



Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

What is HSSO?

Colorado High School Soccer Officials (HSSO) is the interface between the Colorado High School Activities Association (CHSAA), high school soccer programs, and soccer Officials.

What are the requirements to officiate high school soccer in Colorado?

For Varsity games, you must be a current member of HSSO. Sub-varsity games do not require membership, although assignments are usually given to HSSO members first.

Why does HSSO exist? Why doesn't high school use USSF Referees?

The United States Soccer Federation (USSF) does not recognize games at the high school or collegiate level. The National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) is the organization that controls high school sports and activities and determines the playing rules.

HSSO maintains a membership of qualified Officials for high school soccer in Colorado; providing annual training, evaluation, and feedback to the membership.

National Interscholastic Soccer Officials Organization (NISOA) is the organization that provides this service for NCAA collegiate games.

USSF has a different agenda than NFHS: its main goal is to provide leadership, training, competitions, and evaluations aimed at providing the best players for international competitions.

High school sports, including soccer, are an extension of the classroom; with the goal of providing students with physical education, teamwork and sportsmanship.

Can USSF registered Referees accept assignments for high school games?

Yes, but only at the Sub-varsity level. Although the game is virtually the same for high school and USSF, there are some differences, and HSSO provides training and evaluation to assure that Varsity games have qualified referees.

What are the requirements to become and remain a member of HSSO?

Must be at least 18 years old, and no longer enrolled in high school.

Must attend a new Officials training session to join HSSO, and preseason meetings annually.

Must pay the HSSO membership dues annually.

Must pass the National Federation of High Schools (NFHS) Soccer Rules test annually.

Must sign the HSSO Code of Ethics statement annually.

Must pass the CHSAA Background Check required of all sports Officials once every three years.

What is the cost to join HSSO?

Membership dues are paid annually, and the amount due is set based on the costs incurred by NFHS, CHSAA, and HSSO. The current membership rates for new and renewing members can be found on the HSSO website.

hss-colorado.org

When are dues paid?

Membership runs from July 1st to June 30th (following the fall to spring school year).

New members' dues are paid at the time of joining HSSO. Renewing members' dues are paid in late spring.

Dues are paid once per year covering both soccer seasons; fall (boys) and spring (girls). Failure to pay membership dues will prevent Officials from receiving Varsity assignments.

Why are membership dues necessary?

NFHS, CHSAA and HSSO all have expenses related to maintaining a qualified pool of soccer Officials for high school, including:

- Annual training materials, rules books, testing and evaluation
- Registration, Administration, and Operational costs
- Supplemental insurance coverage for Officials

The annual Budget is posted on the HSSO website.

What is the HSSO Constitution & By-Laws? Who are the Board of Directors and Area Directors?

The Constitution & By-Laws are posted on the HSSO website. All HSSO members must abide by the By-Laws.

The Board of Directors are elected by the current membership, serving a two-year term as set in the Constitution. Area Directors are elected by the current membership, serving a one-year term. All positions are voluntary.

What is the HSSO Areas? Does an Official only officiate in their Area?

For all high school sports CHSAA has set up regional areas in Colorado to aid schools in keeping travel costs lower by determining potential Officials within an area. Officials are placed in these areas based on the county of their home residence.

The ten (10) HSSO Areas and the Area Directors are posted on the HSSO website.

However, any HSSO Official can referee any high school game in Colorado, and are not limited to just the area the Official resides.

CHSAA has set limits on schools for reimbursement of travel expenses (mileage) to Officials; and the Official must understand that mileage may not be reimbursed when accepting a game assignment.

How do Officials receive game assignments?

Games are assigned by an Assignor selected by the school(s), district(s), or league(s). Assignors are independently contracted to obtain sports Officials. These Assignors do not have any relationship with HSSO or with CHSAA.

The Assignors use a list of current HSSO members to assign high school soccer games online at ArbiterSports.com. Instructions on the use of ArbiterSports are provided by CHSAA to all HSSO members; including use of the CHSAA Main – Central Hub account (for background check and rules test) and the CHSAA Soccer account (for assignments); including how to “block” days when the Official is not available, set travel limits for the miles an Official is willing to commute, and a list of any schools an Official will not accept an assignment for due a possible conflict of interest (ie: The Official is an alumnus within the previous four (4) years, has a child/sibling/spouse/next of kin that attends or is affiliated with a high school, etc).

In order to receive assignments, the Official must be a member of HSSO and needs to have completed the yearly Soccer Registration, passed the rules test, completed the background check, updated their calendar blocks and travel limits and confirmed they are ready for assignments by checking the “Ready to Assign” box in ArbiterSports.

Game assignment notifications will come from ArbiterSports to the email address provided by the Official. Most initial assignments are provided about 2 to 3 weeks prior to the start of the season, but assignments may also be provided any time throughout the season.

When a game is assigned, the Official must log on to ArbiterSports to either accept or decline the assignment, merely having the assignment listed does not complete the assignment process. It is up to the Official to accept or decline assignments by the required “respond by” date posted in ArbiterSports. Timely responses will assist the Assignors in getting games filled with a crew as efficiently as possible.

Any declined game assignment in ArbiterSports requires an explanation.

Assignors occasionally need to make a change to an Officials’ previously accepted assignment due to a change requested by a school. The Official should monitor their list of assignments within ArbiterSports often, and if a conflict occurs, notify the Assignor immediately. There is no penalty to an Official who must decline a changed assignment.

What is “The Draw”?

In the Denver metro front range and Northern Colorado areas there are overlapping Assignors, using the same pool of Officials. To give these Assignors equal access to the available Officials prior to the start of a season, CHSAA has instituted the “Draw”. ArbiterSports automatically distributes the Officials among the games for the Assignors based on an Officials’ availability, travel limits, and rank; within Area 7, 8, 9, and 10.

Games assigned by the “Draw” for the Assignors will be sent to the Officials in a mass publish prior to the season. The Official is not required to accept all of the games within that block; but should remember that assigning is a difficult task, and to work with the Assignor as best they can to assist when having to decline a game based on time or distance, as there may be other options for the Assignor and Official that will work for both parties.

What uniforms are used by HSSO?

Officials for high school soccer in Colorado use the same uniform as USSF:

- Black shorts (long black pants acceptable in inclement weather)

- Black socks used by USSF (known as 2-stripe)

- Black shoes

- Five colors of jerseys: yellow, green, blue, red and black

Other equipment includes flags for assistant referees, whistle, time piece, and record keeping pen and paper.

Does high school have a different Referee system?

No, and sometimes yes. The CHSAA Soccer Committee and HSSO prefer the Diagonal System of Control (DSC), the method used by USSF, consisting of a Referee and two Assistant Referees, for use on all Varsity games

CHSSA also accepts the occasional use of the Dual (2-whistle) System on Varsity games as well. Most all Sub-varsity games use the Dual System.

Training for the Dual System is provided to new Officials during the new member clinic.

For some Sub-varsity games (especially, Freshman or C-Level games) an Official may be asked to Referee alone, commonly referred as an “Ironman”. Doing so is up to the individual Referee; notify the Assignors if these games are not acceptable to you.

Varsity games must have at least two Officials.

What is the method for determining game difficulty and Referee ranks?

Game “priorities” in ArbiterSports are set by estimating whether a game will be more or less difficult based on the ranking of the two teams, determined by a committee of Coaches completing surveys prior to the start of any season.

Concurrently, a committee of Officials, Assignors and Coaches also complete surveys to evaluate and provide a ranking of the Officials. This ranking is based on several factors, including prior game performance reports, experience level, perceived fitness, and so on. Any Official can ask the HSSO Board of Directors why a certain rank was assigned to them in ArbiterSports. Some examples of steps to improve upon that ranking may include: attending HSSO Officiating Camps, USSF fitness evaluations, and asking Assignors for higher level games in order to demonstrate ability to manage.

As one can expect, such a system can be subjective, but is necessary in order to assure that an Official will feel as comfortable as possible with any game assignment.

More information on Referee Rank can be found on the HSSO website.

Can an Official work for multiple Assignors?

Yes, but it is up to the Official to assure that conflicting assignments do not occur.

How are game reports completed?

Score reporting is the responsibility of the school(s).

Misconduct reporting is the responsibility of the Referee (DSC) or Lead Official (2-whistle). If there are no misconduct events (“cards”), no report is needed. If there is misconduct to report (Cautions, Disqualification, Other Important Event), this must be completed on the CHSAA website within 24 hours of the game, or by 10am the following business day.

<http://www2.chsaa.org/officials/soccer/forms/report.asp>

What is the pay scale?

The CHSAA Official Fees are set prior to the school year, and vary based on whether the game is Varsity (Referee, AR or 2-whistle) or Sub-varsity. Travel expenses (mileage) may also apply, based on distance, carpooling requests, and other considerations (for example, if an Official has requested an assignment in another area mileage reimbursement might not be provided).

Current game fees can be found on the HSSO website.

How do Officials get paid?

This varies by school, so it is up to each Official to make sure to keep a record of payments due and received. Officials are independent contractors; HSSO and CHSAA will not intervene in payment issues. Assignors may assist by providing verification that the Official did in fact officiate a game for a school.

Game fees are paid by the home school during the regular season and first 3 rounds of playoffs:

A few Schools pay at the game; however, this is not common.

Some Schools/Districts will pay on a periodic basis either by mailing checks to the address provided by the Official in ArbiterSports or by a direct deposit arrangement with School/District.

The majority of the Schools pay through ArbiterSports. This will require that the Official provide a payment route (bank account, checking, savings, etc) be setup in RefPay. The Official is then required to periodically request transfers of the payments from their RefPay account. CHSAA or the Assignors may be able to assist in setting this up if there are any issues.

A few Assignors have their own payment system for the School which will require the Official to provide banking information for electronic deposits.

Because of the various methods game fee payments may range from immediate to a few weeks. If a payment has been missed it is the requirement of the Official to contact the Assignor/School/District directly to resolve the delay.

CHSAA has some exclusions for Officials Fees for schools, such as, no payments to Officials for scrimmages or preseason tournaments. As such, HSSO advises any Official confirm with the Assignor/School/District if any preseason assignment is received whether the game will have a paid fee or not.