



New Members Guide

FORT WORTH FOOTBALL OFFICIALS

FWFO New Official,

Welcome to the FWFO and Texas high school football. You are about to embark upon an interesting, rewarding, and challenging journey. We are excited that you have decided to join FWFO, and we look forward to helping you develop as a football official.

The tradition of Texas high school football is well-known and celebrated throughout the country and in pop culture. However, there is one aspect that typically garners little attention (and hopefully so), which is the individuals in the black and white stripes. A Texas high school football official is responsible for ensuring the fairness and smooth running of the games. It is a significant responsibility that is both daunting and immensely rewarding.

Officiating is a complete 180 degree turn from playing or casually observing a football game. Once you step onto a field as a football official you will never watch the game in the same way. No longer will you focus solely on the football or watching all 22 players at once. A football official monitors small aspects of every play. In addition, an official must be well-versed in the playing rules.

The role of our new member training program is to help you build your knowledge of the rules coupled with the mechanics necessary to put yourself in position to make the right calls. Your initial games will be a blur, but we hope that our program will move you along the learning curve so that the game slows down and you become more comfortable and proficient at officiating.

Football officiating allows you to remain involved in athletics, to stay in shape, earn extra money, contribute positively to the youth of Texas, and also make great friends. We look forward to getting to know you and are excited about serving as your guides on the road to becoming a football official.

Please let us know what we can do to help and best of luck in your development. Most importantly, HAVE FUN.

Yours in Officiating,

The FWFO New Member Training Committee

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Getting Started

New Member Registration:

In order to become an Official in the FORT WORTH FOOTBALL OFFICIALS (FWFO) you must join the Texas Association of Sports Officials (TASO) and our chapter, FWFO. You will be required to pay a total of \$105 for your first season. There are 2 steps you must complete for the membership process.

1)First join TASO:

Go to TASO website and follow join instructions. This step will require online payment of \$40. Here is the link to use: www.taso.org and click on “New Applicants near the top right of the webpage.

2)Next, join FWFO.

Go to WWW.FWFO.ORG and click on “Join the FWFO” link. You will need to complete the application on the webpage. You will be prompted to pay you fees via PayPal.

Your membership enables you to work FWFO assigned games. Each new member official will also receive a NCAA rule book. Additionally, new member officials will be granted access to the members section of the TASO & FWFO websites where you will find very useful information.

The main contact for new member recruiting and dues and registration is: XXXXXX who can answer questions regarding the Chapter and becoming a member.

Meetings

New member training sessions are provided each season. These meetings are typically scheduled from 6:30 PM to 8:00PM on Monday evenings. A schedule is included later in this document. The meetings are designed for the benefit of the officials and are an invaluable source of education and training at all levels. Some of these meeting dates will actually be on field training sessions for new members. The location and time of the meetings will be posted on the FWFO website (www.FWFO.org) so please check the website regularly to get the latest information.

New Member Training Committee

This committee manages and performs all activities regarding the training of new officials. The members of the committee are all veteran officials with a mixture with various lengths of service and experiences ranging from high school to Division I NCAA football.

TASO Information

In the late 1930s, the Southwest Conference (SWC) recognized the need for training sports officials and developing local associations under the umbrella of the Southwest Officials Association (SOA) throughout the state. While the SWC was motivated by a commitment to improving officiating and athletics, the overriding belief was that from such a structure would result in better trained officials for SWC competition. As a result, the Southwest Conference Official's Association (SWOA) was formed to handle football and basketball officiating duties. Though originally formed to train collegiate officials, many high school officials joined the SWOA ranks. In 1977, the Texas football, basketball, and baseball officiating associations recognized the need to form a statewide governing body for high school officials. As a result, the Southwest Officials Association (SOA) was formed based in Dallas. Since the formation of the SOA in 1977, the volleyball, softball, and soccer divisions also came into the SOA.

In 1999, the SOA changed its name to the Texas Association of Sports Officials (TASO). After a brief tenure in Mesquite, TX, the TASO office relocated to its current location in Richardson, TX.

With the University Interscholastic League (UIL) governing high school athletics in Texas, TASO provides officials for all UIL contests. TASO is independent of the UIL but works closely with the UIL in providing officials for UIL contests.

TASO is an independent organization of sports officials governed by sports officials unlike other states in which officials are only members of a state association. Each of the six divisions is individually governed by a board of directors comprised of officers and regional directors elected by the membership throughout the state. Overall TASO policy is set by the TASO board of directors. The TASO board of directors is comprised of the president and president-elect (or vice president), of each of the six sports.

Current TASO membership is approximately 16,000 members in 196 local chapters throughout the state. You can learn more about TASO by going to: www.taso.org.

Rankings

Each member will be classified from Division I-V. You accumulate points by working games, scrimmages, training as an official, chain crew member, and attending different types of sanctioned TASO approved events including State meetings, rules clinics or on-field clinics. The more points you earn the higher you move up in divisions.

Division V	0 – 59 points
Division IV	60 – 179 points
Division III	180 – 359 points
Division II	360 – 659 points
Division I	660 and more points

Dues and Game Fees

Dues

As mentioned previously, you are required to join both the TASO and FWFO to be member in in the FWFO. Please note that these dues are variable and are subject to change from year to year.

These dues cover the necessary administrative and operating costs of the various organizations, rulebooks, and your ticket for the chapter banquet held in November. With your dues, you will get an NCAA Football Rules and Interpretations book. Your membership in TASO includes \$5,000,000 in General Liability coverage while you are engaged in your officiating duties.

Game Fees

Sub varsity game fees are determined by the UIL. Most schools will have you fill out a pay sheet and a W-9 form and then mail you a check within 2-3 weeks. Sub-varsity game fees range from \$45-\$55 per game depending on the length of each game. Varsity games range from \$65-\$180. This is just a general range and could vary depending on each school district. Officials are also reimbursed for travel, based on the game(s) location. Each school district may require a completed W-9 form each year.

Please Note: Once you have completed a W-9 for a specific school district the next time you officiate a game in that district you do not need to put your Social Security number on it again. Just indicate “ON-FILE”. It is only necessary to enter your Social Security number the first time you officiate in that district.

In order for a new member to officiate games in the FWFO, an official must pay TASO & chapter dues before any deadlines, attend 60% of the chapter meetings or new member training classes, and score a 70% or higher on the TASO annual new members test or regular test.

Getting Game Assignments

The main objective of our training program is to prepare you to work on the field. There are several types of on-field assignments available to new members. These include scrimmages, sub-varsity assignments, sixth man on a crew, chain crew assignments. While Pee-Wee or other youth league games may be available these are not officially scheduled by our chapter. There are many officials in our chapter that schedule these and if you ask around you will find out who they are and can contact them if interested.

What is the process for receiving game assignments?

FWFO uses a web-based scheduling system called RefTown. Each member must set up an account to use RefTown. The link on Reftown is www.reftown.com. (see tutorial at the end of this packet) For any issues with Reftown, including login, please contact the Chapter Secretary.

Sub-Varsity Coordinators

The sub-varsity coordinators as a liaison between the schools and the FWFO and are responsible for specific geographic segments throughout Fort Worth and surrounding North Texas area. The sub-varsity coordinators coordinate the sub-varsity games and chain crew assignments for their respective areas and schools.

The contact information for sub-varsity coordinators is available on the FWFO website www.FWFO.org (login required), under Directories. Listed under each sub-varsity coordinator is their contact information and the school districts that they are responsible for scheduling officials.

You should identify coordinators that make assignments in those areas that you want to work in. We suggest looking to work in areas that are convenient to your work or home. However, you might have to expand to other areas to get more games. We also suggest that you work for more than one coordinator to establish a positive reputation within the chapter.

Please contact your targeted sub-varsity coordinator as soon as possible regarding the following potential assignments. Make sure you verify your calendar so you can accept assignments and make sure that you don't overbook yourself.

Sub-Varsity Games

New officials initially gain experience by working sub-varsity games. These are paid game assignments typically worked with 3-5 officials. Sub-varsity games are typically scheduled Monday through Thursday evenings (Most games start at 5:30 to 6:00 PM – but there will some games that may start earlier). In addition, most of the time you will be working 2 games at each assignment. You will often be working with more veteran officials as sub-varsity coordinators try to avoid having games in which only new members.

Many games are booked during the summer but there are still games available throughout the fall. Don't be afraid to contact sub-varsity coordinators frequently because changes often occur throughout the season. We also suggest that during the season new officials keep their uniform with them, even when they do not have an assignment. There is always a possibility that a sub-varsity coordinator may call looking for someone to work. You should also feel free to contact sub-varsity coordinators on days you do not have games as they are likely to have openings emerge. There is also a section on the FWFO website, where officials post games they are trying to get covered. They will be listed under “Games Available” in the forum section.

Chain Crew Assignments

Sub-varsity coordinators will assign two officials to “pull chains” for all the varsity games at a respective stadium. These are paid assignments (typically between \$40-60). These assignments allow a new member to meet and observe different varsity level crews. Most crews are typically open to chain crew members participating in their pre-games as well so take advantage of this when available as it is a good learning opportunity.

Chain crew assignments can be on Thursday, Friday & Saturday nights but mostly on Friday nights as that is when most varsity level games are on. These provide valuable insight into officiating where new officials further learn the basic rules and officiating mechanics by observing varsity level officials.

Assignment Tips for New Members

- 1) *Be on time for your game assignments***
- 2) *Once you accept an assignment from a Satellite Secretary honor that commitment. Do not give back game assignments because you believe that you have a better assignment opportunity.***
- 3) *You will have conflicts that emerge during the season – hopefully rare but we understand they do happen and should be a legitimate reason. If you need to give back an assignment give the Satellite Secretary as much notice as possible. If you have to give back an assignment on the day of the game then you should attempt to find a replacement as well.***
- 4) *Do not overbook yourself so have your calendar accessible to you whenever accepting assignments***

Scrimmages

Scrimmages occur at the Varsity level twice a year, in the Spring (May) and Fall (August). The Chapter will assign a varsity crews or other veteran officials to work the scrimmages. The scrimmages are open to all officials and are great opportunities for new officials to get snaps and earn points before the season begins. We recommend that new members try to work as many scrimmages as possible.

The Chapter will provide a schedule of scrimmages and which crews are working those. New members should contact the referee of the respective crews to see if it is okay for them to attend. You may also check with the Chapter secretary to see if there are specific scrimmages in which the Chapter needs more officials to attend. We recommend trying to attend a scrimmage with the fewest number of people assigned in order to maximize the number of snaps that you get to work.

There are also new member's on-field training and scrimmages that are arranged each year as well. The dates for these will be announced on the website as well as in new members training classes.

Pee-Wee/Youth Football Leagues

Pee-Wee/Youth games are not directly associated with our chapter, but are assigned by several members of our chapter who work with the various Pee-Wee/Youth leagues. These games provide great training opportunities for new officials as well.

Uniforms

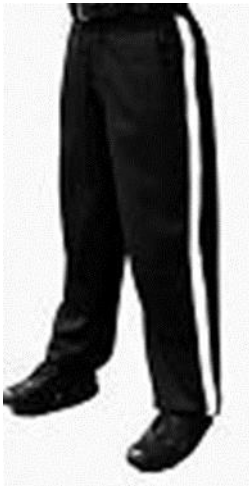
What you will need at a minimum for an on-field uniform is listed below.

UNIFORM ITEMS:

- SHIRTS - Black and white striped Short sleeved polyester shirt - specifically the TASO Approved football shirt as shown below. This is the only shirt allowed for both Varsity & Sub-varsity games. A long-sleeve version of this shirt is also available.



- PANTS - The pants shall be full length black pants. The pants must include a one and one quarter inch white strip on the seam of the leg, must not be cuffed, and must continue to the shoe without a break. (Mandatory for Varsity assignments and chain assignments)
- SHORTS - Black shorts with white side seams (Authorized for scrimmages and for sub varsity assignments)



- I** UNDERSHIRT/UNDERSHORTS – Black T-shirt and black compression shorts/tights.
(NOTE: If you are wearing a short sleeve officiating shirt you must wear a short sleeve black undershirt.)



- II** BELT - A black leather belt, with a width in the range of 1.25-2 inches wide.



- III** Black with white piping hat (NOTE: you will not need a white hat)



- IV** SOCKS: Black socks not higher than the ankle



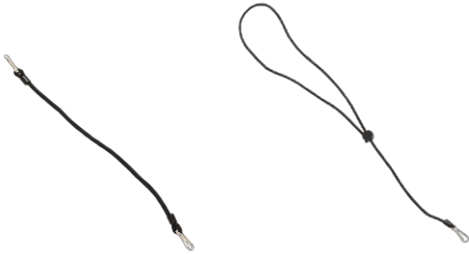
V SHOES - Predominantly black shoes with black laces and appropriate soles or cleats. (NOTE: Some white is allowed but the shoes must be mostly black in color)



VI WHISTLE – The FOX 40 lanyard whistle, finger whistle or both are allowed.



VII LANYARD – Used with whistles requiring a lanyard. Multiple styles are available.



VIII FOUL MARKER (aka Flag) – A light gold foul marker weighted in the center with pebbles, sand or beans.



IX BEAN BAG - White or Black is allowed.



X CHAIN CLIP – Multiple options are available. This is used when you are working on a chain crew. Examples shown below.



XI WRITING UTENSIL – You will need something to write with during the game. Pencils are commonly used and are sold by our uniform vendors. Example shown below.



XII GAME CARD - Plastic game card or something else you can write on to track details during the game, Game cards are commonly used and sold by our uniform vendors. Example shown below.



XIII DOWN INDICATOR - Elastic down indicator. Various options are sold by our uniform vendors. Examples shown below.



The uniform for all **chain assignments** will be the same as your sub-varsity uniform with pants and with the exception of an all white polo style shirt instead of a striped shirt. A small logo on the white polo is acceptable as long as it is appropriate. You will need your chain clip but not your other accessories.

Equipment Vendors

Most vendors will have available a “Starter Packet” at a discount price for new members. This packet will include all necessary equipment for officiating football. These vendors will also be available at different times during our chapter meetings and other clinics.

Some Common Uniform Do's and Don'ts:

DO ensure that your uniform is clean when you put it on

DO make sure that your shirt is tucked in

DO make sure that your shoes are clean and serviceable; shined if possible

DO carry a backup whistle, down indicator and flag

DO wear black undergarments beneath your shirt and pants

DON'T wear sunglasses for varsity assignments

DON'T let your flag hang out by carrying inside front of your pants, shorts, or in back pocket

DON'T clean or shine your shoes in the locker room

DON'T wear wrinkled pants or striped shirt

Uniform Vendors

Stripes Plus of Amarillo, TX
Phone: 888-551-7357
www.stripesplus.com

OFFICIALS GEAR OUTLET of West Texas
Connie Pardue
Phone: 432-853-0514
www.officialsgearoutlet.com/

UMP JUNK of Denton, TX
(214) 444-8679
www.umpjunk.com

It's My First Game

Sub-Varsity Assignments:

Travel: Please arrive 20-30 minutes prior to the assigned kickoff time.

Dress: You will need to go dressed, unless otherwise notified of dressing facility available. You would wear your black undershirt while driving; put your Stripe shirt on at the field parking lot.

Payment: Most stadiums will have a sign-in sheet at the gate or nearby. If not, some administrative person or another official will direct you in completion of forms for payment process. You will not receive payment at the game site typically it will be mailed to you at a later date. You may have to fill out some additional tax forms (e.g. W-9) the first time that you work for a specific district. Some districts require officials to have a taxpayer ID number or Social Security # when you sign-in so make sure you take that with you to your games. It's always a good idea to carry W-9's with you to the game site in case they request you complete one.

Please note whenever possible if you already have supplied a Social Security number to a school district you can indicate "ON-FILE" on any sections of paperwork asking for it. This will help minimize any potential fraud issues.

Position: Once you arrive and meet the other officials you will discuss which position you will be working. Most of the time as a *New Member* you will work on the wings. Don't be afraid to work multiple positions if you have more than one game. We strongly recommend work some games at the "referee" position, so you can work on game management, penalty announcements, and enforcements.

Varsity Assignments: (Chain Crews)

Travel: Please contact the Head Linesman by Wednesday for crew details. You may meet and ride with them or meet at the stadium. **DON'T BE LATE IF YOU ARE ATTENDING THE PRE-GAME.**

Dress: You will be able to dress at the stadium in most cases. However, you may choose to arrive already dressed. Make sure you allow for dressing time.

Payment: There will be sign-in sheets at the locker room. If not, the crew will instruct you as to where you sign-in for payment.

New Official Expectations

- 1.** Be on Time
- 2.** Honor your commitments. If you get assignments show up. If a conflict emerges then help find a replacement
- 3.** Recognize the importance of the games you are working to the Players, Parents, and Coaches
- 4.** Represent yourself and the Chapter in a professional manner
- 5.** Look the part both on and off the field. Clean and neat uniforms. Take pride in your appearance
- 6.** Ask Questions: you cannot learn unless you get the information
- 7.** Be a Sponge: rules, mechanics, officiating philosophies
- 8.** Find a Mentor: a veteran official or a varsity crew
- 9.** Find a new member “buddy”: study together, work together
- 10.** Be available and flexible. Show your schedulers that you are dependable.
- 11.** Don’t be afraid to be wrong: a new official has a lot to learn. You don’t have all the answers (none of us do)
- 12.** Go to clinics when possible to learn and improve as an official
- 13.** Strive to get better every game
- 14.** HAVE FUN

After Completing Your First Year

Congratulations on completing your first year. Now what do you do next?

First, if you enjoyed being a football official make sure you pay your annual dues on time. A letter will arrive from the FWFO chapter secretary for you to complete so you get credit for your points earned and to pay next year's dues (TASO & FWFO).

Second, the FWFO chapter supports an off-season training. The main objective of this program is to help make you the best possible football official you can be. The target audience is officials in the 1-10th year of officiating, but anyone from the chapter is welcome to attend, including new members.

The training program typically runs from Feb through May and the program/classes are held on Monday evenings at 6:30-8pm. The agenda is posted to the FWFO website in February along with an email blast to officials. Class sessions will cover rules, mechanics, rule quizzes, and video. Many of the presentations will be from veteran officials who also have an interest in helping make you the best possible football official you can be. In addition, we have a spring on-field clinic for officials to be evaluated by veteran officials from within the chapter.

Many younger officials who have attended, and have worked at becoming the best official they can be are being rewarded for their efforts. Some have received their first varsity game assignments and some have been picked up on crews and will start their first season working with a varsity crew. Many of them continue to attend because they know the level of effort which got them to their current point. They also know what more is expected of them going forward.

Working on the Chain Crew

Fort Worth Football Officials

New Members Training

Chain Crew

Responsibilities:

1. Contact the Head Linesman (HL) on the crew either working at the stadium or on your crew if you are the Box-Man by Tuesday if the game is on Thursday and by Wednesday if the game is on Friday. If you plan on attending pre-game be sure and ask what time it will start and BE SURE to BE ON TIME. (don't be disruptive coming late)
2. Dress: Full uniform, except wear a white polo type shirt instead of STRIPES. (ALWAYS pack stripe shirt...you never know when you might use it)
3. **CLEAN UNIFORM...SHINED SHOES.... CLEAN HAT....**(no sweat stains)
4. Have couple of Clips to use vs. taking from HL
5. Remember you are a part of the CREW working the game...You will go onto and leave the field with the other Officials working the game.

Mechanics:

1. There will be at least 3 Chain Crew Members/Officials assigned.
 - a.) Two will work the chains...Line to Gain(LTG)
 - b.) One will work the Down Box...
 - c.) If a fourth official is assigned – they will work the CLIP.
 - d.) Prior to the game the chain crew will assist the **HL** to make sure there are no problems with the chains
2. **Working the Chains on 1st down plays:**
 - a.) **NEVER MOVE** until you have been instructed by the **HL**.
 - b.) **HUSTLE** when you move...But **DO NOT** run over anybody
 - c.) HL will first set the Down Box and then chains set-up on the Down Box.
 - d.) Make sure chains are pulled tight.
 - e.) The clip will be put on the chain at the back of the nearest 5 yard. Line; If only 1-2 yard are between nearest five year line and back stake then go to next 5 yard line
 - f.) Always communicate with the **HL** what yard line you have clipped (i.e. 20, 25, 30, etc.)

3. Working the Chains on non 1st down plays:

- a.) Down Box will move to forward point of the Ball after HL signals to you next down. Move to the forward progress spot BEFORE changing down box
- b.) The LTG Crew will not move until a 1st down is gained.
- c.) If HL has instructed you to move...but you see a penalty flag then get their attention by pointing to the flag

4. Measurements

- a.) HL will move the Down Box Man (DBM) to forward stake (Line-To-Gain or LTG)
- b.) HL will confirm with the DBM the spot to be clipped...The persons holding chains will then proceed with HL to the football
- c.) The Front LTG crew will give the Umpire their stake...while the Back LTG will continue to hold Back stake
- d.) If 1st down is gained then chain crew will hustle back to sideline and set up for a new 1st down
- e.) If **NOT** a 1st down Chain Crew will remain on the field until the football is placed inside the Hash Marks... U and R will assist replacing the football back to the in-bound line (Hash Mark)

5. Penalty Enforcement

HL will instruct you when to move...usually the HL will walk-off penalty first

- **Communication MOST IMPORTANT:**
- NEVER comment to any coaches regarding the calls made or NOT made by the officials working the game.
- Always ask the **HL** to help you get either coaches or players back...DO NOT tell a player or coach to get out of your way...
 - Know Down & Distance on EVERY PLAY
 - Down Box should repeat down and line to gain/yard line to HL on every play.
 - Line to gain/Front Stake should let HL know if it is a first down by forward progress spot.

REMEMBER TO ACT PROFESSIONAL AND YOU WILL BE TREATED PROFESSIONALLY....AND MOST IMPORTANT ENJOY WHAT YOU ARE DOING.....

Resources....

Rulebooks

- For a searchable pdf of the rulebook go to <http://www.ncaapublications.com/>
You can download the pdf file for **FREE**. Many officials choose to have these printed and bound. The Chapter also provides all new members rulebooks
- Be sure to also get a pdf version of the UIL Texas High School exceptions to NCAA rules which will be applicable to all games our chapter officiates. Rules information can also be found on the DFOA & TASO websites, www.fwfo.org & www.taso.org.

Study Guides

- These are not meant to be a replacement for the rule book, but instead a teaching manual organized around phases of the game and overall topics of importance.
 - **Redding Study Guide *** HIGHLY RECOMMENDED*****
 - RSG - REDDING'S STUDY GUIDE - NCAA FOOTBALL

Websites & Videos

- CFO Website: www.cfo.arbitersports.com. Site that provides rules information and interpretation for free. There are other functions such as weekly videos and national training that you receive after registering for CFO. There is a yearly registration fee required, but TASO members typically receive a discount.
- Many College officials receive weekly training tapes from their respective conferences so if interested reach out to those officials.
- www.footballofficiating.com: free website put together by Big 12 Conference that has some video resources.
- A great resource for rules study is the following website www.ruletool.info. Not only does it organize the rules in an easy to review manner it also has many video links embedded to provide examples of many of the rules topics and fouls.
- Many high school crews get HUDL videos of their games from the schools after working their varsity game. Talk to a crew chief about potentially sharing their video. You will be given access to HUDL once you are a DFOA member.

Tests: working rules tests are an excellent way of improving your rules knowledge


- TASO administers an annual test that is available on the website. www.taso.org
- New Members must take and pass the TASO New members test or the Regular test. It is recommended for your first year to take the New Members test.
- Several college conferences give tests to their members so find those officials and ask for copies.

Mechanics Manuals-

- We spend a lot of time discussing mechanics for 3, 4, 5 & 7 man officiating crews. To access then go to www.taso.org then click on [TASO Football - Member's Portal Page](#) (login required).

Useful Links

The following are links to several of the web sites you will utilize as well as links to additional useful information:

- FWFO website, www.fwfo.org
- TASO website, www.taso.org
- Reftown, www.reftown.com
- TASO approved Mechanics manuals for a crew of 3, 4, 5 and 7 officials, www.taso.org then click on [TASO Football - Member's Portal Page](#) (login required)
- 2017 NCAA Rules, Online PDF, ePub & Mobi version available on NCAA website [here](#)
- UIL & TAPPS Exceptions to Football Rules, www.taso.org then click on [TASO Football - Member's Portal Page](#) (login required)
- www.ruletool.info
- www.footballofficiating.com
- College Football Officiating: <https://cfo.arbitersports.com>
- Look for Fort Worth Football Officials on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. 



The Foundation will provide scholarships to veterans who return from defending our country with an opportunity to get integrated back into their community through officiating. Those who have been involved in officiating already have felt the joy of stepping out onto the field or a court. With it, comes a great sense of value that leaves one with a feeling of accomplishment.

<https://www.battlefields2ballfields.org/>

Eligible Sports & Application period

Basketball: September 1, 2018- February 1, 2019

Soccer: November 1, 2018- March 1, 2019

Baseball & Softball: November 1, 2018 - February 1, 2019

Volleyball & Football: May 1, 2019- September 1, 2019