

United States
Soccer Federation

Referee Administrative Handbook



The Referee Commitment

The U. S. Soccer Federation National Program for Referee Development, through the involvement of each referee, is recognized by players, coaches and administrators as a program which consistently provides excellence in officiating and displays the highest level of professionalism through service and dedication.

To accomplish this, I, as a referee, am committed to:

1. Officiating matches in a fair and safe manner that ensures player and spectator enjoyment.
2. Maintaining my physical fitness for peak performance.
3. Faithfully keeping all appointments assigned to and accepted by me.
4. Supporting my fellow officials with loyalty, pride and dignity.
5. Conducting myself in a way to be ethically and morally beyond reproach.
6. Granting players and coaches dignity and self-respect.
7. Contributing to the overall development of the National Program for Referee Development.
8. Remaining committed to continuous learning and an improvement process that enables me to perform to my full potential.

Revised 11/92

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Revised 2004

REFEREE ADMINISTRATIVE HANDBOOK

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Notice Regarding Updates to This Handbook

Note: The information contained in this book was updated in May 2004. Any policy or procedure changes approved by the United States Soccer Federation Board of Directors, the Executive Committee or the Referee Committee since that time will not be included. To find the most up-to-date information and any changes to the contents of this book, please check the referee page on our web site, www.ussoccer.com.

Although you can contact our office at any time should you have a question, many questions can or should be addressed by the State Referee Administrator who may be more familiar with certain state procedures and protocols. If you do not know how to contact the State Referee Administrator in your area, you will find a list, with contact information, on our web site.

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UNITED STATES SOCCER FEDERATION BYLAWS AND POLICIES

Pertaining to Referees

(Extracted from the Federation Bylaws and Policy Manual)

Subpart D-Referee Administration

Bylaw 531. General Policies

The Board of Directors shall prescribe policies concerning the administration of the National Referee Development Program consistent with these bylaws, including policies related to referee registration, assignment of game officials, uniforms, Federation FIFA referee and assistant referee qualifications, assignors, use of unregistered referees, misconduct toward game officials, and misconduct by game officials and ethics and restrictions on game officials and assignors.

Policy 531-1 - Referee Administration

Section 1. The State Referee Administrator (SRA) shall be jointly appointed by the Adult and Youth State Associations within the State. (A mutually acceptable nominee will be selected by the Referee Committee and the Board of Directors when the State Associations cannot agree.) The SRA shall be appointed for a specified two (2) year term and may be reappointed. (An interim SRA may be appointed, as provided in this section, to fill a vacancy during the specified 2-year term). The SRA shall work in cooperation with the Referee Committee in administering the Federation referees within the State through which they are registered and shall serve as a liaison between the State Associations. The SRA may be a member of the State Board or Executive Committee, but shall not be the President or Chief Officer of the State Association.

Section 2. A State Youth Referee Administrator (SYRA) shall be appointed by the Youth State Association for a specified (2) two year term with the advice of the State Referee Administrator. The State Youth Referee Administrator may be reappointed. An interim SYRA may be appointed to fill a vacancy during the specified 2-year term. At the discretion of the Youth State Association, the SYRA, or designee if there is no SYRA available, will be responsible for implementing and administering the national programs for the Recreational Youth Referee (grade 9). The SYRA or designee will also serve as registrar for the aforementioned grade.

Section 3. All Federation registered referees who reside, work or do their primary refereeing outside of the State Associations of the United States, shall be administered by the Referee Staff of the Federation in consultation with the referee committee.

Section 4. The Adult and Youth State Associations within a State may jointly establish a State Referee Committee to administer the National Referee Development Program for their associations.

Policy 531-2 - Referee Registration Fee

Section 1. Setting the Fee and Use of Payment by the Federation

The registration fee for referees shall be set by the Referee Committee and approved by the Board of Directors. From the registration fee, 50% shall be paid to the treasury of the Federation and used only for the National Referee Development Program.

Section 2. Fee Payments Retained and Used by the State Referee Committee

(A) For State Associations, the other 50% shall be retained within the State of registration by the State Referee Committee or the State Referee Administrator (SRA) if there is no State Referee Committee, and expended on referee development to include, but not be limited to, referee recruitment, instruction, assessment, assignment and administration, and permit the state the opportunity to offer referee educational experience which will benefit the referee and the state's program.

(B) The State Referee Committee and/or the SRA, either through the State Association and/or State Referee Committee or SRA, shall provide for such fiscal control procedures necessary for proper fund accounting, prepare an annual budget, and an annual written report of income and expenditures to the State Association and the Referee Committee.

(Revised 05/04)

Policy 531-3 - Referee Registration Cards

All referee registration cards shall be issued by the Federation.

Policy 531-4 - Referee Uniform

The official uniform for referees shall be set forth by the Referee Committee, subject to Board of Director approval.

Policy 531-5 - Referee Authority

The referee shall have the power to decide as to the fitness of the ground in all matches.

Policy 531-6 - Restriction on Referee as a Player

A referee, when registered as such, shall not be eligible as a player in any competition in which he is a game official.

Policy 531-7 - Federation FIFA Referee and Assistant Referee Qualifications

Referees and Assistant Referees appointed to the International Referee and Assistant Referee Panels of FIFA must be United States citizens and must meet the requirements established by FIFA.

Policy 531-8 Assignment of Game Officials

Section 1. Registration Required Prior to Assignment

No one shall officiate as a referee or assistant referee in any match under the sanction or jurisdiction (direct or indirect) of the United States Soccer Federation who is not registered with the Federation for the current year unless that person is a visiting foreign referee who has been properly accredited by his or her national association.

Section 2. Unregistered Referee in Emergency

If, because of unforeseen circumstances, a currently registered referee is unable to officiate or does not appear for an assigned match, a person may then be designated at match time to act as referee in the emergency for that one match.

(Revised 05/04)

Section 3. Use of Club Linesmen

When neutral assistant referees are not assigned or fail to appear for a match as assigned, the match referee may seek the assistance of club linesmen whose duties shall be as delegated to them by the referee.

(Revised 05/04)

Section 4. State Assignor Coordinator

A State Assignor Coordinator (SAC) shall be jointly appointed, for a fixed term, by the State Associations of the state based on a recommendation of the State Referee Committee (SRC) or the State Referee Administrator if there is no SRC. The SAC shall be responsible for the coordination of referee assignments by the referee assignors within the State Associations and shall not assign games nor have the authority to reassign referees who have accepted previous assignments.

Section 5. Minimum Game Requirements

(a) Each registering State Referee Committee, with the agreement of the state association, is allowed to set a reasonable minimum number of games required by referees, registering within its jurisdiction, to maintain yearly referee grades of 5, 6 or 7.

(Revised 05/04)

Section 6. Assignor Code of Ethics

The SAC and referee assignors shall adhere to the Assignor Code of Ethics and ensure that all referees receive equal consideration for match assignments consistent with the state's minimum game requirements and the referee's ability and desire for advancement.

Section 7. Registered Assignors

No one shall assign or appoint a referee, assistant referee or fourth official in any match under the jurisdiction (direct or indirect) of the Federation who is not registered as a Referee Assignor with the Federation for the current year. The state association, league or tournament may appoint an unregistered assignor in an emergency who may not serve past the end of the current seasonal year without becoming registered. This section does not apply to an assignment to any youth recreational or house league match.

Policy 531-9 - Misconduct Toward Game Officials

Section 1. General

Misconduct against referees may occur before, during and after the match, including travel to or from the match. Misconduct may occur also at later times when directly related to duties of a game official as a referee.

(Revised 05/04)

Section 2. Rule Application

(A) This policy shall supersede all rules of Organization Members that pertain to assaults or abuse upon Federation referees, assistant referees, the manner and means of hearings, appeals, and rehearings in matters pertaining thereto.

(B) Nothing in this policy rule shall be construed to restrict or limit any league, event/tournament or State Association from applying equal or greater restrictions to anyone not listed in section 4(a)(1) of this policy (i.e., a spectator associated with a club or team).

(C) This policy shall not apply to players, coaches, managers, club officials, or league officials while participating in Professional League member activities.

Section 3. Terms and References

As used in this policy –

(1) “Referee” includes the following:

(A) all currently registered USSF referees, assistant referees, 4th officials or others duly appointed to assist in officiating in a match.

(B) any non-licensed, non-registered person serving in an emergency capacity as a referee (under Policy 531-8).

(C) any club assistant referee.

(2) “Hearing” means a meeting of at least three neutral members, one of which is designated

or elected to serve as chairman. The hearing shall be conducted pursuant to guidelines established by the State Association.

(3) (a)(i) Referee assault is an intentional act of physical violence at or upon a referee.

(ii) For purposes of this policy, “intentional act” shall mean an act intended to bring about a result which will invade the interest of another in a way that is socially unacceptable. Unintended consequences of the act are irrelevant.

(b) Assault includes, but is not limited to the following acts committed upon a referee: hitting, kicking, punching, choking, spitting on, grabbing or bodily running into a referee; head butting; the act of kicking or throwing any object at a referee that could inflict injury; damaging the referee’s uniform or personal property, i.e. car, equipment, etc.

(4) (a) Referee abuse is a verbal statement or physical act not resulting in bodily contact which implies or threatens physical harm to a referee or the referee’s property or equipment.

(b) Abuse includes, but is not limited to the following acts committed upon a referee: using foul or abusive language toward a referee; spewing any beverage on a referee’s personal property; spitting at (but not on) the referee; or verbally threatening a referee.

(c) Verbal threats are remarks that carry the implied or direct threat of physical harm. Such remarks as “I’ll get you after the game” or “You won’t get out of here in one piece,” shall be deemed referee abuse.

Section 4. Jurisdiction and Hearings

(A) General

(1) When any amateur or professional player, coach, manager, club official or game official assaults or abuses a referee, the original jurisdiction to adjudicate the matter shall vest immediately in the responsible State Association which is affiliated with the United States Soccer Federation.

(2) When an allegation of assault is verified by the State Association the person is automatically suspended until the hearing on the assault.

(3) The State Association must hold a hearing within thirty (30) days of the verification by the Association of the abuse or assault or, if applicable, the thirty-day period provided by subsection (b)(3) of this section. If the Association does not adjudicate the matter within that period of time, original jurisdiction shall immediately vest in the Federation's Appeals Committee to adjudicate the matter, to which the same provisions as to the term of suspension shall apply.

(4) Failure to hold the initial hearing shall not rescind the automatic suspension.

(5) In cases of reports of referee abuse, a hearing is held only when requested by the alleged assailant or otherwise deemed appropriate by the convening authority.

(B) Events and Tournaments

(1) In the event an assault or abuse of a referee occurs in an event outside the alleged offender's home state, the referee shall (A) immediately notify the Event/Tournament Chairman, and (B) forward a copy of the game report and his/her comments on the incident to the Event/Tournament Chairman.

(2) The Event/Tournament Chairman shall have the right to immediately convene a hearing at the site of the Event/Tournament, at which the alleged offender, the coach of the alleged offender when the offender is a player, and the game official should be present. Information presented at this hearing shall promptly be relayed to the alleged offender's State Association President by the Event/Tournament Chairman, both orally and in writing; however, failure to provide written information shall not restrict the offender's home State Association from taking action with regard to any referee abuse or assault.

(3) Final jurisdiction shall vest with the alleged offender's home State Association. A hearing shall be held by that State Association within thirty (30) days of the receipt of the initial report of the abuse or assault on a referee.

Section 5. Penalties and Suspensions

(A) Assault

The player, coach, manager, or official committing the referee assault is automatically suspended as follows:

for a minor or slight touching of the referee or the referee's uniform or personal property, at least 3 months from the time of the assault;

except as provided in clause (c) or (d), for any other assault, at least six months from the time of the assault;

for an assault committed by an adult and the referee is 17 years of age or younger, at least 3 years; or

for an assault when serious injuries are inflicted, at least 5 years.

(2) A State Association adjudicating the matter may not provide a shorter period of suspension, however, if circumstances warrant, may provide a longer period of suspension.

(B) Abuse

The minimum suspension period for referee abuse shall be at least three (3) scheduled matches within the rules of that competition. The State Association adjudicating the matter may provide a longer period of suspension when circumstances warrant (e.g., habitual offenders).

Section 6. Appeals

(A) Assault

A player, coach, manager, or official who is found to have committed the assault may appeal to the Appeals Committee by following the procedures of Federation Bylaw 705 within ten (10) days from receipt of the decision of the State Association.

(B) Abuse

A player, coach, manager, or official who is found to have committed the abuse may appeal to the Appeals Committee by following the procedures of Federation Bylaw 705 within ten (10) days from receipt of the decision of the State Association.

Section 7. Procedure for Reporting Assault and Abuse

(A) Procedures for reporting of referee assault and/or abuse shall be developed and disseminated by the US Soccer Referee Committee to all Federation registered referees.

(B) Referees shall transmit a written report of the alleged assault or abuse, or both, within 48 hours of the incident (unless there is a valid reason for later reporting) to the designee of the State Association and the State Referee Administrator. For tournaments or special events, the referee shall transmit a written report to the tournament director on the day of the incident and to his home state SRA within 10 days of the incident.

Policy 531-10 - Misconduct of Game Officials (Former Rule 3042)

Section 1. Terms and References

(A) “Game Officials” includes the following:

(1) all currently registered USSF referees, assistant referees, 4th officials or others appointed to assist in officiating in a match.

(2) any non-licensed, non-registered person serving in an emergency capacity as a referee (under Policy 531-8).

(3) any club assistant referee.

(4) any referee development program person performing any official function at a match.

(B) “Referee Development Program Person” includes any referee, referee administrator,

referee assessor, referee instructor, referee assignor, or other person serving in such capacity in a line or supervisory position, including members of any referee committee appointed by the Federation, its Divisions, Affiliates or Associates, a State Association, or a competition, tournament or other appropriate authority.

(C) “Hearing” means a meeting of at least five members, one of which is designated or elected to serve as Chairman. The Chairman of a hearing shall not vote except to break a tie vote. Such members, including the Chairman, shall not be the State Referee Administrator, the State Director of Referee Instruction, the State Director of Referee Assessment, a Federation National or FIFA Referee, or any other member of the State Referee Administration.

(D) “State Association” shall be that State Association through which the game official is registered or referee development is appointed. Where a state has both Amateur and Youth State Associations, the reference shall mean that State Association which has legal authority within its state to administer the registration of the referee or the appointment of the referee development program person charged.

Section 2. Procedures

(A) Misconduct at a Match

When any game official is accused of having committed misconduct toward another game official, participant, or spectator at a match, or of having a conflict of interest, the original jurisdiction to adjudicate the matter shall vest immediately in the State Association or Organization Member through which the accused game official is registered. In the situation where Amateur and Youth State Associations exist in a state, and the incident of alleged misconduct occurred at a match sanctioned by one State Association, jurisdiction shall vest with the State Association sanctioning the match in question.

(B) Misconduct Away From a Match

When any game official, referee, referee assistant or referee development program person is accused of unethical conduct, misuse or abuse of authority or conflict of interest in any matter in the pursuit of or may affect the individual's official dealings within and as authorized by the Federation, its Divisions, Affiliates or Associates, a State Associations or Organization Member, or a competition, tournament or other appropriate authority, the matter shall vest immediately in the State Association through which the accused game official is registered or through which the referee development program person is appointed.

(C) Any allegation of misconduct or of conflict of interest by a game official as described by subsection (A) of this section, or of unethical conduct, misuse or abuse of authority or conflict of interest as described by subsection (B) of this section, shall be made in writing to the State Referee Administrator or to the State Association(s) or Organization Member that shall report all such allegations including any allegations against the State Referee Administrator, to the State Association(s) or Organization Members through which the accused game official is registered or through which the accused referee development program person is appointed.

(D) Upon receipt by the appropriate Organization Member of a verified written complaint, a hearing shall be conducted within 30 days from verification pursuant to guidelines established by the Organization Member having jurisdiction as provided by subsection (A) or (B) of this section. The hearings and appeal process within the Organization Member shall provide for adequate due process for the accused person including proper notice of charges, the right to bring witnesses in defense, and the right to confront and to cross-examine the accusers.

(E) The Chairman of the hearing committee shall transmit the findings of the committee in writing to all parties concerned including the accused and the accusers and to the State Association(s) or Organization Member within seven days of the hearing.

(F) Any party subject to penalties shall receive, at the time of notification of the decision, a notice of the rights of appeal and a copy of the procedures and deadline dates required for such an appeal to be properly considered. Time for filing an appeal shall start with the date official receipt of the decision by the party making the appeal.

Section 3. Penalties

(A) The severity of the penalty imposed upon an individual shall be determined by the decision-making body having jurisdiction.

(B) Penalties may be among the following:

- (1) letter of reprimand;
- (2) a fine;
- (3) suspension from all active participation in the Federation for a fixed period of time;
- (4) any combination of clauses (1), (2) or (3) of this subsection; and
- (5) dismissal from the Federation.

(C) When deemed appropriate by the decision-making body having jurisdiction, the accused individual may be temporarily suspended from active Federation participation during investigation of the complaints and conducting of any indicating hearings. The temporary suspension shall not exceed ninety (90) days.

(D) Any individual while under suspension may not take part in any activity sponsored by the Federation or its members.

Section 4. Appeals

(A) Any game official who is found guilty of misconduct as defined in this rule may appeal the decision of the hearing committee as follows:

- (1) to a Referee Disciplinary Committee jointly appointed by the Amateur and Youth State Associations.
- (2) to the Federation Appeals Committee as provided under Federation Bylaw 705.

(B) The party appealing the decision of a committee shall have ten (10) days to file the notice of appeal of a decision. Time for filing an appeal shall start with the date of official receipt of the decision by the party making the appeal.

Policy 531-11 - National Referee Development Program

Part I - Referee Program Vision

By the year 2005, the United States Soccer Federation's National Referee Development Program is to become the preeminent worldwide model for referee excellence in officiating, administration, instruction and development at all levels of the game.

Part II - Referee Program Mission

The National Referee Development Program is to be a service organization of integrity dedicated to all referees, whose purpose is to ensure the development of the United States Soccer Referee in terms of quality and quantity through achieving excellence in governance, education and administration. The program shall work in the interests of all its members to serve the game at every level of competition.

Part III - Standards of Conduct

Subpart A - Purpose

To define general guidelines to determine whether members of the National Referee Development Program act within acceptable limits so far as ethical conduct or conflict of interest are reflected in their conduct as soccer officials and members of the United States Soccer Federation.

Subpart B - Policy

Membership as a privilege offered and granted to individuals who perform capably as State Referee Administrators, referees, referee assigners, referee instructors and referee assessors during United States Soccer Federation sanctioned activities. It carries with it an obligation for each individual member to uphold and promote the stated goals and objectives of the Federation and do nothing to bring the Federation into disrepute or work against its goals and objectives. Any conduct which is considered unethical or as a conflict of interest shall be subject to possible disciplinary actions.

Subpart C - Code of Ethics for Referees

- (1) I will always maintain the utmost respect for the game of soccer.
- (2) I will conduct myself honorably at all times and maintain the dignity of my position.
- (3) I will always honor an assignment or any other contractual obligation.
- (4) I will attend training meetings and clinics so as to know the Laws of the Game, their proper interpretation and their application.
- (5) I will always strive to achieve maximum team work with my fellow officials.
- (6) I will be loyal to my fellow officials and never knowingly promote criticism of them.
- (7) I will be in good physical condition.

- (8) I will control the players effectively by being courteous and considerate without sacrificing fairness.
- (9) I will do my utmost to assist my fellow officials to better themselves and their work.
- (10) I will not make statements about any games except to clarify an interpretation of the Laws of the Game.
- (11) I will not discriminate against nor take undue advantage of any individual group on the basis of race, color, religion, sex or national origin.
- (12) I consider it a privilege to be a part of the United States Soccer Federation and my actions will reflect credit upon that organization and its affiliates.

Subpart D - Code of Ethics for Assignors

- (1) I will maintain the utmost respect for referees and other officials of the game and I will conduct myself honorably at all times.
- (2) I will make the assignments based on what is good for the game and what is good for the referee.
- (3) As a member of the United States Soccer Federation, my actions will reflect credit upon the organization.
- (4) I will contribute to the continuous development of referees in the National Referee Development Program.
- (5) I will conduct myself ethically and professionally in the assignment process.
- (6) I will respect the rights and dignity of all the referees and I will not criticize them unless it is in private, constructive, and for their benefit.
- (7) I will offer equal opportunity to all qualify referees and I will not discriminate against or take undue advantage of any individual or group on the basis of race, color, religion, sex or national origin.
- (8) I will cooperate fully in the timely resolution of any grievance hearing or complaint.
- (9) I consider it a privilege to be a part of the United States Soccer Federation and my actions will reflect credit upon that organization or its affiliates.
- (10) I will safeguard the confidentiality of the USSF registered referee list.
- (11) When assigning unaffiliated games, I must notify the referees being assigned that the game is unaffiliated.
- (12) I will not use affiliated game assignments to coerce or convince registered referees to officiate unaffiliated matches.

Bylaw 532. Referee Registration Required

All referees will be registered on Federation referee registration forms through the State Referee Administrator or the Overseas Referee Branch. Certain registration responsibilities may be delegated to a State Association Referee Registrar with the approval of the Referee Committee and the Board of Directors.

Policy 202(1)(H)-2 – Professional League Standards Regarding Misconduct Against Game Officials

Section 1. Misconduct against referees may occur before, during and after a match, including travel to and from a match.

Section 2. All Professional League Members shall adopt and enforce policies prohibiting misconduct against referees that meet the following minimum criteria.

(a) Referee Assault

- (1) Any player, coach, manager, club official, or league official who commits an intentional act of physical violence at or upon a referee (“Referee Assault”) shall be suspended without pay for a period of at least six consecutive matches (the “Assault Suspension”). The Assault Suspension shall commence with the first match after which the individual has been found to have committed this act.
- (2) For purposes of this subparagraph 2(a), “Referee Assault” shall include, but is not limited to: striking, kicking, choking, grabbing or bodily running into a referee; spitting on a referee with ostensible intent to do so; kicking or throwing an object at an official that could inflict injury; or damaging the referee’s uniform or personal property (e.g., car, uniform, or equipment).
- (3) The Professional League Member may not provide for a penalty shorter than the Assault Suspension but may provide for a longer suspension and/or a fine.

(b) Referee Abuse.

- (1) Any player, coach, manager, club official, or league official who threatens through a physical act or verbal statement, either explicitly or implicitly, a referee (“Referee Abuse”) shall be suspended for a period of at least three consecutive matches (the “Abuse Suspension”). The Abuse Suspension shall commence with the first match after which the individual has been found to have committed this act.
- (2) For purposes of this subparagraph 2(b), “Referee Abuse” shall include, but is not limited to: verbal and nonverbal communication which contains foul or abusive language and which implies or directly threatens physical harm; spewing a beverage on or spitting at a referee or the referee’s personal property.
- (3) The Professional League Member may not provide for a penalty shorter than the Abuse Suspension but may provide for a longer suspension and/or a fine.

(c) Referee.

For purposes of this section 2, a “referee” shall include the referee, assistant referees, and fourth official.

- (d) Match. For purposes of the Assault Suspension and the Abuse Suspension, a “match” shall mean any official match of that individual’s team in the Professional League Member for which there is paid attendance, i.e., regular season, playoff, officially sanctioned cups and tournaments, and international games played in the United States.

Section (3). This policy shall apply only to players, coaches, managers, club officials, or league officials while participating in professional League Member activities. The Assault Suspension and abuse Suspension (the “Suspension”) shall preclude the suspended individual from participating in any soccer competition until the suspension has expired.

United States Soccer Federation Referee Grades

To provide uniform standards for soccer referees in the United States, the US Soccer Referee Committee has adopted the following referee grades. These grades supersede all grades that may have been adopted by state associations and leagues so that uniform and comparative grading exists throughout the United States.

12 - United States Soccer Federation Assistant Referee

- A. Minimum Age: 18
- B. Badge: USSF Assistant Referee, with current year
- C. Authorized Assignment Level: Assistant Referee on all adult and youth games

9 - United States Soccer Federation Recreational Referee

- A. Minimum Age: None
- B. Badge: USSF Recreational Referee, with current year
- C. Authorized Assignment Level: Referee on recreational youth games under-14 and younger only and assistant referee on any game U-14 or below

8 - United States Soccer Federation Referee

- A. Minimum Age: None
- B. Badge: USSF Referee, with current year
- C. Recommended Assignment Level: All youth games, assistant referee in comparable games

7 - United States Soccer Federation Referee

- A. Minimum Age: 17
- B. Badge: USSF Referee, with current year
- C. Recommended Assignment Level: All youth games and mixed leagues, assistant referee in all adult games below the top division.

6 - United States Soccer Federation State Referee

- A. Minimum Age: 18
- B. Badge: USSF State Referee, with current year
- C. Recommended Assignment Level: All youth games and adult amateur games through second division and assistant referee in the top adult division and Amateur Cup games.

5 - United States Soccer Federation State Referee

- A. Minimum Age: 19
- B. Badge: USSF State Referee, with current year
- C. Recommended Assignment Level: All youth games and adult games including first division and assistant referee in professional league and international cup games.

4 - United States Soccer Federation National Referee

- A. Minimum Age: 23
- B. Badge: USSF National Referee, with current year
- C. Recommended Assignment Level: All games except formal FIFA international matches; assistant referee for international matches
- D. U. S. Citizen or Permanent Resident

3 - United States Soccer Federation National Referee

- A. Minimum Age: 23
- B. Badges: USSF National Referee, with current year
- C. Recommended Assignment Level: All games except formal FIFA international matches.
- D. U. S. Citizen or Permanent Resident,
- E. By invitation of US Soccer

2 - United States Soccer Federation International Assistant Referee

- A. Minimum Age: 23
- B. Badge: FIFA Assistant Referee, with current year, on international matches*
- C. Recommended Assignment Level: All games
- D. U. S. Citizen
- E. By nomination by US Soccer

1 - United States Soccer Federation International Referee

- A. Minimum Age: 25
- B. Badge: FIFA, with current year
- C. Recommended Assignment Level: All games
- D. U.S. Citizen
- E. By nomination by US Soccer

The United States Soccer Federation grade and title of an official will be determined solely by the standards and examinations issued by the US Soccer Referee Committee and the United States Soccer Federation Board of Directors. Annual re-examination is required.

A referee must officiate at the next - higher level to accumulate experience to be certified competent at that level. Assignors must exercise care to increase the difficulty level of the game assignments in a gradual and orderly manner for the good of the official and of the players.

*International Assistant Referees must wear USSF National Referee badge when assigned as referee in all matches.

(Revised 04/04)

Criteria for Certifying Assistant Referee and Recreational Referee

| Criteria | Assistant Referee Grade 12 | Associate Referee Grade 11 |
|---|--|---|
| 1. Minimum age | 18 years minimum | None |
| 2. Experience (minimum cumulative career outdoor games at designated level) | Must have played at least three years of adult, college or competitive youth soccer, or officiated at least three years as USSF grades 9 or 10 | Not Applicable |
| a. Game level to be counted for advancement | Not applicable | Not Applicable |
| b. Time in present grade | Not applicable | Not Applicable |
| 3. Training course requirements | Successfully complete the 7.5 hour USSF Assistant Referee Training Course | Successfully complete 8 hour USSF Recreational Referee Training Course |
| 4. Written Examination (See Note B) | 75% minimum score on USSF Associate Referee Exam | 75% minimum score on USSF Recreational Referee Exam |
| 5. Field Evaluation by currently registered USSF Assessor | Not required. It is recommended that each new referee be observed in one of his first 10 games. | Not required. It is recommended that each new referee be observed in one of his first 10 games. |
| 6. Physical Fitness Test | Not required | Not Required |

Annual Renewal Requirements

| | | |
|-----------------------|--|---|
| In-Service Training | Five hours during the preceding 12 months | Four hours during the preceding 12 months |
| Refresher Exam | Passing Score Required See No. 4, above | Required |
| Physical Fitness Test | Not required | Not required |

Criteria for Certifying and Upgrading Referee

| Criteria | Referee Grade 8 | Referee Grade 7 |
|--|---|---|
| 1. Minimum age | None | 17 |
| 2. Experience (minimum cumulative career affiliated outdoor games at designated level) | Not applicable | Referee: 75 Assistant Referee: 25 |
| a. Game level to be counted for advancement | Not applicable | U.S. Soccer Federation Games |
| b. Time in present grade | Not applicable | 12 months as Referee Class 2 |
| 3. Training course requirements | Successfully complete USSF Referee Training Course 9 or the Referee Bridge Course to upgrade from 9 to 8) | 5 hours of USSF Intermediate Level Training |
| 4. Written Examination (See Note B) | 75% minimum score on USSF Referee Exam | 85% minimum score on USSF Referee Exam |
| 5. Field Evaluation by currently registered USSF Assessor | Not required. It is recommended that new referees be observed in one of their first 10 games | Pass one evaluation as referee in an affiliated Under-17 or higher level game employing the DSC |
| 6. Physical Fitness Test | Not required | Required (with passing score-see P.25) |

Annual Renewal Requirements

| | | |
|-----------------------|---|--|
| In-Service Training | Five hours during the preceding 12 months | Five hours during the preceding 12 months |
| Refresher Exam | Passing Score Required | Passing Score Required |
| Field Evaluation | Not required | 1 developmental assessment, at any level designated by the state (U-17 or higher recommended), <i>if adopted by state</i> |
| Physical Fitness Test | Not required | Required (with passing score) |

Criteria for Certifying and Upgrading State Referee

| Criteria | State Referee Grade 6 | State Referee Grade 5 |
|--|--|--|
| 1. Minimum age | 18 | 19 |
| 2. Experience (minimum cumulative career affiliated outdoor games at designated level) | Referee: 100 Assistant Referee: 25 | Referee: 150 Assistant Referee: 50 |
| a. Game level to be counted for advancement | Under-19 Competitive leagues or higher level | Of the 150 games a minimum of 50 must be on adult Division 1 league games |
| b. Time in present grade | 12 months as Referee Grade 7 prior to application | 12 months as State Grade 6 prior to application |
| 3. Training course requirements | 19 hours of State Referee Training | 7 hours of In-Service State Referee Training |
| 4. Written Examination (See Note C) | 75% minimum score on USSF State Referee Exam | 85% minimum score on USSF State Referee Exam |
| 5. Field Evaluation by currently registered USSF Assessor (See Note D) | Pass two field assessments as referee (one must be on Div. 2 adult or higher) and one as assistant referee in Under-19 competitive league or higher. | Pass two field assessments as referee and one as assistant referee in affiliated top adult Division 1 leagues or higher. |
| 6. Physical Fitness Test | Required (with passing score-see P. 25) | Required (with passing score) |

Annual Renewal Requirements

| | | |
|-------------------------------|---|---|
| In-Service Training | Five hours during the preceding 12 months | Five hours during the preceding 12 months |
| Refresher Exam | Passing grade of 75% required | Passing grade of 85% required |
| Field Assessment (See Note D) | One assessment as a referee at Div. 2 adult match or higher | One assessment as referee required. |
| Physical Fitness Test | Required (with passing score) | Required (with passing score) |

Criteria for Certifying and Upgrading National Referee

| Criteria | National Referee Grade 4 | National Referee Grade 3 |
|--|--|---|
| 1. Minimum age | 23 | 23 |
| 2. Experience (minimum cumulative career outdoor games at designated level) (See Note F) | Referee: 150 (50 must be affiliated Div. 1 adult or higher; 5 must be professional games) Assistant Referee: 100 (5 must be professional games. | Same as for grade 4. See Note number 1. |
| a. Game level to be counted for advancement | Affiliated Adult League or higher | Same as for grade 4. See Note number 1. |
| b. Time in present grade (See Note G) | 2 years as Grade 5 prior to application date. Foreign-trained referees must have been a US Soccer Referee for a minimum of one year. | Same as for grade 4. See Note number 1. |
| 3. Training course requirements | Attend and successfully complete the National Referee Certification Session. | Same as for grade 4. See Note number 1. |
| 4. Written Examination | Must pass a special National Referee Examination. | Same as for grade 4. |
| 5. Field Evaluation (See Notes D, E, F, G,I) | Pass 3 field assessments as referee and 2 as assistant referee. 2 of the assessments as referee and 1 as assistant referee must be on a professional game ¹ | As required for renewal; see notes. |
| 6. Physical Fitness Test | Physical Fitness Test successfully completed as per grade standards (page 25) | Physical Fitness Test successfully completed as per grade standards (page 25) |
| 7. Citizenship | U.S. Citizen or Permanent Resident | U.S. Citizen or Permanent Resident |

¹ FIFA Referees, FIFA Assistant Referees and national Referees working a minimum of 5 Division 1 Professional league games should see note 1.

Criteria for Certifying and Upgrading National Referee (Cont.)

Annual Renewal Requirements

| Criteria | National Referee Grade 4 | National Referee Grade 3 |
|---|---|--------------------------|
| Training | Attend and successfully complete the National Referee Certification Session. | |
| Written Exam | Pass National Referee Exam | |
| Physical Fitness Test | Annual Physical Fitness Test required (passing score required) | |
| Field Assessment (See Notes E, F, G) | Pass two (2) field assessments as referee (one on professional game) and one (1) as assistant referee on professional game. | |

Notes and Comments

Note 1. Grade 3 referees must meet all published criteria and be recommended for grade level by the U.S. Soccer Referee Technical Committee. Grade 3 designation will be based on game assignment level and field evaluations. Certification and re-certification for grade 3 can only come through the technical committee.

Note A, Registration and Upgrading: Registration, annual renewal and requests for upgrading must be made through the appropriate State Referee Administrator. Referees who have registered as grade 8 or higher may not re-register as grade 9.

Note B, Retaking Exams (grades 9, 8, 7): If a person does not pass the written examination, the entire examination must be retaken after a minimum waiting period of one month.

Note C, Retaking Exams (grades 6, 5): If a person does not pass the written examination, the entire examination must be retaken after a minimum waiting period of three months.

Note D, Assessments: For all referees **seeking an upgrade to the next referee level**, the assessments, if required for upgrade, should be completed within a twelve-month time period. No more than two failing assessments can occur within that time period. If a candidate for upgrade fails two assessments in that 12-month period, the referee must start the upgrade procedure over for the next registration cycle, starting with zero assessments.

*For **annual maintenance** assessments for **State and National** referees: Assessments for National Referee must be by a currently registered USSF National Assessor or an assessor approved by the Director of Assessment and the national office. They must be on games approved by the Referee Committee and played within the dates specified (Dec 1-November 30). The minimum acceptable score is 80. (See note J for additional information.)

The first failure will require only one additional passing assessment (1 for 1). For the second, and any additional failures, the two for one criteria applies. (i.e. two passing assessments needed to offset the failed assessment). Make up assessments must be on the same level game, or higher, as the failed assessment.

National Referee candidates must get their upgrade assessments in the December 1-November 30 time period in the year prior to National camp attendance.

Note F, Declaration: State Referees who wish to be assigned to professional games to receive assessments for upgrade to National Referee must complete the appropriate “New Candidate Declaration” form and submit it to the SRA. The SRA will forward the application to the National Office. Forms are accepted between December 1 and December 31 of the year prior to the year the referee will be a candidate. National Referee Candidates must attend a regional professional clinic and pass the physical fitness test to be eligible to receive assignments to professional games.

Note G, Professional Games: The Referee Committee may approve other games to count toward the requirement for professional games. Approved games are listed on the referee web page: www.ussoccer.com

Note H, Fast Track: Candidates for upgrading to National Referee must be acceptable to the US Soccer Referee Committee. Requirements other than age, game level, professional game counts and assessments may be waived at the discretion of the US Soccer Referee Committee.

Note I, Assessment requirements for FIFA Referees: Three (3) Professional League Division 1 matches as a referee.

Assessment requirements for FIFA Assistant Referees: Three (3) Professional League Division 1 matches as an Assistant Referee.

Note J, Assessment requirements For National Referees working a minimum of five (5) Division 1 Professional League matches as a Referee: Two (2) assessments as a Referee on professional league matches and one (1) assessment as an Assistant Referee on an amateur division 1 (or higher) game. You will be asked to list these assessments on your National Camp application.

Assessment requirements For National Referees working a minimum of five (5) Division 1 Professional League matches as an Assistant Referee: Two (2) assessments as an Assistant Referee on professional league matches and one (1) assessment as a Referee on an amateur division 1 (or higher) game. You will be asked to list these assessments on your National Camp application.

All other grade 3 and 4 referees: See chart on page 23.

Physical Fitness Test

A physical fitness test is required for registration, annual renewal and upgrading for the referee classes shown. The test can be administered by designated United States Soccer Federation Instructors. A document signed by the individual conducting the test is required. Fitness tests must be taken within a six-month period preceding the start of a new season or the date of registration.

The referee must pass all of the events that are part of the test at the same testing session. A reasonable rest period should be allowed between events. The procedure is to run the Endurance Test first.

PHYSICAL FITNESS TEST, REQUIREMENTS

| | Age | Referee Grade 7 | State Referee Grades 5 & 6 |
|---|--------------------------------|---|---|
| Endurance (12 minute run- meters) | Under 38 38 – 45 Over 45 | 2200 meters 2000 meters 1800 meters | 2400 meters 2200 meters 2000 meters |
| Speed Test 50 meter dash (run - once) | Under 46 Over 45 | 9.0 seconds 9.5 seconds | 9.0 seconds 9.0 seconds |
| 200 meter dash (run – once) | All Ages | 40.0 seconds | 40.0 seconds |

| | NATIONAL REFEREES | REFEREES WORKING DIV. 1 AND DIV. 2 PRO LEAGUE MATCHES |
|--|------------------------------|--|
| Endurance (12 minute run-meters) | 2400 meters | 2700 meters |
| Speed Test 50 meter dash (run – twice) | 9.0 seconds 9.0 seconds | 7.5 seconds 7.5 seconds |
| 200 meter dash (run – twice) | 35.0 seconds 35.0 seconds | 32.0 seconds 32.0 seconds |

Effective: Sept. 1, 2002; Adopted: NRC 9/9/2000

Certification of National Referees

Certification of National Referees can be done only in accordance with the qualification criteria determined by the US Soccer Referee Committee. The program is intended to give each experienced referee a fair opportunity to qualify as a National Referee.

Only registered United States Soccer Federation referees meeting the requirements specified in the “Criteria for Certifying and Upgrading National Referees”, or identified “Fast Track Referee“ Candidates, are eligible to attend the National Referees Certification Session. National Referee Certification Sessions (national camps) are conducted annually and attendance is by invitation only.

The State Referee Administrator must certify, by signature, the information on the National Referee Application and Composite Record Sheet. The national office verifies credentials of foreign trained referees, however, all national referees must meet U.S. Soccer requirements for National Certification, including residency requirements. In case of a dispute, appeals of game count and grade level must be made to the National Office. The candidate will submit the application to the designated authority by the date specified in the original announcement. No referee will be tested unless the proper paperwork has been completed and submitted, in advance. A check or bank money order, covering the non-refundable application fee (made payable to the United States Soccer Federation) must accompany the form. Referees completing the requirements for National Referee the first time must also pay the prevailing registration fee for upgrading to National Referee through the State Referee Administrator (if applicable).

It is the SRA’s responsibility to give the US Soccer Referee Committee any additional administrative information they feel is pertinent to the referee’s qualifications to become a national referee. This should be done by a cover letter sent in with the referee’s application, with a copy sent to the referee.

Assessments (see “Criteria for Certifying and Upgrading National Referees” for requirements) must be listed on the application.

Candidates for certification/recertification as a national referee must take and pass the complete fitness test at the national camp. Referees who are not able to take the test because of injury or illness, those who do not complete the test, and those who fail the test will be given an opportunity to be retested at later date and place set by the National Referee Office. National referees or candidates who do not pass the complete fitness test for any reason at the national camp shall be responsible for their costs to the national camp as well as all the expenses incurred in attending the make-up fitness testing session.

Candidates successfully completing the fitness test and the written exams will be certified as national referees at the end of the National Referee Certification/Recertification Session.

National Referee Candidates: All referees seeking to upgrade to the National level must do the following:

- 1) Must be U.S. Citizen or Permanent Resident
- 2) Announce candidacy by obtaining the required declaration form. Submit the form that has been completed and endorsed by the SRA to the national office by the specified deadline (December 1- 31 of the year prior to being accepted as a National Referee Candidate).
- 3) Attend any required clinics specified by the national office and take the physical fitness test.
- 4) Fulfill the assessment requirements within the designated time frame.
- 5) These requirements must be completed at the specified time.

Fast Track Candidates: For information about Fast Track, see note H on page 27.

Note: At the discretion of the National Office, other referees may be invited to the National Camp. These officials will participate in all camp activities; however, they will not advance to National Referee grade status during that year.

Recertification: National Referees must be re-certified each year. At this time, a refresher examination must be taken and passed. If a National Referee is not re-certified during a given year, the official will no longer be entitled to wear the National Referee badge and must be re-certified by the official's State Association at the next appropriate grade.

Requirements for Assessments for International Referees are at the discretion of the US Soccer Referee Committee.

Age deadline: National Referee Candidates attending the National Referee Testing Session must be age 23 before January 1 of the year they will be attending the National Camp.

Recertification of National Referees with Extended Disabilities

A National Referee who suffers from an extended disability preventing participation in the physical fitness test at either the national camp or at the make-up session must have this certified in writing by a physician. The referee will then be given a one-year waiver for disability and will be allowed to register as a national referee for that year. Referees who request a waiver from the physical fitness test will be responsible for all camp costs.

A referee who receives a waiver will not be given any assignments by US Soccer until recertification is completed the following year.

(Note: This policy does not apply to National Referee Candidates.)

(Revised by the NRC 9/28/98)

Referee Emeritus

The purpose of the emeritus grade is to retire from the highest level the referee has attained. It may not be used to circumvent the testing and registration procedures of the federation.

The emeritus grade allows a National, or State Referee the option of retiring from those levels of officiating while retaining that grade and continuing to referee at a lower level.

To become an emeritus referee, the official must submit a personal letter of intent to the State Referee Administrator who will initiate the appropriate paperwork. The referee must have held the grade for a minimum of three years prior to the request.

Active emeritus referees must qualify each year for the level that they will be officiating and pay the published fees for that level. Emeritus Referees will receive an Emeritus Referee Badge, a card, law book and all general mailings.

An Emeritus Referee may reinstate as an active referee at the level the official retired from once all the criteria has been met.

Honorary Grade

A referee who retires from officiating completely may retain the highest grade attained as an honorary grade.

To become an honorary grade referee, the official must submit a personal letter of intent to the State Referee Administrator who will initiate the appropriate paper work.

State Referee Administrators shall note in the comment section of the official's registration form (Administrative use only) that the official requests certification as an honorary grade.

Honorary grade referees will not receive a patch, but will receive a card, law book and other materials sent with the annual registration packet.

There are no time in grade requirements to be eligible for this grade.

Honorary referees are no longer certified to officiate in any match.

Referee Registration Instructions

1. How and where to register

A. *Registration through State Referee Administrator*

For a referee to be registered in a state, referees must reside, work, or do their primary refereeing in that state. The controlling factor is the area where referees do their primary refereeing.

B. *Registration for referees temporarily out of the country*

For US Soccer referees to be registered in the Overseas Branch, they must reside, work or do their primary refereeing outside the United States of America. Referees qualifying for this registration must be U.S. Citizens or permanent residents temporarily living outside of the U.S.

2. Annual registration requirements

In order to be registered at their current grade level all Referees and State Referees must: (a) Complete the required number of hours of in-service training, take their respective current Referee Refresher written examination; (b) Pass the physical fitness test (Referees Grade 8 & 9 excluded); and (c) Referee the number of affiliated games required by the state association each year at their highest level of competency as provided for in Policy 531-8, Section 5 (A). In order to be registered, in such grade, all National and International Referees must successfully complete the annual National Referee Certification/Recertification session (see Certification of National Referees).

3. When referees are considered registered

International, National Referees and National Referee Candidates are considered registered when the National office has received and accepted their completed registration form from the State Referee Administrator.

Other State level referees and below are considered registered when the State Referee Administrator or State Youth Referee Administrator or (referees in the Overseas Referee Branch send their forms directly to US Soccer) has received and accepted their completed registration form.

If the National Office does not receive a registration form for a referee in that registration year, the registration becomes null and void even if the form was turned in to the State Referee Administrator.

4. Registration deadline

All National Referees, National Referee Candidates and International Referees must be registered by December 15th in the year preceding the year for which the referee is registering. All re-certifying referees must be registered before they begin officiating games in a calendar year.

5. Qualification for referee grades

A. *Proper Qualification*

Before being registered at a particular grade, the referee must be properly qualified at that grade according to the certification criteria published by the US Soccer Referee Committee.

B. *Date Attained Present Grade*

The “date attained present grade” is the date accepted by the State Referee Administrator as the date that a referee has successfully met all the

requirements for a specific grade. For example, the date of grade for a Referee Grade 8 is the date that the referee successfully passes the written test. This date must be noted on the registration form. Where a date is not noted, the date the form was received in our office will be the default date.

The attained present grade date for all National and International referees is the date that the referee successfully completes the National Referee Certification session.

C. *Upgrading*

In order for a referee to be upgraded, the referee must have met the time in grade requirement stated in the “Criteria for Certifying and Upgrading” (12 months to upgrade to grades 7, 6 and 5; two years to upgrade to National Referee).

There is no time in grade requirement for Recreational Referees, Grade 9. Recreational Referees may upgrade to 8 after successfully completing the Referee Bridge Course or the Entry Level Referee Training Course.

Referees who have registered as grade 8 (Referee Class 2) or higher may not re-register as a Recreational Referee, Grade 9 or an Assistant Referee, Grade 12.

Upgrading to the Next Level

- 1. Referees, Assessors or Instructors who have met all the requirements for upgrading to the next level can be upgraded at the next registration cycle by marking the pre-printed registration form “UPGRADE” in the box on the bottom right. The new grade should be marked in two areas, the grade box in Section A, in the upper portion of the form, and the bottom right corner, where Administrators sign the form. The form and fee will be submitted in the usual manner, with other forms the state is submitting.**

- 2. If the referee meets the criteria to be upgraded before the next registration cycle, the SRA must send an “Administrative Upgrade” request in writing (this can be a short letter - a new form does not need to be submitted), with the following information:**
 - **The referee’s name, address and ID number**
 - **The date that the referee attained the new grade**
 - **The correct fee. The Administrative Upgrade fee is \$5 or the difference between the two grades, which ever is higher. For example, if a referee is upgrading from 8 to 7, the fee due is \$5. If the referee is upgrading from 7 to 6, the fee is \$15 (the difference between the grade 7 registration fee and the grade 6 registration fee), with 50% going to US Soccer and 50% remaining with the state referee committee. To cover the cost of the new registration card packet, when the upgrade fee is \$5 or less, the full fee will come to US Soccer.**
 - **Grade changes for Recreational Referees who take the referee bridge course or the entry level training course after they have already been registered for the year should be handled as per section one or two above.**

Note: When upgrading Assessors and Instructors to Grade 6, regardless of whether you submit a registration form or an Administrative Upgrade, always include the date, location and lead instructor of the state course the applicant completed.

D. Downgrading of a Referee

A referee may be downgraded if the referee fails to meet any of the criteria for that grade. A referee can only be registered at the level where the criteria of a particular grade are met. If referees are downgraded, they do not have to spend a year in the lower grade. Referees may be upgraded when they have met the standard for that grade.

E. Change of Address Policy

It is the responsibility of the official to notify the national office of an address change immediately. Address changes must be in the national office before May 15 of each year to insure delivery of the registration renewal packet to the new or corrected address.

If a referee does not receive a badge and card, and has moved since the registration was processed, the badge and card may have been mailed to the former address. Referees should ask their State Referee Administrator to check the status of their registration with the national office. A five (\$5) dollar service charge must accompany each request for a second badge/card mailing if there has been a change of address.

6. Referees not registered in the previous year

Any referee who was not registered with the U.S. Soccer Federation the previous year may be certified at the grade previously held after taking and passing the written qualifying examination, fitness test, and assessments. The following policy applies to referees who were previously certified and registered with the Federation:

1. Grade 8 referees who miss 1-2 consecutive years of registration can be re-registered as a grade 8 after completing a Referee Re-certification clinic.
2. Grade 8 referees who miss 3-4 consecutive years of registration can be re-registered after taking the Referee Bridge (Grade 9 to Grade 8) Course or the entire Entry Level Referee Training Course.
3. Grade 8 referees who miss 5 or more consecutive years must re-take the entire Entry Level Referee Training Course.
4. Grade 7 Referees and Higher - Referees can only be registered at the grade they qualify for. Referees who were Grade 7 or higher should be downgraded a minimum of one (1) grade, as per current policy (as long as they have met the criteria for that grade). Once they retake the appropriate course as listed above for grade 8 referees and have completed all the requirements for the previously held grade, they may be upgraded.
5. Grade 9 Referees who miss one or two years of registration may be re-certified after fulfilling all re-certification requirements for that grade. A Grade 9 Referee who misses two years of registration can be eligible to take the Bridge Course (9-8) after he or she has met the requirements to be re-certified as Grade 9.
6. US Soccer Federation Referee Instructors who wish to re-certify as a referee after a lapse in referee registration may be registered as a grade 8 referee upon meeting current re-certification requirements, no matter how long it has been since they last registered as a referee, if they are currently registered as a US Soccer instructor and have taught, at a minimum, one entry-level referee training course in the last two years.

Referees are registered annually, for the period January 1 to December 30. Current year Referee, Assignor, Instructor, and Assessor registration forms are accepted by the National Office from September 01 of the previous year to June 30 of the current year (10 months). Referees who did not have the opportunity to re-register during the prescribed current year registration period may register for the following year without penalty. (e.g. A referee last registered in 2002 may take a 2004 re-certification course in August 2003 without having to pay a 2003 registration fee.) HOWEVER, re-certifying referees who wait until after June 30 to re-register should not be added to assignment lists until the following January 1. (e.g. A referee last registered in 2002 may take a 2004 re-certification course in August 2003 but shall not be assigned until January 01, 2004.)

7. Unauthorized disclosure of a list of registered referees

State Referee Administrators may furnish lists of referees only to state associations, assignors, affiliated leagues or tournaments for conducting their soccer related activities. These lists may not be made available to anyone else (including soccer related businesses) for a fee or free of charge. If lists are made they must not include the referee's social security number.

8. Referee Packets

Every referee registered is entitled to receive a registration card and badge from the National office upon completing registration requirements. Distribution of badges may vary from place to place. Check with your State Referee Administrator to find out how badges are distributed in your area.

Every referee will also receive a copy of the Laws of the Game from the U.S. Soccer Federation. Distribution of the Laws of the Game to re-certifying referees may vary from state to state. As above, more information can be obtained through your state. All new certified referees will receive a copy of the Laws of the Game from their state association. An English copy will be sent, however, Spanish editions can be ordered through the U.S. Soccer Federation office.

Lifetime Membership

The Referee Committee of the United States Soccer Federation recognizes those referees who have distinguished themselves through long-time, unselfish contribution to soccer officiating in the United States.

Criteria:

Referees who have reached the age of 60 or older and meet any of the following criteria are eligible for lifetime membership, provided they displayed a thorough dedication to the referee program.

- A. Their activity as referee, instructor, assessor or referee administrator must span over at least twenty-five years.
- B. All recipients of the Eddie Pearson or Bill Scofield awards.
- C. All referees who are recipients of the U. S. Soccer Federation Hall of Fame Meritorious Service Award, if the award was received for their contribution to the referee program.
- D. All former FIFA Referees and FIFA Assistant Referees who retired from the FIFA list solely due to age eligibility.

Nominations:

- A. Each state association, state referee committee, or state referee administrator may recommend any candidate based on any of the criteria.
- B. Any member of the US Soccer Referee Committee may recommend any candidate based on any of the criteria.

Screening:

- A. The National Referee Office will be responsible for verifying that the candidate meets the requirements stated in the recommendation.

Award:

The award is a certificate that signifies their dedication to the program over the years. The recipients are entitled to free registration for all programs (referee, instructor, assessor, etc.) in which they actively participate.

**Standards of Dress and Appearance
Official United States Soccer Federation
Referee Uniform**

BLACK COLLAR

GOLD SHIRT with black pinstripes
(long or short sleeve)

ONE BADGE ONLY:
UNITED STATES SOCCER FEDERATION
– WITH CURRENT YEAR (Securely fastened
to shirt over left chest. The badge should be for
the highest grade for which the referee is
currently qualified)

BLACK CUFF
(on long sleeve shirt only)
(no cuffs on short sleeves)

BLACK SHORTS: Bottom edge of shorts not
less than 3 nor more than 7 inches above the top
of the knee-cap.

BLACK SOCKS with Federation referee crest
or three stripe white top

BLACK SHOES (may have white
manufacturers design) with black laces



Alternate Referee Uniforms

The following three shirts have been approved by the federation as alternates that can be worn in case of color conflict. There is no order of preference among the alternate jerseys. The other parts of the referee uniform (shorts, socks, shoes) do not change if the referee wears an alternate shirt.

BLACK SHIRT with white pinstripes, **BLACK COLLAR**, and **BLACK CUFFS** (on long sleeve shirts only).

RED SHIRT with black pinstripes, **BLACK COLLAR**, and **BLACK CUFFS** (on long sleeve shirts only).

BLUE SHIRT with black pinstripes, **BLACK COLLAR**, and **BLACK CUFFS** (on long sleeve shirts only).

Standards of Dress and Appearance for Off the Field Duties of Referees, Instructors and Assessors

As referees, instructors or assessors, you represent the United States Soccer Federation. The first impression of the organization is the one that you provide, either on or off the field. Is the referee program of the Federation administered by competent professionals, or is it the casual product of poorly trained amateurs?

Therefore, the following standards of dress and appearance are intended for referees traveling to and from a match, for the referee instructor while teaching any course or clinic, and for the referee assessor while evaluating or assessing a referee performance:

1. Always acceptable for men: Navy blue blazer and gray slacks with Federation tie or emblem; for women, two piece suit or equivalent; black shoes. (Required for professional, National or International level matches.)
2. Also approved for referees traveling to and from assignments, excluding professional matches, are neatly pressed slacks, skirt or dress slacks for women, and a short or long sleeved knit shirt with Federation logo.
3. Always acceptable, especially while observing a match or demonstration or teaching on the field: Well kept warm up suit with Federation emblem, sports shirt with Federation logo.
4. Acceptable, especially while evaluating or assessing the performance of a referee: A neat and clean appearance with appropriate dress that does not call attention to oneself.
5. Acceptable, especially in summer: Slacks or well kept warmup suit bottoms, sports shirt with Federation logo.

Ethics and Grievance Procedure for Referees, Administrators, Assignors, Instructors and Assessors

Grievances against a referee, administrator, assignor, instructor or assessor for unethical conduct, misuse or abuse of authority or conflict of interest is not covered by a separate policy. It is covered under the policies of the Federation, the Policy 531-10 (See page 9). Please refer to that policy in this book in the section titled "United States Soccer Federation Rules Pertaining to Referees."

Policy:

Systems of Officiating Outdoor Soccer Games

The Laws of the Game recognize only one system for officiating soccer games, namely the diagonal system of control (DSC), consisting of three officials - one referee and two assistant referees. All national competitions sponsored by the U.S. Soccer Federation require the use of this officiating system. (Certain competitions will use a 4th Official.)

In order to comply with the Laws of the Game which have been adopted by the National Council of US Soccer, all soccer games sanctioned directly or indirectly by member organizations of the U. S. Soccer Federation must employ the diagonal system. As a matter of policy, the US Soccer Referee Committee prefers the following alternatives in order of preference:

1. One Federation referee and two Federation referees² as assistant referees (the standard ALL organizations should strive to meet).
2. One Federation referee, one Federation referee as an assistant referee and one club linesman *who is unrelated to either team and not registered as a referee. (Only if there are not enough Federation referees as stated in 1, above).
3. One Federation referee, and two club linesmen* who are unrelated to either team and not registered as referees, acting as club linesmen, (only if there are not enough Federation referees as stated in 1 or 2, above).
4. One Federation referee and two club linesmen* who are not registered Federation referees and who are affiliated with the participating teams, (only if there are not enough Federation referees as stated in 1, 2 or 3, above).

Member organizations and their affiliates should make every effort to assist in recruiting officials so that enough Federation referees will be available to permit use of the diagonal officiating system for ALL their competitions.

² In all cases, the Assistant Referee may be Grade 12 if the game level is appropriate for that assignment.

* Club linesmen (not registered as Federation Referees) are limited to calling in and out of bounds only.

Policy:

Referee's Responsibilities to Affiliated Teams

A person registered with the U.S. Soccer Federation as a referee has the right to participate in referee courses and clinics conducted by the Federation and its affiliates and to be examined and graded from time to time - all for the purpose of assisting referees in improving their officiating skills as well as qualifying them for assignment at a higher level competition. A Federation registered referee also has the responsibility to officiate games among youth, adult and professional teams which are affiliated with U.S. Soccer Federation so that affiliated teams do not have a shortage of qualified officials for their competitions. Recognizing these rights and responsibilities, the US Soccer Referee Committee has adopted the following policies:

1. The primary duty of a Federation registered referee is to officiate games among teams (youth, adult and professional) which are affiliated with the Federation.
2. In order to prevent any referee from taking benefits from the National Program for Referee Development without also assisting affiliated teams in conducting their competitions, the State Referee Administrator has the authority to refuse registration and to refuse participation in Federation sponsored referee development programs to a referee who has previously registered with the Federation if the State Referee Administrator determines that the following conditions exist:
 - A. The referee during the past calendar year has officiated more games for unaffiliated soccer teams than for affiliated soccer teams. (School sponsored games are not to be considered as either affiliated or unaffiliated games for this purpose.)
 - B. The referee has not officiated during the past calendar year the minimum number of games required by the state referee committee to maintain their current grade level, unless written clearance has been received by the referee from the SRA.

Definition of Unaffiliated or Outlaw Soccer Team and/or League

An outlaw team and/or league is a suspended team and/or league in bad standing with the United States Soccer Federation, including its divisions and/or other affiliated organizations.

An unaffiliated team and/or league is a team and/or league that has never been affiliated with the United States Soccer Federation or has left the Federation voluntarily (on its own terms) and was in good standing with the federation and its state association at the time of its departure.

(Adopted 10/01/95)

Policy:

Unaffiliated Games

The US Soccer Referee Committee is concerned about the number of referees officiating unaffiliated matches. While referees cannot be prohibited from working these games, the referee committee requests that all state and local referee administrators strongly discourage referees within their jurisdiction from working these games. Only in doing so will these unaffiliated leagues be encouraged to become affiliated.

Here are some ample reasons why referees should not work these games:

1. No assessments may be accepted from games in unaffiliated leagues.
2. There is no liability insurance coverage when a referee is working in unaffiliated leagues.
3. If the referee is assaulted or should there be any other serious misconduct, there's no assurance any disciplinary body will review and act on it.
4. The referee may not be able to fulfill state referee committee requirements to work a certain level of affiliated games to maintain grade.
5. The referee's U.S. Soccer Federation registration may be denied should the referee refuse to work affiliated games over unaffiliated games.
6. Referees who have worked more unaffiliated games than affiliated games may be refused registration.

NOTE: Interscholastic and intercollegiate competitions are not considered to be affiliated or unaffiliated for the purposes of this policy.

(10-28-88)

Policy:

Referees as Administrative Officers, Conflict of Interest

The United States Soccer Federation Policy 531-1 Section 1, provides that the State Referee Administrator may be a member of the State Board or Executive-Committee, but shall not be the President or Chief Officer of the State Association. Federation Policy 531-6, further provides that a registered referee shall not be eligible as a player in any competition while serving as a game official.

These rules permit referees to be represented on the administrative committee or board of a league or state association, and allow an active referee to be the chief officer of a league. The above restrictions are a minimum and referees should take steps to prevent any appearance of a conflict of interest. Therefore, the US Soccer Referee Committee has adopted the following policy:

An active referee may serve on the administrative committees or board of a league or state association including being the chief officer (except as restricted in USSF Policy 531-1), and may referee in the league or state association while also being a member, but the referees:

- shall disqualify themselves from participating in any disciplinary proceeding in which the subject is a team, player or other person where there is a vested interest,
- shall be recused from participating in any disciplinary proceeding involving a game where they served as a game official.
- should not referee in any match where there is a vested interest.

“Vested interest” is defined as when the referee or a member of the referee’s family (spouse, child or parent) or that person’s team may be affected by the outcome of the proceeding or match.

Policy:

Referees Traveling Out of the State Association

Referees are registered by the U.S. Soccer Federation through the State Referee Administrator and are considered independent contractors. As a matter of courtesy, referees should inform the SRA/SYRA when traveling out of the state association to work games provided that they have met their obligation to the state association.

The US Soccer Referee Committee specifically encourages National referees, International referees and Grade 5 referees who are national referee candidates to have at least one of their required annual assessments conducted outside of the referee's geographical area.

Policy:

Guidelines for Contact With Media

Game Officials should use good judgment, based on the referee Code of Ethics when speaking to the media.

Game Officials should:

1. Not, under any conditions, discuss the politics of the game or the sport.
2. Stick to what you know as it relates directly to your personal experience in the game of soccer.
3. Relate only factual information about a game. Do not discuss judgment calls that were made.
4. Avoid making declarations, which amount to speaking for other people.
5. Represent yourself, your state association and the game in a positive and enthusiastic way.

(Approved by the Referee Committee on August 26, 1995)

Policy:

Game Priority in Referee Appointments

Each registered U.S. Soccer Federation referee is expected to abide by and respect the Code of Ethics and keep all assignments that are accepted. However, there are certain occasions when a referee has duty to the referee program to release a lower level appointment and accept a higher level one in the interest of the U. S. Soccer Federation.

Therefore, the US Soccer Referee Committee declares that the following National and International appointments have precedence or priority over all other matches:

1. All FIFA Appointments
2. All CONCACAF Appointments
3. International A Matches
4. Any U. S. National Team Matches
5. Professional Division 1 League Matches (MLS)
6. Foreign Pro Club vs Foreign Pro Club
7. National Cup Finals (all matches)
8. All Regional Cup Finals
9. Other Professional League Matches (A-League, D3 Pro)
10. National Tournaments (Adult and Youth matches – must be 90 minutes in length)
11. Interstate National Cup Competitions (Adult)
12. National Adult Leagues
13. Intrastate National Cup Competitions (Adult)
14. State Cup Competitions (Adult and Youth matches – must be 90 minutes in length)

No other match (with the exception of the above) has appointment priority or precedence over any other match within the state.

The priority policy does **not** apply:

1. Within 72 hours of the scheduled match time unless an emergency situation exists, or
2. When a substantial financial commitment has been made for the referee appointment (e.g., non-refundable airline tickets).

Referees traveling out of town for a National or International appointment may:

1. Travel a day before and after the day(s) of the match(es), if necessary, and are excused from all other appointments on those days.
2. Not accept any other appointment on the day of the match appointment without permission of the Federation.

Game Priority in Referee Appointments (cont.)

Advice to Referees

1. Referees are responsible to communicate the receipt of a higher priority appointment to their existing assignor as soon as possible.
2. When an assignor refuses to release a referee to the higher priority assignment, then the referee must report this action immediately to the SRA and the National Referee Office.

Advice to Assignors

1. Continue to schedule the most experienced referees to your most difficult weekly matches as always.
2. Identify the highly experienced referees on your assignment roster who are likely to be assigned to a higher priority assignment. Always be prepared to fill these slots on an emergency basis.
3. Insist that the highly experienced referees on your assignment roster keep the lines of communication open about upcoming National and International appointments as far in advance as possible.
4. Cooperate with other assignors on those rare occasions when the priority policy is invoked.
5. Report any abuses of the priority policy to the State Referee Administrator.

Approved Referee Committee 2/1/92, Approved NBOD 4/11/92
(Revised 5/2/98)
(Revised 04/04)

Cross Certification Policy Between AYSO/USSF

Cross-certification is available to referees of AYSO and USSF who have been certified as referees for six months or more and who are not certified with both organizations. All games officiated for AYSO or USSF may be applied toward the certification requirements of either AYSO or USSF. The diagonal system of control is the only recognized system of control.

AYSO Referee Certification Level

Regional Referee (no cross-certification)
 Area Referee to USSF Grade 8
 Section Referee to USSF Grade 8
 National 2 Referee to USSF Grade 7
 National 1 to USSF Referee Grade 7

USSF Referee Certification Level

Grade 9 (no cross-certification)
 Grade 8 to AYSO Regional
 Grade 7 to AYSO Area
 Grade 6 (and above) to AYSO Section

| Requirements for AYSO Referees | Requirements for USSF Referees |
|--|--|
| <p>Fees: Referees cross-certifying from AYSO to USSF need to include a check or money order in the amount of \$25, made payable to their state association, to cover the annual fee for registering as a USSF referee.</p> | <p>Fees: There are no fees associated with cross-certifying from USSF to AYSO. However, to be covered under AYSO's Accident Reimbursement Program (ARP) and receive InPLay, AYSO's quarterly newsletter, all volunteers must complete a Volunteer Registration Form each year.</p> |
| <p>Required Authorizing Signature: National 2 and 1: Section Referee Administrator Area and Section: Area Referee Administrator</p> | <p>Required Authorizing Signature: All levels - State Referee Administrator</p> |
| <p>Return form and fee to: State Referee Administrator or designee See the U.S. Soccer web site for mailing directions.</p> | <p>Return form(s) to: AYSO National Office See the web site for mailing directions.</p> |

AYSO Officials: Contact your Area or Section Referee Administrator to obtain a Cross-Certification Form.

USSF Officials: Contact your State Referee Administrator or the National Office to obtain a form.

Forms are available on both organizations' web sites.

Approved NRC: 4/20/2002

Assault On Referees

Assaults sometimes happen, even to experienced referees. To help keep the number of assaults from rising, referees working all competitions must follow a sensible and consistent course of action that will enable the State Association with jurisdiction over the game to punish offenders, and discourage potential offenders from acts of violence. A referee should respond to an assault in a manner that will permit administration and enforcement agencies to do their job.

“Misconduct Toward Game Officials” is covered under Federation Policy 531-9. Please refer to that policy in this book in the section titled “United States Soccer Federation Bylaws and Policies Pertaining to Referees”. You may also access the Bylaws and Policies of US Soccer at www.usoccer.com, at the “Services” page.

If an assault occurs:

1. **Never strike back** if such action can possibly be avoided. Defend yourself as passively as possible. When referees are struck, the majority of players and bystanders are automatically sympathetic towards them, even if they were previously hostile. If the referees choose to “slug it out,” they stand to lose the support and calming influence of the players and bystanders. The referees’ legal position may also be prejudiced.
2. **Try to remain calm and avoid undue signs of stress.** Maintain a standard of behavior befitting a professional referee. Remember that police officers are assaulted frequently, yet they react in as controlled a manner as the situation permits, drawing on their resources of self-control to get to the top of the threatening situation.
3. **Send the player off.** Advise the captain of your decision, and be prepared to abandon the game if the player is not removed completely from the scene.
4. **Get the details down on paper** (when things are under control). Note the player’s number and obtain the name from the team captain or coach if necessary.
5. **Obtain witnesses.** Consult your assistant referees, if any, or any unattached bystanders. Record names and telephone numbers for future reference. Use other players as witnesses only as a last resort. Do not be concerned about holding up the game; common assault is a criminal offense and must be treated seriously. Make notes to be sure that your subsequent report is accurate. After the game, discuss the incident with your witnesses; this is quite legal as no charges have been laid at this stage.
6. **Seek medical attention if you are injured.** Go to the nearest hospital emergency room or trauma clinic. The medical personnel will treat any injuries, and document them for the record. Retain any medical records.
7. **Official notification of the incident.** Contact the President of the State Association and the State Referee Administrator, as soon as possible, but at least by the next business day, to make them aware of the incident. Follow up with a complete

written report. A copy should go to the SRA, the state presidents and to the league or local association to which the accused belongs.

8. **Write a report.** The report of assault or abuse toward any member of the referee crew must be professional, precise, informative and above all, accurate. The report should be accompanied by written reports from the assistant referees (if used) and by copies of any other game misconduct reports sent to the league under whose jurisdiction the match was played. If you were, or are going to be, medically treated for injury, that should also be noted.
9. **Procedure for report transmittal.** The written reports are sent within 48 hours to the State President with jurisdiction over the game or a designee, and a copy to the SRA, the league or local association. For tournaments or special events, the tournament director/event coordinator must be notified, in writing, on the day of the incident, and the referee's home state SRA (if out of state) within 10 days.
10. **Report terms and references:** Refer to Policy 531-9, Section 3.
11. **In the event that the assault is serious enough** for you to consider filing civil action with the local authorities, you do have that right. Please inform the State President of your intent to do so.

Misconduct Report Writing

Referees' Misconduct Reports must be professional and concise, and yet complete. Supplemental reports should be filed when necessary to provide a complete description of an incident.

1. The misconduct report should include:
 - A. the teams (the full and correct names of the competing teams)
 - B. the venue and date of the match
 - C. the competition (league, tournament, etc.)
 - D. the player's name, jersey number, registration card, team
 - E. reason for report (i.e., specific Law 12 reason)
 - F. action taken
 - G. the incident (i.e., description of what actually happened stating only the facts, with no opinions, and no recommendations)
2. The incident (G) must be:
 - A. as you saw it (there is no substitute for the facts)
 - B. brief, but containing enough evidence and information to enable a disciplinary committee to understand what happened. This description would include the reaction, if any, of the player(s) and others.
3. Make certain that your assistant referees have all the above details before leaving the field.
4. Remember that each incident meriting a report must have a separate report; e.g., two players who are sent off means two separate reports.
5. Present your report in the most legible manner. If your handwriting is difficult for others to read, then print it or type it if at all possible.
6. Check your spelling. Almost every important word is in the current FIFA Laws of the Game or can be located on the FIFA web page (www.FIFA.com).
7. The report is to be filed within forty-eight (48) hours. Make certain you have your name on it. (Your address and phone numbers should be on a separate cover page.) Remember to retain a copy of the report for future reference.
8. The report is sent to:
 - A. General Cases of Misconduct -
Local League
Local Soccer Association
Area (or District) Referee Administrator

B. Referee Assault & Referee Abuse -

1) League Play:

- State Presidents or their designee
- Local League
- State Referee Administrator (SRA)
- The relevant police department (if charges are filed)

2) Tournaments/Special Events:

- Tournament Director/Cup Coordinator (on day of incident)
- Player's home state president
- Your home state SRA (within 10 days)
- The relevant police department (if charges are filed)

Policy:

Guidelines for Referees Appearing before a Disciplinary Committee

Misconduct reports must be sent to the appropriate authorities within the stipulated time. It is your duty to acknowledge all correspondence relating to the misconduct report and to advise the hearing panel of your availability to attend a disciplinary hearing or committee meeting when requested. Such requests are not made lightly and if you are invited to appear before the disciplinary committee, you should make every effort to attend.

1. Take a copy of the misconduct report and the match record card to the meeting. This will help to recall the incident clearly.
2. Take pride in your personal appearance, since this will be an indication of your professionalism and will enhance your credibility as a witness.
3. Arrive in plenty of time and introduce yourself.
4. Answer all questions clearly and briefly.
5. Remain cooperative throughout the proceedings.
6. Do not become involved in discussion, debate or argument with any other party who may be in attendance.
7. Remember that the final decision taken by the Committee will be its judgment based on all the evidence presented. It is not for you to pass opinion or judgment on the decision reached.
8. Claim only expenses to which you are entitled.

(Approved by the Referee Committee 8/26/1995)

The National Referee Assessment Program

Field Assessment of Referees and Assistant Referees

Introduction

The United States Soccer Federation Assessment Program, under the Director of Referee Assessment, develops policies, programs, and procedures to guide the evaluation of officials by trained and certified assessors. The objective of this evaluation -assessment- is to assist officials at all levels of the game to improve and sharpen their skills.

Assessors certified by the United States Soccer Federation function under the direction of State Directors of Assessment who report administratively to the State Referee Administrator and who are responsible for carrying out the mission of the National Program. There are four assessor grades: Associate (the Entry Level), Assessor, State Assessor, and National Assessor. A limited number of National Assessors are certified at the invitation of US Soccer. They report directly to the National Director of Referee Assessment and are responsible for assessing officials at the highest levels of the game and, when qualified as instructors, for conducting Entry and State Level Assessor Clinics.

Official assessments for upgrading purposes must be conducted by a currently certified and registered United States Soccer Federation Assessor. Assessors, like referees, must register each year to retain their certification.

Responsibility for scheduling assessments

The State Director of Assessment (or in the absence of an SDA, the State Referee Administrator) is responsible for developing a corps of assessors large enough to meet the assessment needs of the State Association. The SDA, or a delegate, is responsible for scheduling assessors to meet the needs of officials within the state.

Assessment Forms

The results of an assessment on a referee or assistant referee are reported in two ways. A numeric rating on each of the Assessment Criteria is developed by the assessor. From the numeric evaluation, the assessor develops a Feedback Form containing a summary of his or her findings. The Feedback Form is provided to the official following the game or within 7 days thereafter. It is United States Soccer Federation Policy that the numeric-rating/worksheet is NOT provided to the official. Only the feedback form is provided to the official.

It is the responsibility of the State Director of Assessment to develop means for circulating completed forms to officials in a timely manner. It is also the assessor's responsibility to provide copies of these assessments to the State Referee Administrator to support officials' requests for upgrading. The State Association is also encouraged to develop a database of information that can be drawn upon to facilitate referee administration.

Assessments of National Referees, National Referee Candidates and State 1 Referees as a referee or assistant referee in adult men's or women's or higher games should be sent to the National referee office in Chicago and to the National Director of Assessment. Professional league games will use an electronic form for entry into the database. All assessment forms are available in an electronic format and should be submitted into the national database.

Assessment Criteria

The following information is a summary of the criteria for the United States Soccer Federation Assessors. It is intended to serve as a guide for use in evaluating and reporting on referees and assistant referees who seek performance improvement and upgrading.

Dress and Appearance

All referees and assistant referees must wear the uniform prescribed by FIFA and the United States Soccer Federation.

To be assessed, the official must be currently registered and wear a current badge of the appropriate level during the match being assessed.

Under appearance, assessors will be concerned that the official presents a neat, proper, and professional appearance. They are instructed not to “nitpick” such things as hair style, beards, and other subjective factors.

Pre-Game Organization

A well officiated game starts with, and is aided by, careful attention to pre-game procedures. The assessor is instructed to observe, without intruding, the following items:

Arrival. Officials are expected to arrive a minimum of thirty minutes prior to the match for routine league matches. For United States Soccer Federation Cup Games and other major tournaments, one hour prior to the match, or earlier if directed.

Field Inspection. All officials should inspect the field. Inspection should include examination of all marking and dimensions. Special attention should be given to critical markings like the penalty-area, penalty-mark, and goal- and touch lines. Goals and nets should be checked, and corner flags checked for proper height and location. Dangerous objects on the field should be examined and dealt with as necessary.

Personal Equipment. All officials should have two watches, two pens or pencils, a notebook, assistant referee’s flags, a flip coin, red and yellow cards, and two whistles. They should also have access to supplementary equipment such as a ball pump, inflation needle, and other items.

Instructions to Assistant Referees: Instructions to neutral assistant referees should include designation of one of them as senior, if it is not designated in the assignment, positions at the kick-off, goal kick, corner kick, penalty kick, and free kicks near the goal. The referee should indicate the direction of the diagonal to be used and the functions of the assistant referees on set plays and at the scoring of a goal. The referee should emphasize their roles in dealing with offside infractions and how they should deal with fouls in their vicinity and away from the referee’s field of vision (including fouls by defenders in their own penalty-areas).

Players’ Equipment and/or Identification: A formal check should be made of team colors, especially goalkeepers and players’ equipment. Nothing dangerous should be permitted. Footwear should conform to the Laws of the Game. Player passes should be checked where they are in use by the league or competition; it is expected that the referee be aware of the requirements for the particular competition.

Game Ball: The game balls and reserve balls must be inspected to insure they meet the requirements of Law 2, *Laws of the Game*.

Starting Time. The referee should never be the cause of a delayed kick-off, but many other factors may play a part - absence of a team, shortage of players, and so on. The referee should make every reasonable effort to start on time. Similarly, there should be no unnecessary delay after half-time.

Fitness

United States Soccer Federation referees at specified grades are required to take an annual fitness test to be recorded by the SRA. However, during the course of a match, an individual's level of fitness may fluctuate, thereby affecting performance on the field. In evaluating the referee's fitness, the assessor considers age and experience (an "old hand" may do far less unnecessary running than would a beginner). The assessor evaluates such things as: Was play held up because the referee could not keep up? Was the referee noticeably slower at the end of the game? Was the referee capable of sprinting when necessary? How well was the field of play covered? (Some items will be considered under "Positioning" and may have nothing to do with fitness, but with lack of good mechanics.)

Attitude Toward Players Coaches, Spectators, and Other Officials

Good officials are expected to be firm but fair, authoritative but courteous, responsible yet cooperative. Referees will gain the most respect if approachable, even when that approachability may be misused by some who choose to express dissent. The assessor is careful to recognize the difference between permissiveness (a weakness) and approachability, which when combined with firmness, can be a great strength.

Referees should be tolerant and supportive of fellow officials, even when disagreements about decisions arise.

The courtesy extended to other participants in a game should not lead to much fraternizing with the players, coaches, or other officials. Such actions can lead to a compromise of the referee's principles.

Positioning and Mechanics of Officiating

The assessor, after watching the game, will answer questions about the referee's positioning and mechanics, such as these:

- Was the referee generally in good position on set plays such as goal kicks, corner kicks, throw-ins, penalty kicks, and free kicks near the goal?
- Was the referee generally in good position at other times; free kicks in midfield, offside situations, during attacks, and during counter-attacks? Was the referee close to play, but not so close that play was hindered?
- Did the referee run a basic diagonal - but departing from it when necessary - keeping assistant referees and play in view at most times? Did the referee ever duplicate responsibility with the assistant referees? Did they work as a team?
- How good was cooperation between referee and assistant referees? Did the referee accept information (flags) from the assistant referees, or did the referee choose to ignore them - even when they were in the better position? When necessary to overrule assistant referees, did the referee handle it in a professional manner, and did the assistant referees accept it without rancor or obvious disagreement?

Game Control

The assessor will look for answers to questions like these:

- How well did the referee control the game overall? Was the referee able, by use of personality, to command respect and have authority? Was the referee “picky”, stopping the game for trifling offenses, rather than letting it flow?
- Were decisions hesitant and late, or were they clear, firm and prompt? Was constant dissent by players or by bench personnel permitted?
- How well did the referee deal with serious infractions or persistent misconduct? Was a free kick simply given or could the referee be seen to warn first, then use the yellow card? When players were cautioned or sent off, were correct procedures followed? Was it clear who the offender was? Was the player informed firmly - but tactfully - as to what action was being taken?
- Was the referee able to spot “off-the-ball” infractions and were the offenders punished?

The assessor looks for an official’s *knowledge* of the Laws, the correct *interpretation* of the letter *and* spirit of the Law, and the *courage* to apply them and take stern action when necessary.

Signals

There are three forms of signals used by officials; the whistle, the flag, and the hand. The correct use of approved signals forms an important part of the referee’s performance.

The Whistle. Two messages are conveyed by the sound of the whistle: *Stop Play!* and *Play!* The intensity with which the whistle is blown forms an important part of the message.

- Does the referee understand this and are the principles of “hard” and “soft” whistles applied during the game? Is the whistle only used when necessary, to not command undue attention?

Courage, Character, And Consistency

Formally referred to as “impartiality”, this section of the assessment form has been renamed to reflect more accurately the meaning of this section of assessment criteria. The assessor assesses the real ability of a referee when encountering adversity, since the strength of his or her personality is brought to the fore.

- How well does the referee stay “cool under fire”? Are there indications that there is personal strength to measure up to the demands of the situation?
- Does the referee continue to enforce the *Laws of the Game* without bias, amid the boos and displeasure of irate fans? Or, is the referee consistently “late” in making decisions, responding to appeals made by players, coaches and spectators? (The assessor is reminded, however, that it can be a sound technique to make “a late decision right” rather than one “too soon and wrong.”)

The assessor is looking for *consistency*. If the referee’s calls are consistently late and consistently in accord with player (and others’) appeals, the assessor will doubt fortitude and record it negatively.

Accuracy of Decisions

There are two aspects to this section of the criteria: Did the referee accurately identify the infraction? And, was the correct punishment meted out? In identifying the infraction, the assessor is reminded to be aware that the referee is much closer to play, and may have a better or different angle of view. The assessor has no such ambiguity when evaluating the correctness of the punishment, however.

- Does the referee distinguish between intentional hand-balls and those other instances when the ball accidentally strikes hand or arm?
- Can the referee spot the player who climbs on an opponent to head the ball and correctly spot the player who “backs under” an opponent who is heading the ball?
- Does the referee correctly identify the culprit when a player is obstructed and, as a result, pushes the opponent in the back?
- Does the referee allow good sliding tackles when the dispossessed player falls over the outstretched leg, and does he or she penalize the defender who intentionally slides in to take both player and the ball?
- Can the referee identify so-called “professional fouls” aimed at the Achilles tendon, the back of the knee, or the ankle by going “over the ball”?

The correctness of the punishment is judged when a particular infraction warrants more than a free kick. In these cases, does the referee caution or dismiss a player? Is the referee’s decision accurate and sufficient for the task?

Use of advantage. The use of the advantage clause, and the ability to identify “trifling” or “dubious” infractions are trademarks of the master of the refereeing profession. These same skills can cause problems for officials, however, because decisions to apply or not apply these two parts of the Laws can affect control of the game.

The assessor considers these factors:

- Is the referee consistent? For similar infractions committed by players on opposing teams at different times during the game, is advantage allowed where it applies?
- Having applied advantage, does the referee nevertheless notify the player who committed the infraction?
- In a “tight” game, does the referee restrict the use of advantage to attacking portions of the field, using it sparingly, to maintain control?
- Does the referee always allow advantage where the infraction does not involve physical contact between players?

The assessor considers the nature of the game. What is considered “trifling” at the professional level would be more serious in youth soccer, for instance. In competitive leagues, players often expect a certain amount of “illegal contact as part of the game”.

Other Forms

The United States Soccer Federation has approved a number of forms for use by assessors in making notes during a match. These are fully described in the United States Soccer Federation Guide for Assessors, available from the National Office. A fee may be charged.

Copies of the Assessor forms can be downloaded from the referee page of US Soccer's web site, www.ussoccer.com, and printed forms can be purchased from the product orders section of that web site.

Becoming an Assessor

Experienced officials who possess the necessary technical and “people” skills are invited to become part of their state’s assessment program. Most State Referee Committees host Entry Level Assessor training courses at least once a year. Contact should be made with the State Director of Assessment or State Referee Administrator for information about upcoming courses.

Other Information

State Directors of Assessment and State Referee Administrators who need information about the national assessment program should contact the Managing Director of Federation Services, United States Soccer Federation, Inc., 1801 South Prairie Avenue, Chicago, 60616.

Individual referees should make all contacts through their State Referee Committee members. The names and addresses of all state SDAs and SRAs are available from the above address and from the referee page at www.ussoccer.com.

United States Soccer Federation Law Modifications for Youth Players

The United States Soccer Federation has adopted FIFA's recommendation for the modification of the following laws in their application to the matches for players under 16 years of age. These changes, where different from the FIFA Laws of the Game are shown below.

LIMITATIONS

Maximum Roster

No team shall be allowed more than eighteen (18) players at any given time.

Minimum Roster

No team shall be allowed to have less than seven (7) players registered with a National State Youth Association or other Organizational Member.

Substitutions

Except as provided by the member youth organizations and their affiliates, substitutions shall be unlimited except where specified otherwise in the rules and regulations for a special competition. Substitutions may be made, with the consent of the referee, at the following times:

- A. Prior to a throw-in by the team in possession
- B. Prior to a goal-kick, by either team
- C. After a goal, by either team
- D. After an injury, by either team, when the referee stops play
- E. At half-time

Length of Games, Overtime Periods, and Ball Specification

The length of games, ball size, ball weight, ball dimensions, and tie breaking rules for each group shall be as follows:

| Age Group | Game Length | Overtime Periods | Ball Size | Circumference | Ball Weight |
|-----------|---------------------------|--------------------|-----------|---------------|-------------|
| Under 16 | Two 40-min. halves | Two 15-min. halves | #5 | 27-28 | 14-16 oz. |
| Under 14 | Two 35-min. halves | Two 10-min. halves | #5 | 27-28 | 14-16 oz. |
| Under 12 | Two 30-min. halves | Two 10-min. halves | #4 | 25-26 | 11-13 oz. |
| Under 10 | As Modified Rules Specify | No tie breaker | #4 | 25-26 | 11-13 oz. |
| Under 8 | As Modified Rules Specify | No tie breaker | #3 | 23-24 | 11-12 oz. |
| Under 6 | As Modified Rules Specify | No tie breaker | #3 | 23-24 | 11-12 oz. |

If the game is still tied after overtime periods, FIFA "Kicks from the Penalty Mark" rules apply in order to determine the winner, unless other instructions are stated in the Rules of Competition.

The National Referee Assignor Program

Objective

It is the objective of the National Program for Referee Development that all league and tournament matches sanctioned by State Associations and other affiliated members of the Federation are officiated by three qualified referees using the diagonal system of control, when possible, and that all referees are provided with proper assignments that ensure their development, retention, and opportunities for advancement.

Structure

The Referee Assignor Program should consist of four positions within a State Association:

- 1) State Assignor Coordinator (Jointly appointed as per policy 531-8.)
- 2) State Games Assignor
- 3) League Assignors
- 4) Tournament Assignors

Training

The State Director of Instruction, making use of certified Referee Assignor Instructors and/or Certified Referee Assignor Instructor Trainers, may conduct Referee Assignor Training Courses within a State Association to improve the quality and consistency of the assigning process.

Registration

All referee assignors who successfully complete the introductory Referee Assignor Training Course may register as assignors with USSF through the State Referee Administration. Registration fees for referee assignors shall be recommended by the United States Soccer Federation Referee Committee and approved by the Board of Directors.

Assignor Appointment

Referee Assignors should be selected by the playing associations/leagues being served, with the advisement of the State Referee Committee. The appointment should be made for a period of at least one year and be based on experience as a referee and/or as an assignor, organization skills, and character. The assignor should be familiar with the process of becoming a registered referee.

Only in an emergency should a certified assignor officiate in leagues or conferences for which he or she serves as an assignor. It is permissible for assignors to officiate in leagues other than those in which they assign.

Referee Assigning Program

A list of currently registered referees must be furnished to certified registered referee assignors by the State Referee Administrator. Assignors should review the directory prior to making any assignment and prior to the start of each season.

The Referee Assignor may not sell or otherwise transmit any directory of currently registered referees received from the State Referee Administrator to any outside third party without the express written approval of the US Soccer Referee Committee and the Board of Directors.

A standardized rating system should be documented by the Assignor with updated input from developmental and formal assessments, coaches' reports, mentors, evaluations, the referee, and other input available to the assignor.

Assignors and referees must recognize that officiating where familiarity of family relationships with coaches or players exist should be avoided. Assignors should limit the number of times a referee officiates for any one team or club.

Referees and assistant referees within a given experience/rating group should be rotated on a regular basis among all the assigned leagues and all the teams within a league. No referee should be assigned to any one league or club exclusively. When the assignor is an active referee, the assignor should be designated within a given experience/rating group and be part of the same rotation system of assignment.

Referee assignors are encouraged to listen to complaints about officials. When the complaint concerns an official who has demonstrated bias, unfair officiating or incompetence, the assignor should direct that the complaint be filed in writing to the local or state administrator. All such reports should be investigated.

In some instances, an assignor may want to work with the SDA to obtain an objective assessment in response to complaints about a referee's performance.

Equal Opportunity for Assignment

Referee assignors should offer equal opportunity to all qualified referees and avoid discrimination against any individual or group regardless of age, race, color, religion, sex, national origin, or disability.

*The Referee Administrative Handbook
is an official
USSF Referee Publication*

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