

Path to Officiating in the NCAA and NFL

The role of a Game Official in the National Football League is the highest honor that can ever be bestowed upon any football official. Of the approximate 4,204 officials who officiated football in 2022 at all levels in the United States, only 1.27% make it to NCAA Division One Officiating and only 0.29 % will make it to the National Football League. It is an honor that should only be bestowed upon the most worthy and qualified individuals.

Path to becoming an NFL Game Official

- Become a member of your local Officiating Association/Chapter
 - Contact an official / Coach you may be familiar with to recommend you or (NFHS.org):
 - First step to learning rules, mechanics, philosophies of officiating high school football.
 - National Federation of State High School (NFHS) Associations requires rules test for license to officiate in every state.
 - Association's / Chapter's usually offer study group rules sessions.
- Each Association / Chapter will assign you:
 - Pop Warner/Pee Wee Football – As many games as possible
 - Pre-season scrimmages immediately
 - High School:
 - Frosh/Soph – 2 to 3 seasons
 - Varsity – preferably 50+ games (5 seasons)
- Division III / Junior College Football
 - Your local association mentor will recommend you when it is time.
 - Introduction to NCAA rules, mechanics, and philosophies; speed of game, travel requirements – first test for commitment to the avocation
 - Minimum of 2-3 years' experience before application to Division I Coordinators
- A combined 6 years of College Football officiating experience consisting of the following prior to consideration to the NFL (upon application):
 - Division 1 Football
 - Preferably 50+ games (5 seasons)
 - Bowl Games

Below are the MINIMUM requirements for consideration by the NFL from both FCS and FBS candidates:

Football Championship Subdivision (FCS)

- Minimum six (6) years' experience as a full-time member of the officiating staff of a particular conference (e.g., Missouri Valley Football Conference) or, if prior experience in an FCS Division I conference, combined years must be six or greater.
- A minimum of nine (9) games per season.
- Minimum of one First Round NCAA FCS playoff assignment and one Second Round NCAA FCS playoff assignment.
- Submit copies of schedules for each of the seasons spent in a specific conference.

Football Bowl Subdivision (FBS)

- Minimum six (6) years' experience as a full-time member of the officiating staff of a particular conference (e.g., PAC 12 Conference) or, if there is prior experience in an FBS conference, combined years must be six or greater.
- A minimum of nine (9) games per season
- A minimum of one (1) Conference Championship assignment
- A minimum of two (2) post-season bowl assignments, preferably (but not required) one a New Year's Six (Orange, Sugar, Peach, Cotton, Fiesta, or Rose Bowl) assignment.
- Submit copies of schedules for each of the season spent in a specific conference.

Consortium Officials

- For any official who is a member of a Division 1 Officiating Consortium (e.g., Collegiate Officiating Consortium, CFO West Officiating Consortium, Officiating Alliance Consortium):
- Minimum eight (8) years combined experience in said consortium, with majority of years at the FBS level. If an official has been hired from a different consortium, eight years minimum applies.
- FCS playoff experience
- (1) FBS Conference Championship game experience
- (1) New Year's Six Bowl assignment experience
- FBS Conference championship game
- Submit copies of schedules for each of the seasons officiated in consortium.

After application to the National Football League

Invitation to become a member of the Mackie Development Program (MDP)

- Applications are reviewed and vetted by NFL Officiating Recruitment Coordinator
 - Invitations are extended to officiate in any of the All-Star football games, including:
 - Hula Bowl game
 - NFLPA game
 - East West Shrine game
 - Senior Bowl
 - Legacy Bowl
- Selection to become a member of either of the Spring Professional Football Leagues
 - XFL
 - USFL
- Selection to participate with an NFL Officiating Crew during June OTA workouts and/or August Fall camp practices / meetings / pre-season football games.