

Why the Work Stoppage Now?

- TCSRO does not want to strike.
- Referees want schools to stop shortchanging student athletes by failing to retain experienced referees and losing out on new referees due to inadequate pay.
 - Student athletes have been suffering for several years due to dwindling numbers.
 - This was most recently evident in the *Star Tribune* article on September 9, 2023: “No. 2 Wayzata pulls away from No. 1 Minneapolis Washburn in boys soccer.” The article noted, “The two-referee crew dealt often with questioned calls and extracurricular physicality.”
 - Referees do not want this to be the future of high school soccer officiating and want to see student athletes protected.
 - Experienced officials are declining high school assignments because they can make twice as much doing college games.
 - High school soccer officials in Wisconsin are paid over \$100 per game. Game pay in the Metro has stalled over the past 20 years
- Referees are not “punishing the kids” by not showing up. Student athletes are *already suffering* due to dwindling experienced referees. Referees want to see high school soccer players getting referees who care about the games.
- TCSRO believes schools need to address the crisis of retention.
- This is not sudden or unexpected TCSRO began communicating with the Metro AD group in Fall 2022. There is no deal in place yet.
- TCSRO has also communicated in the past year to every AD in the metro area regarding fees. Only a handful have ever responded.
- Based on the delay, TCSRO does not believe we will reach an agreement without measures that will actually get the attention of ADs.
- Once this season is over, TCSRO does not expect a resolution.

What do Referees Want?

- Referees want high school soccer players to have competent, caring, and experienced officials assigned to their games.
- Referees want high school soccer players to have a safe, fun, respectful, and educational experience on the field, and referees play an integral role in providing that experience.
- Referees want proper training and standards to ensure the best experience for student athletes.
- Referees want to ensure we stop losing referees and ensure we are able to recruit new referees. Referee fees need to increase to do this.
- Referees want to be *fairly compensated* for their work. Varsity double headers involve leaving work early to arrive by 4:30 p.m. and heading home around 8:30 p.m. \$131 (after self-employment tax, about \$113) for the night is inadequate 4 hours of work is inadequate.
- Referees do not want to pay assignors when they have no say in the assignor pay. If assignors are working for the schools, the schools should pay the assignors, not the referees. It's much easier to play with someone else's money.
- Referees do not want to be penalized for working double headers.
- Referees want to feel respected.
- Referees want the Metro AD committee to stay engaged.
- Referees want to ensure there are enough referees to properly staff high school games, and they believe increasing the pay is an essential piece of that.
- Referees want the Metro AD committee to approve the following:

Fee Structure for Referees

<u>Fee Per Official Per Game</u>	<u>2024-25</u>	<u>2025-26</u>	<u>2026-27</u>	<u>2027-28</u>	<u>2028-29</u>
Varsity (3 officials)	\$90	\$100	\$105	\$110	\$115
Varsity (2 officials)	\$100	\$110	\$115	\$120	\$125
JV/9/8 (2 officials)	\$72	\$82	\$87	\$92	\$97
JV/9/8 (1 official)	\$82	\$92	\$97	\$102	\$107

Assignor Fees

Referees will not be responsible for paying the assignor. As long as schools select the assignor, then schools will bear 100% of the cost for assigning fees. All fees above will be paid *to the referee*. No discounts will be taken for assigning fees. (While this seems to be quite likely and even desired, the Metro AD committee has not confirmed it.)

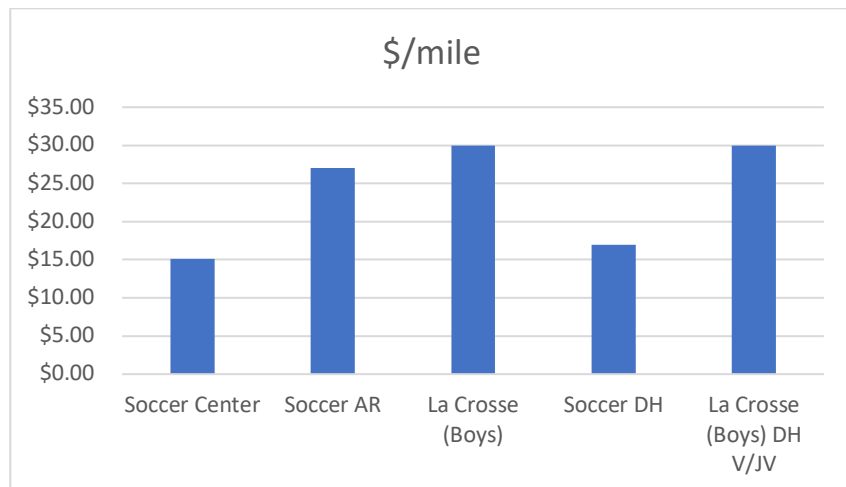
Elimination of the Double Header Penalty

The Double Header Penalty will be eliminated. Referees will not be penalized for working two games. They will be properly compensated for working each game. (While this seems to be quite likely, the Metro AD committee has not confirmed it.)

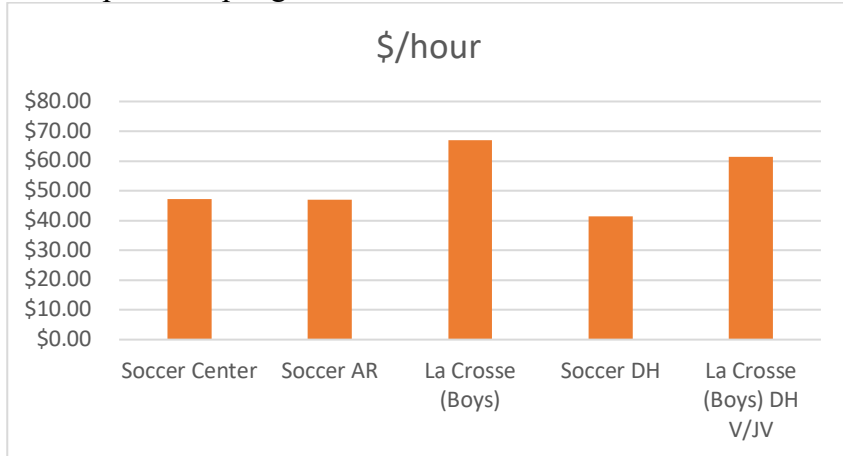
- Referees want parity with other field sports, particularly Lacrosse which provides a reasonable approximation.
 - A referee tracked and averaged his miles run and minutes worked in boys soccer and boys lacrosse and for 2022 was able to make the following comparison showing soccer referees are working for longer times, running more, and making less money than lacrosse.

	Fee	Miles	Minutes	\$/mile	\$/hour
Soccer Center	\$77*	5.1	98	\$15.09	\$47.14
Soccer AR	\$77*	2.86	96	\$27.00	\$47
Lacrosse (Boys)	\$83	2.77	86	\$29.96	\$66.92
Soccer DH	\$134	7.96	195	\$17.00	\$41.49
Lacrosse (Boys) DH V/JV	\$141	4.67	138	\$30.00	\$61.30

*\$77 was the scheduled amount, not the \$71 actually received.



- For the 2023-24 season, soccer referees are scheduled for \$79 per game and volleyball referees are paid \$78 per game.



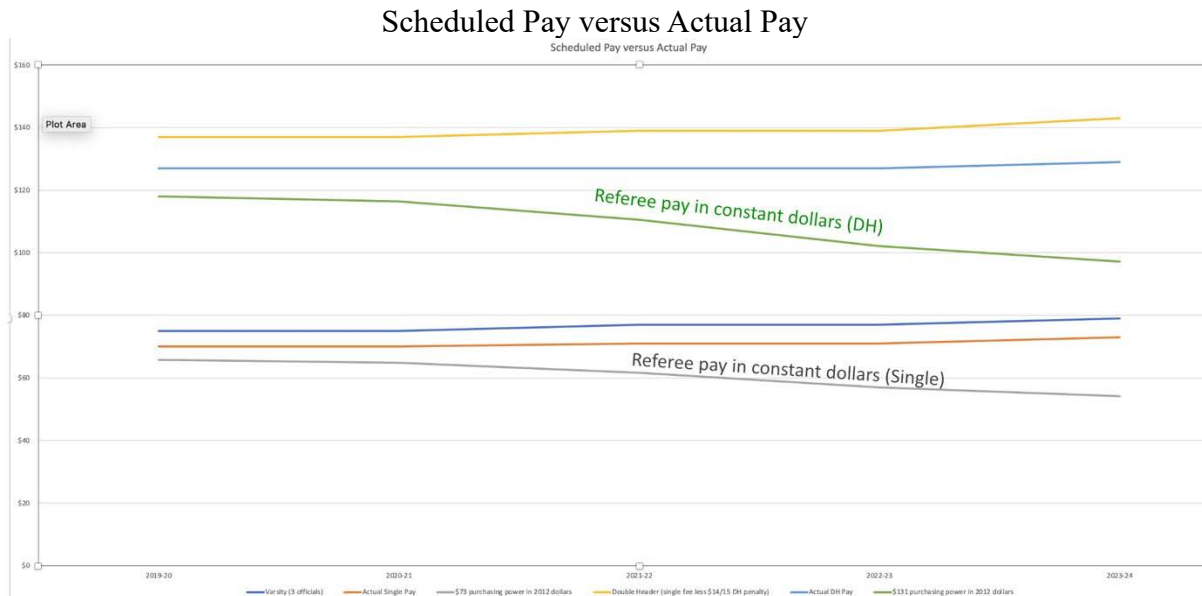
What are referees actually getting paid?

- There is no contract. TCSRO believes references to a “contract” are misplaced. There is no “contract.” There is a fee schedule of unknown. At least two of the three metro area assignors have stated they were never consulted about the current fee schedule for assignors or referees.
- Until 2022-23, Referees were largely unaware of the metro fee schedule.
- Referees do *not* receive the actual dollar amount stated on the fee schedule.
 - *Assignor Fees are not included on this schedule.* Referees received \$6 less than the scheduled amount for single games and \$12 less for a double header.
 - In the 2022-23 and 2023-24 seasons, assignor fees are \$6 per official, per game (that is \$18 for a single game and \$36 for double header!).
 - Referees were actually paid 7.6% less for a single game and 17% less for doing a double header than the single game fee schedule for varsity games.
 - In 2022-23 the actual single game pay was \$71 per game and varsity was \$127 per game
 - In 2023-24 the actual single game pay is \$73 per game and \$131 for a double header.
 - In 2021 or 2022, the assignor fee went from \$5 to \$6 per game. A 20% increase in assigning fees taken from the scheduled fee for referees. Referee pay had increased at most \$2—half of the increase went to the assignor.

- Over the past 10 years, Referee pay has been *decreasing* in constant dollars.
 - In 2012/2013, a single varsity game was approximately \$64 per game and about \$120 for a double header (both after paying assignors and a DH penalty)
 - Based on the 2012/13 rate of pay, referees are earning less according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics Consumer Price Index Calculator

Fee Per Official	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
Varsity (3 officials)	\$75	\$75	\$77	\$77	\$79
Actual Single Pay	\$70	\$70	\$71	\$71	\$73
\$73 purchasing power in 2012 dollars	\$65.79	\$64.90	\$61.58	\$56.91	\$54.12*
Double Header (single fee less \$14/15 DH penalty)	\$137	\$137	\$139	\$139	\$143
Actual DH Pay	\$127	\$127	\$127	\$127	\$129
\$131 purchasing power in 2012 dollars	\$118.07	\$116.47	\$110.51	\$102.13	\$97.13*

*In2013dollars.com



History and Context

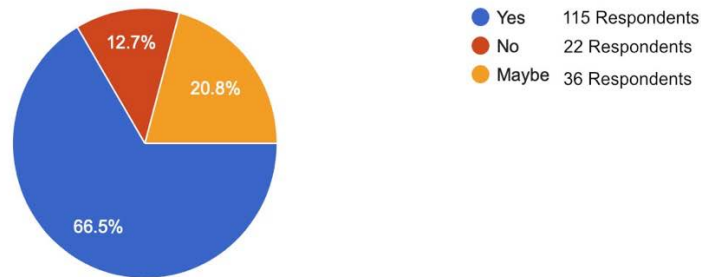
- Soccer is unique among high school sports because there has not been an officials association for over 20 years. Most sports have officials associations that negotiate officials' pay and hire and pay the assignor
 - In 1998-1999, we had an active high school referee association, Minnesota Soccer Referee Club
 - The association negotiated fees with the metro ADs, but after protracted negotiations in 2000, a work stoppage for the entire season was contemplated.
 - ADs at the time set match fees and hired various assignors to staff games.
 - Deduction of pay from referees to pay assignors was determined by the assignors
 - Soccer officials have not had a voice in the last five metro fee schedule cycles.
 - This led to a glut in training of officials and a decrease in fees relative to other sports.
- Spring 2022: TCSRO was incorporated as a non-profit corporation in Minnesota and is a registered 501(c)(3) organization
- August 2022: TCSRO sent an e-mail to *all* ADs in the metro asking them to eliminate the Double Header Penalty and stop deducting assignor fees from the referees' pay
- Multiple schools did, in fact, absorb the penalty or assignor fees or both.
- October 25, 2022: Keith Cornell, St. Michael Albertville AD reached out to assignors to discuss the 2024-2029 Metro Fee Schedule. Merry Hilger brought TCSRO into the discussion.
- After TCSRO members contacted Keith Cornell saying they wanted TCSRO representing the referees, TCSRO was brought into the discussion.
- November 21, 2022, TCSRO presented a fee proposal that eliminated the double header penalty, had the schools pay the assignors, sought parity with field sports
- November 28, 2022: initial discussions were held with some common ground found
- December 15, 2022: another conversation was held
- May 11, 2023: Keith Cornell announced deferment of discussions until 2023-24 school year
- July 10, 2023: TCSRO reinitiates conversation with Keith Cornell after no information since January 2023.

- August 20, 2023: A flash poll was sent to referees and received 173 responses to the question: “If high schools are not willing to raise the high school fees to \$96 per game, would you be willing to stop officiating games until fees are increased?”

66.5% (115) - yes
20.8% (36) - maybe
12.7% (22) - no

If high schools are not willing to raise the high school fees to \$96 per game, would you be willing to stop officiating games until fees are increased? [Copy](#)

173 responses



- August 22, 2023: TCSRO holds its pre-season clinic and discusses potential for work stoppage with members
- September 14, 2023: Two assignors (Merry Hilger and Todd Sauers) and TCSRO meet with Keith Cornell
- September 18, 2023: TCSRO follows up with results from the poll noting that while a deal seems close, people are asking why we do not have a deal and what we are going to do about it. Potential for a strike is noted.

What happens if no deal is reached?

- In the immediate future, referees will stop working with potential impacts on end of season games, play-off games, section games, and state tournament games.
- Moving forward, referee numbers will continue to decrease.

- Student athletes will continue to see either more inexperienced and less qualified referees or—no referees at all.
- Player safety and enjoyment will be reduced. With fewer officials, the game just cannot be properly managed.