**Frequently Asked Questions by New & Transferring Members**

**What do I have to do to get Started as a High School Football Official?**

We always are looking for new and experienced Officials to join us. Simply fill out the application on the home page of this website. One of our Board Members will contact you to let you know we have received the application. From there, as the start of the season approaches (we begin to meet & train in late June), we will keep you informed of what you need to do.

**What kind of Commitment do I have to make?**

In order to become a Member of our Association and be eligible to be on the field, we require attendance at our weekly meetings on Monday Nights at Berkmar High School. These meetings are from late June through October and are usually 1 ½ hours long. Meeting topics include classroom rules & mechanics training, video reviews and happenings within the Association. Please go to the home page to check out the meeting schedule on the 2015 Calendar Page.

You will also be required to attend on-field training sessions in the pre-season. These are mostly on Saturday mornings in July and August.

New Officials will generally work a predominantly Sub-Varsity schedule. These games are mostly on Thursday afternoons starting from 5-7pm. New Officials will also work in a support capacity on Varsity Games (Clock Operation, Chains). This provides valuable experience for New Officials. These games are mostly on Friday nights with a few games on Thursday and Saturday nights as well.

**What does it cost to become a high school football official?**

This is always the number one question for a brand new official. Before a new official can work at all, they have to buy their uniform and all the other gear needed to call a game (whistle, flags, beanbags, shoes and such). The gear isn’t cheap. But there are new officials coming into the game all the time. Consequently, most of the major equipment vendors have starter packages that will get a new official through his/her first year with minimal expense. MCFOA makes a strong recommendation that whatever else you find a way to save money on when buying your first set of uniforms and gear, do NOT ever buy a pair of officiating shoes just because they can be had for a cheap price. Comfortable shoes are a must! While you can buy uniforms from just about any vendor, we do require our officials to buy shoes that “match” what our other officials are wearing. Currently we use the “3 and 2” brand of shoes in our uniform requirements.

**How much money does a high school football official make?**

A lot of what an official makes depends on his demonstrated skill level. We pride ourselves in MCFOA in evaluating talent quickly. When we identify a skilled official, we make every effort to promote him through the ranks as quickly as he/she can go. We’re all about performance and effort. Having said that much, a brand new official is typically going to go through a multi-year process to develop into a truly mature on-field official. In the meantime, he/she will work mostly a sub-Varsity schedule as well as occasional assignments as an electronic clock operator (ECO) and/or as a member of a Varsity chain crew. Current rates of pay for Varsity assignments are $96/game for an on-field assignment and $48/game for ECO or chain crew assignments. Sub-Varsity pay per game is $55, and these are all on-field assignments. In a typical first year with us, a brand new official will work 4-5 sub-Varsity games and have a comparable number of chain crew or ECO assignments for Varsity games. In the second year and beyond, how many games and assignments of all types depends a lot more on demonstrated ability than any other factor. By the 3rd or 4th year of an official’s career with us, he/she should expect to be working majority of the Varsity games (in a mixture of on-field and chain crew/ECO assignments) and will work about 7 or 8 sub-Varsity games as well.

**What sort of training does MCFOA provide its officials?**

No experience is necessary. MCFOA provides a comprehensive training program for all levels of officials. This includes providing rule books, case books and other printed study material. We conduct training sessions as a major part of our regular association meetings. During these classroom sessions, members are exposed to formal classroom type work with video training aids. We will also break out into groups depending on assigned on-field positions and experience levels several times during “training season.” We conduct 4 on-field training events exclusively for MCFOA officials. And we encourage our members to attend one of the 6 GHSA-provided training camps operated each summer just in advance of football season. For new officials, especially, we also encourage membership in one of the local youth officials associations. Youth football is an important training ground, not only for players, but also for officials. Seeing as many snaps as possible before ever setting foot on a high school field will greatly enhance the average high school official’s ability to recognize what is happening at the higher speeds that we observe in the high school game.

**If I am transferring from another association into MCFOA, how will this impact my career?**

Officials may only work for one association per sport in any given school year. Transfers from other associations within the state transfer in at the same “level” (Registered, Approved or Certified) as they had at their last year’s association. Officials who transfer in from out-of-state generally will drop back one level for one year if they were Approved or Certified in their previous state. From a practical point of view, this makes little difference in the regular season. MCFOA will evaluate transfers for their on-field capabilities just as quickly as we can. Our goal is to get the highest quality officials on the field as quickly and regularly as we can. When it comes to playoff assignments, it is rare for a transferring official to work in the playoffs in an on-field capacity in their first year with MCFOA. There are exceptions for truly exceptional officials, but it is unrealistic to “expect” to work playoffs in the first year after having transferred into MCFOA.

**What does MCFOA recommend about becoming a high school football official?**

People have a genuine interest and aptitude for becoming a high school football official will find a welcoming organization in MCFOA. Love of the game with a desire to help mold young lives through the medium of high school sports should be a big motivating factor for any potential high school official. The money we make for doing this work is nice, but high school officiating should not be considered a vocation. Instead, it is an avocation. It beats other avocations (like golf) in that instead of costing you money, you can make a little at it. But if supplementing family income is the main goal, there are lots of other part time jobs that will pay you better.

**What does it take to become a high school football official?**

There are no hard and fast rules about becoming a high school football official. Most people who take up the avocation are former players, but some of our best officials also never played the game. More than any other quality a good high school official will be a hard worker. This work includes learning the rules of the game, the “mechanics” of where and how each official goes about his business of calling a game and how to deal with the players, coaches and even fans at the game. He/she will also care about his/her physical appearance and will strive to get in, and stay in, shape to be able to perform at a high level even when weather is bad and the competitive aspect of the game he/she is calling has long since been decided. In other words a good football official cares about the game, the players and him/herself in a way that shows pride in the work being done without also carrying an arrogant attitude.

**What is MCFOA and how does MCFOA relate to the Georgia High School Association (GHSA)?**

MCFOA is one of 23 football officials associations in Georgia that have been sanctioned by the state governing body for high school sports (GHSA) to officiate high school football games at the Varsity and sub-Varsity levels. Annually we officiate approximately 100 regular season Varsity games and about 75 sub-Varsity games as well as a smattering of middle school contests. We do this with a roster of approximately 85 officials. In the post-season, MCFOA usually works from as many as 12 to as few as 8 games in the playoffs. GHSA assigns games among its officiating associations depending on several factors of evaluation; MCFOA has worked through the semi-final round of the playoffs for the past 5 consecutive years.