NFSOA New Member Session

Welcome to the Association

North Florida Soccer Officials Association | Referee Training

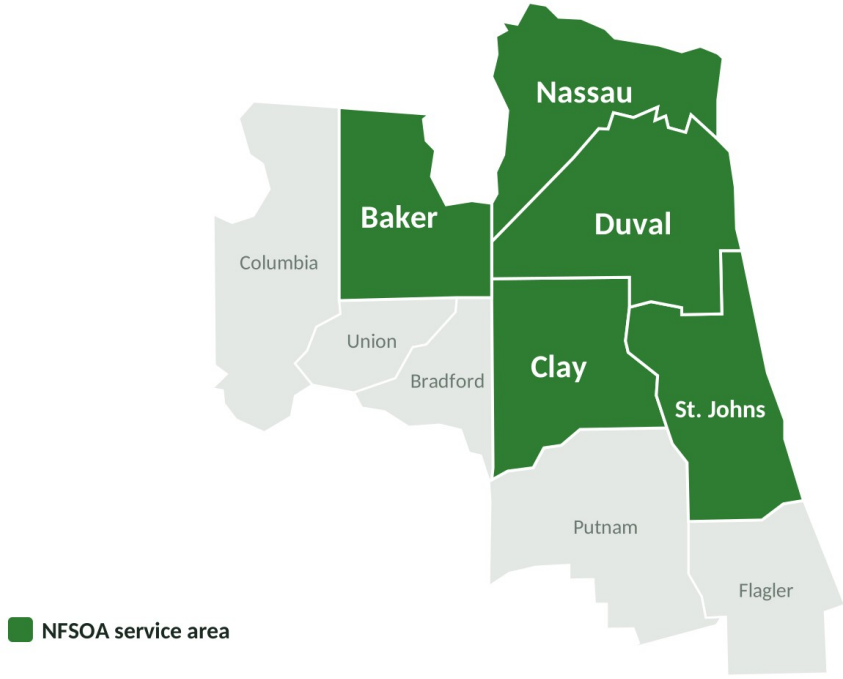
October 22, 2026

Agenda

1. Welcome to NFSOA
2. NFHS Rule Differences
3. FHSAA Rule Modifications
4. Pre-Season Games
5. Read on Your Own

Welcome to NFSOA

The North Florida Soccer Officials Association is a non-profit organization dedicated to training and assigning soccer officials for high school and middle school competitions in Northeast Florida.



We are run by and in service of our members.

NFHS Rule Differences: The Big Picture

An overview, not a comprehensive list. Review the rule book on your own.

- The goal of high school sports is the development of the student-athlete through athletic competition. It is **not** the promotion of soccer as a sport
- High school sports are about inclusion, participation and good sporting behavior
- In general, if you can’t do it in the classroom, you can’t do it on the field
- Safety comes first. If you believe a player is injured, stop play quickly. If you believe a player may have a head injury, **stop play immediately**

Administrative Rule Differences

- **Timekeeping:** the referee's watch is official, but the scoreboard time **must** be reasonably in sync. No added time; instead, the clock stops at events prescribed in the rules
- **Team roster:** presented by the coach or a player to the referee 5 minutes before the game. Names may be added after play starts. Player numbers required. Everyone in the team area must be on the roster
- **Coin toss:** attended by head coaches and captains. Coaches certify that players are legally and properly equipped, then may leave
- There is **no player check-in** before the game and no player passes

Rule Differences: Substitutions (1 of 2)

- A cautioned player **must leave the field of play**. The team may substitute for the player or play short. The cautioned player may return at the next legal substitution opportunity
- Injured players must be substituted if the referee calls the healthcare professional and/or coach onto the field
- This applies to goalkeepers too. In IFAB an injured goalkeeper does not have to leave the field. In NFHS the goalkeeper **must leave the field** and be replaced by another goalkeeper
- When beckoned by the referee, subs become players and can enter immediately (they don’t wait for the substituted player to leave)

Rule Differences: Substitutions (2 of 2)

- The team in possession may sub on its own throw-in or corner kick. If it subs, both teams may sub (in addition to other sub opportunities)
- **No subs on free kicks** (except for injury)
- If the team leading subs with 5 minutes or less left in the second half, the clock is stopped
- Substituted players must exit at the halfway line in front of their bench

Rule Differences: Player Equipment (Rule 4)

- Home team wears **dark** jerseys and **dark** socks. Dark means any color that contrasts with white. The socks don’t have to match the jerseys
- Away team wears **white** jerseys and **white** socks
- **Uniform issues cannot prevent a game from being played**
- No jewelry. Officials do not check in the teams before the match. Instead, the coach certifies the team is “legally and properly equipped.” Violations: a caution to the head coach for the first instance, and to players for every instance after that

Rule Differences: Stopping the Clock

The clock stops for

- Goal
- Misconduct
- Penalty kick
- Team leading subs with 5 minutes or less remaining in the second half (including the second half of OT)
- Referee’s discretion (injury; no-ball runners; late in a close game where the home team is leading)

Signals

Stop the clock

Arms crossed at the wrists, over the head

Start the clock

Arm winding, similar to American football

Rule Differences: Misconduct

These violations are unique to high school.

Caution (yellow card)

- Incidental use of profane language

Ejection (red card)

- Taunting
- Leaving the bench when a fight is taking place

All misconduct must be reported to both coaches before the restart of play. “Coach, #9 was cautioned for dissent.” This is not an opportunity for debate.

Rule Differences: System of Control

- Games use the **Diagonal System of Control** (referee and two assistant referees) or the **Dual System of Control** (two referees with whistles)
- In general, varsity uses the Diagonal System and sub-varsity uses Dual
- State playoff games include a fourth official

FHSAA Rule Modifications

No new FHSAA modifications this season. The existing modifications still apply.

- **Hydration breaks** are required in all games, during an organic stoppage at about the halfway point of each half. One minute long
- **Draws/ties stand** at the end of a game. Overtime only during tournament play: two 10-minute periods (no “golden goal”), then kicks from the mark
- Varsity plays two 40-minute halves that **may NOT be shortened** (your rule book says differently)
- JV and MS halves can be **any length**, usually 30 or 35. **Make sure the coaches agree** before the game starts

FHSAA Mercy Rule

- An **8-goal differential** at the end of the first half, or at any point in the second half, ends the game
- If an 8-goal differential is reached at any time in the first half, the clock keeps running after goals are scored
- Once the clock starts running because of an 8-goal differential, it runs for the rest of the game, even if the differential drops below 8

Pre-Season Games

- **Pre-season games start Monday, October 26.** A limited number of schools play a small number of them
- A chance for new members to work games with veterans before the season. You may receive feedback from an evaluator or from the veteran you work with
- We use these games to understand your abilities and assign you appropriately
- Specific roles (referee or AR) may change from what is published

Download This Presentation

Scan the code with your phone camera, or type the address in your browser.

nfsoa.com/meetingdocs

This presentation includes a **Read On Your Own** section with material we could not cover in class.

Read These on Your Own

The next four slides: Getting Assignments, Playoffs, NFSOA Key Personnel, and To Do Outside of Class

Getting Assignments

- NFSOA uses **Arbiter** to assign referees to games. **Download the Arbiter app** to your phone
- **Add your blocks** to your Arbiter schedule. Blocks are the days and times you are not available
- **Accept or decline** games very quickly after they are sent
- Assignments come out in about **4 batches** throughout the season
- **Turn backs:** a game you accepted but can no longer work. For a game-day turn back, **text and/or call Allison and get a response from her**
- Pre-game duties: get in touch with your crew

What Are Playoffs?

- High schools are organized by size classification (7A, 6A, 5A, etc.) and geography (Regions, then Districts)
- At the end of the regular season, all teams in a class and district play the **District Tournament**
- Teams that qualify play the **Regional Tournament**. Winners of each Region play in the State Semi-finals and Finals
- When people say “playoffs,” they usually mean Regionals and beyond
- There are also in-season tournaments, such as the Gateway Conference Tournament, which are only for bragging rights

NFSOA Key Personnel

Kevin Flynn

President

Rick Squibb

Treasurer

Allison King

Assignor

Mike Register

Training Coordinator

To Do Outside of Class

Four things to do on your own. Scan each code with your phone camera.

Checklist

nfsoa.com/join

Read the full checklist, with links for each step

NFSOA Profile

nfsoa.com/profile

Complete it: location preferences, brief resume, availability

Rules

nfsoa.com/docs

FHSAA Soccer Manual and Comparative Study. We give you a paper NFHS rule book each year

Allison's Contact

904-349-1838

Save her card to your Contacts. Check your email regularly during the season