

GEORGIA HIGH SCHOOL RODEO ASSOCIATION
GEORGIA JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL RODEO ASSOCIATION

CONTESTANT & PARENT HANDBOOK

2026-2027 SEASON



Official Member Guide

Policies • Procedures • Rodeo Information

www.ghsra.com | www.ghsra.com/jrhigh

NHSRA MISSION STATEMENT

Promote the sport of rodeo and the highest type of conduct and sportsmanship

Expose its positive image to the public

Preserve the Western Heritage

Offer an opportunity of continuing education

Offer a privilege of family bonding

Maintain the highest regard for livestock

Welcome to Georgia High School Rodeo! GHSRA has a proud history of competitive rodeo while maintaining a family-oriented atmosphere. We are one of the member states, provinces, and countries that make up the National High School Rodeo Association (NHSRA). Because each association has policies and procedures unique to the way it conducts rodeo, this handbook outlines GHSRA policies and ground rules. We hope it will be helpful to both new and returning contestants. Parents and guardians are also encouraged to read the handbook, as it includes important information about academics, financial matters, State Finals, and National Finals.

PURPOSE AND GOALS

The purpose of GHSRA & GJHSRA is to provide high school & junior high students with an activity that promotes Western heritage and creates opportunities to further their education.

ORGANIZATION

GHSRA & GJHSRA are members of the National High School Rodeo Association. High School and Junior High follow the NHSRA Rule Book. The association operates under a Board of Directors nominated at the annual meeting held each year at State Finals. The adult board makes major organizational and financial decisions for the association. Student officers are also elected by the contestants at State Finals.

NHSRA RULE BOOK 2026-2028

It is every member's responsibility to know the Ground Rules as well as the rules of the National High School Rodeo Association rulebook. Any rule that is NOT covered in these Ground Rules and additional rules can be found in the NHSRA rulebook.

<https://nhsra.com/rulebook/>

Each contestant receives a current NHSRA Rule Book when joining each year. The rule book covers event rules, conduct, protest procedures, point systems, and miscellaneous rules. Contestants should become familiar with it, particularly because NHSRA event rules may differ from PRCA and amateur association rules. GHSRA may adopt ground rules that are consistent with the NHSRA Rule Book but better suited to the association's needs.

TRANSFERS

The GHSRA National Director has discretion regarding contestant transfers into and out of the association for both high school and junior high.

CONTESTANT AND PARENT CONDUCT

Contestants are responsible for the actions of their parents.

DRESS CODE: Contestants must be in full Western attire during performances and slack whenever they are in the arena, stock area, or bleachers. Full Western attire is also required when picking up a payout. Failure to follow the dress code will result in a \$50 fine, which must be paid before the contestant may enter the next rodeo. (Full Western Attire: Cowboy hat, buttoned down long sleeve shirt, jeans, and western boots.)

LOGOS: See the current NHSRA Rule Book. **This rule will be applied; do not plan to ask for forgiveness.

PARENTS AND FRIENDS WHO ENTER THE ARENA TO ASSIST A CONTESTANT MUST BE IN FULL DRESS CODE. BASEBALL CAPS, SHORT SLEEVES, STREET SHOES, AND OTHER NON-COMPLIANT ATTIRE IS NOT ALLOWED IN THE ARENA OR ALLEY WAY. FAILURE TO ABIDE COULD RESULT IN DISQUALIFICATION.

TOBACCO, SMOKING &/OR VAPING: Tobacco and vaping products are not allowed in the arena. This rule applies to contestants, friends, and adults. Alcohol is 100% not tolerated by contestants. Adults need to use discretion; this is a family event. If you cannot be responsible, you could jeopardize your contestant being disqualified for the weekend; with discretion on the board members/directors.

FOUL LANGUAGE/CURSING: Anywhere on the rodeo grounds is prohibited. Repeated warnings may result in disqualification.

ANIMAL ABUSE: in or around the arena may result in contestant disqualification.

GRADES AND ACADEMICS

The Georgia association uses the same academic eligibility standard required by Georgia-accredited high schools. A contestant must meet the requirements of the contestant's local school to participate in athletic activities. This standard is higher than the minimum stated in the NHSRA Rule Book. GHSRA recognizes home-school students who meet Georgia requirements. Contact the GHSRA State Secretary for applicable requirements and guidelines.

The state secretary must receive grades & school eligibility form for all members, including those homeschooled at the following times.

- At the start of the season (or contestants 1st rodeo with the association)
- Mid-Year: Start of the 2nd half of the season (February 2027)
- Prior to State Finals (End of May 2027)

If a contestant does not meet the state's grade requirements, the contestant may not compete until official proof of good standing is provided. Failure to do so will result in the loss of earned points and suspension from competition until good standing is regained.

If a contestant/parent/guardian, falsifies or misrepresents academic information, the contestant will be suspended for the remainder of the season and may be permanently expelled, depending on the circumstances. During the suspension, the contestant will not be allowed in or around the arena and may not work with or assist another participant at a rodeo.

LIABILITY WAIVERS

With the initial membership application, the contestant and parents will sign the National High School Rodeo Association's Minor's Release (Notarized) and upload it into the portal.

In addition, the Georgia State Waiver of Liability, will be signed, notarized and turned into the State Secretary at check-in at the contestant's first rodeo. This liability form covers the entire rodeo season. **"We agree that this WAIVER shall apply to any incident, accident or death occurring on the below date and FOR A PERIOD OF ONE (1) YEAR THEREAFTER or until the contestant/member's association membership expires, whichever shall last occur."**

Contestants without the required forms will not be allowed to compete.

CONTESTANT MEETINGS

Contestant meetings are held throughout the season. These meetings provide information about upcoming rodeos, event changes, and other important matters. Attendance is mandatory. **Contestants must be in full Western attire.**

GRAND ENTRY

The Grand Entry sets the tone for the rodeo and is an important way to recognize our sponsors. Contestants may be asked to carry a flag during the grand entry. Participation is required if contestant's horse can tolerate the experience.

ORDER OF EVENTS

BAREBACK RIDING
SADDLE BRONC RIDING
BULL RIDING
GOAT TYING
TIE DOWN ROPING
BREAKAWAY ROPING
RIBBON ROPING
STEER WRESTLING
BARREL RACING
TEAM ROPING
POLE BENDING
BULL RIDING
CHUTE DOGGIN'

*Subject to change with notification.

RODEO ENTRY

Beginning this season (2026-27), GHSRA & GJHSRA will enter all rodeos through EQUEST events. <https://www.equestevent.com/> Each contestant will be responsible for setting up their EQUEST profile. Through this system, you will have the opportunity to pay online or pay cash/check at the rodeo. There is a 3% fee for each contestant's entry; even for cash at rodeo. There is an additional fee for bank drafts and credit card payment.

Should we have a performance on a rodeo weekend, there are 8-10 performance slots, and those positions must be filled first. After the performance positions are filled, remaining contestants compete in slack before or after the performance. Please cooperate with the Rodeo Secretary if your preference is not available. Every effort will be made to accommodate contestants but not guaranteed.

In the event of a death in the immediate family or high school graduation conflict, a contestant may be allowed to compete in a special slack between rodeos on a weekend when two rodeos are scheduled at one arena. Approval is at the discretion of the board.

SIGN-IN & PAYMENT OF ENTRY FEES

Sign-in begins one hour before the performance or slack and CLOSES before the start of the rodeo. Any change in sign-in will be communicated on social media and in Band. **ALL CONTESTANT ENTRY FEES MUST BE PAID ONLINE OR TURNED IN AT CHECK-IN BEFORE THE START OF THE RODEO.** If you cannot be at check-in, **you must** pay your fees online. Fees paid after the start of the rodeo will have a \$20 late charge added to the entry.

GHSRA will accept checks for payment of fees. A returned check will result in a \$35 fine; a second returned check will result in a \$50 fine and a CASH-ONLY policy for that contestant/family. Once a check is returned to GHSRA, the contestant may not enter future rodeos until the check and applicable fees are paid in full.

NO SHOW POLICY

If you cannot attend a rodeo after entering, you must notify the Rodeo Secretary, Julie Townsend, at least 24 hours in advance. Failure to provide notice will result in no-show fine, and the contestant may not compete again until all fines and fees are paid in full. No-show fines are \$10 plus entry fees for the first occurrence and \$25 plus entry fees for the next occurrence.

A sick horse is a valid reason for a late draw-out when accompanied by a written veterinarian's excuse. Please notify and email the rodeo secretary with the attached veterinarian's excuse.

If GHSRA participates in a rodeo hosted by another association (for example, Cleveland or Andalusia), a GHSRA contestant who enters that rodeo is considered entered. THERE WILL BE NO DRAW-OUTS FOR THESE RODEOS. The contestant is responsible for all entry fees, which must be paid before the contestant may compete at the next rodeo.

RODEO PERSONNEL/VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Many people are needed to make a rodeo run smoothly. Numerous duties are performed behind the scenes and in the arena. Most are handled by contestant parents who volunteer their time. The association welcomes volunteers and will provide training for available positions. The following is just a sample of what is needed on a rodeo weekend. Please reach out to any of the board members with questions and/or interest.

- **TIMERS**
- **GOAT HANDLER**
- **BARREL & POLE SETTERS**
- **HOSPITALITY (SNACKS, DRINKS ETC FOR DIRECTORS, BOARD MEMEBERS & VOLUNTEERS)**

Paid rodeo personnel generally include stock contractors, judges, bullfighters, pickup men, and the announcer. The stock contractor may provide these personnel as part of a package, or the sponsor may hire them individually.

QUEEN & PRINCESS CONTEST

The Queen & Princess Contest is held at State Finals each season. Every girl in grades 5-7 for Princess & 9-11 for Queen is eligible to compete. Contact the Queen Coordinator (Keshia Garland @ 229-561-1197) for details. No points toward the All-Around shall be allowed from the Queen Contest.

The GHSRA Queen will have her entry fees paid during her reigning year. She will be responsible for hauling all Grand Entry equipment and carrying the American flag during the rodeo opening. The Queen will be given double travel money to Nationals, if she meets all requirements for the sponsorship program.

CUTTING HORSE & REINED COW HORSE

Contestants will pay a cattle charge plus their entry fees. This event is only offered to high school contestants. The GHSRA will use the NHSRA option rule.

ROPING EVENT OVERALL RULES (LOOP/JUMP)

The association will use a one-loop/jump rule in steer wrestling, breakaway roping, tie-down roping, team roping, and ribbon roping during the regular season competition unless otherwise posted in the ground rules.

Break away roping: One (1) loop is permitted. Two (2) loops are permitted at State Finals, the second loop must be made up and tied to the roper's saddle. No loop may be rebuilt. Rope(s) must be tied to saddle horn hard and fast. The loop must go over the cattle's nose and be a bell-collar for high school contestants or it will result in no time. The loop has to go over the cattle's nose for junior high contestants (but does not require bell-collar) to be a catch. Refer to WPRA rules.

Tie down and roping: One (1) loop is permitted. Two (2) loops are permitted at State Finals, the second loop must be made up and tied to the roper's saddle. No loop may be rebuilt. Rope(s) must be tied to saddle horn hard and fast. Catch as catch can. This same rule applies to **JH**

Ribbon roping.

Team Events (Ribbon and Team roping): If a partner is unable to compete, the able partner may select another partner. The replacement partner must be entered in the rodeo but not already entered in team roping. If two or more teams have partners who are unable to compete, eligible remaining partners from those teams may pair together. If a contestant does not have a designated partner, he can enter with the "draw partner" option. If entering with this option, only the paid entry will receive a payout because the drawn partner pays no entry fee. The contestant must declare a partner for State Finals.

Team Roping High School: Each contestant may carry only (one) 1 rope. (Two) 2 loops are permitted in Team Roping events, unless otherwise posted in the ground rules. At State Finals, three loops are allowed (one) 1 roper may rebuild (one) 1 loop. A dropped loop is considered a thrown loop.

Team Roping Junior High School: Each contestant may carry only (one) 1 rope. Three loops are allowed (one) 1 roper may rebuild (one) 1 loop during regular season competition and at State Finals. All other HS team roping rules apply, unless otherwise posted in the ground rules.

GOAT TYING

In goat tying, one goat will be drawn for three contestants. The goat will be changed according to the draw, not according to the number of runs on the goat. This applies to all qualifying rodeos and the Southeastern Showdown. Southeastern Showdown will drag every 10. At State Finals, goats will be rotated for every contestant. Only one goat will be in the arena during goat tying.

POINT SYSTEM

GHSRA uses the point system established in the NHSRA Rule Book. Each go-round at State Finals, plus the finals average, is worth a maximum of 10 points. All-Around points are awarded under the same 10-point system.

APPEALS AND PROTESTS

A contestant who wishes to appeal a decision must do so through the adult Event Director, the Arena Director, and the National Director. **DO NOT GO DIRECTLY TO A JUDGE.** Only the contestant may file an appeal. Parents/Guardians can attend an appeal, but the contestant must be present and initiate the process.

SAFETY EQUIPMENT

Approved safety vests and mouthpieces are required for all three roughstock events. Helmets are required for bull riding. Quick-release riggings in bareback riding are optional. In the Junior High Division, contestants in bull/steer riding must wear a helmet, vest, and mouthpiece. Equipment may be inspected at various rodeos.

SEMINARS AND CLINICS

GHSRA may hold clinics and seminars. Private seminars may also be available. GHSRA does not endorse private seminars, although some contestants choose to attend them.

WESTERN LEGACY-MULTI-STATE RODEOS-SOUTHEASTERN SHOWDOWN

GHSRA hosts the Southeastern Showdown held in Perry, Georgia at the Georgia National Fairgrounds. This rodeo is open to all states within NHSRA. The date for this season is November 5-8, 2026. This is a great rodeo highlighting GHSRA. It takes a village to make this rodeo great, and the association will need help from both contestants and adults; please volunteer.

The GHSRA treats the Showdown as a points rodeo based only on GHSRA contestants. Points are awarded but there is not a separate GHSRA payout. If a contestant places in a round of the Showdown, they would receive Showdown payout.

STATE FINALS

GHSRA & GJHSRA State Finals will be held May 20-23, 2027, in Perry, Georgia at the Georgia National Fairgrounds. There will be two go-rounds plus a championship go-round for the top 25 contestants in each event.

Qualification/Eligibility: Contestants must attend a minimum of 25% of the association's state rodeos for the season. 2026-27 would require 4 rodeos based off our current schedule. In addition, a contestant must fulfill the sponsorship requirements (Raffle Tickets/Sponsorships). Contestants must sell \$300 raffle tickets/sponsorships to be eligible to compete at State Finals. To be eligible for awards at State Finals, you must attend 50% of the state rodeos in the season.

The top four contestants at State Finals, in each event, earn the right to attend and compete at the National High School Finals Rodeo.

For a saddle to be awarded in an event, that event must average at least four contestants throughout the year or a single event saddle sponsorship sold for the qualifying event.

Awards are presented to the All-Around, Reserve All-Around, and Rookie winners. A saddle will be awarded in each event that averages at least four contestants throughout the year, subject to the Ground Rules. Each contestant that qualifies and competes at State Finals will receive a choice of a jacket or qualifier buckle.

In the event of a tie, duplicate awards will be given. A coin toss or mutual agreement between the tied contestants will determine who receives the award that is immediately available.

State Finals Barrels & Poles: Each contestant will draw for position in the final round.

RAFFLE AND SPONSORSHIP

Each member must sell a minimum of **\$300** in raffle tickets and/or sponsorships **to be eligible to compete at State Finals**. A National Qualifier must raise at least **\$500** in sponsorships and/or raffle ticket sales **to receive travel money**. Raffle tickets will be included in your packet, distributed at your first rodeo.

Contestants that sell over the \$500 requirement will get a stall paid for at State Finals for every \$100 over.

Example:

\$600=1 stall

\$700=2 stalls

Minimum Raffle Ticket sales are due at the Madison Rodeo on October 9th. You may keep selling throughout the season with all additional raffle tickets sales due by March 20, 2027 at the Franklin, GA rodeo. Official drawing will be held that weekend.

Sponsorship money must be turned in by **March 20, 2027**, at the **Franklin, GA rodeo entry/check-in**.

SCHOLARSHIPS

Seniors have the opportunity to apply for scholarships awarded at State Finals. Information regarding application submissions and deadlines will be posted on the website, our GHSRA Facebook page, and BAND.

Seniors that attend the NHSFR are also eligible for scholarships awarded at Nationals. The NHSRA scholarship application must be completed online prior to Nationals. Paper copies must be turned in, so please plan accordingly.

HORSE PAPERS

Contestants are required to have current Coggins papers at each rodeo. State inspectors attend several rodeos. GHSRA is required to notify inspectors when and where each rodeo will be held. If you are asked to provide your horse's Coggins papers and do not have them, you will not be allowed to unload your horse and may cause all livestock at the rodeo to be quarantined.

ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIP

Associate Members have the right to vote at the State Meeting and hold office; should the opportunity become available. Membership must be completed by April 1 each year to be eligible to vote at the annual meeting. Associate Membership forms are available at rodeos and on the website.

PRODUCING GHSRA RODEOS

Many of our GHSRA rodeos are produced by teams of families. If you are interested in producing a GHSRA rodeo, please contact GHSRA President, Haley O'Neal. Rodeo committees are responsible for: facility, stock for both high school and junior high, ambulance/EMT, judges, announcer, bullfighters, pickup men, tractor and drag, metal barrels, box pads, bucking chutes, roping box, etc. Rodeos, paid in full, are allowed to distribute up to \$3000 in sponsorship credit. The credit may be divided among as many contestants as the rodeo producer chooses. This credit counts only toward consideration for National Finals parking allocation and does not count toward the minimum raffle/sponsorship monies. The rodeo producer must identify, in writing to the State

Secretary, the contestants who will receive the credit. The producer of a sponsored rodeo may be allowed to use half of the ground-fee money.

Our association will not rodeo on Easter weekend.

NATIONAL FINALS RODEO

The **NHSFR** will be held in Lincoln, Nebraska, July 18-24, 2027

Sandhills Global Event Center

4100 N 84th St
Lincoln, NE 68507

Light Rifle & Trap Range

10801 S. 134th St
Bennet, NE 68317

The **NJHFR** will be held in Guthrie, Oklahoma, June 20-26, 2027

Lazy E Arena

9600 Lazy E Drive
Guthrie, OK 73044

Light Rifle Range

12496 N.E. 234th Road
Arcadia, Oklahoma 73007

The top four contestants in each event are invited to compete. If a qualifier does not attend, GHSRA may roll down through eighth place to fill available positions. This does not affect State standings or awards.

FOLLOWING THE STATE FINALS AWARDS CEREMONY, PLEASE BE PREPARED TO ENTER FOR NATIONALS AND COMPLETE ADDITIONAL PAPERWORK BEFORE YOU LEAVE. In the past, it's been a requirement that both parents/guardian for present for Nationals entry. This may change with the use of EQUEST. The State Secretary will communicate this process closer to State Finals. In the event we need to notarize the entry form, both parents will need to be present. If there is a circumstance that prevents both parents from being in attendance, let Kriston Wilson (865-388-8768) know before arriving for at State Finals.

TRAVEL MONEY (NATIONALS): There is potential for GHSRA to provide National Qualifiers with travel money to help offset expenses. Funding is subject to program sponsorship sales, entry fees, and other available funds. The GHSRA Board of Directors will determine distribution. In the event travel money is available, it will be awarded at Nationals. Contestants must have raised a total of \$500 or more in raffle tickets/sponsorships to be eligible to receive travel money.

HOOK-UPS AT NATIONALS: In the event hook-ups are limited at Nationals (typically HS, not Jr. High) National Finals RV hookups will be assigned based on the amount of sponsorships sold by contestants.

NHSFR & NJHFR HONEST TRY

Contestants must make an honest effort when representing Georgia on the National level. If a contestant qualifies for and attends the NHSFR AND/OR NJHFR but does NOT compete in the first round, the attending board members will determine whether the contestant will receive travel money. If a contestant qualifies, enters and pays the required fees for NHSFR/NJHFR, but is unable to attend, GHSRA board members will determine whether the contestant will receive the spirit pack (National shirt, T-shirts, jacket, etc.).

COMMITTEES 2026-2027

AWARDS	Haley O’Neal-CHAIRMAN Holli Sapp-CHAIRMAN Kriston Wilson Kristy Ethridge
BUDGET	Haley O’Neal-CHAIRMAN Scott Briscoe Tiffany Bullard-HS TREASURER Allison Davis-Jr. HIGH TREASURER
HOSPITALITY	Kriston Wilson + Volunteers/Sign-Up Genius
NOMINATING	Holli Sapp-CHAIRMAN
RULES	Haley O’Neal-CHAIRMAN
SCHOLARSHIP	Jolyn King-CHAIRPERSON Haley O’Neal-CHAIRMAN
QUEEN COORDINATOR	Kecia Garland
GALA COORDINATOR	Megan McLeod
PUBLICITY/WEBSITE	Julie Townsend
SOCIAL MEDIA/ADVERTISING	Trista Hooten-Wilson

STUDENT OFFICERS 2026-2027

PRESIDENT	JulieGrace Biles
VICE PRESIDENT	Braxton Townsend
SECRETARY	Ellison Wilson