

The Organization

Twin Cities Soccer Referee Organization (TCSRO, www.tcsro.org) is a member organization providing training, mentoring and advocacy for its over 130 metro area high school soccer referees. We work through our metro area assignors to provide soccer officials for varsity and subvarsity (JV, B squad, 9th grade) matches. Our organization comprises highly experienced soccer referees with 90 percent of our members also officiating USSF youth and adult soccer. Many of our members have state high school tournament experience with a significant number also officiating college matches regionally. Two-thirds of our members have over seven years' experience with one-fifth having over twenty years' of high school soccer experience.

Significant Referee Shortage for the 2022 Season

There will be a significant soccer referee shortage for the 2022 high school season. Less than two weeks before the start of the season, there are over 150 metro varsity matches that do not have full crews assigned. The referee shortage is even more pronounced at the subvarsity level. This proposal addresses the pending shortage and offers a solution to ensure safe and positive playing experiences for our student-athletes.

Current Soccer Referee Compensation

There is a significant fee disparity for varsity soccer; referees working varsity doubleheaders (3 person crew) will earn \$63.50 per match this fall, based on the metro schedule doubleheader fee of \$139 less \$12 in match assigning fees. Other field sport officials (boys and girls lacrosse) will earn \$84 per match (3 person crew) next spring for shorter contests. One of our members who officiates both soccer and girls lacrosse has extensive match GPS data that shows he runs significantly farther during soccer matches.

Varsity fees have also fallen behind youth soccer fees. Many metro clubs are paying \$65 for referees to work U13-14 matches (35 minute halves). Last fall, one of our members worked a junior high match (30 minute halves) at a metro private school (7-12) and received \$65. The next week he worked a JV match (40 minute halves) at the same school and received \$47. The same AD signed both checks..

Our Members' Views on Referee Compensation

We recently surveyed our membership; they told us that match compensation is an area of frustration. Over 80 percent of referees felt that match compensation was significantly lower (54%) or slightly lower (36%) than what they would consider fair. Nearly all referees (44/45) who were aware of fees for other high school sports thought soccer officials were underpaid relative to their peers.

Varsity match compensation and the doubleheader discount were equally noted as the most important compensation components that our members wanted to see addressed.

Our members told us they would work more matches (44% yes, 27% maybe) this season if compensation were increased. Improved compensation will also help us recruit additional USSF and college officials to work high school matches.

Our Proposal for the 2022 Season

Our 2022 season proposal requests adjustment of two referee compensation components, the varsity doubleheader discount and assignor fees.

Varsity Doubleheader Discount

Currently there is a \$15 discount for the second match of a varsity doubleheader. Other field sports such as lacrosse do not have a discount for multiple matches. While there is a discount for dual varsity matches in basketball, that is not the predominant match configuration as it is for soccer. In their written compensation survey comments, officials noted that they work just as hard during the second match of a doubleheader as the first and that there is a significant wait period (20+ minutes on-field warmup and introductions) between varsity matches.

TCSRO Proposal: Eliminate the double header discount and pay both matches at the full match fee.

Assuming eight home doubleheaders per season, this would result in a cost increase of \$360 (3 officials, \$15, 8 matches) or approximately \$180 per varsity team.

Assignor Fees

Assignor fees for soccer are currently deducted from the referee fees listed in the 2000-2024 Metro Officials Fee Structure. Most metro assignors charge \$6 per referee per match with no discount for the second match of a doubleheader while one assignor charges \$6 for a single match and \$10 (\$5 x 2) for doubleheaders.. For varsity doubleheaders, the \$139 fee listed in the fee schedule is reduced by \$12 or \$10 for a net fee of \$127/\$129. As our assignors provide a valuable service to schools, it would be appropriate for schools to pay the soccer assignor fees.

TCSRO Proposal: Schools would absorb all or a portion of the current assignor fee.

Assuming nine home matches per season, full school absorption of the assigning fee would result in a cost increase of \$162 (3 officials, \$6, 9 matches) per varsity team.

Implementing both proposed adjustments would bring soccer referee net compensation to \$77 per match, the single match fee specified in the 2020-2024 Metro Officials Fee Structure. While this still lags other field sports with shorter match duration and active playing time like boys and girls lacrosse (\$84 for 2022/23 season), it brings our soccer officials much closer to fee parity. It will allow us to engage more referees to provide your schools with match coverage this season.

The proposed 2022 fee adjustment also supports your member districts' diversity, equity and inclusion goals. We officiate a sport with significant numbers of athletes from diverse communities and backgrounds. Our high school soccer officials reflect the diversity of our student-athletes and the metropolitan region. Addressing fee disparity will promote diversity and equity while encouraging additional BIPOC persons to consider high school soccer officiating.

Proposal for 2022 Metro High Soccer Referee Fees
Twin Cities Soccer Referee Organization
August 17, 2022

Our Commitment to Conferences and Schools

We recognize that we are asking you for an additional investment in our high school soccer referees. Working with our assigning partners, TCSRO members will provide absolute scheduling priority to conferences and schools that agree to improve 2022 referee compensation. We will work to ensure your matches are fully covered to provide safe and positive playing experiences for our student athletes.

Questions and Feedback

Please contact TCSRO (jjime@tcsro.org) and your high school soccer assignor to accept the compensation proposal so we can begin to adjust referee schedules to cover your matches. If you have specific questions or feedback on our proposal, please contact Jim Engelking at jjime@tcsro.org.

Thank you for your consideration.

TCSRO Leadership Team

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