
Colorado Springs Football Officials Association

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

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CSFOA website: csfootballofficials.com

CHSAA website: http://www2.chsaa.org/officials/football/o_football.asp

How do I start officiating in Colorado Springs?

On the CSFOA website, click on the “New Officials” link in the menu and submit the short questionnaire. We will contact you with more information about becoming a Colorado Springs High School Football official.

Who is my employer for high school football officiating?

No one. All CSFOA officials are independent contractors. When you accept an assignment, you enter a contract with the home school to officiate the game in exchange for payment. You determine how many games you want to officiate and which game assignments to accept.

What are the relationships and responsibilities among CHSAA, CFOA, and CSFOA?

The Colorado High School Activities Association (CHSAA) is a non-profit organization that sanctions all high school sports and activities for Colorado member schools. CHSAA’s responsibilities include arranging for officials to work sanctioned games. CHSAA exclusively recognizes the Colorado Football Officials Association (CFOA) as the non-profit association of officials authorized to work varsity and junior varsity football contests in Colorado. CSFOA is the established officials’ association for CFOA Area 3. CFOA and CSFOA are both responsible for recruiting, training, developing, evaluating, and retaining high school football officials.

What is the anticipated start-up cost?

Football is relatively expensive to start. There are no financial costs (other than uniforms and equipment) to officiate Parks and Rec football in the spring.

CHSAA requires a \$10 background check when you first register, and then every 3 years thereafter for those who officiate at middle and high school in the fall. There is also an annual \$7 insurance fee to CHSAA, regardless of how many sports you work. There is a \$10 Arbiter Sports

registration fee for each sport. CFOA dues are currently \$70 per year, and CSFOA dues are currently \$30 per year. You can expect to invest about \$250-\$400 in equipment, including shoes, short- and long-sleeved shirts, pants and shorts, cold-weather gear, hats, whistles, flags, bean bags, etc. Some officials purchase more gear (backup flags, whistles, hats, shirts, etc), so the cost will differ. Many officials will purchase a handful of new items each season. You can expect to recoup your initial equipment investment after officiating six to eight games.

How many officials are in the Colorado Springs Football Officials Association?

In 2025, 109 men and 4 women were in the association.

What is the purpose of the New Officials Clinic Class?

To work Colorado High School Football games, you must pass the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) 100-question test with a minimum score of 85%. We conduct training each Tuesday evening in July to prepare for the test and the first game in late August. The new officials class schedule is posted on the csfootballofficials.com website.

What about spring football?

Colorado Springs Parks & Rec has a 6-week spring season that runs from mid-March to the end of April. To prepare for that short season, CSFOA instructors will offer a truncated new-officials class in late February and early March that covers the essentials of officiating those games. The new officials will still attend the clinics in the summer to prepare for the fall season.

What happens after I pass the test for the fall season?

In late July, the crew chiefs will meet with you to ask questions about your background and availability. You will then be drafted onto a crew.

How often do the crews meet?

We begin our association meetings in early August with the state master clinic. From there, CSFOA rotates between full in-person association meetings, online CFOA webinars, and individual crew meetings. Some crews also combine for larger sessions to review film and discuss plays and game situations.

Am I expected to attend all meetings?

No, each member is expected to attend a portion of the meetings to retain “member in good standing” status. The Board determines the required number of meetings.

Is there a physical fitness requirement?

No, although officials are expected to move well enough to keep up with teenage football players.

When are most games played?

Varsity games are mostly played on Friday nights at 7:00 pm and Saturdays in the afternoon or evening. A few varsity games are held on Thursday night. Sub-varsity games are on Monday, (a few Wednesdays), and Thursday afternoons and Saturday mornings/afternoons. We also officiate

3rd- through 8th-grade Parks & Rec games. You could possibly officiate a high school, middle school, or Parks & Rec game any day/evening except Sunday.

When does the fall season begin and end?

The fall season begins the last week of August and ends the first week of November.

What levels does the Colorado Springs association officiate?

We work 6-man football games (with a five-person crew); 8-man games (with a five-person crew); and 11-man games at the 1A through 5A levels. CHSAA (www.chsaanow.org) will publish a football bulletin with specific classification information by school.

How many games can I expect to work?

This depends on your availability. As a rookie official (unless you are a transferring official with varsity experience), you most likely will not work varsity games in your first season. With “complete” availability, you can expect to work 20-35 games in August, September, October, and November.

How many officials work on the field?

Schools will pay for a specific number of officials depending on the level:

Parks and Rec – 4 officials (Referee (R), Head Linesman (L), Line Judge (LJ), Umpire (U))

Junior High /Middle School – 4 officials (R, L, LJ, U)

Sub-varsity – 4 officials (R, L, LJ, U)

Varsity – 5 officials (R, L, LJ, U, Back Judge (BJ))

Some crews may choose to add a fifth official (BJ) to sub-varsity games, and the total fee is then split among the five officials.

Will I work multiple games in a single day?

That will depend on the level and on your availability. Junior High/Middle School will typically play a 7th-grade game (7-minute quarters) followed by an 8th-grade game (8-minute quarters). You will typically officiate only one high school sub-varsity game per day. An exception may be on a Saturday, where you could officiate a 9:00 am sub-varsity game at one location and a 12:00 pm or 1:00 pm game at another.

Am I expected to work a certain number of games to maintain “good standing”?

No, you can work as many/few games as you’d like. However, the more snaps you see, the better you will get. You will not be able to officiate “minimal” games and progress as quickly as your peers.

How much will I be paid per game?

Parks & Rec/Middle School/Jr High pays \$55-\$65 per game

Sub varsity (C -Squad and JV) pays \$70 per game

Varsity pays \$95 per game

Schools will also pay a travel stipend in the city and mileage for out-of-town games

How far will I travel to officiate games?

Most games are in the city. However, we will travel out of the city for some games. Boundaries include Deer Trail to the northeast, Genoa-Hugo to the east, Fountain-Fort Carson to the south, and Buena Vista to the west. We may also assist other associations with their games, so crews may travel longer distances.

Will I get on-field practice before the real games begin?

We will hold an on-field new official clinic, and your crew will also work one or two scrimmages before games begin.

What crew positions should I expect to work?

As a new official, you will spend most of your first season on the “wing” (L and LJ). You may also work a few games as an Umpire. You will probably not work any games as a Referee or Back Judge.

Can I watch varsity games?

We invite all new officials to attend the varsity pre-game (1-1/2 hours before kick-off) and to walk the sideline behind one of the wing officials (on a non-intrusive basis). This helps with personal development.

What can my expectations be for advancement?

This depends on several variables: your availability (the number of games you can work), your fitness, your performance, and your crew chief's judgment. The most successful officials spend a lot of time studying the rules book and mechanics manual, watching game film, asking other officials questions, finding and meeting with an informal mentor, attending varsity games to observe, and volunteering where needed/able. Some may officiate a varsity game in their first season, depending on the number of available officials.