helmets only

c. Day 3: 2.5 hours practice with helmets and shoulder pads

d. Day 4: 2.5 hours practice with full pads

e. Day 5: 2.5 hours practice with full pads or play a game.

GIRLS FLAG FOOTBALL

A. Three games per site per night

B. 15 maximum on the roster

C. 8-minute quarters - running clock (except for the last 2 minutes of the 2nd and 4th quarters)

D. Halftime is 5 minutes

E. 3 Timeouts per half

F. Regular season games will use 2 officials per game. Post-season games will use 3 officials per game.

G. The top 6 teams will make the postseason. Tie breakers will go as follows:

a. Head to Head when applicable, when 2 teams are tied - Record among tied teams when applicable, when more than 2 teams are tied

b. Record against all common opponents

- c. **Total Points allowed - If necessary, it will go to points allowed against common opponents.**
 - d. **Coin Flip**
- H. **1st team listed is the HOME team and will wear the DARK COLORED jerseys. 2nd team listed in each match-up will be the visiting team and wear the LIGHT colored jerseys.**
- I. **One team will need to “flip” jerseys- it will be the team that plays Game 1 and Game 2 (Visitor Game 1 and Home Game 2)**

SOFTBALL

A. All regular rules of GHSA fastpitch will apply. Effective in the 2025-26 year forward, the 60% limit on games equals 17 games. This includes tournament games.

1. Run rules

(a) 15 after 3 innings

(b) 12 after 4 innings

(c) 8 after 5+ innings

2. Time limit – for regular season games, no new inning will be started after two (2) hours of play. No time limit for post-season.

B. The end-of-season league tournament will be single elimination.

C. The top eight (6) teams will qualify for the postseason tournament. The highest seed will host in the first two rounds. If a head-to-head competition does not break a tie, a coin toss will be used to determine playoff seeding, as needed.

D. All regular-season games should be scheduled to begin by 6:00 pm unless agreement is reached otherwise. Warm-up time should be given to each team upon arrival of the visiting team. If waiting extensively for a bus, batting practice should be taken at the home facility before boarding the bus.

CHEERLEADING – Squad size limits may be imposed.

NOTE: Chelsea McCreary, cheer coach at OHS, serves as coordinator to our HCMSAL and HCS cheer programs. chelsea.mccreary@henry.k12.ga.us She will conduct the rules clinic.

The HCMSAL Championship will alternate between UGHS, ELHS, and OHS each year on the same date as their invitational competition. MS teams may enter the competition to be considered for placement in the invitational at the event registration price. There is no charge to enter the HCMSAL competition only. The 2025 Middle School Championship will be hosted by Austin Road and will be held on _____.

NOTE: All cheer contracts must be completed/received by the hosting school no later than August 1st.

A. All cheerleading competitions must be conducted according to the rules of the “National Federation Spirit Rules Book” and the “GHSA Competitive Cheerleading Manual.” The GHSA cheerleading manuals are posted on the GHSA website www.ghsa.net

Competition Manual [2023 Competitive Cheerleading Guide 6.28.2023.pdf \(ghsa.net\)](#)

Spirit Manual [24-25 GHSA Spirit Manual](#)

B. The maximum number of competitions for middle school cheerleading is four (4) plus the HCMSAL championship. Middle school squads may not compete in any high school competition; there is no middle school national competition. Competition cheerleading must follow the GHSA calendar; it may attend only GHSA-sanctioned events.

To register for competitions, Middle schools may select the contracts from the GHSA site and download. Teams registration should be written in as MIDDLE SCHOOL and submitted to the school with the entry fee by the deadline.

[2025-2026 GHSA Cheerleading Contracts | GHSA.net](#)

C. All competitive coaches must have taken and passed the AACCA safety course (www.nfhslearn.com) that includes liability insurance. NOTES: Course completion is good for 4 years; full-time employees are covered by liability policy; the school to pay the cost of the course. Coaches must also attend the mandatory rules clinic for HCS.

*It is recommended that coaches be members of the Georgia Cheer Coaches Association.

D. Other information:

1. Tryouts may be scheduled to include four (4) days of preparation time before the actual tryout date.
 2. The coach cannot require additional or supplemental training, i.e., tumbling classes or participation with other elite competitive teams.
 3. All camps must be attended outside of the school year during the summer months.
 4. All schools with competitive cheer teams will participate in the league championships.
 5. Schools may enter the county championship as a small team (16 or fewer) or large (17-18 members). Notification of intended division must be submitted to the host school at least 30 days prior to the competition.
- E. A competitive cheerleading team consists of a maximum of sixteen (16) performers in the small division, or up to 18 in a large division. A coach can select fewer members than 16 based on the talent break among those who try out.
1. Nonstudents are not allowed to be a part of a cheer group either as junior cheerleader or as mascot (GHSA constitution).
 2. All team members must be dressed in the adopted school uniform that displays the school identification (i.e., letter, monogram, mascot symbol, etc.) EXCEPTION: The mascot is exempt from this rule.
- F. The competitive area is a 42' x 42' blue cheerleading mat, and the routine must be performed within the boundaries of the competitive area. Stunts should be practiced on mats before performing in a routine.

(See the competition manual for other specifics related to the competition)

(See the link for scoring in the GHSA Cheer Manual.)

G. Winners in the county championship will be determined by the highest point total from the judges.

1. In case of a tie, the GHSA tie breaker will be used.

H. Judges' decisions are final. The HCMSAL does not allow protests in any activity.

I. In all competitions, all judges must be registered with the GHSA and must have completed the GHSA training program.

J. Websites for further information: www.ghsacheerleading.com; www.georgiacheer.com

NOTE: All cheer score sheets and contracts are located on the GHSA site under the Cheerleading tab.

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BASKETBALL

A. All regular rules of GHSA basketball will apply; modifications are noted below.

B. Girls will use the smaller GHSA-approved basketball.

C. A minimum of one (1) GHSA-registered official is required before a regular season game may start.

D. All officials must sign the scorebook.

E. Games will be scheduled to begin by 6:00 P.M. Only one game preceding a school day may be played per week.

F. Six-minute (6) quarters will be played with at least five (5) minutes to warm up and at least six (6) minutes between halves.

G. If officials or teams are late for a game, the coaches of both schools must agree to any change in warm-up time and halftime before the start of the game. The total time available for the games must be divided equally for each game.

H. Mercy rule: If the point differential is greater than 30, a 4-minute clock will then be used for all remaining quarters. The clock will only stop for injury. At the pre-season parent

meeting, coaches and/or the AD will make sure this is announced. **ADs will continue to make the point to coaches that there should be no pressing when the point difference is insurmountable.**

I. Home teams will wear white jerseys unless agreed upon otherwise by both schools ahead of time.

J. The top six (6) teams in the league will participate in the league tournament. Two (2) GHSA officials are required to start a playoff game.

L. Seeding for the tournament will be determined by the league's record schedule.

M. GHSA tie-breaker system will be used as needed to determine playoff teams. Coin toss will be used when after the record and heads up have been exhausted.

N. If regulation play ends in a tie, the clock will be set to 3:00 minutes with each team getting one additional time-out.

O. If a player is ejected from a contest, Section IV of the HCMSAL Sportsmanship regarding player ejections will be followed.

WRESTLING

A. All wrestling GHSA rules will apply with the exception of weight classes. The following weight classes will be used for all HCMSAL-sanctioned matches: 75, 80, 85, 95, 100, 105, 110, 115, 120, 127, 137, 147, 157, 167, 185, 200, 215, 275.

B. The participating schools prior to the start of the season, will establish weight classifications.

C. 1st and 2nd place team trophies and individual medals for 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place will be presented by the league.

D. Seeding: Tournament seeding will be based on a combination of the following: 1) overall records; 2) head-to-head (last match); 3) common opponents; 4) recognized strengths.

E. Weigh-ins: Wrestlers will weigh in at the host school on the day of the league championship. This will be a step-on, step-off process with a challenge scale involved.

F. The 2-pound growth allowance will be permitted after January 1st.

G. All wrestling participants will be required to wear protective headgear for every match.

TRACK AND FIELD

A. Weekday meets should be scheduled to begin no later than 6:00 P.M. Saturday meets, as needed, will begin no later than 9:30 am. The season will be conducted via Wednesday meets, but invitationals and rain make-up events may be scheduled on Saturday. Field events will run concurrently with running events, and athletes may have to toggle between the events to keep the meet running. Each host will be responsible for the run of the meet according to the schedule given at the rules clinic.

B. Only one (1) meeting preceding a school day may be held per week.

C. One (1) coach from each school should be prepared to assist in the timing and judging of events if needed by the host school.

D. Jerseys shall be of the same color.

E. A league championship meet will be held at the conclusion of the season. Each school will be permitted to enter two (2) participants in each event, except the 1600m and 3200m (which can have 4 participants per school).

F. The league championship meet will be scheduled each year. The format will be decided upon by the school ADs and the County Athletics Coordinator.

G. The league will present the following awards:

(1) 1st and 2nd place team trophies

(2) 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place individual medals in each event

H. An official starter will be required for the county meet for all running events. NOTE: it is the responsibility of the host school to secure a starter and a timer and it is strongly encouraged that the host school secures them as soon as they are awarded this event.

I. All track and field events will follow the prescribed order per GHSA and NFHS rules.

J. County records may be **set only** at the County Championship.

K. The **top 8 times in qualifying heats** go to the finals for that event (excludes events that run as finals). This may vary depending upon the format decided upon (see “G” above).

VOLLEYBALL

A. Volleyball will be governed by GHSA rules. The exception is that volleyball is a fall sport for high school (Georgia), but is played as a spring sport in the HCMSAL.

B. The schedule will follow the 60% rule of the number of varsity competitions plus the HCMSAL tournament. Games will begin no later than 6:00 pm.

C. Scoring: (NOTE: eliminated any reference to 3-team meets)

1. If two (2) schools are playing, the match will consist of 3 out of 5 games.
2. Games 1, 2, 3, and 4 will play to 25 points. Game 5 will be played to 15 points.
3. Rally scoring will be in effect.
4. A team must win by two (2) points.

D. Line judges must be high school players or adults.

E. The top six (6) teams will qualify for the tournament. The tournament will be a single-elimination format.

F. Seeding will be determined by overall record, head-to-head, and wins against the highest-seeded opponent. Coin flip tie breaker will be used as needed to determine playoff teams.

APPENDICES – INCLUDES SCHEDULES, TOURNAMENT BRACKETS, AWARDS, AND CHEER FORMS

APPENDIX A SPORT SCHEDULES

Fall Sports Rules Clinic: July 30

 HCMSAL Football Schedule .docx

 HCMSAL Softball 2025

 Flag Middle School 2025.xlsx

Winter Sports Rules Clinics: Nov 6th (6 pm virtual) - Start Date Nov 7

 25-26 HCMSAL Basketball Schedule

 25-26 Master Wrestling Schedule HCMSAL League

Spring Sports Rules Clinic: February 4th - Start Date: February 5th

 2025-2026 HCMSAL Track Schedule

 Draft of 2026 HCMSAL Volleyball Schedule

HCS Athletics Manual for all coaches

GHSA Constitution excerpt regarding Administrative Duties modified for use by HCMSAL

2.20 - ADMINISTRATIVE RESPONSIBILITIES

2.23 The administrative head of each school is expected to be a person who believes in fairness and honesty as evidenced by the strict adherence to all rules and regulations in regards to eligibility of contestants representing his/her school.

2.24 The administrative head of each school is expected to 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 HCMSAL will have a report of that behavior sent to the Professional Standards Commission.**

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

2.27 Member schools that fail to follow stated procedures and deadlines may be assessed a fine for each violation. **SEE LIST BELOW**

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

APPENDIX B

ELIGIBILITY VIOLATIONS

Allowing a player to participate in a game without having an eligibility form filed with the HCMSAL
\$50

Allowing a player to try out, practice, or compete without having a standardized physical
examination form on file at the school.\$100

Allowing an ineligible student to try out, practice, or compete. \$100

SPORTSMANSHIP VIOLATIONS

Have a coach or player ejected from a competition. \$20 NFHS Course

Substitutes leave the bench area to go to the area of a fight during a contest. \$50

Players, coaches, or administrators behave in an unsporting manner before or after a contest. \$100

Coach or player confronting (or making contact with) official(s) or committing other unsporting acts.
\$50

Having players involved in a multi-player fight before, during, or after a game. \$100

Violation of video taping rules: \$75

Make comments to the media that are critical of officiating, \$50

ADMINISTRATIVE VIOLATIONS

Hold an illegal practice (i.e., during school hours, out of season, etc.) or violation of practice safety
rules, \$100

Allow an unauthorized person to coach \$100

Failure to follow HCMSAL procedures and deadlines is \$25

Allowing a player to exceed the participation limit for that sport: \$75

Failure to exert reasonable institutional control (with players, coaches, spectators, facilities, etc.)
[By-laws 2.22-2.24, 2.26 and 2.71: \$50

Failure to meet the conditions of game contracts and agreements \$50

Failure of coaches to attend HCMSAL sport rules clinics is \$75

Allowing a non-student to try out, practice, or compete. \$100

ETHICS VIOLATIONS VIOLATION

School personnel/boosters involved in recruiting a student for athletic purposes and/or using undue influence to gain or retain a student. \$250

Misrepresenting facts on an HCMSAL document. \$250

Misrepresenting facts during an HCMSAL investigation. \$250

HCMSAL SITE PICKS FOR 2025-2026

NOTE: All championships are “Top 6” (except Track).

Football – SMS

Football Jamboree - Host Sites are: LGMS, MMS, and UGMS

Softball – OMS

Girls Flag Football - Playoffs at LMS

Competition Cheer –ARMS

Basketball Boys/Girls Finals – WMS

Basketball Girls Semi Finals - Higher Seed

Basketball Boys Semi Finals - Higher Seed

Wrestling – HMS

Volleyball – DMS

Track – ELMS