

New Football Official Starting Out Guide

Joining a football officiating crew offers a rewarding experience that extends beyond the game itself. As an official, you have the unique opportunity to give back to the community while earning additional income. This role imparts essential life skills such as discipline, teamwork, and integrity while also fostering camaraderie among the officiating crew. Together, you will create lasting bonds, ensure the game is played fairly and safely, and contribute to the growth and success of both the sport and its players.

The learning curve can be steep if you've never officiated a football game. As you embark on this journey, never hesitate to ask a fellow official any questions, regardless of how basic they may seem. Save your questions for an appropriate moment. We learn by doing and improve each other!

Below, you will find a list of items you need to be successful. If you are starting on the Auxiliary team by working the clock or chain crew, you only need the items listed under the "Auxiliary Crew Uniform" section. If you plan to officiate games this season, you will need the items listed under the "Football Official Uniform" section. There are many online options for purchasing equipment, with some websites offering complete sets of uniform pieces and equipment. Be a discerning consumer and shop around, as prices vary between websites. Using Smitty's brand shirts is recommended for their superior quality. A list of stores that cater to sports officials is provided.

Lastly, keep track of all your receipts so you can deduct your expenses from your earnings, saving you money when you file your tax return.

ArbiterSports: Your Gateway to a Smooth Football Season

If you still need to do so, create an account at Arbitersports.com. This website is essential for managing the administrative functions you will encounter throughout the season. You will use it to sign up for the football season, block out days or partial days of availability, receive assignments, handle payroll, and access 1099 tax forms. Take some time to explore the website, and don't hesitate to ask any questions you may have.

Auxiliary Crew Uniform - See links at the end of this document.

- (1) Black Hat with White Piping
- (1) Solid Black Polo Shirt—If you already have one, you are all set, and you needn't worry about the brand.
- (1) Solid Black Shorts - If working auxiliary, any solid black shorts work that have belt loops. If you plan on officiating on the field, you may consider investing in solid black officials shorts.
- (1) Black Belt - If planning on officiating on the field. The belt should be approximately 1-¾" to 2" wide.

- (1) pair of Black Socks - If you are wearing shorts, your socks should be “ankle” height. If you are wearing pants, wear “crew” height socks.
- (1) Black undershirt. Feel free to wear black cotton or a black moisture-wicking undershirt.
- Shoes - Black or Black with a white accent. To start, any black shoes will work.
- (1) Black Pants for Cold Weather. Any solid black pants will work. You can also wear black official pants with a white stripe.
- (1) Radio with an earpiece to listen to officiating crew communications.

Official Training

Here are the resources needed to get yourself onto the field:

- (1) Current NFHS Rule Book and Case Book - Ask your Crew Chief if he has any extras, or you can purchase them online. Everything you need to know can be found in these two books.
- Mechanics Guide - snoafootballofficials.com (Note: A new website, snoafootballofficials.com, is coming in the near future.)
- SNOA Football Youtube Channel - [SNOA Football Channel](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCvQyLaM3Vp2E?si=Hp2SoLc2P-RUiGul)
- Clock Management Youtube Video:
 - <https://youtu.be/3QylaM3Vp2E?si=Hp2SoLc2P-RUiGul>

Supplemental Training is recommended but not required.

- Redding Study Guide - This guide expands upon the NFHS Rule Book and explains the rules in layman's terms.
 - Referee.com - 2025 NFHS Redding Football Study Guide
 - OfficialsLocker.com - 2025 NFHS Redding Football Study Guide Spiral Bound
- MIBT.ORG - This training website offers a comprehensive introductory course and hundreds of videos to help you learn. They also offer live training seminars once a week just before and during the football season. There is an annual subscription fee, but it is worth it.
- Football Officiating Camp - While these have a cost to them, it is something to consider down the road as you get instant feedback from the clinicians:
 - Tait Consul Griffith Football Camp
 - Southern California Football Officials Clinic

Football Official Uniform

- (1) Black Hat with White Piping (same hat used for auxiliary)
- (1) Football Official Short Sleeve Shirt with 2.25” stripes with flag over left pocket (Note: We are transitioning to 2.25” stripes, but you may still wear your current 2” stripe shirt.)
- (1) Football Official Long Sleeve Shirt with 2.25” stripes with flag over left pocket. Used for Cold Weather games. (Note: We are transitioning to 2.25” stripes, but you may still

wear your current 2" stripe shirt.)

- (1) Solid Black Shorts for Freshman and Junior Varsity games with Warm Weather
- (1) Black Pants with white stripe - For Varsity and Cold Weather Freshman and Junior Varsity Games. Choose your preference for fabric material
- (1) Solid Black Belt
- (1) Black Undershirt. Can be cotton or a performance material.
- (1) Pair of black socks - If wearing shorts, socks should be "ankle" height. If wearing pants, socks should be "crew" height.
- Shoes - Shoes should be either all black, or black with white accents. Below are some samples, but feel free to purchase any brand.
- (1) Black undergarment beneath your pants or shorts.

Football Official Equipment

- (1) Black Down Indicator
- (2) Fox 40 Whistle on a lanyard. The second whistle is used as a backup.
- (1) set of Referee Throw Down Bags. Black, Blue, and White Colors
- (1) Yellow Ball Center Penalty Flag
- (1) Watch with a timer or a standalone timer.
- Pencils to track points and fouls.
- (1) Chain Clip for wing officials
- Optional - (1) Football Information Cards
- (1) Radio with an earpiece to listen to officiating crew communications.

Online Football Shops

- ump-attire.com
- purchaseofficials.com
- outwestofficials.com
- honigs.com
- amazon.com

Below are examples of the types of uniforms and equipment you will need. Shop around and choose the brand that best suits your comfort and budget.

Auxiliary Crew Uniform

- Black Hat with White Piping
 - [Black w/ White Piping Woven Poly High Performance Low Profile Hat](#)
 - [Richardson Flex-Fit Football Hat](#)
 - [Under Armour Referee Cap](#)
- Solid Black Polo Shirt - If you already have one, you are all set, and don't worry about the brand.
 - [Ben Hogan Men's & Big Men's Performance Easy Care Solid Short Sleeve Polo Shirt, up to 5XL - Walmart.com](#)

- [Men's Nike Solid Dri-FIT Golf Polo](#)
- Solid Black Shorts - If working auxiliary, any solid black shorts work that have belt loops. If you are planning on officiating on the field, you may consider investing in the following solid black shorts without the white stripe:
 - [Smitty 4-Way Stretch Solid Black Shorts](#)
 - [Smitty Premium Knit Polyester Softball Umpire / Referee Shorts | Ump Attire](#)
 - [Honig's New Performance All Black Football/Lacrosse Short](#)
- Black Belt - If planning on officiating on the field, consider the following belts:
 - [Boston Leather 1 3/4" Belt - Standard Leather \(Belt runs small\)](#)
 - [1 3/4" Genuine Leather Referee / Umpire Belt | Ump Attire](#)
- Black Socks - If you are wearing shorts, your socks should be "ankle" height. For pants, your socks should be "crew" height.
- Black undershirt. Feel free to wear black cotton or a black moisture-wicking undershirt.
- Shoes - Black or Black with white accent. To start, any black shoes will work. Below are the styles we use if officiating on the field:
 - [Under Armour Yard Turf Black & White Field Shoes | Ump Attire](#)
 - [Smitty V2 Black & White Umpire / Referee Field Shoes | Ump Attire](#)
- Black Pants for Cold Weather - Any solid black pant will work. You can also wear black official's pants with a white stripe.

Football Official Uniform

- Black Hat with White Piping (same hat used for auxiliary)
- Football Official Short Sleeve Shirt with 2.25" stripes with American flag over left pocket (Note: We are transitioning to 2.25" stripes, but you may still wear your current 2" stripe shirt.)
 - [Smitty Short Sleeve 2 1/4" Stripe w/ Dye Sublimated Flag](#)
 - [Honig's 2.25" Striped Short Sleeve Football Shirt With Sublimated American Flag](#)
- Football Official Long Sleeve Shirt with 2.25" stripes with American flag over left pocket (Note: We are transitioning to 2.25" stripes, but you may still wear your current 2" stripe shirt.)
 - [Smitty Long Sleeve 2 1/4" Stripe w/ Dye Sublimated Flag – Purchase Officials Supplies](#)
 - [Smitty Long Sleeve Football Shirt - 2 1/4" Stripes - Pocket Flag](#)
- Solid Black Shorts for Freshman and Junior Varsity games with Warm Weather
 - [Smitty 4-Way Stretch Solid Black Shorts](#)
 - [Smitty Premium Knit Polyester Softball Umpire / Referee Shorts | Ump Attire](#)
 - [Honig's New Performance All Black Football/Lacrosse Short](#)
- Black Pants with white stripe - For Varsity and Cold Weather Freshman and Junior Varsity Games. Choose your preference for fabric material
 - [Smitty Football Cold Weather Pants 1 1/4" Stripes - Water Proof Featur – Out West Officials Gear & Apparel](#)
 - [Smitty Football "Tapered Fit" Warm Weather Pant with 1 1/4" Stripe](#)
 - [Smitty Warm Weather Tapered Fit Black Football Referee Pants | Ump Attire](#)

- Solid Black Belt
 - [Boston Leather 1 3/4" Belt - Standard Leather \(Belt runs small\)](#)
 - [1 3/4" Genuine Leather Referee / Umpire Belt | Ump Attire](#)
- Black Undershirt. Can be cotton or a performance material.
- Pair of black socks - If wearing shorts, socks should be “ankle” height. If wearing pants, socks should be “crew” height.
- Shoes - Shoes should be either all black, or black with white accents. Below are some samples, but feel free to purchase any brand.
 - [Under Armour Yard Turf Black & White Field Shoes | Ump Attire](#)
 - [Smitty V2 Black & White Umpire / Referee Field Shoes | Ump Attire](#)

Football Official Equipment

- Black Down Indicator
 - [Smitty Black Velcro Referee Down Indicator | Ump Attire](#)
- Fox 40 Whistle on a lanyard. The second whistle is used as a backup.
 - [Fox 40 2-Pack Classic & Classic CMG Referee Whistles with Lanyard | Ump Attire](#)
- Set of Referee Throw Down Bags. Black, Blue, and White Colors
 - [Smitty Single Sided Referee Throw Down Bag | Ump Attire](#)
- (1) Yellow Ball Center Penalty Flag
 - [Champro Black Ball Center Referee Penalty Flag | Ump Attire](#)
- (1) Watch with a timer or a standalone timer.
- Pencils to track points and fouls.
 - [Umpire / Referee Game Card Pencil with Pencil Shield | Ump Attire](#)
- (1) Chain Clip for wing officials
 - [Orange Nylon Chain Clip with Plastic Yard Marker Slide | Ump Attire](#)
- Optional - (1) Football Information Cards
 - [Smitty Football Referee Information Cards | Ump Attire](#)
- Radio and Earpiece
 - [Amazon.com: Midland - LXT500VP3, 22 Channel FRS Walkie Talkies with Channel Scan - Extended Range Two Way Radios, Silent Operation, Batteries Included \(Pair Pack\) \(Black\)](#)
 - [Amazon.com: Midland AVPH3 Transparent Security Headsets with PTT/VOX – Wrap Around Design – Lasting Comfort Pair, Black](#)