

Middle Tennessee Soccer Officials Association

Official Meeting Minutes

November 3, 2025

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:43 PM at Hunters Lane High School.

I. ELECTIONS

Prior to the in-person meeting, members were invited to submit nominations for the following positions:

- Assignor
- Secretary
- Treasurer (special election to complete the remaining two-year term)

Nominations Received:

- **Assignor:** Coz
- **Secretary:** Jess
- **Treasurer:** Mandi Burley

all candidates ran unopposed, each was declared elected by acclamation.

II. ANNUAL BANQUET

The annual banquet will be held on January 26, 2026. Members were reminded that 2026 dues must be paid to attend. No exceptions will be made for members with unpaid dues. The Secretary will send email notification to all members with banquet details.

III. FIELD SAFETY AND DEPARTURE PROTOCOL

The Assignor emphasized TWSAA requirements regarding immediate departure from fields after games. A recent incident at the Summit vs. Hendersonville sectional match was cited as an example of why officials must leave immediately following games.

Key points discussed:

- Officials are not to handle post-game incidents
- Bring minimal items to the field (keys and water only if necessary)
- Do not bring bags or unnecessary equipment to the field
- Proceed directly to vehicles after the final whistle

It was noted that all games are now recorded, and officials should be mindful that their actions and comments may be captured on video.

IV. EQUIPMENT ENFORCEMENT - SHIN GUARDS

Joe Blair, head of TSSAA soccer, has designated shin guard compliance as a point of emphasis. This directive was included in the State Rules meeting presentation and must be enforced consistently.

Requirements:

- Shin guards must be age and size appropriate
- Must display NOCSAE symbol

- Modified or cut shin guards are illegal

The Assignor reported that two coaches received red cards at the state tournament for equipment violations. Officials were instructed to address violations during preseason to prevent state tournament issues. It was recommended to check equipment during warm-ups when possible.

Discussion ensued regarding the challenge of transitioning from club soccer (where enforcement is less strict) to high school requirements. Several coaches have expressed frustration with inconsistent enforcement and have requested officials' assistance in maintaining standards.

V. RULE CHANGES AND CLARIFICATIONS

Halftime Communication:

Coaches are prohibited from approaching referees at halftime unless specifically beckoned. Officials should be pragmatic and may address legitimate questions but must ensure both coaches are treated equally. If one coach is permitted to speak with officials, the other must be afforded the same opportunity.

Language Policy:

High school athletic fields are considered an extension of the classroom. Profanity results in an automatic red card. All red cards, including those for language, must be reported to the state. The new reporting system allows differentiation between types of violations.

VI. STATE TOURNAMENT PARTICIPATION

The Assignor announced that MTSOA will send 5-6 officials to future state tournaments, reduced from the previous allocation of 8. This reduction was mandated by the state to ensure equitable distribution among all associations.

2025 State Tournament representatives:

- Samantha Burkett - Assistant Referee on Division 2 Final
- Colby Reid - Center Referee on Division 2 Final

Liberty won the Division championship. The association expressed pride in the officials' performance at the state level.

VII. ADMINISTRATIVE REQUIREMENTS

Arbiter System Updates:

- All officials must upload a professional headshot photo
- Phone numbers must be set to public for crew communication
- Spring availability must be updated by Christmas/New Year period

Safety Notifications:

Officials with medical conditions (diabetes, etc.) should notify crew members before games. An incident was cited where EMS was called for an official, highlighting the importance of sharing medical information with partners.

VIII. MENTORSHIP AND DEVELOPMENT

The following mentors are available to assist with official development:

- Wayne Jackson and Chuck Krzinski - Primary evaluators for mechanics and positioning

- Our association also has numerous other referee coaches and mentors from the USSF side - Jay (coach), Jess, Glenn, Tim, Mike Musante and others that anyone can reach out to for help and guidance

Officials are encouraged to request evaluations and work with more experienced officials to improve their skills. Contact information for all mentors is available through Arbiter.

IX. RECOGNITION

The association recognized Tony Sheets for 23 years of dedicated service who is moving to Cookeville to be near family. The membership expressed appreciation for his long-term commitment to the organization.

X. OTHER BUSINESS

Association Policies:

The Assignor clarified that officials will not be removed from games based solely on coach complaints. The only exception is if a coach pays the official's full game fee to request a replacement. This policy protects officials from arbitrary removal while maintaining professional standards.

Meeting Schedule:

The President discussed the decision to hold fewer meetings due to conflicts with college and USSF meetings. Plans for improved communication during the boys' season were discussed.

XI. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held as part of the Banquet on January 26, 2026

XII. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Jess, Secretary
Middle Tennessee Soccer Officials Association

Approved:

Date