



WELCOME ASPIRING OFFICIALS

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



CAPITAL DISTRICT FOOTBALL OFFICIALS ASSOCIATION
Serving NYSPHAA Section 2 Football Programs

Thank you for your interest in joining our team of officials who ensure fair, safe, and exciting football games across Section 2. Officiating offers a unique way to stay connected to the game, promote sportsmanship, and contribute to its integrity.

As part of CDFOA, you'll have the chance to officiate tackle football at all levels, from youth leagues to high school varsity, as well as the growing sport of Girls Flag Football. It's a rewarding experience that builds skills, connections, and a deeper appreciation for the game.

This brochure answers common questions and outlines next steps as you explore this opportunity. Feel free to reach out or visit our website to learn more—we'd love to connect and talk football!

Sincerely,
The Members of the CDFOA
recruiting@518football.com



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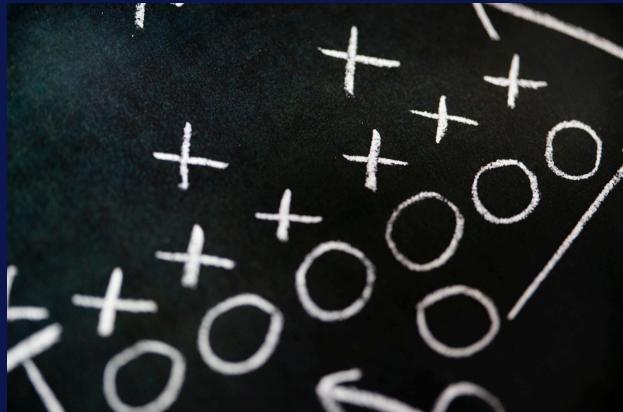


WHAT QUALIFICATIONS DO I NEED TO BECOME A FOOTBALL OFFICIAL?

No prior officiating experience is necessary! Our comprehensive training program will teach you the rules, mechanics, and techniques needed to confidently start officiating games in your first year.

Since you're already inquiring about becoming a football official, it's clear you have an interest in the sport, and a general passion and understanding of football can certainly help—but it's not required.

We welcome individuals from all backgrounds to join and learn!



WHAT TYPES OF FOOTBALL DO WE OFFICIATE IN THE CAPITAL DISTRICT?

In the Capital District, we officiate a wide variety of football at the local level, including:

- **Fall Tackle Football:** We cover everything from youth leagues like Pop Warner to high school varsity football, with nearly 750 games and over 3,000 positions to cover. In addition to Pop Warner and high school varsity games, we also officiate at modified and junior varsity, ensuring opportunities to gain experience at all levels of the game.

- **Spring High School Girls Flag Football:** A rapidly growing sport in the District, we officiate high school girls' flag football, which has gained popularity since it began in 2022. Currently, this is a varsity only sport.

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN FALL TACKLE FOOTBALL AND SPRING HIGH SCHOOL GIRLS FLAG FOOTBALL?

Fall Tackle Football

- A traditional, full-contact game where players wear helmets and pads. Teams follow the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) rules, emphasizing blocking, tackling, and physical gameplay.
- Played from late August to November, aligning with the high school football season and culminating in sectional, regional, and state playoffs.
- Open to male and female athletes, though it's predominantly played by male students. It has a long-established tradition in high schools.

Spring High School Girls Flag Football

- A non-contact sport where players wear flags attached to their waists. The objective is to pull the flag of the ball carrier to stop play instead of tackling. It focuses on speed, strategy, and skill, with rules modified for safety. Teams follow the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) rules.
- Played in the spring, typically starting in April and ending in June, which includes the playoffs.

DO I HAVE TO OFFICIATE BOTH FALL TACKLE FOOTBALL AND SPRING HIGH SCHOOL GIRLS FLAG FOOTBALL, OR CAN I CHOOSE ONE?

No, you are not required to officiate both leagues. Officials have the flexibility to choose which sport to officiate based on their interests, schedule, and availability.

- Fall Tackle Football: If you prefer traditional, full-contact football, you can focus solely on officiating tackle football during the fall season.
- Spring H.S. Girls Flag Football: If you enjoy a fast-paced, non-contact game or want to explore officiating in the spring, you can officiate flag football.
- Both: Many officials choose to work both seasons to stay active year-round, gain more experience, and increase their earnings.

Whether you choose one or both, you will receive the appropriate training to ensure success on the field.

WHAT TYPE OF OFFICIALS ARE YOU LOOKING FOR MOST: TACKLE OR GIRLS FLAG FOOTBALL?

The answer isn't clear-cut—we are always looking for officials who are excited and committed to bringing fair play and integrity to both games.

- **Fall Tackle Football:** In the fall, we need a significant number of officials to for nearly 750 games and over 3,000 positions to cover each season, from Pop Warner to high school varsity football.
- **Spring H.S. Girls Flag Football:** Covering about 120 games in the spring season, this fast-pace, exciting, sport has become very popular, not only to the players, but also for officials to officiate.

Many enjoy officiating both tackle and flag football, finding fulfillment in the different styles of play each sport offers. Whether you prefer one sport or want to be involved in both, there are plenty of opportunities to contribute!

DOES GENDER MATTER IN BECOMING AN OFFICIAL AT EITHER LEVEL?

Complete NO, gender does not matter. Our association is committed to fostering an inclusive and welcoming environment for everyone interested in officiating, regardless of gender.

We encourage individuals of all genders to bring their unique perspectives and skills to the field. Both Fall Tackle Football and Spring High School Girls Flag Football benefit from diverse officiating teams that reflect the spirit of inclusivity and sportsmanship we uphold.

If you're passionate about football and fair play, we'd love to have you as part of our officiating community!



WHAT TYPE OF PHYSICAL ABILITY OR SHAPE DO I NEED TO BE IN TO BECOME AN OFFICIAL?

We welcome officials with a variety of physical abilities and fitness levels. Officiating on the field is an active role that involves running, quick movements, and a lot of hustle, which can be physically demanding. However, we work with each official to find a position that best suits their strengths and abilities.

- **On-Field Officials:** These roles require physical exertion, as you will be moving up and down the field to maintain positioning and keep up with the pace of play.
- **Clock Operators:** If running isn't a good fit for you, there are positions like clock operation that are less physically demanding but still critical to the game.

Our goal is to ensure every official is positioned to succeed while maintaining high standards of officiating. Training and support are provided to help you adapt to the demands of the role.

WHAT IS THE TIME COMMITMENT FOR NEW OFFICIALS?

The time commitment for new officials is manageable and flexible!

- **Seasonal Commitment:** The official tackle football season runs from late August to early November. New officials typically start by working Pop Warner and youth league games, progressing from high school modified, JV, and varsity games as you gain experience.
- **Girls Flag Football:** The Girls Flag Football season runs from April to June, with training classes beginning in March. Like with tackle football, you'll receive thorough training to ensure you're prepared for these games.



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- **Training Classes:** Training classes are an integral part of the overall meeting schedule, designed to equip you with the skills and knowledge needed to officiate confidently. For tackle football, there are typically 10–12 meetings per season, while the Girls High School Flag season includes about 3–4 meetings. These sessions run for about an hour and are a mix of in-person and virtual formats, providing flexibility and accessibility. Additionally, there are occasional Saturday clinics to offer hands-on experience and reinforce key concepts.
- **Meeting Schedule:** For fall tackle football, meetings run from mid-July through the entire season. These are held mainly in-person with some virtually, and last for about an hour. For the spring H.S. girls flag football season, meetings begin in February and run through April, typically conducted virtually. We understand busy schedules, so if you miss one or two, don't worry—you'll still be able to catch up and continue developing your skills.



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- **Game Day Commitment:** A typical day involves driving to the game location, arriving 30 minutes before kickoff to meet your crew and prepare, officiating the game, and then driving home. The total time commitment for these games is usually 2–3 hours. If you're scheduled for a doubleheader at one location, you can expect to add an additional 2 hours to your day.
- **Varsity Games:** Varsity games often involve additional pregame preparation and collaboration with your crew, especially for complex matchups. These games can take up to 5 hours of total commitment from travel to pre-game preparation, to completion.

We're committed to working with you to make sure you can balance training and games with your schedule while ensuring you get the full experience needed to succeed.



HOW MANY GAMES PER YEAR DO I HAVE TO OFFICIATE?

There is no specific number of games you are required. We hope you will have availability in your calendar, but the number of games you work is entirely up to you.

Through our assigning system, you have full control of your schedule. You can block out dates, days, and/or times that you are unavailable, and you will not be scheduled for games during those blocked-out periods. This flexibility allows you to work as much or as little as you'd like, depending on your availability and interests!



WHAT DAYS AND TIMES ARE THE GAMES USUALLY SCHEDULED?

Most high school games typically take place in the late afternoon, with start times ranging from 3:30 to 7 p.m. Additionally, there are Saturday games, especially for JV and varsity.

Youth games usually take place on weekends and can run from the afternoon into the late evening, depending on the number of games scheduled. The schedule for youth games can vary, but weekends are the primary time frame.

Girls Flag Football games generally start around 4 p.m. during the week, and only a limited number of games on weekends.



WHAT EXPENSES ARE INVOLVED IN GETTING STARTED?

When you decide to join CDFOA, here's an overview of the costs involved:

- **Membership Dues: \$110, covering state dues, insurance, and rule books.**
- **Fingerprinting: \$101.25 - paid directly to company.**
- **Equipment Costs**
 - Starting as an official requires an upfront investment in:
 - Uniforms, Shoes, and Gear: Approximately \$300.
- **Optional Online Course: A \$50 fee for the RefReps online course.**
- **Totaling approximately \$500 to get started, but keep in mind these are not expenses that occur all at the same time.**

Equipment Costs

Starting as an official requires an upfront investment in:

- Uniforms, Shoes, and Gear: Approximately \$300.

U.S. Veterans, organizations like Battlefield2Ballfields can cover startup expenses, making it even easier to join the team.

Once you're in, your earnings will quickly offset these costs. As a new official, depending on your availability and the number of games you officiate, you can expect to earn between \$1,000 and \$1,500 per season.

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Additionally, there are yearly dues and fees to help the organization operate smoothly:

- **Yearly Dues Fee: Equivalent to one JV game pay.**
- **Assignor Fee: A small percentage of game assignments (4% per game; e.g., \$4 from a \$100 game), billed annually. There may also be minor fees for turning back assignments, which are rare but manageable.**

The assignor plays a vital role in ensuring the organization and schedules run efficiently—a fair value for their hard work.

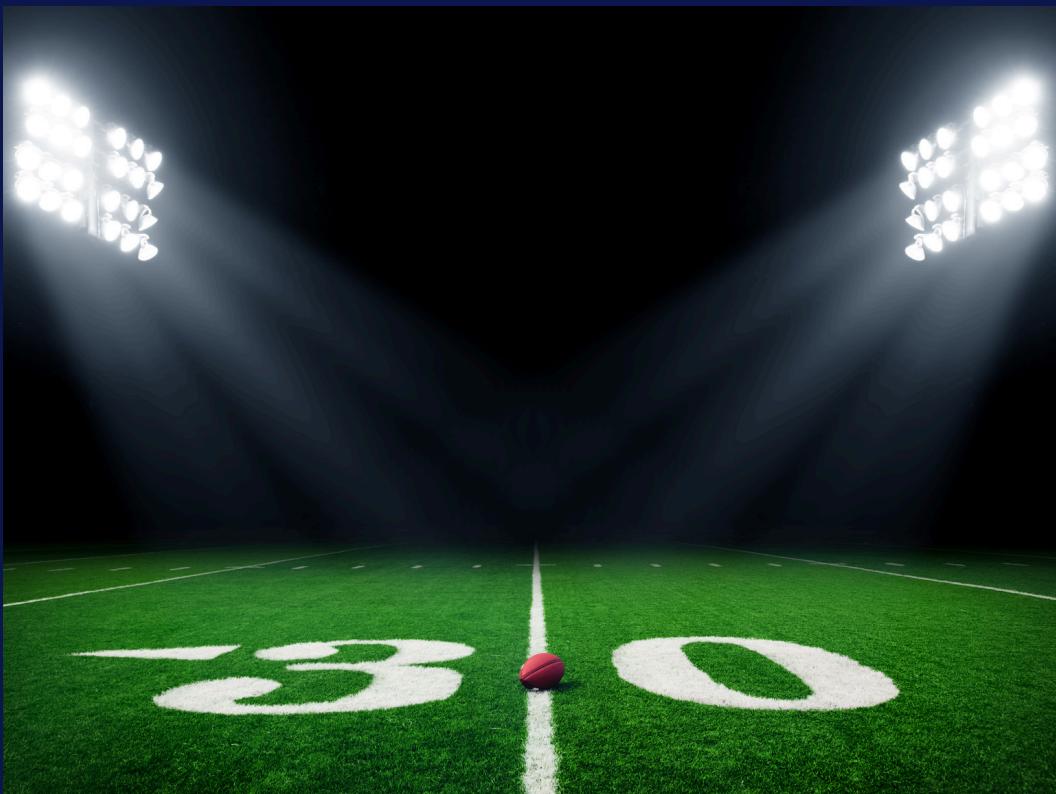
Needless to say, our organization thrives when everyone participates and helps keep things running smoothly. The fee structure is designed to support the success of our officials and operations, and your investment pays off through the games you officiate. Plus, officiating is a great way to earn money while staying connected to the game you love.

Don't let the fees deter you—join us and see how rewarding officiating can be!

WHAT ARE THE GAME FEES FOR FOOTBALL OFFICIALS?

Officials earn a range of \$60 to over \$110 per game, depending on the level.

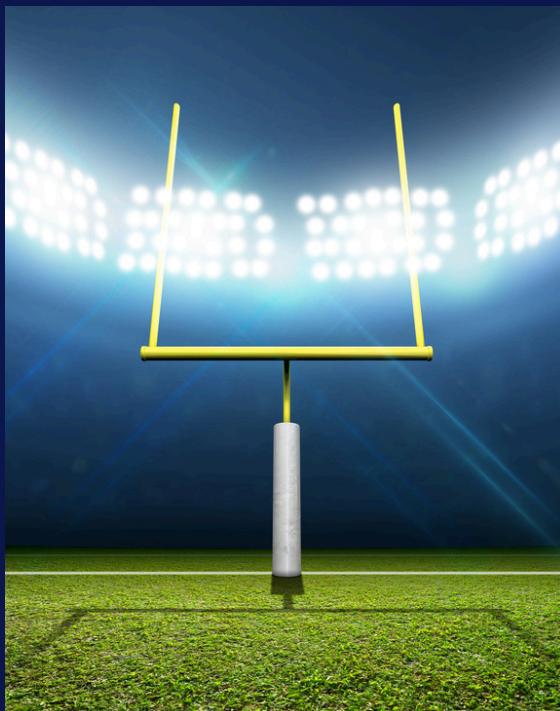
New officials can expect to earn between \$1,000 and \$1,500 in their first year, depending on the number of games worked. If you work both tackle and flag season, you could be closer to \$2,000.



WHAT LEVELS OF FOOTBALL WILL I OFFICIATE AS A BEGINNER?

New officials begin with youth league games and clock assignments for varsity games. Over time, assignments progress to high school modified, JV, and eventually varsity games typically by the third year.

For Girls Flag Football, there is only varsity level. Beginners may start with clock assignments and, over time, work their way onto the field.



WHAT SUPPORT IS AVAILABLE FOR NEW OFFICIALS?

New officials receive comprehensive support, including mentoring, opportunities to shadow experienced officials, and access to game videos with commentary to help improve your skills. You'll also be invited to observe experienced officials in action and learn their mechanics.

Additionally, a great way to get started before even getting on the field is to take the optional RefReps courses. RefReps (<https://www.refreps.com/>) is a third-party online tool that provides an immersive experience, allowing you to learn rules, mechanics, and game situations through a virtual environment. There is a \$50 charge to access RefReps, but don't worry—if you take this online class, you'll be reimbursed in the form of a credit toward your year-end dues.

Essentially, you get your investment back while gaining valuable training to prepare you for the field.

Additionally, as part of a crew, you'll receive ongoing feedback from many seasoned members of the organization who are always willing to help you grow. We have each other's backs on the field, no matter your level or experience!

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF BECOMING A FOOTBALL OFFICIAL?

In addition to earning extra income, officials enjoy camaraderie, opportunities to develop leadership skills, and the chance to contribute to youth sports by ensuring fair play and safety.



DOES THE LOCATION OF WHERE I WORK AND WHERE I LIVE MATTER?

Football in our area is considered Section 2, which spans the Capital District, parts of Lake George, Glens Falls, northern Saratoga County, and several areas of Warren County. Due to the large number of schools in this section that have football, our area has two officiating associations: the Capital District Football Officials Association and the Adirondack Football Officials Association.

Depending on where you live and where you work, one of these associations might be a better fit for you. Both associations are made up of outstanding individuals committed to fairly officiating the games in our section. We're here to help you navigate which association will work best for your location and schedule, ensuring a smooth start to your officiating journey!

IS THERE AN AGE MINIMUM FOR BEING AN OFFICIAL?

There is no minimum age to become an official, and we actively encourage young people to start their officiating journey. Even if you need to take time away for school or other commitments, you can always return and pick up where you left off.

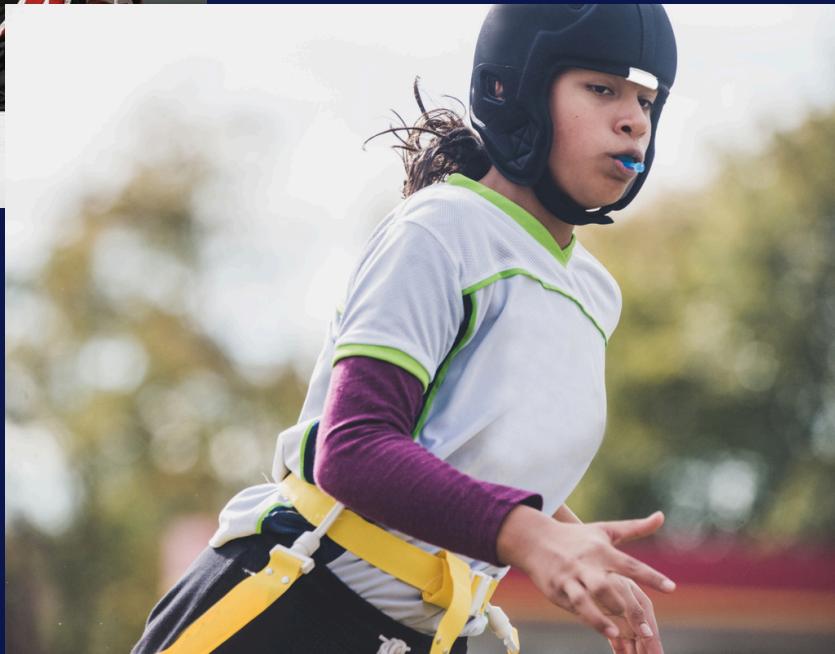
We understand the challenges of balancing officiating with school and transportation. That's why we work with younger officials to accommodate their schedules and travel needs. Most games are within 20-30 minutes of the Capital Di, and if you don't have a driver's license yet, we'll do our best to assign you to games that fit your situation.

New officials typically start by working the clock, gaining confidence and experience before moving on to Pop Warner games in their local area.

We're here to support you every step of the way. If you or your family have any questions, we'd love to connect and help make officiating a great opportunity for you!

CAN OFFICIATING LEAD TO HIGHER-LEVEL OPPORTUNITIES?

Yes! Our association has produced officials who have advanced to collegiate conferences like the ACC, Ivy League, and Patriot League, as well as NCAA Division II and III levels.



HOW CAN I ENGAGE AND LEARN MORE BEFORE COMMITTING TO BECOMING AN OFFICIAL?

We're here to help you explore and learn before making a full commitment!

- Reach Out:** Fill out our interest form at 518football.com, and we'll connect with you soon to answer your questions and guide you through the process.
- Information Sessions:** Attend one of our info sessions held throughout the winter season. These are great opportunities to learn more and ask any questions.
- Join a Meeting:** Come to one of our scheduled meetings to meet experienced officials, hear their stories, and get answers to all your questions.



WHY SHOULD I BECOME AN OFFICIAL DESPITE THE CHALLENGES?

There's no denying that officials play a critical role in ensuring the game is called fairly. This responsibility can sometimes lead to passionate reactions from spectators, coaches, or players who may express frustration over a call. But here's the real story:

When you're on the field as part of a well-trained crew, with strong rules knowledge, sharp mechanics, and dedication to improving your craft, handling those passionate moments becomes much easier. Confidence in your accuracy, teamwork with your fellow officials, and preparation are key.

Our crews—whether 3, 4, or 5 officials—work together, supporting one another every step of the way. The white hat (Referee) has the authority, backed by the state and our association, to address inappropriate behavior from coaches or spectators if necessary. While unruly players are rare, we prioritize safety and communication with coaches, players, and each other to manage any issues effectively.

It's important to remember that many outbursts stem from the passion and competition inherent to the game. Patience, clear communication, and teamwork make managing these moments not just possible but rewarding.

Don't let the fear of fan reactions discourage you from officiating. Step onto the field, experience the camaraderie, and see for yourself the fulfillment that comes from being part of the game you love.

HOW DO I BECOME A FOOTBALL OFFICIAL?

Complete our interest form on the website, and we'll guide you through the entire process. This includes training classes that consist of both classroom learning and field exercises designed to prepare you for officiating.

As part of the training, you'll eventually need to pass a mandatory state test each year. This test focuses on rules and game situations where you'll apply the appropriate rule. Don't worry—it's an open-book test, making it an excellent opportunity to reinforce your understanding of the material. The only closed-book test occurs when advancing to different levels of official status within the organization.

We'll provide all the resources and support you need to succeed. Let's get you certified and on the field!



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HOW DO I BECOME AN OFFICIAL IN SECTION 2?

**Fill out the interest form on our website
(518football.com), and we'll reach out to discuss your
location and determine whether the Adirondack Chapter
or Capital District Chapter is the best fit for you.**

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