

**SOUTHERN ONTARIO TOUCH FOOTBALL  
OFFICIALS' ASSOCIATION  
POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**



January 2008



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## **Association Goals:**

That the members of the Southern Ontario Touch Football Officials' Association (SOTFOA) conduct themselves professionally and appropriately at all times;

That the SOTFOA provide the best available officials on the field for all games;

That SOTFOA members), supported by the executive, be promoted to senior levels of Touch/Flag football;

That SOTFOA member, supported by the executive, is encouraged to participate in various tournaments and championship games throughout the Province and across Canada;

That the SOTFOA provide the required amount of training for its Officials to advance through the levels of Touch Football Ontario's Certification Program;

That the SOTFOA conduct clinics at all Levels for the advancement of its Members;

That SOTFOA provides support and attendance at meetings on the Provincial and National levels.

### **1.0 Background/Introduction**

SOTFOA has been active since 2008. With approximately 30 registered Touch Football Officials, the Association officiate both Touch and Flag football in southern Ontario. The Association's main territory covers the Region of Halton. SOTFOA Officials typically work from May to November annually.

SOTFOA Officials have worked at all levels of football, from minor House Leagues to adult Touch and Flag Leagues registered with Touch Football Ontario or Touch Football Canada. The SOTFOA has qualified instructors to assist Officials interested in working toward these higher levels of football.

### **2.0 Constitution**

The SOTFOA maintains a Constitution in order to conduct its affairs, and to inform its members of their responsibilities, rights and privileges. Copies of the Constitution are available to all members as requested or by accessing the SOTFOA web site.

### **3.0 Executive Members**

The SOTFOA is operated with a current Executive membership of five individuals - the President, Referee in Chief, Secretary, Treasurer and the Director at Large.

The Constitution defines the positions and roles of the Executive members. Executive members are elected for a three (3), two (2) and one (1) year terms, on a rotating basis, as indicated in the constitution. The association uses an Assignor who works with the R.I.C to schedule officials.

During football season, the Executive will plan to meet once a month and approximately every other month during the off-season. The Secretary keeps minutes of all meetings.

### **3.1 Executive Honorarium**

Executive members will receive an annual Honorarium set by the executive and reported to the membership to reflect their workload and responsibilities.

The Assignor will receive a percentage as determined by the executive based on the number of games assigned.

\*If requested, and funds are available, the assignor will receive payment prior to the end of the season.

### **4.0 Administration**

#### **4.1 Roster**

A Roster will be made available to each member, whose responsibility it is to advise the Secretary and Referee-in-chief of any changes to the Roster.

#### **4.2 SOTFOA Finances**

##### **4.2.1 Use of funds**

The Association maintains funds for various uses involving the business of the Association. These include printing, postage, and insurance, registration to Provincial/National Associations, meetings, clinics, and related materials. These funds come from the membership's annual dues.

##### **4.2.2 Mileage**

Mileage is paid to Officials participating in certain Touch and Flag leagues. A flat rate is paid for mileage. Mileage is not included in the calculation of Association dues.

#### 4.2.3 Game fees

Game fees may vary from league to league. As a general rule, ALL Officials assigned to a game receive the same game fee. In most cases, game fees will be charged to the leagues. Payment to members is made four times a year - April, June, September, and December.

On occasion, a game fee may be paid in cash on site, by the Home team. If this is the case, the Referee-in-chief / Assignor will inform the Officials before the game. Game fees will be determined with the leagues prior to starting the season. Members will receive the current fee structure at the preseason meetings.

#### 4.2.4 Dues and Assessments

Dues are collected from members to operate the Association. Assignments are subject to a 10% deduction. Mileage or other out-of-pocket expenses will not be subject to any deduction. The calculation of these dues is subject to an annual review. Other Dues/Assessments/Expenses collected include:

- *\$50.00 SOTFOA Annual Membership fee;*
- *Any equipment purchased;*
- *Rulebooks, manuals;*
- *Fines for failure to attend meetings/clinics, uniform infractions, and violations of policy.*

#### 4.2.5 Missed game fines

Once an Official is assigned a game, it is assumed that he/she will fulfill that commitment. If an Official misses a game, based on specific circumstances, he/she is subject to a fine in the amount of the game fee. The game fee will then be distributed to the other Officials who worked the game.

*Note: Legitimate reasons for missing a game would include business or health related issues, or personal reasons. The Official is responsible to contact the assigning officer first and provide an explanation for the missed assignment. The Official will contact the Executive, in writing, within two weeks of the game, with reasons for having missed the game, in order to avoid the fine. (The fine is subject to the approval of the Executive.)*

#### 4.2.6 Missed game procedures

If an Official realizes he/she cannot fulfill an assignment, he/she is responsible for finding a replacement. Failing that, he/she must contact the Assigning Officer as early as possible, so that a replacement can be found and the game(s) covered. If the official cannot provide a replacement in time the official should also contact the school or field to notify the other officials.

#### 4.2.7 Number of Officials on a game

If only two Officials are at a football game, they should approach both teams and obtain their agreement to proceed with the game. If one of the teams does not agree, the game should not start. (Exception: BMFA, Non-Contact Football... Mite Division games, using one half of the field, require only one official.)

#### 4.2.8 Cancelled game

Scheduled games that are cancelled after officials have arrived will result in game fees, plus travel if applicable, being charged.

#### 4.2.9 Insurance Coverage

Officials can obtain a copy of the current policy from the TFont web site. ([www.tfont.ca](http://www.tfont.ca))

#### 4.2.10 Officials' Liability

Officials working a football game have specific responsibilities as outlined in the manual of "Policies and Procedures", and in the SOTFOA Constitution. Officials can minimize their liability through knowledge gained from the rulebook and manuals. All Officials are expected to be fully aware of their responsibilities before they work a game.

#### 4.2.11 Expenses - Representing SOTFOA

If a SOTFOA member attends a meeting representing SOTFOA, his/her expenses shall be covered. These expenses include mileage and meals, as applicable. Receipts must be submitted to the Treasurer for reimbursement.

### 4.3 Discipline

In order for the SOTFOA to maintain its standing as one of the leading associations of football officials, and to provide a high level of service to the various leagues, from time to time it may be necessary for the Executive to discipline an Official.

The discipline may take the following form:

- Discussion with the Referee-in-chief;
- Discussion with President/ an Executive member, to correct the problem.

If the behaviour continues, a letter will be sent to the Official advising the Official that the behaviour must change.

If the behaviour remains unchanged, a registered letter will be sent to the Official advising that he or she is 'On Probation';

If the behaviour continues, the Official will be suspended.

Gross misconduct may require immediate termination from the Association.

Suspensions may range from a prescribed number of games to the entire season.

If a situation arises, the disciplinary action could involve an Official being asked to leave the Association and not return.

Any appeal of disciplinary action must be made in writing to the President, requesting a special Executive meeting.

#### 4.4 Annual General Meeting

The Annual General meeting is normally scheduled in December (*see Constitution*). The Association's business is reviewed at this meeting. Members in good standing are eligible to vote on Association business. A member in good standing means a member who has paid all association fees and is not under suspension. Issues relating to the Constitution are discussed at this meeting with at least thirty (30) days' advance notice to the Secretary in writing. (*See Constitution for exact details.*)

#### 4.5 New Members

Each new SOTFOA member is eligible to receive the following:

Flag (orange);

Association Number (black number on white background);

Fox 40 whistle;

SOTFOA crest.

#### 4.6 Uniforms/Equipment

All Officials will be dressed in exactly the same manner while on the field. Each Official should bring the correct equipment in order to be uniformly dressed.

The SOTFOA uniform that will be worn is as follows:

Hat: Officials wear a black hat with white piping.

(Tournaments:

Referee: White hat with black piping;

Others: Black hat with white piping.)

Shirt: Short sleeved or long sleeved, with SOTFOA crest and Official's number firmly attached.

Pants: Black, (or black with limited white piping) long pants are allowed, especially in cooler weather.

Shorts: Black with black belt.

Socks: If wearing shorts, white tube socks with three black stripes, (are the standard).

Ankle-length socks are not encouraged.

Shoes: Black, (or black with limited amount of white) with black shoelaces.

Shoes are to be clean and polished before each game.

During inclement/cooler weather:

A jacket with black/white stripes may be worn;

Black rain pants (warm up pants) may be worn in place of shorts;

A black first layer under the Official's shirt is advisable;

Gloves and winter type hat (black) are appropriate.

#### 4.7 Rule book

Each Official will be required to have a copy of the current rulebook. The Official should carry the rulebook to games to review/discuss correct rules/interpretations as necessary. Rulebooks must be taken to each clinic.

#### 4.8 Manuals

Each Official will be required to purchase a copy of the manual that relates to the level he/she has attained. The Official should carry the manual to games to review/discuss correct mechanics as necessary. Each Official should review the manual on a regular basis. Manuals must be taken to each clinic.

#### 4.9 Tournaments

SOTFOA Officials are encouraged to participate in TFONT Tournaments. Officials should indicate to the RIC and Assigning officer at the beginning of the season, for registration purposes, their interest in participating in such events

In order for a member to participate in a National event, the Executive must confirm his/her participation. A SOTFOA member may be entitled to receive funds in advance of the tournament, subject to confirmation by the Executive. These funds are to cover food and travel expenses<sup>1</sup>.

#### 4.10 Newsletters

Officials can check the SOTFOA web site for current information. Officials are responsible for advising the Secretary of their current mailing address.

#### 4.11 Player ejection

During the course of a game, SOTFOA Officials will not “sit out” a player. If a player warrants an ejection, he/she will be removed from the game, as per the rulebook.

Each ejection will be documented on the game sheet and left with a representative of the teams involved. The Referee of the game must contact the Referee-in-chief immediately after the game, by phone or e-mail, to explain the circumstances surrounding the ejection. The Officials involved must make notes of the situation for future reference.

#### 4.12 Fights during a game:

It is not our Policy to get involved in fights between players or others during or after a football game. If a fight occurs the Officials are not to get involved, but are to observe which players are involved and apply the correct ruling after the fight

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<sup>1</sup> Unless provided by the Tournament

is over. The Officials involved must make notes of the situation and send a report to the RIC for future reference.

4.13 Abuse of an Official:

Any abuse, whether verbal or physical, will not be tolerated. The Official will immediately contact the Referee-in-chief and /or SOTFOA President regarding the incident following the game. All Officials on the game should make their own notes of the situation and submit them.

The SOTFOA Executive will take the appropriate action with each situation and keep the affected Officials informed.

4.14 SOTFOA Agreement with Leagues

The following agreement will be followed with all Leagues utilizing SOTFOA services.

	<b>League:</b>	<b>SOTFOA:</b>
<b>Responsibilities</b>	- will provide written copies of rules that differ from those of the current TFONT Rule book. Unless written changes are provided before a game, the TFONT rulebook shall be utilized;	-will provide the best-qualified officials available for each game;
	- will be responsible for arranging for fields, field markings, goal post pads and, if required, lights;	- will provide a minimum of three officials for each game, unless league requirements dictate otherwise.
<b>Officials</b>		A minimum of three (3) officials are assigned to each game. If required, a game may be played with two (2) officials, if agreement is previously obtained from both teams. If there is no agreement, the game will not be played. A game will not start with one (1) official. Exception: BMFA Non-Contact, Mite Division.

<b>Schedules</b>	The League will provide a schedule of games for the season three (3) weeks before the start of the season.	In the case of inclement weather, Officials will wait as outlined in the TFONT rulebook before terminating a game and leaving.
	Changes to submitted schedules for games/locations shall require 72 hours' notice.	
	Leagues will provide 24 hours' notice if a game is unable to be played.	
<b>Discipline</b>	Concerns regarding an Official must be submitted in writing to the Referee-in-chief, within 48 hours of an incident. The SOTFOA will respond within 48 hours of receiving a written complaint.	The SOTFOA will provide written details of any disciplinary action it requests against a player, team, coach, League representative, parent, etc., within 48 hours of an incident. The League must respond before the player, team, etc., participates next in league play. Failure to address a written concern could result in withholding of services.
<b>Payment</b>	Payment of invoices shall be made upon receipt. Leagues can provide post –dated cheques if requested.	The SOTFOA will submit two (2) invoices, one pre-season and the other at end-of-season.
	Payment will be for Officials participating in games. If an Official misses an assignment, fees are not required for that Official. (The SOTFOA fines its members for missed assignments.)	The SOTFOA will provide a written fee schedule for officials on an annual basis. Fees will reflect regular season, post-season and championship game amounts.

		Any mileage or other game-related expenses will normally be identified before a game is played, and charged accordingly.
		All games will be charged to the league. No payments will be made at a game unless agreed upon by the RIC and Assignor.
		If, due to a SOTFOA error, a game is not played, the SOTFOA will be responsible for game- related expenses.

## 5.0 Certification

### 5.1 Clinics

There will be one (1) general pre-season meeting/clinic each year. Each official participating in Touch/Flag is required to participate. The Pre-season meeting/clinic will typically be held at the end of April, prior to the start of the football season.

A Level One clinic will be held annually for new officials. Clinics to upgrade certification levels will be held as needed. The fine for missing the clinic is \$ 50.00.

### 5.2 Certification

All officials are welcome and encouraged to participate in Touch/Flag Football.

New officials will attend a Level 1 Certification clinic, based on the guidelines established by Touch Football Ontario and Touch Football Canada. A take-home exam will be made available, and is to be completed by the new official within his/her first year. To be fully certified, an official must work games within the year following the clinic. Members of the senior panel of Touch Officials will evaluate all new officials on the field.

Any Officials wishing to upgrade their current certification level must attend the appropriate clinic, write the Exam and meet the requirements set out by Touch Football Ontario and Touch Football Canada.

Those officials wishing to obtain Level 4 must participate in TFONT Tournaments to be evaluated by Provincial senior panel members.

Any officials wishing to obtain their LEVEL 5 Certification must officiate in a National Championship Final game and meet the requirements for Level 5 set out by Touch Football Ontario and T.F.C.

## **6.0 Ratings**

### **6.1 Evaluations**

All new Touch officials will be rated on their exam mark, field performance and overall ability. This will be done during the season by members of the senior Touch panel or by a paid off-field evaluator.

Veteran Officials will be rated by members of the senior Touch panel on an ongoing basis or when requested. Any concerns will be discussed immediately with the officials should the need arise.

### **6.2 Discipline**

It is extremely important that all discipline be documented. The SOTFOA Executive should be informed of all disciplinary actions.

Verbal complaints will be noted but not necessarily acted upon. All complaints about the Association or an SOTFOA Official will only be accepted if written. All written complaints will be replied to by the related RIC. See section 4.2.9 for details of discipline procedures.

## **7.0 Working with other Associations or Officials' groups**

All SOTFOA Officials who participate in Tournaments or who work with other Officials' Associations must receive prior permission from the Referee-in-Chief. Failure to obtain permission could result in disciplinary action up to and including, suspension.

## **8.0 Social Functions**

### **8.1 Annual Dinner/Annual General Meeting**

The Annual Dinner and Annual General Meeting will be held on the first Friday of December each year (see Section 4.4). This event is open to each SOTFOA member in good standing. The meal portion of the event is paid for through members' dues.

## **9.0 WEB Site**

[www.sotfoa.on.ca](http://www.sotfoa.on.ca)

SOTFOA will maintain a web site to keep members informed.

Meeting and clinic dates, training information and other related links would normally be provided. The Executive will make every effort to keep the web site current. Current Blog site:

<http://www.touchflagofficials.blogspot.com>

## **10.0 Harassment & Abuse Guidelines**

SOTFOA believes in the existence and promotion of a football environment in which all individuals are treated with respect and dignity. Harassment, abuse and discrimination are never acceptable and must not be tolerated.

Please refer to the TFONT ([www.tfont.ca](http://www.tfont.ca)) web sites for applicable policies and procedures with regards to this subject matter.

## **11.0 Amendments to Policies and Procedures**

The Association's Constitution will always take priority over its Policies and Procedures.

The information contained in the manual of Policies and Procedures is meant to document the procedures the Association should normally follow in given circumstances.

From time to time, it will be necessary to amend the Policies and Procedures. The Executive will decide what changes are approved. Members requesting changes should do so in writing to the Executive. Amendments will be provided to members in a timely manner.