

November 11, 2023

Stewart Stephenson, SASOA President
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Greetings!

Yet another exciting season of school soccer is on the horizon!

Attached you will find a contract for soccer referee services for the 2023/2024 school year.

HIGHLIGHTS:

1. **Game coverage: security.**
2. **Bookkeeper's contact info is MANDATORY. No email address, no contract.**
3. **New fees and fee rates.**

ISSUES FROM LAST YEAR:

1. **Referee coverage. The decline in referees continues. WE NEED MORE REFEREES. Please help us recruit more officials.**
2. **Spectator behavior.**

This contract will be between your school and the Shoals Area Soccer Officials Association (SASOA) and will be in force upon our receipt of a signed and dated copy of the contract. Please complete the contract and home game schedule and return them to the above address by **Friday January 1, 2024**. No referees will be assigned to your home games without a signed and fully completed contract. Electronic copies (.pdf) are preferred. The host school will be invoiced for all home games in advance. A mileage allowance fee will be added to each set of matches in accordance with AHSAA rates. The minimum milage rate will be initially invoiced with any additional milage invoiced at the end of the SASOA fiscal year (May). Invoices will be sent once all matches are in DragonFly and treasurer Jeff Edwards is notified at jeffedwards.sports@gmail.com. your schedule is entered and complete.

Once we have a 100% return of contracts AND schedules are entered into DragonFly (regular season, not tournaments), a strike list roster will be available upon request for your review.

According to AHSAA, schools are entitled to scratch 10% of the confirmed SASOA Officials' roster. If you choose to strike a specific referee, your strike list (signed by A.D. or Principal) must be communicated to us at least three (3) days before your first home match is played. Please keep in mind with the limited number of officials we have, striking of referees may affect, our ability to cover your games with a full complement of officials.

For this year SASOA will be having observers at different games, as well as SASOA and AHSAA District Director training events. As these observers are referees from within SASOA or the AHSAA Northwest District for Soccer, their availability will depend upon our resources. See Item #11 & #12 under the contract.

The following information is also provided for your assistance:

1. Rules - NFHS and AHSAA rules will be used. Variations to NFHS and AHSAA rules for any tournament need to be supplied to SASOA one week prior to the first match.
2. Account Information (over/under-payments) – Your school's account will be reconciled at the end of the season.
3. Submitting Schedules and Match Scheduling – Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays are high volume match days. To decrease the likelihood of match cancellation, it is strongly recommended that schools consider alternate weeknights & Saturdays for scheduling games. Games scheduled before 5 PM may not receive referees. Multiple games need to be scheduled back-to-back whenever possible (as opposed to parallel).

All games are to be entered by the school into DragonFly. Entry in DragonFly does NOT constitute acceptance of the game(s). The SASOA group number is SC701. Your institution must be linked to SC701 in DragonFly.

SASOA reserves the right to manage tournaments according to referee availability.

4. Cancellation Policy – It is extremely important to provide notice of cancellation of games **by 12:00 PM on weekdays, and at least 3 hours prior to kickoff on Saturdays** to the contact given in the contract. *Fees **and travel** will be assessed if this policy is not adhered to. Please see your contract for more info.*
5. Adding Games (Re-Scheduling and Schedule changes) – All schedule changes must be emailed to the SASOA AHSAA Assigning Officer, Brandi Fletcher.
6. Schedule Verification – A reminder: If your upcoming game is not listed in DragonFly, SASOA does not know about your match.
7. Mileage – Mileage is in effect for each set of matches. AHSAA guidelines will apply, which are as follows:
0-60 miles \$15 travel for each official. 61-120 miles \$25 travel for each official 121-180miles \$50 travel for each official A maximum of 2 travels per match set.

8. Fees/Method of Control – SASOA prefers to use the Diagonal System of Control (1 referee & 2 assistants) for all games. In the event that SASOA cannot provide three (3) referees for a given match, two (2) referees (Dual System) will be provided and your school account will be credited according to AHSAA rates. As allowed by the AHSAA. The fee schedule is the maximum allowable according to AHSAA Official's Guide. Regular season (including Section matches) varsity match fees will be \$80.00 per referee and \$70.00 per assistant referee. Junior varsity match fees will be \$75.00 per referee and \$65.00 per assistant referee. Middle school match fees will be \$65.00 per referee and \$55.00 per assistant referee. In the event a dual system is used the fees are the normal referee fee for each of the two referees in that level of play. Also, per the 2024 AHSAA spring book, an administrative fee of \$100 per high school and \$75 per middle school per sport will be included in the initial invoice to the school. All invoices are due by Jan. 26, 2024. Unless negotiated with the SASOA Fees and Negotiation Committee, all tournaments will be full match fees and travel fees will apply as outlined in item #7. Lastly, for ALL matches, each institution will be invoiced \$2 per slot on EACH match. This fee is passed through to the schools, per AHSAA, to utilize DragonFly payment of officials.

If you request the use of Duals, there is no guarantee your request will be honored, and you cannot schedule triple headers.

9. Security – The host school is responsible to guarantee referee crew safety while they are at the match location/field. Also, a **School Representative**, who is **NOT the Coach**, shall be **visually identified to the referee crew at each home game**. This person is responsible for the home team and facilities should the coach be ejected from the game. Without a Coach or School Representative physically present on the field, the competition cannot continue according to AHSAA rules. (**Note:** Teams **technical areas (team and coaching area)** will be positioned per NFHS guidelines. This will be verified in the pre-season field inspections.)

10. Spectator behavior – NFHS competitions are an extension of the classroom. Those standards do not only apply to the coaches and players, but also to the spectators of the contest. Spectators are only allowed positive support for their team only. Any behavior that is deemed to be unsporting to any match official, or to be any of the following will be subject to removal from the contest venue without warning: heckling or harassment of sports officials, coaches, or players; provocative language directed or otherwise; lewd language or sounds directed or otherwise; derogatory comments or sounds (barking) directed or otherwise; use of profanity in a public or directed manner towards players, coaches, or match officials; comments of a personal nature made publicly or otherwise to players, coaches, or match officials; failure to remain in designated spectator areas; throwing of objects at coaches, players, or match officials; throwing objects onto the playing surface; entering the playing surface for ANY reason. This is not a comprehensive list of removable behavior but are examples of spectator issues from 2023. The non-coaching administrator must ask the offending spectator(s) specified by the referee to leave the venue in its entirety. The removed spectator(s) may not remain outside the contest area fence nor the parking area as this presents a security risk to participants and match officials. Any removal of spectators initiated by the match officials will result in a report filed to AHSAA. Failure of the non-coaching administrator to promptly address the removal of spectator(s) will result in abandonment of the contest and a report filed with AHSAA. We ask that your non-coaching administrators be proactive in dealing with unsporting behavior from spectators PRIOR to the referee having to

stop the contest for the issue. Preventing interruption of the contest would be ideal and not result in a report filed to AHSAA. This same information can be found in the contract item#10.

11. Inclement Weather – SASOA requests that your school communicate to SASOA, in writing, the location of a safe area near your home field(s) where players, coaches, spectators and referees can go in case of inclement weather.
12. Observers – SASOA requires that host schools allow free entry to its games to SASOA observers. Observers are the SASOA’s Board of Directors and other identified designated persons (specified in the contract). The primary purpose of the observer is referee development, but other observations (coaches, teams, spectators, and/or facilities) may be included. These observers will include anyone designated by AHSAA District Director as their representative. In the event of the attendance of such a representative for the District Director, the head coach will be contacted via email or text at least 12 hour prior to the match by SASOA or the District Director to provide the identity of the observer(s), (example, Kris Bailey, National Referee Coach will be attending your match on x date at y time.)
13. SASOA and AHSAA District Director Training Events – Some host school games will be selected for referee development and training purposes for live observation and learning for our referees with SASOA Observers (see item#11 for observer definitions). SASOA requires that host schools allow free entry to its games to SASOA active members (referees) in good standing to any SASOA or AHSAA District Director Training session. Host schools whose games are selected will be contacted via email to the head coach at least 24 hours prior to the match and given an up-to-date roster of members of SASOA in good standing. Members attending must present their Officials’ Pass to enter. These officials’ passes are digital via DragonFly and should be printed or on their phones.
14. Tournaments – These games are to be entered into DragonFly as well in their tournament section. SASOA will have to consider supporting tournaments on a “first come – first serve” basis. Generally, the maximum number of games that SASOA is able to support is 6 per day. This is the number we try to use in planning what we can support. If we are close to the limit, we reserve the right (and are responsible to AHSAA) to support Varsity Section games before any other games.
15. Field Inspection – SASOA **requires** a pre-season inspection of your field(s) to ensure compliance with AHSAA regulations and rules. All playing fields must be in compliance with Rule#1 in the NFHS Soccer Rules Book. The inspection requirement applies to all fields to be used for competition. Inspections can be scheduled by contacting **President Stewart Stephenson**. If desired, a written assessment can be provided to a designated school representative. If no inspection is scheduled by the school, then the inspection will occur on the date of the first game and may be conducted by the head referee officiating the match. **Please note:** If you wait until game day for your field inspection, your game may be delayed, or possibly cancelled if not in compliance with the AHSAA requirements. Additionally, field inspections conducted on the date of the first match may not receive a written report. **Please also note that coaching and team areas MUST be marked.**

16. Match Limit. – If there are more than 10 games on a given day, SASOA reserves the right to have games above the limit rescheduled. The home team will be responsible for rescheduling the game(s) if so notified by SASOA **by cancelling the match in Dragonfly.**
17. Referee Availability – SASOA will make every effort to support all games as scheduled. Should this become impossible on a particular day the assignment priority (per the AHSAA) will be as follows: Varsity (section), Varsity (non-section), Junior Varsity, and Freshman/Middle School (same priority). Boys’ and girls’ games will receive equal scheduling priority. (Note: Priority will be given to schools who have recruited referees that have been trained (and certified) to work high school games and are actively participating in officiating soccer games during the high school season. Please contact Brandi Fletcher if further explanation is needed.) Tournaments have the lowest priority.

ASSIGNING PRIORITY: If your school has not paid SASOA’s pre-season invoice, your school’s games will be at the bottom of the list.

18. Points of Contact – Please fill in the ones that apply to your school on the attached sheet. Give as much information as possible. An electronic version of this form (pdf) is available simply by contacting Brandi Fletcher at sasoaref701@gmail.com. A bookkeeper point of contact with a valid email is **REQUIRED**. The contract will not be accepted until the treasurer or bookkeeper information is provided.

Please keep your school’s administration and coaches up to date in DragonFly. Unlink any unactive coach and ensure that any coach or team official that will be within your coaching area is registered and listed on your school’s DragonFly.

Please contact Brandi Fletcher at the above listed phone number/address or Email address if you have any questions concerning this contract.

Sincerely,

Stewart Stephenson
SASOA President

2023/2024 High School / Middle School Soccer Contract

This contract is entered into between _____ School and the Shoals Area Soccer Official's Association (SASOA), an association duly sanctioned by the Alabama High School Athletic Association (AHSAA). SASOA agrees to supply certified officials, subject to availability, to officiate the home games identified below.

The following agreements are part of this contract:

1. Rules – Game rules will be governed by, in the following order, AHSAA, National Federation, Host Institution Tournament rules. Where Host Institution Tournament rules are to be applied, SASOA must receive a copy of the rules from the Host Institution one week prior to the first match.
2. Payment Method – All payments for the entire season will be made by January 26th, 2023. Checks must be made payable to **SASOA** and must be sent to SASOA, PO BOX 1175 FLORENCE, AL 35631
SHOULD ANY SCHOOL FAIL TO CONFORM TO THE REQUIREMENTS UNDER THIS SECTION, SASOA RESERVES THE RIGHT TO NOT ASSIGN REFEREES TO ANY OF THAT SCHOOL'S HOME GAMES UNTIL THE REQUIRED PAYMENT HAS BEEN MADE. (Please refer to Item 12, "Tournaments" in this contract for tournament payment process.)
3. Schedule – All games are to be entered by the school into DragonFly. SASOA will schedule and assign all games via the web-based program DragonFly. If match information changes less than 2 days prior to the match date, an e-mail must be received by the SASOA AHSAA Assigning Officer, and the change will be made by the assignor. **IF A GAME IS NOT IN DRAGONFLY REFEREES WILL NOT BE ASSIGNED.**

Last minute changes – Last minute re-scheduling of games is becoming increasingly more difficult to do. Please know this going into the season. If we can accommodate game changes, we will. In some cases it may not be possible to accommodate last-minute re-schedules.
4. Cancellation Policy – Fees for regularly scheduled games will be payable unless notice to Brandi Fletcher (sasoaref701@gmail.com) by **12:00 PM on Weekdays, and 3 hours prior to kickoff on Saturdays** is provided. PLEASE REFER TO THE GAME NUMBER when canceling and/or changing games. If Brandi Fletcher does not send back a confirmation of receipt, you must contact Stewart Stephenson (stewart.stephenson13@gmail.com) by the same cut off times. Failure to communicate cancellation by the above listed cut off times will result in the assessment of the full match **and travel fees** for the applicable matches.
5. Adding Games – Games may be added during the season and are subject to acceptance.

6. Schedule Verification - Schools shall verify the accuracy of the home schedule that has been entered into DragonFly. Changes, corrections, or modifications shall be coordinated with the SASOA AHSAA Assigning Officer, Brandi Fletcher (sasoaref701@gmail.com). **If your upcoming game is not listed on Dragonfly, SASOA does not know about your match.** To ensure your games are covered, the home school shall send the school POC email to the AHSAA Assigning Officer, Brandi Fletcher (sasoaref701@gmail.com).
7. Mileage – Per mileage rates established by the AHSAA, a travel fee is assessed for all events. Mileage –0-60 miles- \$15 travel for each official; 61-120 miles- \$25 travel for each official; 121-180 miles- \$50 travel for each official. A maximum of 2 travels per match set. The minimum of \$15 per official for a total of \$30 will be initially invoiced with any balance invoiced at the end of the SAOA fiscal year (May).
8. Fees – As allowed by the AHSAA. The fee schedule is the maximum allowable according to AHSAA Official’s Guide. Regular season (including Section matches) varsity match fees will be \$80.00 per referee and \$70.00 per assistant referee. Junior varsity match fees will be \$75.00 per referee and \$65.00 per assistant referee. Middle school match fees will be \$65.00 per referee and \$55.00 per assistant referee. In the event a dual system is used the fees are the normal referee fee for each of the two referees in that level of play. Also, per the 2024 AHSAA spring book, an administrative fee of \$100 per high school and \$75 per middle school per sport will be included in the initial invoice to the school. All invoices are due by Jan. 26, 2024. Unless negotiated with the SASOA Fees and Negotiation Committee, all tournaments will be full match fees and travel fees will apply as outlined in item #7.
9. Security – The host school shall identify to the referee crew a location where a host representative shall be available through match completion. This representative must be visually identified to the crew upon arrival. The representative is responsible to make sure the crew can safely enter and depart the facility. This representative shall be designated by the host school and may be anyone except the following: coach, member of the coaching staff, or rostered member of the team. (Note: The representative may be switched during the match, provided a new representative is identified to the referee(s) before the switch is made.) The representative must remain present for the entirety of the match. The school **SHOULD** also identify a safe parking place for match officials. Additionally, if a fence or permanent barrier between the field and spectator area is not present, a temporary barrier shall be provided per the National Federation of High Schools (NFHS) rules.
10. Spectator behavior – NFHS competitions are an extension of the classroom. Those standards do not only apply to the coaches and players, but also to the spectators of the contest. Spectators are only allowed positive support for their team only. Any behavior that is deemed to be unsporting to any match official, or to be any of the following will be subject to removal from the contest venue without warning: heckling or harassment of sports officials, coaches, or players; provocative language directed or otherwise; lewd language or sounds directed or otherwise; derogatory comments or sounds (barking) directed or otherwise; use of profanity in a public or directed manner towards players, coaches, or match officials; comments of a personal nature made publicly or otherwise to players, coaches, or match officials; failure to remain in designated spectator areas; throwing of objects at coaches, players, or match officials; throwing objects onto the playing surface; entering the playing surface for ANY reason. This is not a comprehensive list of removable

behavior but are examples of spectator issues from 2023. The non-coaching administrator must ask the offending spectator(s) specified by the referee to leave the venue in its entirety. The removed spectator(s) may not remain outside the contest area fence nor the parking area as this presents a security risk to participants and match officials. Any removal of spectators initiated by the match officials will result in a report filed to AHSAA. Failure of the non-coaching administrator to promptly address the removal of spectator(s) will result in abandonment of the contest and a report filed with AHSAA. We ask that your non-coaching administrators be proactive in dealing with unsporting behavior from spectators PRIOR to the referee having to stop the contest for the issue. Preventing interruption of the contest would be ideal and not result in a report filed to AHSAA.

11. Inclement Weather - The host school shall be responsible for observing, determining, and notifying the referees of inclement weather 3 hours before and during the game. Each school shall have an inclement weather plan and a representative on-site to implement the inclement weather plan. The school bears the responsibility to notify the referees when the game must be stopped due to hazardous weather conditions per NFHS weather guidelines (Appendix E of the 2023-2024 NFHS Soccer Rules Book).
12. Observers – The host school shall allow free entry to its games to SASOA observers, unless attending the game for non-SASOA related reasons (i.e. watching a direct family member play in the match). Observers are the SASOA’s Board of Directors (Stewart Stephenson, Scott Infanger, Jeff Edwards, Brandi Fletcher). Observers additionally include anyone designated by AHSAA District Director as their representative. In the event of the attendance of such a representative for the District Director, the head coach will be contacted via email or text at least 12 hours prior to the match by SASOA or the District Director to provide the identity of the observer(s), (example, Kris Bailey, National Referee Coach will be attending your match on x date at y time.) The primary purpose of the observer is referee development, but other observations (coaches, teams, spectators, facilities) may be included. There will be no prior contact with the host school if the observer attending is a SASOA Board member. All observers will be required to present their photo ID (government issued, DragonFly, or US Soccer, etc) to confirm their identity to enter.
13. SASOA and AHSAA District Director Training Events – Some host school games will be selected for referee development and training purposes for live observation and learning for our referees with SASOA Observers (see item #11 for observer definitions). SASOA requires that host schools allow free entry to its games to SASOA active members (referees) in good standing to any SASOA or AHSAA District Director Training event. Host schools whose games are selected will be contacted via email to the head coach at least 24 hours prior to the match and given an up-to-date roster of members of SASOA in good standing. Members attending must present their Officials’ Pass to enter. These officials’ passes accepted will be digital via DragonFly presented from the member’s phone or printed.

14. **Tournaments** – The host school shall be responsible for requesting SASOA support for tournaments at least 30 days prior to the start of the requested tournament. Tournament dates are subject to approval by the SASOA. **Tournaments must be paid in advance. An invoice will be provided once you have notified SASOA treasurer, Jeff Edwards that the tournament schedule is complete and entered into DragonFly.**

15. **Field Inspection** – Field inspection is required and this applies to all fields to be used, including those not owned by the individual school to ensure compliance with AHSAA and NFHS regulations and rules. **Fields must be compliant with rule #1 outlined in the NFHS Rules Book.** Preseason inspections may be scheduled with Stewart Stephenson. If no inspection is scheduled, the inspection will occur on the date of the first game and will be conducted by the head referee assigned to the match. **Please note:** If a host school waits until game day, their game may be delayed, or possibly cancelled if not in compliance.

Goals must be safely anchored, or the game will not be played. The Technical Area (coaching/team area) must be clearly marked with paint per AHSAA regulations. Cones or other means may be used on turf fields or other surfaces where painting the field is not possible.

Spectator fences and temporary barriers: Not all fields have fences. Please strongly consider using temporary barriers if a fence is not present.

16. **Coaches** – We will use these guidelines in judging proper coach behavior and conduct.

Coaches should:

- (a) Exemplify behavior that is representative of the educational staff of the school and a credit to the teaching profession.
- (b) Demonstrate high ideals, good habits and desirable attitudes in personal behavior and demand the same standards of the players.
- (c) Emphasize to his/her players and bench personnel the importance of proper sideline behavior and the necessity of refraining from entering the playing field to engage in any confrontation or fight.
- (d) Recognize that the purpose of competition is to promote the physical, mental, social and emotional well-being of the individual players and that the most important values of competition are derived from playing the game fairly.
- (e) Be a modest winner and a gracious loser.
- (f) Maintain self-control at all times, accepting adverse decisions without public display of emotion or of dissatisfaction with the officials.

- (g) Pay close attention to the physical condition and well-being of players, refusing to jeopardize the health of an individual for the sake of improving his team's chances to win.
- (h) Teach athletes that it is better to lose fairly than win unfairly.
- (i) Discourage gambling, profanity, abusive language and similar violations of the true sportsman's code.

Signed in duplicate this _____ day of _____, 20__.

PRINCIPAL SASOA AHSAA Assigning Officer

SASOA President

PRINTED NAMES:

PRINCIPAL SASOA AHSAA Assigning Officer

SASOA President

Points of Contact (PLEASE NOTE SOME ARE REQUIRED BY CONTRACT)

Position	Name	Phone	Email Address
*Administration - Principal			
*Treasurer - Bookkeeper			
Athletic Director			
Designated POC			
Boys Varsity Head Coach			
Girls Varsity Head Coach			
Boys JV Head Coach			
Girls JV Head Coach			
Boys MS Head Coach			
Girls MS Head Coach			
Other Contacts (specify)			

Asterisk (*) indicates required contacts.

SASOA will use the Athletic Director as the school's designated POC if none is specified.