



AYSO National Referee Program



The AYSO National Support & Training Center
12501 S. Isis Avenue
Hawthorne, CA 90250
TEL: 800.872.2976
FAX: 310.643.5310
www.AYSO.org

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Contents

AYSO National Referee Program	1
Contents	3
Introduction	5
Administration	6
National Referee Program Organizational Overview	6
AYSO National Referee Program: Three Main Elements	7
AYSO Philosophy	8
The Organization of Soccer	8
Guidelines for Cooperation: AYSO/USYSA	10
The Diagonal System of Control	11
Administering the Regional Referee Program	11
Training and Certifying Referees	18
Scheduling Referees	21
Ensuring General and Personal Safety	22
Miscellaneous Administrative Matters	24
Conclusion	25
Instruction Program	27
The AYSO Referee Instructor Program	27
Planning a Referee Training Course	27
Using Written Examinations Effectively	29
Roster Return Policy	31
A Final Word to Instructors	31
Assessment and Mentor/Advisor Program	32
Assessor, Mentor/Advisor Training Program Overview	32
Referee Mentor/Advisor Program	33
The Mentor/Advisor	33
Assessment: Requirements and Procedures	36
Assessment: Assessor Techniques and Procedures	38
Assessment: Field Observation Narratives	40
Observing the Intermediate Referee Candidate	40
Assessing the Advanced Referee Candidate	42
AYSO National Referee Program—2010 Edition	3



Assessing the Advanced Referee Candidate as Assistant Referee	43
Assessing the National Referee Candidate	44
Assessing the National Referee Candidate as Assistant Referee	46
Training and Development of Assessors	48
Thoughts on Assessment and Suggestions for Assessors	49
The AYSO Referee Assessor’s Creed	52
Appendix	53
<hr/>	
AYSO Referee Training Matrix	53
AYSO Referee Certification Requirements	54
AYSO Referee Instructor and Evaluator Certification	56
AYSO Referee Assessor, Mentor/Advisor Requirements	57
AYSO Referee Physical Test	58 57
AYSO Section Map	59
Notes	60
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Introduction

This manual is meant to be an easy-to-use source of information regarding the AYSO National Referee Program. It contains information of use to all AYSO Referee Administrators, Instructors, and Assessors. An elaborate support system is available to assist you in providing the best possible officiating program for the enjoyment of AYSO players, volunteers, and spectators in your region. Please do not hesitate to contact members of the AYSO referee support staff available to you at the Area, Section and National Level.

The *Referee Administrator Reference Guide* is a must-have for all Referee Administrators and is available from the AYSO Supply Center at (888) 243 2976. Additional materials also available to help you build a successful officiating program include: *The AYSO edition of the Laws of the Game (available in English and Spanish)*; *The AYSO Guidance for Referees and Coaches (available in English and Spanish)*; *The Annual Referee Update*; *The Referee Mentor/Advisor Handbook*; *The Referee Instructor Resource Book*; *The AYSO Recruiting and Retaining Referees Manual*, *The AYSO Short-Sided Games Guide for Referees*; *Developing and Maintaining a Youth Referee Program*; *The Youth Referee Manual*; *A Guide for Women Referees*; and a multitude of supporting materials and lesson plans on <http://ayso.org>.

Thank you for volunteering your time and talent to contribute towards a positive AYSO experience for the players, coaches, and spectators who participate in AYSO. The overall success of AYSO and of the AYSO National Referee Program depends upon your efforts as a member of the volunteer referee support staff. Those efforts are greatly appreciated.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Thomas Bobadilla".

Thomas Bobadilla
AYSO National Referee Program Administrator
National Support and Training Center (NSTC)
12501 S. Isis Avenue
Hawthorne, CA 90250

Phone: 888 243 AYSO
Email: Thomasbobadilla@ayso.org



Administration

National Referee Program Organizational Overview

National Referee Advisory Commission

The National Referee Advisory Commission (NRAC) members are nominated by the National Referee Administrator in conjunction with the NRAC Chairman and appointed by the AYSO National President. The members of NRAC provide technical expertise to produce, maintain, and revise as needed the AYSO National Referee Program in response to the needs of AYSO referees.

National Referee Advisory Commission Chairman

The National Referee Advisory Commission Chairman is nominated by the National Referee Administrator and appointed by the AYSO National President. The NRAC Chairman is an executive member of AYSO and represents the AYSO National Referee Program at all National Board of Directors meetings and at the AYSO Annual General Meeting. The NRAC Chairman chairs NRAC meetings and works closely with the National Referee Administrator to assist with the development, revision and implementation of the National Referee Program.

AYSO National Referee Administrator

The AYSO National Referee Administrator (NRA) is hired by the AYSO National Executive Director and is responsible for the development, revision, and implementation of the AYSO National Referee Program in response to the overall needs of AYSO referees. The NRA acts on recommendations regarding program development and implementation from NRAC.

Section Referee Administrators

The Section Referee Administrator (SRA) is appointed by the Section Director and is responsible for implementing the AYSO National Referee Program in response to the needs of AYSO referees within the section, areas, and regions. The SRA appoints Section Directors of Referee Instruction and Assessment. These directors are charged with implementing the respective areas of the AYSO National Referee Program under the direction of the SRA.

Area Referee Administrators

The Area Referee Administrator (ARA) is appointed by the Area Director and is responsible for implementing the AYSO National Referee Program in response to the needs of AYSO referees within the area and regions. The ARA appoints Area Directors of Referee Instruction and Assessment. These directors are charged with implementing the respective areas of the AYSO National Referee Program under the direction of the ARA.

Regional Referee Administrators

The Regional Referee Administrator (RRA) is appointed by the Regional Commissioner and is responsible for implementing the AYSO National Referee Program in response to the needs of AYSO referees within the region. The RRA appoints Regional Directors of Referee Instruction and Assessment. These directors are charged with implementing the respective areas of the AYSO National Referee Program under the direction of the RRA.

The National Referee Advisory Commission

Member	Responsibilities	Contact email
Pat Mullane	Chair	NRAC.chair@ayso.org
Jerry Anderson	Point of Contact: Instruction NRAC Liaison: Sections 1 & 10	NRP.instruction@ayso.org



David Keller	Point of Contact: Assessment NRAC Liaison: Sections 6 & 8	NRP.assessment@ayso.org
Carol Komaki	Point of Contact: Communication NRAC Liaison: Sections 7 & 11	NRP.communication@ayso.org
Roy Levin	Point of Contact: Curriculum NRAC Liaison: Sections 2 & 9	NRP.instruction@ayso.org
Jeff Moore	Point of Contact: Diversity NRAC Liaison: Sections 4 & 12	NRP.diversity@ayso.org
Patrick Streeter	Point of Contact: Youth Referees NRAC Liaison: Sections 5 & 14	NRP.youth@ayso.org
Jane Vanderhook	Point of Contact: Women Referees NRAC Liaison: Sections 3 & 13	NRP.women@ayso.org

To contact the entire commission:

NRAC@ayso.org

For administrative matters:

NRP.administration@ayso.org

For all other National Referee Program matters:

NRP@ayso.org

Supporting the National Referee Advisory Commission

	Role	Contact email
Steve Close	Senior Program Coordinator (Staff)	steveclose@ayso.org
Tom Bobadilla	National Referee Administrator (Staff)	thomasbobadilla@ayso.org
Bill Mason	AYSO FIFA Law Interpreter	
Randy McNutt	NBOD Liaison to NRAC	
Tom Tobin	Director of Programs (Staff)	tomtobin@ayso.org

AYSO National Referee Program: Three Main Elements

Administration

- Administrative training is available for referee administrators: Referee Administrator Training plus generalized management training courses.
- The *National Referee Program Manual* (this document) provides details regarding responsibilities, operating procedures, and guidelines for administering an AYSO referee program.
- Cross-certification opportunities with the United States Soccer Federation (USSF) are available for referees.

Instruction

- Six levels of Referee certification and training are available: U-8 Official, Assistant Referee, Basic Referee, Intermediate Referee, Advanced Referee, and National Referee.
- Special programs are offered for youth referees.
- Three levels of Referee Instructor certification are available: Referee Instructor, Advanced Referee Instructor, and National Referee Instructor.
- Certification as a Referee Instructor Evaluator is available.

Assessment

- Two levels of referee assessor certification are available: Assessor and National Assessor.
- Referee Mentor/Advisors are trained to be a helping hand for new and developing officials.



AYSO Philosophy

AYSO's philosophy, as determined by the AYSO founders in 1964 and still guiding the organization today, grew out of a deep concern for the positive development, growth, and enjoyment of all children who wanted to participate in the wonderful game of soccer.

AYSO Vision Statement

To provide world-class youth soccer programs that enrich children's lives

AYSO Mission Statement

To develop and deliver quality youth soccer programs which promote a fun, family environment based on the AYSO Philosophies:

- **Everyone Plays:** Our program's goal is for kids to play soccer so we mandate that every player on every team must play at least 50% of every game. It's no fun to spend the game on the bench...and that's no way to learn soccer
- **Balanced Teams:** Each year we form new teams as evenly balanced as possible because it's more fun and a better learning experience when teams of similar ability play. It allows for each player to gain the experience of a wide variety of teammates of different skill levels.
- **Open Registration:** Our program is open to all children between 4 and 19 years of age who want to register and play soccer. Interest and enthusiasm are the only criteria for playing. There are no elimination try-outs and nobody gets cut.
- **Positive Coaching:** Encouragement of player effort provides for greater enjoyment for the players and leads to better-skilled and better-motivated players. A coach can be one of the most influential people in a child's life, so AYSO requires they create a positive experience for every boy and girl.
- **Good Sportsmanship:** We strive to create a positive environment based on mutual respect rather than a win-at-all-costs attitude, and our program is designed to instill good sportsmanship in every facet of AYSO.
- **Player Development:** We believe that all players should be able to develop their soccer skills and knowledge to the best of their abilities, both individually and as members of a team, in order to maximize their enjoyment of the game..

These fundamental principles are the foundation of the AYSO National Referee Program and must be emphasized in all aspects of program implementation in local AYSO regions throughout the country. Referees play a crucial role in ensuring that there is truth in the motto: **"In AYSO, it's about more than the game!"**

The Organization of Soccer

Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA)

Soccer is played throughout the world. The international governing body of soccer is the Fédération Internationale de Football Association, most commonly referred to as FIFA.

FIFA was founded in Paris in 1904 by the football associations of France, Belgium, Denmark, the Netherlands, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland.

FIFA consists of over 200 member national associations. National associations are recognized as the governing body of soccer for the countries or territory they represent.



The FIFA Headquarters has been based in Zurich, Switzerland, since 1927.

Laws of the Game

The *Laws of the Game* are promulgated and altered by the International Football Association Board (IFAB), which consists of twenty members, four of whom are appointed by the Executive Committee of FIFA and sixteen of whom are appointed by the four British associations, each of which nominates four members. This structure cannot be changed except by the unanimous consent of the members of the board.

FIFA annually publishes The *Laws of the Game*. The International Football Association Board (IFAB) is made up of The Football Association (England), The Scottish Football Association, The Football Association of Wales, The Irish Football Association and the Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA). The IFAB meets annually in February or March to consider proposed alterations to the *Laws of the Game*.

IFAB meets annually to consider any requests for changes to the Laws or any decisions necessary to clarify any aspect of the Laws. FIFA publishes a copy of the *Laws of the Game* each year.

AYSO, with the permission of FIFA, publishes an AYSO Edition of the FIFA *Laws of the Game* each year. Copies are available from the AYSO Supply Center.

All AYSO games are conducted in accordance with the current FIFA *Laws of the Game* and decisions of the International Board, subject to those modifications adopted by AYSO in the current AYSO National Rules and Regulations. Copies are available from the AYSO Supply Center and by download from <http://AYSO.org>.

Confederation Norte-Centroamericana y del Caribe de Futbol (CONCACAF)

FIFA member national associations are divided into six continental confederations: Africa, Asia, South America, CONCACAF, Europe, and Oceania.

The United States is a member of CONCACAF, which is comprised of 35 countries from North and Central America and the Caribbean.

United States Soccer Federation (USSF)

The United States Soccer Federation (USSF) is the national governing body for soccer in the United States, and is a member of the Federation Internationale de Football Association (FIFA), the worldwide governing body.

The United States Soccer Federation, also known as US Soccer, is made up of three councils:

- Youth Council
- Amateur Council
- Professional Council

The Youth Council members are the American Youth Soccer Organization (AYSO) and the United States Youth Soccer Association (USYSA).

AYSO is the second largest member of USSF. As members of USSF, AYSO has voting representatives on the Referee Committee and Coaching Committee, as well as a number of other committees.

AYSO and USYSA boards of directors, based upon the recommendations of the joint committee of AYSO and USYSA representatives, have adopted the following guidelines, which are consistent with the April 1989 AYSO/USYSA agreement, for the good of youth soccer.



Guidelines for Cooperation: AYSO/USYSA

Friendly Games

AYSO and USYSA member teams are encouraged to participate in friendly games under the following suggested format:

- Establish the rules and regulations governing friendly games before play begins, preferably before teams meet on game day.
- Follow the host team's rules with the understanding, however, that consideration will be given to the other, non-hosting organizations rules and regulations, including AYSO's "Everyone Plays" rule (even if substitutions are made only at halftime).
- The host team will provide proof of liability insurance.
- Both teams must have and provide proof of medical insurance.
- The USYSA state association and the AYSO Regional Commissioner, through their designated representatives, should be notified by their teams that a friendly game has been scheduled.

League Play

If an AYSO team applies to play in a USYSA league, or vice-versa, that team must comply with all the rules, regulations, and financial commitments of the league in which it wishes to participate. Also:

- Dual registration is permitted; however, once players have played with a team, they must fulfill their obligations to that team.
- Once an AYSO or USYSA team is formed, no recruitment of players from that team by another team competing during all or a portion of that season is permitted.
- Creating leagues that combine a number of AYSO and USYSA teams is not recommended.

Tournaments

Each organization is encouraged to host "Open Tournaments". Any team invited to a tournament must comply with the tournament rules of the hosting organization. All teams must comply with the procedures governing travel in the tournament and/or travel manual of their own organization.

National Cups

AYSO and USYSA will continue to hold separate national competitions (AYSO National Games and USYSA National Youth Challenge Cup).

Coaching and Refereeing Programs

Cross-certification agreements have been established between AYSO and the USSF National Coaching and Refereeing Programs.

Cooperation

AYSO and USYSA will continue to encourage an ongoing dialogue and work together to resolve any state and/or local issues. They will also continue participating in each other's board and membership meetings, e.g., workshops, NAGMs and section meetings.

The AYSO/USYSA committee has been granted a continuing role as a facilitator of local AYSO/USYSA issues, and will be a strong ongoing communications link between AYSO and USYSA.

AYSO and USYSA will respect each other's disciplinary actions against players and/or adult volunteers. Neither group will accept players or adults from the other organization if the primary



purpose of seeking a change is to escape disciplinary action. Nor should a program be accepted if the purpose for switching is to circumvent the reasonable rules of the other's constitution and bylaws.

The AYSO/USYSA committee will meet periodically to evaluate the progress of implementing these recommendations and, if needed, address any new issues that arise as a result of their implementation.

The Diagonal System of Control

The diagonal system of control is the only system for officiating outdoor soccer games that is currently recognized by FIFA. The diagonal system employs three officials for every match: one referee and two assistant referees. The diagonal system of control (one referee on the field) is the approved method of control for all AYSO matches.

The application of the diagonal system of control, including cooperation between the referee and the assistant referees, the mechanics of the use of the diagonal system, and the signals used by the referee and assistant referees, shall be as recommended in the current AYSO edition of the *FIFA Laws of the Game*.

In addition to being the universally recommended method of officiating outdoor matches, the diagonal system can be a most effective method of increasing and retaining the number of officials. Recruiting new volunteers as assistant referees has proven to be an effective method of introducing new officials into AYSO. After proper training and exposure to the game while serving as assistant referees, many otherwise uninterested volunteers become enthusiastic for more training so that they can try their hand as the official in the middle.

The AYSO National Referee Program is designed to support and encourage the use of the diagonal system of control. The Referee Administrator Training Course includes components that address the recruitment and scheduling of officials. The Referee Training and Certification Program provides instruction tailored to all levels of AYSO. The Referee Assessment Program incorporates the diagonal system as an essential component of referee testing, observation, and assessment for advancement to higher-grade levels.

Note: Use of the dual refereeing system must be avoided. The dual refereeing system uses two referees on the field, both with whistles. This system encourages the development of poor officiating habits and is the source of frustrations as the officials attempt the impossible task of remaining close to play and, at the same time, being correctly positioned to watch for offside infringements. This system also fosters hesitancy on the part of the officials and/or unnecessary interruptions in play as the two officials attempt to consult with one another for a consensus.

If only two qualified officials are available for a match, one should assume the duties of the referee and the other should become a neutral assistant referee. A "club linesman", if available, may be used after receiving instructions from the referee. If a "club linesman" is not available, the referee must assume the duties of the missing assistant referee as is done in the single referee system.

Administering the Regional Referee Program

Administrative training is offered in the Referee Administrator Training Course as well as the generic Introductory and Advanced Management courses available to all AYSO administrators.

The Introductory Management course offers the new regional management team (the Regional Commissioner, Regional Referee Administrator, and Regional Coach Administrator) a unified, practical approach to management training at the regional level and is designed to equip the regional management team with the basic management skills and tools, which they will require during their first year together, to establish and manage a viable regional program.



The Advanced Management courses offer an enhanced curriculum to the more experience regional management team that will also provide a unified, practical approach to management training. They are designed to upgrade the regional management team with the advanced management skills and tools that they will require to negotiate the more complex issues of maintaining and improving a regional program.

It is strongly recommended that every Regional Referee Administrator attend these courses with their management team at the earliest possible opportunity.

General Management and Program Delivery

Each referee administrator – section, area, or regional – has the same overall responsibility: to be a conduit through which the energy of the AYSO National Referee Program can flow. This is an in/out process; the program must be both received and sent. Any referee administrator who receives training or programming and fails to pass it on makes the training or program valueless, just as though it had never been received in the first place.

To assist in the delivery of the National Referee Program, each referee administrator is expected to be familiar with the program's purpose, intended audience, and usefulness to particular situations, and limitations. Part of the Section Referee Administrator's duty is to be thoroughly familiar with the National Referee Program and to pass that familiarity on to the Area Referee Administrators as part of their training. An Area Referee Administrator has the same duty in training the Regional Referee Administrators. The Regional Referee Administrator should then apply the program at the local level.

The Section Referee Administrator should take either direct responsibility for a program's implementation or indirect responsibility by passing it to the Area Referee Administrator; the Area Referee Administrator takes direct responsibility or passes the program to the Regional Referee Administrator for direct implementation. For example, since the development of instructors or the education of advanced or national level referees requires special resources, planning, and training not usually found at the regional or area level, these programs are usually executed by the Section Referee Administrator with the assistance of the Area Referee Administrator. On the other hand, the Section Referee Administrator is not usually involved in the training of beginning or intermediate level referees in every region because that is more properly the responsibility of the Regional or Area Referee Administrator.

To deliver a program, one becomes familiar with it and passes it on; to implement a program, one places it at the appropriate level, and then gives it the capability to succeed through motivation, planning, resources, and tools. The referee administrator who does these things helps to ensure the successful completion of the delivery/implementation cycle.

Making Local Rules

The Regional Referee Administrator is primarily responsible for ensuring that the matches within the region are conducted in conformance with FIFA Law and AYSO National Rules and Regulations (as interpreted by the AYSO National Referee Advisory Commission and the AYSO FIFA Law Interpreter). Sources of information include current editions of:

- AYSO edition of the *FIFA Laws of the Game*
- AYSO National Rules and Regulations
- AYSO Guidance for Referees and Coaches
- USSF Advice to Referees on the *Laws of the Game*
- USSF Guide to Procedures for Referees, Assistant Referees and Fourth Officials
- Communication with Area, Section, or National referee staff

The very first line of the AYSO *National Rules and Regulations* states, "All AYSO games shall be conducted in accordance with the current *FIFA Laws of the Game* and decisions of the International Board..." The bulk of the remaining content of the *National Rules and Regulations* clarifies the specific exceptions that are permitted. In the beginning of the *FIFA Laws of the Game*, under "Modifications", it states, "Subject to the agreement of the national association concerned and provided the principles of these Laws are maintained, the Laws may be modified in their application..." and then specifies the kinds of modifications permitted. These statements endeavor to



make it clear how AYSO games should be played and who, how, and to what extent the Laws may be modified.

Making a local rule in the presumed interest of safety may appear well-intentioned on the surface but careful consideration must be given to the overall effect of the rule and whether or not it is permissible or, in fact, beneficial. Accidents happen in soccer, and if we tried to make a rule to prevent all of them we would be overrun with rules that don't make sense. Running, jumping, kicking, heading, dribbling, tackling, shooting, and goalkeeper efforts to prevent goals all have potential to cause injury. Soccer is a competitive sport and physical contact between players is a normal and acceptable part of the game; however, players must play within the Laws and respect the principles of fair play. Soccer is a contact sport and injuries are possible. It is impossible to avoid. Players and parents must recognize there is risk involved in playing sports. The waiver on the player registration form, which all parents are required to read and sign, makes this point very clearly.

It is the job of coaches to teach players correct technique to help them avoid injury to themselves and to others. It is the job of referees to learn to recognize when skills are executed correctly or not. Players should develop, coaches should teach and referees should learn to recognize skills that are a part of soccer. When we make a local rule that takes away one or more of the skills used in playing the game, we lessen the opportunities for players to learn to execute the skill correctly, coaches to teach the skill, and referees to recognize the skill performed legally. An argument could be made that such local rules actually may cause more injuries because coaches will be discouraged from teaching correct techniques to the players since there is a local rule prohibiting the skill.

Working with the Regional Commissioner and Regional Board

The regional referee program does not exist in a vacuum. It is just one component of an AYSO region. It is the responsibility of the Regional Referee Administrator to ensure that the needs of the regional referee program are incorporated into the region's overall program. It is recommended that the Regional Referee Administrator work closely with the Regional Commissioner and regional board (especially the Regional Coach Administrator) to establish, at a minimum, the following:

- a referee program budget
- regional guidelines (including guidelines for referees and coaches)
- weather policy
- protest policy
- apparel requirements
- codes of conduct

Establishing a Regional Officiating Staff

The activities required to run a successful regional referee program are simply too numerous and time consuming to be effectively carried out by any single individual. A team effort is required. The first goal of any Regional Referee Administrator (RRA) should be to establish a regional officiating staff. Every RRA should appoint a Regional Director of Referee Instruction and a Regional Director of Referee Assessment. It is strongly recommended that every RRA should also appoint a Regional Coordinator of Recruitment, and a Regional Coordinator of Scheduling. The RRA, while providing direction and maintaining control, should delegate the responsibility for these elements of the regional referee program to the appointed individuals. The RRA must also ensure that the appointed officials receive adequate training and instruction in their particular area so that they can perform their duties.

Registering Volunteer Officials

It is critical that all volunteer officials are annually registered with AYSO. This is accomplished through the use of the AYSO Volunteer Registration Form or through an on-line process at eAYSO.org. Registration ensures that referees are covered by the Soccer Accident Insurance.

Certifying Volunteer Officials

Every volunteer referee (and coach) in AYSO must be suitably trained and certified, including Safe Haven certification. This ensures the maximum possible protection for our children and for the volunteers who work with them. The RRA should ensure that all regional referees/officials have successfully completed their training and certification including the AYSO Referee Safe Haven Certification course before they are given any assignments. This Safe Haven course is a one-hour



course for which the lesson plan can be found on AYSO.org. The certification can also be taken online at AYSOtraining.org.

Equipping the Referees

It is absolutely essential that regional referees be properly equipped with a complete proper uniform and the necessary accessories for the job. A referee should look the part to really feel the part. A sharp-looking referee, in proper uniform, will receive more respect than an equally trained, but non-uniformed, referee.

Throughout the soccer community, referees and assistant referees are identified by their uniforms. The AYSO National Referee Program's goal is to have three trained officials at every game. This goal applies to uniformity and consistency in the application of the Laws, and it includes the appearance of the officiating team.

The AYSO National Referee Program encourages referees, when officiating a match, to wear a shirt that distinguishes them from the members of both teams. It also recommends that, whenever possible, referees and assistant referees follow these uniform guidelines:

Referee Shirt

It is suggested that when purchasing new shirts the United States Soccer Federation recommended shirt colors be chosen. They are as follows:

Primary shirt color:

- gold with black stripes and trim.

Alternate colors:

- black with white stripes and trim
- red with black stripes and trim
- blue with black stripes and trim
- green with black stripes and trim

Referee Shorts

- Solid black.
- Length not less than 3 or more than 7 inches above the knee.

Referee Socks

- Black with three white stripes at top.
- Pulled up over the calf

Referee Badge

The only badge appropriate for referees to wear during AYSO games is the current AYSO referee certification level badge earned by the referee. Exceptions: An International Referee may wear his or her FIFA badge; and, if provided, special referee tournament badges may be worn by referees during that tournament's games.

- Only one badge on uniform.

Referee Footwear

- Black, or black with white trim.
- Smooth, turf, or cleated soles.
- Cleaned and polished regularly

Referee Hats

Hats are not traditional for soccer referees and are discouraged. If hats are worn for sun-protection health reasons, the following guidelines should be observed:

- Solid black, or predominately black with white trim, or



- Solid white, or predominately white with black trim.

Hats should bear no logo or slogans, except AYSO logos (traditional, promotional, regional, or tournament) are permitted, and National corporate apparel sponsor logos are allowed.

Local conditions and common sense may dictate some variations from these recommendations. For example, a region may have purchased shirts of different colors or styles than those noted above for their referees and assistant referees. If variations are appropriate, they should be applied consistently. The referee and assistant referees should wear shirts of similar color and style, thus appearing as a team on the field. If the referee chooses to wear an alternate jersey that the assistants do not have, then the assistant referees should at least match each other. Uniformity on the part of the officials establishes initial credibility for them as a team, and it demonstrates their kinship with an important group: the trained, dedicated referees and assistant referees of AYSO.

It is usually not necessary to provide all of the regional officials with a complete set of new equipment every year. For example, returning referees can normally use the same uniform shirt and shorts for two or more years, depending on the quality of uniform purchased. On the other hand, socks may need to be replaced every year. Whistles, data wallets, red and yellow cards, and assistant referee flags also tend to last for several seasons. Keeping a record of the returning referee's equipment needs over several seasons is a practical way of providing the Regional Referee Administrator with guidelines as to the equipment needs of returning referees. However, it is critical that every registered referee be provided each year with the current AYSO edition of the *FIFA Laws of the Game*, the *AYSO National Rules and Regulations*, and the *Guidance for Referees and Coaches*.

Developing a Regional Referee Program Budget

One of the attractions of the game of soccer is that it is a relatively inexpensive sport to play. The regional board's primary financial focus is, legitimately, on the players (uniforms, soccer balls, etc.) and the fields (goal nets, line markings, corner flags, etc.). Because of this, it is sometimes easy to overlook some of the less apparent financial implications of the game, particularly those costs associated with the implementation of an effective regional referee program. It is, therefore, the responsibility of the Regional Referee Administrator to make sure that sufficient funds are available to support the regional referee program.

The most effective way to accomplish this responsibility is for the Regional Referee Administrator to prepare a regional referee program budget element for inclusion in the region's annual operating budget. In preparing this budget, the Regional Referee Administrator should work closely with the members of the regional referee staff. The Regional Directors of Referee Instruction and Assessment should identify their anticipated needs, particularly regarding proposed clinics and workshops. The coordinators of recruitment and scheduling may also have specific program plans that require funding. Each of these individual referee program components should be broken down into specific detailed costs and prioritized.

When considering what items to include in your regional referee budget, you may wish to keep the following comments in mind. While AYSO is a volunteer organization, one cannot realistically expect the volunteer officials, who are already giving substantial amounts of their time, to also absorb the total costs associated with the implementation of a successful regional referee program. Imposing a significant financial burden on the volunteer official can severely limit your ability to recruit and retain all but the most dedicated, and affluent, volunteers. Therefore, it is critical that a region provide adequate financial assistance to its referee program. This assistance may come from a variety of sources, including player registration fees, referee sponsors, etc. Regardless of the source, money invested to train and equip the region's officials, following a well-conceived plan and budget, will result in a high rate of return. The bottom line is that the region's players will have a more positive experience and the games will be more enjoyable for all if the region's referees are properly trained and equipped to perform their duties. A properly prepared regional referee program budget is critical to achieving this end.

A standard regional referee program annual budget form is available on AYSO.org. You may use this form as a guide in formulating your own regional referee program budget.



Once the regional referee program budget is prepared, the Regional Referee Administrator must work with the Regional Commissioner and regional board to see that the referee program budget is included as a component of the region's annual operating budget.

Under a policy adopted in 2009, regions may pay referees if they adhere strictly to guidelines established by the NSTC.

Developing a Regional Referee Calendar

Just as the thinking referee establishes game control by being proactive on the field, the thinking Regional Referee Administrator needs to be proactive in planning the region's referee program. The preparation of a regional referee calendar is essential for the successful administration of the regional referee program.

Preparation of the regional referee calendar needs to begin far in advance of the actual playing season. Indeed, initial planning should normally begin during the conclusion of the preceding season with an assessment and evaluation of that season's successes, problems, etc. The Regional Referee Administrator must work with the regional officiating staff to identify those aspects of referee administration, recruitment, instruction, assessment, certification, and scheduling requiring modification or increased emphasis for the next season. It should be determined which of these activities must be addressed prior to the registration of players and volunteers, after registration but prior to the commencement of the player season, and during the season itself.

One technique many Regional Referee Administrators have found successful in preparing a regional referee calendar is to begin with a full twelve-month blank calendar, which coincides with the region's playing year (e.g. January—December, July—June, etc.). They then identify those key dates that have already been established, such as regional board meetings, player and volunteer registration, the beginning and ending of the playing season(s), regional play-offs or tournaments, etc. Special events outside the region, such as area meetings, section and national annual general meetings, area and section tournaments, referee clinics and camps, etc., should also be included.

The Regional Referee Administrator, together with the regional officiating staff, then works backward from each of these events to establish what action is required at the regional level to prepare for that activity, when that action must take place, and who specifically is responsible and accountable.

Date	Activity	Notes
Jan thru Dec	Attend board meetings	Help establish standards and support referee program
Jan	Prepare budget and policies Appoint referee staff	Order training materials and uniforms early. Plan and document policies for protests and player and coach discipline. Set objectives for recruiting, training, retention, and assessment and appoint staff for each discipline
Feb	Schedule training classes	Coordinate with area and section for information on instructor, assessor, and referee upgrade courses
Mar thru May	Schedule referees for spring games	Preseason referee meeting is advisable. Games can serve as opportunities for training, assessment, and recruiting.
Mar	Train instructors	Make use of spring games as opportunities for training. Reserve facilities for referee camps and courses.
Apr	Recruit referees and assistant referees	REGISTRATION DAY. Register all referees on volunteer registration forms. Recruiting is a year-round activity.
May thru Aug	Train and certify referees, ARs, and assessors, Mentor/Advisors	If there are summer games, use them for training, observation/assessment, and recruiting
Aug	Coach presentations	The <i>Laws of the Game</i> should be part of all coach training.

Representing the Region's Officials

It is often said that there are three teams on the field during every soccer match: two teams of players and the team of officials. It is important that the AYSO volunteer officials at the regional level



recognize that they are also a part of a larger team that extends to all other volunteer officials at the area, section, and national levels.

The Regional Referee Administrator (RRA) is the conduit between volunteer officials at the regional level and:

- the Regional Commissioner and regional board,
- the Area Referee Administrator (ARA),
- the Section Referee Administrator (SRA), and
- the National Referee Administrator (NRA) and National Referee Advisory Commission.

The RRA is the vital link in a two-way communication chain. The RRA must communicate national, section, and area referee policy and news to the regional officials. Equally important, since AYSO is a “grass-roots up” organization, the concerns, needs, and problems of the regional referees and assistant referees must be passed along so that area, section, and national staff can respond by providing direction and programs that are tailored to the experiences of the volunteers “in the trenches”.

To accomplish this goal, the Regional Referee Administrator must be prepared to meet and communicate frequently with the regional officials during the season. The RRA must also be committed to active participation in area and section referee meetings, instructional clinics and camps, and other activities so that the information provided in these forums can then be passed along to the regional officials.

The Regional Referee Administrator also serves the important role of recognizing and reinforcing the efforts of the volunteer officials within the region. The RRA can demonstrate the fact that AYSO appreciates the efforts of our volunteer officials in a number of ways:

A simple verbal: “Thank you! Without your dedication, our children wouldn’t get to play” can go a long way toward reinforcing both the importance of the volunteer and the AYSO philosophy. The introduction and acknowledgment of officials at the end-of-the-season picnics or banquets is another way of providing public recognition in front of players and parents. Volunteer officials who have put in extra effort in terms of the number of games covered, advancement to a higher certification level, or who have become referee instructors and/or referee mentor/advisors, assessors can and should be given extra acknowledgment.

Small tokens of appreciation, such as AYSO Certificates of Appreciation, referee pins, special coins for the pre-game coin toss, etc., are appropriate. Useful referee equipment like data wallets and cards, assistant referee’s flags, warm-up jackets, etc., may also be considered. It must be emphasized that, consistent with the volunteer nature of AYSO, our volunteer officials may not be paid or otherwise financially compensated in any manner for their efforts.

Recruiting Referees

Recruiting volunteer officials is the most challenging responsibility of the Regional Referee Administrator. Frequent surveys of Regional Referee Administrators identify the recruitment of officials as their number-one problem.

To maintain a qualified and competent regional referee staff, it is necessary to pursue and recruit new officials continually. A general rule of thumb suggests that the recruitment effort should attempt to bring new officials into the fold at a level of 50% of the previous season’s staff. Because of attrition, this will keep the referee roster at approximately a constant level. If you anticipate an expansion of your region, the effort has to be intensified to increase the referee corps. In general, there are never an adequate number of referees, especially well-versed and well-trained ones.

Due to the importance and ongoing nature of referee recruitment, it is strongly recommended that the Regional Referee Administrator designate a Regional Coordinator of Referee Recruitment. When looking for a candidate for this position, the RRA should be cognizant that this individual will be the “salesperson” for the regional referee program. The coordinator should, therefore, have some refereeing experience, and be able to answer basic questions about the game, the Laws, and most



importantly, the AYSO philosophy of officiating. The coordinator must be personable, outgoing, and able to make prospective volunteers feel at ease. The coordinator should develop a staff of referee recruiters to assist with recruitment. The regional recruiting staff should represent a cross section of the region's referees. It should include men, women, and youth referees. The main objective is to convince potential volunteers that refereeing in AYSO is open to everyone, and that AYSO will provide the volunteer official with the training necessary to perform the job.

The greatest opportunity for referee and assistant referee recruitment usually occurs at regional player registration. Registration occurs well in advance of the season before the calendars of potential recruits have become crowded. Registration also provides an opportunity where a large number of individuals can be contacted easily in one place, and in person. It is also the perfect opportunity to meet the parents of new players, especially those in the younger age divisions. Careful planning can make the most of this opportunity.

One suggestion is to have a team of referees and assistant referees in uniform present at registration. Women and youth referees should be part of this referee team at registration so that these two important sources of volunteers have a very visible presence. The referee team can help the registration process in an indirect way by answering questions regarding registration or the AYSO program and at the same time recruiting referee candidates. Care must be taken in choosing the referee team, selecting those who present a friendly image and who can explain the enjoyment of supporting the AYSO soccer program by actual involvement in the game itself.

Members of the referee recruiting team must remember that many of our volunteers have little or no familiarity with the game of soccer. Therefore, potential officials must understand that they should not hesitate to volunteer simply because they do not know the game. The recruiting team should briefly outline the training program to assure potential referees and assistant referees that they will be prepared to take the "pitch".

Another source of referee recruits is U-8 Officials and club linesmen, whom Referee Mentor/Advisors should encourage to become trained as certified referees. (The Referee Mentor/Advisor program is outlined in the Assessment section of this manual.)

A source of referees often overlooked is the players themselves. Information on starting a Player Referee Organization (PRO) Program can be obtained from the NSTC. Valuable information on developing a youth referee program can be found in the manual, "Developing and Maintaining a Youth Referee Program".

Women represent a largely untapped source of referees. Women who are also trained referee instructors, assessors, and administrators will serve as respected role models for other women who are recruited. The NSTC can provide additional information on developing and supporting a women referee program.

For a more in-depth discussion of some specific techniques that have proven successful in recruiting and retaining referees, please see the AYSO National Referee Program publication *Recruiting and Retaining Referees*, available from the AYSO Supply Center.

Training and Certifying Referees

Proper training is the cornerstone of any effective regional referee program. Without adequate referee training everyone associated with the game is adversely affected. For this reason the National Referee Program strongly recommends that each Regional Referee Administrator appoint a Regional Director of Referee Instruction, who is then delegated the responsibility for the implementation of the AYSO Referee Training Program.

The Referee Training Program is delivered by AYSO referee instructors utilizing NRP-approved course curricula. The program offers six levels of referee training opportunities: U-8 Official, Assistant Referee, Basic Referee, Intermediate Referee, Advanced Referee, and National Referee. Special



programs are available for youth referees. Three levels of instructor training are also available: Referee Instructor, Advanced Referee Instructor, and National Referee Instructor. Two levels of assessor training are available: Assessor and National Assessor.

As RRA you should ensure your Regional Director of Referee Instruction and all your referee instructors obtain a copy of this manual (the *AYSO National Referee Program Manual*), which is available from the AYSO Supply Center.

One of the most important parts of the AYSO National Referee Program is the AYSO Referee Certification and Training Program. All referees (and coaches) in AYSO are required to be trained and certified. AYSO Referee Administrators and their staff, the Directors of Referee Instruction, and Directors of Referee Assessment administer the program for our volunteer referees according to the spirit and intent with which the program was designed. The philosophy of the AYSO Referee Certification and Training Program involves:

- protecting referees through AYSO Safe Haven Referee Certification
- helping referees to improve their officiating skills
- assisting referees to advance in level
- providing support and encouragement
- establishing realistic achievement standards
- providing challenges commensurate with ability and experience
- providing consistent and uniform program implementation

Each level of referee certification is intended to be representative of the officiating skills needed at a specific level of play within AYSO. Certification levels are not linked to specific age groups. Necessary officiating skills vary according to both the age and skill level of the players involved and range in complexity from our beginning under-6-year-old players to the more advanced play common among our under-19-year-old teams.

Rationale for AYSO Referee Certification Levels

- **U-8 Official:** Trained in the fundamental skills needed to officiate short-sided games for players under 8 years of age.
- **Assistant Referee:** Trained in basic skills needed to be an AYSO Assistant Referee, as well as to officiate short-sided games for players under 8 years of age.
- **Regional Referee:** Trained in the basic skills needed to referee AYSO matches under AYSO (FIFA) Laws and AYSO National Rules and Regulations.
- **Intermediate Referee:** Trained in the skills needed beyond the basic level to referee soccer matches that are more physically demanding and challenging under the AYSO (FIFA) Laws and AYSO National Rules and Regulations.
- **Advanced Referee:** Trained in the advanced skills needed to referee most upper-level AYSO soccer matches under the AYSO (FIFA) Laws and AYSO National Rules and Regulations.
- **National Referee:** Trained in the professional aspects of refereeing needed to referee more challenging upper-level matches under the AYSO (FIFA) Laws and AYSO National Rules & Regulations.

AYSO Safe Haven Referee Certification and training for the Assistant Referee, U-8 Official, and Regional Referee levels is the responsibility of the Regional Referee Administrator and requires the completion of the required courses. It also requires the annual completion of a volunteer registration form and submittal of the form to the National Support and Training Center.

Cross-certification opportunities with the United States Soccer Federation (USSF) are available upon application.



Training Courses

The AYSO National Referee Program is designed to provide training to referees and prospective referees that will allow them to referee an AYSO soccer match under FIFA *Laws of the Game* and the AYSO National Rules and Regulations. It is the intent of this program to standardize the course requirements for consistency throughout AYSO. With the exception of training for the U-8 Official, referee designations and training are not directly associated with any specific age group. The U-8 Official Course prepares volunteers to officiate AYSO matches for players under 8 years of age but does not adequately prepare them for any other level of AYSO play.

It is the belief of AYSO that Regional Referees and above should have sufficient training to provide skills to referee many AYSO soccer matches. It is obvious that to effectively referee higher level games a referee must have experience, physical conditioning and mental preparation, as well as training. Training in AYSO is a continuing process. Referees are encouraged to continue their education by annually attending additional training and update sessions.

Lesson plans for each of the courses have been prepared as guidelines for instructors. Each lesson plan indicates the referee instructor level necessary to be the lead instructor. AYSO encourages lead instructors to use their own initiative in developing how material may be presented. Each instructor however, is responsible to ensure the lesson goals and learning objectives of the lesson plans are met.

Exclusive of breaks (and testing), approximate course durations are:

- U-8 Official Course: 3 hours
- Assistant Referee Course: 5 hours
- Basic, Intermediate, and Advanced Referee Courses: 8 hours each
- National Referee Course: 15 hours

Although AYSO referee training is most commonly delivered as whole courses, the constituent classes of the courses, sometimes referred to as “modules”, may be used for stand-alone training where they serve a need. In some cases, instructors will find it necessary to adjust the content of class lesson plans used in this way due to implicit or explicit prerequisites.

Every referee must have a sound foundation in the *Laws of the Game* as a prerequisite to being certified as a referee. The training program provides the foundation at the Regional Referee level. To confirm this knowledge at the Regional Referee level and higher, candidates are expected to successfully pass appropriate level referee examinations. These examinations are considered to be a separate requirement and are not a required part of the referee training courses.

Certification

Referees may enter the certification process at the U-8 Official, Assistant Referee, or Regional Referee level. Certification at the Intermediate, Advanced, and National levels builds on knowledge and experience acquired at the previous level(s).

Certification requirements for referees are listed in the Appendix of this manual (page 54). Additionally, to address exceptional situations, there is a form for volunteers to request exemption from some certification requirements (available on AYSO.org).

Referee Upgrade Process

The Application for Referee Certification form must be completed by the candidate for upgrade to Intermediate Referee level and above. The form is available at AYSO.org or from the AYSO Supply Center. An appropriate referee staff member verifies that all requirements have been “signed off” by individuals authorized to do so. After obtaining the verifying signature, the referee must send the form to:

AYSO National Support and Training Center
12501 S. Isis Avenue
Hawthorne, CA 90250



For Intermediate and Advanced Referee upgrades, the verification of requirements is performed either by the Area (or Section) Referee Administrator or the Area (or Section) Director of Assessment. For National Referee upgrades, the verification of requirements is performed by the Section Referee Administrator or Section Director of Assessment. At all levels, this verification of requirements is a simple administrative action whose sole purpose is to verify that the individuals who have signed the form indicating completion of the individual requirements for upgrade are in fact authorized to do so. The verification is not a separate approval step.

Obtaining Certificates and Badges

U-8 Official, Assistant Referee, and Regional Referee badges (and, optionally, certificates) are awarded by the course instructor upon completion of the associated course and exam. These (and only these) entry-level badges and certificates may be ordered directly from the AYSO Supply Center. Intermediate and Advanced badges are supplied by the Referee Program Coordinator (see p. 7) to the Area or Section Referee Administrator, who awards a badge upon receipt of a completed and verified Application for Referee Certification form. A National badge (and certificate) is mailed to the upgraded referee by the National Referee Administrator (see p. 7) upon receipt of a completed, signed, and verified Application for Referee Certification form.

Scheduling Referees

A thorough review of the various ways referees can be scheduled can be found in the *Referee Administrator Reference Guide*, which is available from the AYSO Supply Center. Scheduling is one of the most important aspects of the regional referee program. If done haphazardly, scheduling can be the Achilles heel that may undermine the morale of the referees and hinder the regional referee program. The task of scheduling referees for each of the region's games throughout the soccer season involves a vast effort of coordinating individuals' personal schedules, their children's schedules and game/field schedules. Confronted with this chore, the initial reaction is to believe that all the variables cannot be brought into control. Obviously, the Regional Referee Administrator should attempt to seek assistance in conducting the scheduling effort. It is strongly recommended that the RRA appoint a coordinator of scheduling to devote full attention to this important task.

In filling this position, the RRA should recognize that this is one of the regional referee staff positions that do not require a trained referee. The coordinator of scheduling simply needs to be someone who is organized, computer-literate, a good communicator, and skilled at coordinating the activities of others. The RRA should provide the coordinator of scheduling with a list of what referees are available, and guidelines as to what level games they are qualified to officiate.

The scheduling of youth referees should be given some special thought and planning. Some regions schedule teams of youth referees, while other regions want an experienced adult referee on each team. Certainly, the youth referees should be consulted on this. There is a lot to be said for putting three young friends together to work as a team, they enjoy it! Youth referees call a very good game, but they should not be put in a situation where they must deal with adult dissent. A responsible adult should be assigned to be at the field where youth referees are working games. The responsible adult can explain to anyone who needs reminding that negative comments about the referees are inappropriate and are not tolerated in AYSO. This is especially critical when youth referees are involved.

There is much to be gained by using all-women teams occasionally as well. A well-officiated game done by three experienced women referees can help dispel some commonly held stereotypes about the competence of women referees.

Schedulers should support the Referee Mentor/Advisor and Assessor Program by scheduling games to provide appropriate time for the conduct of assessments and observations and debriefing of candidates.

Be sure to obtain a copy of the *Referee Administrator Reference Guide* for more details regarding scheduling referees and the various options available.



Ensuring General and Personal Safety

For additional safety information, please refer to the *AYSO Guidance for Referees and Coaches*.

The referee administrator has many concerns, but one of the foremost is safety. The entire referee staff needs to be involved both before and during the season to deal with all the factors that affect safety for both the players and the referees.

Factors that affect the safety of referees and players equally are:

- field conditions
- weather
- fitness
- pre-game warm-up

Factors that affect the safety of the players are

- players equipment
- goalposts and corner flags
- dangerous play
- treatment after an apparent injury

Referee administrators cannot demand referee fitness, but they can encourage it. Talk about fitness at clinics, in casual conversations with referees, and wherever the opportunity presents itself. Point out that you have a selfish reason for wanting referees fit: fit referees are less likely to miss games due to injury.

At clinics, have a sport's trainer teach your referees the best way to stretch and warm up before a game to avoid injury. Get referees to help each other to remember to stretch before and after games. Stretching should be a ritual at all pre-game and post-game gatherings of referees. Make fitness and stretching a part of referee social interactions.

In the off-season the referee administrator and the referee staff can promote referee fitness. Remind the referees to work on fitness so they will be prepared for the season. –Get fit to referee – don't referee to get fit". Use clinic mailings, registration, and newsletters to promote fitness also.

Sponsor a fitness group. Invite referees to jog together 3 or 4 times a week. Get a fitness expert to attend one of these workouts to teach fitness techniques.

Teach safety and first-aid with a clinic on sports medicine. Coordinate this through the region's risk manager/safety director.

Work with the field director to ensure that the fields and sidelines are as smooth as possible. Also check the goalposts for structural damage. Holes and uneven ground on the fields and sidelines can cause the region to lose the services of its best referees. Work with the field director, sparing no effort to get the fields in the best condition possible. Referees should be encouraged to contact the field director when dangerous field conditions exist. The referee organization should also remember to thank and recognize a hard working field director (many consider the job of field director as one of the most difficult and thankless).

Work with the regional board to ensure that everyone knows that games will end, and not simply be postponed for a few minutes, when thunder is heard or lightning is seen. It does no good to stop a game for lightning if people are going to stand around by the field wondering if the game will continue later. If there is no doubt that the game is finished for the day, people will clear the fields and get into the safety of their cars more quickly.

AYSO Severe Weather Policy

The National Severe Storms Laboratory (NSSL) currently recommends that all individuals should leave the game site and reach a safe structure or location when lightning is within 6 miles.



The National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Lightning Safety Guidelines indicate that since lightning can strike out of a clear blue sky as far away as ten miles from a rain storm, when the “Flash-to-Bang” count is thirty seconds or less, everyone should leave the game site to a safe location.

The United States Soccer Federation (USSF) position is that if you can hear thunder you are within reach of lightning and that referees must protect the safety of all participants by stopping game activities quickly, so that participants and spectators may retire to a safer place before the lightning threat becomes significant. Applying the 30-30 rule is recommended and to wait thirty minutes or more after hearing the last thunder before leaving shelter.

In view of the above, the following is the position of the AYSO National Referee Commission regarding severe weather:

It is said that lightning can strike from a clear blue sky within a ten-mile radius of a storm. It is therefore strongly recommended that practices and games be terminated immediately upon hearing thunder or seeing lightning. “If you can see it - flee it; if you can hear it – clear it.”

Instruct referees not to wait until a thunderstorm is near to stop the game. The game needs to be stopped while the storm is miles away so that the field can be cleared of people before the lightning is overhead.

Inspecting Players’ Equipment

The referee’s opinion as to dangerous equipment is the final authority in the FIFA *Laws of the Game*. As Regional Referee Administrator, you must set minimum standards to help your referees who may not recognize possible dangerous situations. The specifics regarding what equipment is and is not permitted can be found in the AYSO publication “Guidance for Referee and Coaches” make sure all your referees are supplied with a current edition.

Dealing with Player Injuries

In AYSO, the coaches have a form signed by the parent giving authority to deal with the injured player. The referee does not have that authority. Parents and coaches also get very concerned when they think their young child is injured on the field. For these two reasons it is important for referees to stop the game and bring the coach on the field when a player appears injured. Both coaches and parents want the game stopped immediately. The referee should not hesitate to stop play to allow injured players to be attended to by the coach. To parents and other spectators, seconds seem like minutes when a child is on the ground.

The referee’s calm voice can be reassuring to an injured young player. First he/she can encourage the child to avoid further injury by lying still. EMT’s, paramedics, or doctors can always be found to address your referees at clinics or meetings to teach the signs of possible injury. This training has an extra advantage beyond the safety of the players the referees can feel better prepared to deal with a possible emergency in the event it is necessary to do so.

Dealing with Bleeding

Law 5 of the *Laws of the Game* states that the referee “ensures that any player bleeding from a wound leaves the field of play. The player may only return on receiving a signal from the referee, who must be satisfied that the bleeding has stopped”. It is the decision of the AYSO NRP that a player, referee, or assistant referee who is bleeding from a wound must leave the field and may only return when the bleeding has been stopped, the wound is covered, and the blood on the skin and clothing is neutralized.



Miscellaneous Administrative Matters

The topics in this section address issues that arise frequently. For additional guidance on these and other administrative matters, refer to the *Guidance for Referees and Coaches*, available from the AYSO Supply Center.

Allowing Additional Clothing

Regions in colder climates must decide what additional clothing, worn for warmth, will be allowed. Ideally, the rule would allow only sweats, worn under the uniform, and a stocking hat. But in reality, not all families can be expected to have these items, and so other types of long pants, jackets, and hooded sweatshirts are often allowed. The region should have a policy on this that is printed for coaches, parents, and referees. If jackets have zippers or snaps, they must be closed and not flapping loose. Hoods that are not being worn over the head should be tucked in. Long pants should only be allowed when the weather is cold enough to warrant it.

Checking players' equipment should be a ritual taught in detail at referee clinics. The more prescribed the ritual, the less likely it will be skipped. Some regions have both teams to line up for the coin flip and/or equipment check. One benefit is that the referee's instructions are heard by everyone. But most important, the equipment check is thorough and not forgotten. In the upper divisions, with older players, the preference is for minimum pre-game instructions, usually involving only the team captains. Player equipment inspections are done individually rather than with both teams assembled together.

Managing Monitored ("Free") Substitution

The AYSO National Board of Directors, at its March 22-23, 1985, meeting authorized the creation of a one-year national pilot program for U-16/U-19 play. The following year, the Board announced the indefinite continuation of the program. The board reaffirmed the appropriateness of this policy in July, 2003. It also reaffirmed that this policy only applies to U-16/U-19 play.

The purpose of the experimental program is to explore different ways to enable sections, areas, and regions to attract and keep U-16/U-19 players in the AYSO program.

Eligibility: All regions (chartered or pilot) or areas that have or wish to establish a U-16/U-19 or combination program and wish to deviate from the National Rules & Regulations with respect to substitution and other matters are subject to this policy.

Guidelines: The experimental program will continue to permit U-16/U-19 play to be conducted with greater flexibility by permitting the following:

- More informal play;
- More games and less practices;
- Co-ed play;
- Providing different programs in U-16 and/or U-19 based on the ability of the participants to commit their time (e.g., a 10-hour program for those with more time and a four-hour program for those with less time).
- Fixing game times on a regular basis to suit the working schedule and other commitments of the participants;
- More flexible player substitutions;
- Limitation of the play of any participant who is excessively violent and receives a red card during a game;
- Creation of a "traveling" team to participate in non-AYSO leagues but only where there are insufficient AYSO players to form a viable U-16 or U-19 league or a combined U-16/U-19 league within the region or area;
- Creation of a "select" team to play in USYSA, SAY or other tournaments;
- Creation of neighborhood or regional or area based teams to minimize the travel of the participants.



Monitored Substitution: Much of the concern about the need to continue the U-16/U-19 experimental program seems to have centered around the desire to have free substitution. Free substitution will be permitted in the U-16/U-19 Experimental Program, but *only if it is handled in a manner that will ensure that every participant plays at least one half of every game by requiring a separate time monitor, independent of either team or coach, who checks each player in or out of the game.*

Other Areas Of Flexibility

- Rural, suburban, ex-urban and city areas seem to require different types of programs because of the varying demands on the time of the participants.
- Co-ed practices and/or teams or parallel social programs should be considered since they have been found to lead to greater participation.
- Coordinate team structuring, playing schedule and practice time and season with the local high schools in the event the local school rule prohibits high school and AYSO play at the same time.

Monitoring: It is the responsibility of the regional commissioner or the area director, as the case may be, to monitor the experimental program during the season.

Conclusion

Experienced Regional Referee Administrators know the basic tasks:

- recruiting,
- training,
- certifying,
- equipping,
- scheduling,
- assessing/advising,
- enforcing, etc.

Yet the proactive Regional Referee Administrator knows the job involves much more. In fact, the more subtle aspects of being an RRA are not part of the normal job description.

Although you are in charge of all regional referees, your responsibilities are not limited to them. As the RRA, you are the link between the referees and the other members of the AYSO regional team. Therefore, you must deal with all groups using support, mediation, and professionalism.

Some of the rules you already know: never criticize another referee; avoid needless debate with coaches and spectators about a referee's decisions, especially during a game; etc. But there are other rules that will create a supportive relationship between you and your referees, as well as between you and the rest of your region:

- Deal quickly and positively with poor officiating through discreet one-to-one contact and counseling.
- Provide support to referees and officials by actively implementing a Referee Mentor/Advisor program.
- Address coach and spectator concerns sensitively for the welfare of your referees and the region.
- Help your referees keep a positive attitude toward all coaches and spectators, even the difficult ones.
- Maintain your referee's good humor through camaraderie, praise and rewards.

Even when you provide solid support for your referees, you can still experience conflicts between referees and the rest of the program. This is where your proactive mediation role becomes critical.



As the Regional Referee Administrator, you are uniquely positioned to be the official speaker for your referees. This also makes you the official receiver of complaints. If your reactions are brusque and defensive, you may be supporting your referees but alienating yourself from the rest of the program. If your response is an attempt to mediate the conflict, listening with genuine interest and responding with careful consideration, you can protect your referees and turn probable opponents into possible allies. You will also need to be diligent to mediate referee antagonism toward coaches, spectators and players.

Through your support and mediation activities, you are demonstrating your professionalism. Professionalism is acting and being the best Regional Referee Administrator you can be. This means, in addition to a positive attitude and philosophy, having a good command of the *Laws of the Game*, exercising competent management (including the delegation of responsibility) and attention to detail. When you present yourself with professionalism and a cooperative attitude, you increase the odds of being respected and accepted, and this helps all your referees as well as the local program.

Support, mediation and professionalism!! As Regional Referee Administrator, your example in these areas will help your referees, other regional volunteers and most importantly, the players in your region. Remember: ***“In AYSO, it’s about more than the game!”***



Instruction Program

The AYSO Referee Instructor Program

Referee Instructors play a crucial role in the development of referees and the overall success of AYSO. This is particularly true for instructors who teach entry-level referee courses, since it is in these courses that new volunteers first develop an understanding of the most important and fundamental aspects of refereeing AYSO soccer. Instructors must ensure that AYSO philosophy, policies, programs, and child and volunteer protection issues are explained. AYSO instructors must instill in the minds of the referees they instruct the importance of understanding and applying the spirit of the Laws and the significant role they each play to ensure that, “In AYSO, it’s about more than the game!” Having qualified local instructors is important because they give the region the flexibility to train new volunteers at a time and place most convenient for the local referees. The AYSO Referee Instructor Program offers opportunities for volunteers to become trained and certified as instructors at three levels: Referee Instructor, Advanced Referee Instructor and National Referee Instructor. The AYSO Referee Instructor Program also provides standardized curriculum and teaching plans for all training courses to encourage consistency of referee training across AYSO.

The AYSO Referee Instructor Program consists of three components:

- **Introduction to Instruction Course:** This course emphasizes common instructional skills and strategies applicable to all disciplines.
- **Referee discipline-specific training courses:** The Referee Instructor Course and Advanced Referee Instructor Course cover the referee-specific knowledge needed to instruct at each of these levels. National Referee Instructors are developed through a mentoring process.
- **Student teaching component:** Students practice teaching in real course situations with evaluation and mentoring by certified Referee Instructor Evaluators.

The criteria and requirements for certification as an AYSO Referee Instructor or Instructor Evaluator are listed in the Appendix of this manual (page 56).

Questions or concerns related to the AYSO Referee Instructor Program may be emailed to NRP.instruction@ayso.org.

Planning a Referee Training Course

Are you ready to give a clinic? Whether this is your first or your thirty-first referee clinic, the steps you must go through are the same. You must plan: plan for every little detail, every contingency. The major difference between the experienced instructor and the new instructor is that this year the new instructor will make the mistakes the experienced instructor made last year. Information in this document will help you to prevent making the mistakes made in the past. Perhaps the best advice you can get is, —“You fail to plan, then plan to fail.”

Okay, you are an instructor. You want to put on a class, but where do you start? Start with a need. Do you need more referees? (What region doesn’t?) When will the referees be needed? With just this information, you can make several decisions: whether or not outdoor classes may be held; the number of days that will be required. Some recruiting methods are time-dependent, and training aids could be affected by the time available. The amount of time available to work with co-instructors could be hampered.



As you can easily see, the need for planning becomes very evident. If you wait until the last minute to plan a clinic, you reduce the number of options and invite the possibility, and perhaps even the likelihood, of failure.

One effective method of planning is to determine when you want the class to finish, and work backwards from there. The steps used might be similar to the following list.

1. Contact the appropriate Director of Referee Instruction.
2. Determine total time available from the present to the training date.
3. Determine the amount of planning time required prior to the first class. Include time for notification of students, instructors, obtaining suitable class space, preparing lesson plans and developing training aids.
4. Determine the number of hours per class and the number of classes per week, and select which days the classes will be taught.
5. Determine the location and get commitments for use of the facility.
6. Contact potential instructors; determine availability; assign classes.
7. Initiate the recruiting program. Let potential students know when and where the clinic will be. If possible, get commitments for attendance.
8. Review lesson plans, develop training aids, practice lessons, and review classes with co-instructors.

Choosing a Location

Facilities for referee instruction should include the following:

- Blackboard or marker board
- Overhead projector and screen or portable computer with projector
- Electrical outlet (always bring your own extension cord)
- Tables or desks for students
- Enough space in the room for demonstrations
- Soccer field (gym if necessary when no field is available).

Possible locations:

- School classroom: junior high, high school, college (elementary schools should be avoided due to small size of desks)
- Church hall
- Youth or senior citizen center
- Library conference room
- Town hall meeting room

Class Scheduling

Classes may be scheduled in a variety of ways to accommodate the varying conditions and needs of local programs. Self-contained lesson plans are available for teaching the complete courses. Additionally, all of the courses, except the National Referee Course, may be offered in smaller increments of time over an extended period.

The type of class schedule used depends upon a variety of factors such as availability of facilities, instructors, and students. The most important consideration to remember is to teach the information that is needed for the experience level of the students. For example, when teaching entry level officials who will only be assigned to lower division or short sided matches (U-6 to U-8), it is neither advisable nor productive to teach aspects of the game that are rarely present at this level of play. Likewise, when teaching advanced officials, it would not be worthwhile to schedule lengthy sessions on such aspects as ball in and out of play, basic referee and assistant referee signals, or correct restart procedures. For course length and content requirements of the various AYSO referee training courses, please refer to the Referee Training Courses section in this manual.

Use of Co-Instructors

It is a good idea to make use of additional AYSO certified instructors in your region or area. Classes are always made more interesting when taught by a variety of instructors. Whenever possible, try to assign at least one woman referee instructor, whose presence may make the training process more



comfortable for female candidates. At the same time, having women instructors demonstrates the knowledge and competence of women referees, a positive message for both women and men referee candidates. If you have not worked with a particular instructor before, it is a good idea to go over the particular class he or she will be assigned to teach. You may want to practice together, especially if you are using a newly qualified instructor. If you will be using an instructor whose teaching is unfamiliar to you, ensure approved teaching or lesson plans are being used. Be sure to ask your guest instructor what teaching aids he/she will be using so you will know if a slide, overhead, movie, or multimedia projector will be needed.

Teaching Aids

Teaching aids are not mandatory, but they can be very helpful. Remember that 70-80 percent of all learning is accomplished through the eyes. As Ken Aston said, “see and I understand.” As you begin to prepare classes, think about what teaching aids, particularly visual aids, you might be able to use to assist in the transfer of knowledge to the students.

The National Referee Program has produced a number of very good teaching aids which are available on AYSO.org. These aids are constantly being produced and improved. Contact your referee staffs or other instructors for assistance in finding the most recent list of available teaching aids.

If no teaching aids are available, or if the available aids do not suit your purpose, do not despair. Use your imagination; develop your own. As you develop teaching aids, consider the following:

- Objective: the teaching aid should be designed to assist you. It should focus the students' attention on the information you want them to retain. A beautiful, well-designed aid that illustrates something other than what you are teaching will distract the students.
- Audience: the teaching aid should be tailored to the audience and should not be too complex.
- Accuracy: the information on the teaching aid must be accurate and current. If you start from material provided by another instructor, be sure to verify that it is still correct. Use current reference sources, such as the current year AYSO edition of the *Laws of the Game*.
- Type of presentation: how durable should the teaching aid be? Is this a one-time class, or is this a class for which you will use this aid over and over? How important is this presentation? Can you afford to spend hours preparing an aid that will be used for 30 seconds in one presentation?
- Time for preparation: how much time do you have to develop the aid?
- Simplicity: keep the teaching aid simple. A picture is worth a thousand words. A picture of a thousand words isn't worth much.

When using teaching aids, remember the following tips:

- Practice with the teaching aid. An instructor who fumbles with an aid or who is perceived as not familiar with its content loses credibility with the students.
- Don't have the aid in front of the class before you need it. When you are finished with it, put it away so that it does not become a distraction for the students.

Using Written Examinations Effectively

All AYSO referee certification levels require taking a written exam. For the entry-level courses, the exam is a part of the course; for higher-level courses, the exam is generally offered in conjunction with the course. The purpose of these exams is to confirm that knowledge has been acquired, not to “pass” or “fail” anyone. Nevertheless, many people get unduly anxious about written exams. Instructors can reduce the anxiety and increase the value of the exams as follows:

- Set aside sufficient time for administration of the exam, which in some cases could be on a separate day from the rest of the course.
- Allow time for review and a question-and-answer session before the exam.
- Establish an appropriate atmosphere in the classroom for administering the exam. Ensure that the room is free of distractions and/or interruptions. Be sure that the students put away their



reference materials before starting the exam. AYSO Referee exams, other than the designated sample tests, are closed-book.

- Make sure that the students read the instructions on the cover page of the exam. Emphasize that there are no “trick” questions. Encourage the students to ask the instructor if the meaning of a question is unclear.
- Be available during testing so you can answer questions.
- As students complete the exam, ask them to leave the room so as not to disturb those who have not yet finished.
- Grade the exams as soon as possible. When grading, understand the intent of the student’s answer and give credit if you are convinced that the student knew the answer, even if it isn’t perfectly expressed. Don’t be petty – remember that the purpose of the exam is confirmation of learning.
- Review the exam with the students and ensure that everyone understands the correct answer to each question. (Answer keys provided for most exams include explanations with the answers.) In some cases, it may be appropriate or necessary to go over individual exams one-on-one.

Those who did not achieve a passing grade should be given some extra tutoring and should be encouraged to take the exam again. Have a plan for administering the exam a second time. Most exams have two different versions available – use a different version the second time in accordance with the AYSO National Referee Program’s retesting policy (see below). However, if a student fails the exam badly, he/she should probably not take a second exam without taking some time to study, and the instructor should encourage that.

Well before the course, the instructor should obtain the current version(s) of the appropriate exam. The following exams are available on the AYSO.org website:

- U-8 Official (2 versions)
- Assistant Referee (2 versions)
- Basic Referee (2 versions)
- Intermediate Referee (2 versions)
- Advanced Referee (2 versions)
- National Referee (2 versions)
- Referee Instructor (2 versions)
- Advanced Referee Instructor (2 versions)
- Referee Assessor
- National Referee Assessor
- Sample Intermediate Referee
- Sample Advanced Referee
- National Referee Pretest (sample exam)

Note that the exams are password-protected, except for the sample exams. (Answer keys for sample exams are password-protected.) Instructors may obtain the passwords from their Section Referee Administrator or Section Director of Referee Instruction.

To preserve the utility of the database from which exam questions are drawn, instructors must not allow students to retain exams. After the exams have been reviewed, they should be collected and destroyed.

Periodically, new versions of the exams with grading keys are produced. Instructors should ensure they have the latest versions and destroy old versions. Old versions must not be distributed to students as “practice tests”, since this compromises the exam question database. Current sample tests (see list above) are intended for this purpose.

With the exception of the National Referee and National Assessor exams, all exams can be administered by any Referee Administrator, Director of Assessment, Director of Instruction, or referee instructor. Thus, students who need to retake an exam should not feel compelled to do so immediately, and instructors should arrange for retesting to occur utilizing these authorized administrators. The National Referee and National Assessor exams must be administered by the Section Referee Administrator, Section Director of Assessment, Section Director of Instruction, a National Referee Instructor or a person designated by any one of them.

Instructors who wish to provide suggestions for improving AYSO’s written exams should complete the feedback form, available on the AYSO.org website on the same page as the exams. Comments may



also be sent to NRP.exams@ayso.org. Include the exam name and version *and the question identifier* – a pair of numbers of the form nn/mm in the right margin of the question.

Retesting Policy

If a candidate does not achieve the required score on a written referee exam (including Law, Assessor, and Instructor exams), the candidate may retake the exam at any time provided that the version of the exam used for the retake (a) differs from all versions administered to the candidate in the preceding four weeks, and (b) is current (that is, no newer version of the exam has been issued by the National Referee Program).

Since at any time there are two current versions of most exams (see list, above), a retake can occur (using a different version) as soon as the candidate wishes. If a candidate does not pass the second time, (s)he will generally have to wait four weeks before trying again.

Roster Return Policy

The AYSO National Board of Directors has established the following policy regarding course rosters:

In order to ensure attendees receive credit for completed training, it is vital that training rosters are returned to the National Support and Training Center (NSTC) to be entered into the AYSO database in a timely manner. Therefore, the disposition of any training course authorized by the NSTC must be resolved within 60 days following the scheduled date of the course and notification of the course status provided to the roster administrator at the NSTC. Any lead Instructor who has failed to account for a roster within the 60 day period following the scheduled training date will not be authorized to conduct additional training until the past due roster is returned or its status satisfactorily resolved.

A Final Word to Instructors

As AYSO Instructors you are a window through which our volunteer referees see the AYSO experience as it is intended to be for all who participate or watch AYSO games. Keep that vision clear and unobstructed and remember to instill the belief that: *“In AYSO, it’s about more than the game!”*



Assessment and Mentor/Advisor Program

Effective referees are indispensable if the American Youth Soccer Organization is to grow and prosper. Effective referee assessors and mentor/advisors are also indispensable if our core of effective referees is to continue to grow. The effectiveness of our referee assessors and mentor/advisors has a tremendous effect on our referees and ultimately the overall success of AYSO. The goal of the Assessment, Mentor/Advisor Program is to produce effective referees through the development and use of effective referee assessors and mentor/advisors.

Assessor, Mentor/Advisor Training Program Overview

The AYSO Referee Assessor, Mentor/Advisor Training program is a voluntary program in which referees and other qualified individuals are encouraged to participate. It is designed to enable anyone with appropriate soccer experience and training to assist in improving the standard of refereeing within the AYSO program by observing, mentoring, and assessing our volunteer referees. Assessors and Mentor/Advisors need not be current referees. The program is administered by AYSO Directors of Assessment.

Referee Mentor/Advisors and Assessors

The first level of developmental support for AYSO officials is the Referee Mentor/Advisor Program. Under this program, Regional Referee Administrators and Regional Referee Directors of Assessment identify and assign qualified referees to act as a helping hand to new and less experienced officials. This helping hand consists of frequent contact to support and encourage development of officials. Experience shows that the Mentor/Advisor Program is important to referee development, retention, and recruiting.

At the second level is the Assessment program. This program trains two levels of assessor (Assessor and National Assessor) to provide required evaluations of referees for upgrade. These assessors are also encouraged to act as Referee Mentor/Advisors for less experienced officials.

Observation and Assessment

Part of referee upgrade involves evaluation of the on-the-field performance of the official. This evaluation serves at least three purposes. First, it ensures officiating competency at the level required to officiate a Typical Regular Season AYSO match in a specified age group. Second, it provides a mechanism for officials to obtain positive and constructive feedback and to measure the progress of their officiating skills. Third, it provides a means of recognition for that progress. Assessments and Observations are either for upgrade or for service. The field evaluation of referee performance for upgrade is either an observation or an assessment, depending on the specific upgrade. Assessments and Observations may also be used to provide the referee with feedback that is not associated with upgrade. These service assessments and observations are conducted using the same criteria and process outlined in this section of the manual.

Observation of an official for upgrade should be performed by an AYSO Assessor (or National Assessor). (Under circumstances where a qualified assessor is not available, an observation for upgrade may be performed by a Referee Mentor/Advisor.) Observations are an opportunity to observe a referee under game conditions with positive feedback provided to the upgrade candidate. These observations are intended to be part of an informal and relaxed activity designed to assist in the development and improvement of a fellow official's skills. Upon completion of the game and after receiving a debriefing, the candidate for upgrade has fulfilled the observation requirement for Intermediate Referee. Observations are also used as a development tool and may be conducted independent of the upgrade process.



Assessment of an official for upgrade must be performed by an AYSO Assessor or National Assessor. Assessments are an opportunity for the assessor to observe a referee under game conditions, evaluate his/her performance, and subsequently provide balanced, constructive feedback. The assessor also decides whether the referee has demonstrated the skills and proficiency necessary for upgrade. These requirements are described beginning on page 40. The training and development of assessors is described beginning on page 48.

Referee Mentor/Advisor Program

The Mentor/Advisor

The Referee Mentor/Advisor acts as A HELPING HAND FOR NEW AND DEVELOPING OFFICIALS. The Mentor/Advisor plays many important roles in the development of referees:

- As **Friend**, the Mentor/Advisor must be persuasive in his or her comments to the officials. The official must trust the motives as well as the judgment of the Mentor/Advisor and believe that the Mentor/Advisor gives freely of time and effort.
- As **Observer**, the Mentor/Advisor must provide sound, simple advice and assistance that leads the trainee on the shortest path to success. The official must believe in the sincerity and credibility of the assistance given.
- As **Supporter**, the Mentor/Advisor offers encouragement in unlimited supply. In this view, the official can do no wrong, but can always be encouraged to do better. *This is unconditional support for the person, not for everything the person does.*
- As **Advocate**, the Mentor/Advisor is obligated to take the part of the official in all encounters. No criticism or dissent can go unchecked; no party can challenge without the proactive, positive involvement of the Mentor/Advisor.
- As **Choreographer**, the Mentor/Advisor helps the new and developing official to stage the officiating process. From the opening (arrival and inspection of the field) to closing (post-game ceremony and bookkeeping), the Mentor/Advisor helps the official to move with purpose and direction from one part of the process to the next. The Mentor/Advisor also encourages and assists the official in moving through upgrades in certification.
- As **Advisor**, the Mentor/Advisor provides accurate, factual information that gives the official additional insight and understanding.
- As **Coach**, the Mentor/Advisor offers tactical instructions that help the official to operate at the top of his/her game, and provides the official with practical suggestions to improve performance.
- As **Role Model**, the Mentor/Advisor gives the developing official a real person to emulate. The Mentor/Advisor's attitudes, values, and behaviors set the example that the official is likely to follow on the field.

The Mentor/Advisor Program can be a great tool for any AYSO region's retention and up-grade efforts. If successful, the program also aids the recruiting effort, and potential volunteers realize the safety net that surrounds each new official.

The Mentor/Advisor Program is simple, effective, and free. And, best of all, it works.

Mentor/Advisor Qualifications

The Mentor/Advisor should:

- Be committed to AYSO and the AYSO philosophies
- Be willing to devote time and energy to the Mentor/Advisor Program
- Have clear and concise verbal communication skills
- Learn to properly observe official's performance
- Have a positive attitude in presenting information



- Develop an aptitude for listening and responding to official's questions and concerns
- Encourage officials and understand an official's shortcomings
- Serve as a role model to other volunteers
- Know the laws of the game and referee mechanics

Administration of the Mentor/Advisor Program

The Regional Commissioner should ensure that qualified personnel fill the positions of Regional Referee Administrator (RRA) and Regional Director of Assessment (RDA) and that the Mentor/Advisor Program has a high priority in the Region.

The Regional Referee Administrator (RRA) supports and encourages the Regional Director of Assessment (RDA) to develop and administer the program. Support must include ensuring that scheduling is done in such a manner to support the Mentor/Advisors and officials being assisted.

The Regional Director of Assessment (RDA) develops and administers the program including:

- Recruiting and training Mentor/Advisors. It is recommended that sufficient Mentor/Advisors be assigned to provide an Mentor/Advisor to each U-8 Official, Assistant Referee, and Regional Referee. Mentor/Advisors should be assigned no more than three (3) officials at any one time.
- Developing a specific program that will ensure assignment of an Assessor to each new U-8 Official, Assistant Referee and Regional Referee during at least the first season of the official's assignment of games in the Region.
- Encouraging Mentor/Advisors to continue their education to become Assessors and National Assessors.

The Area Referee Administrator (ARA) and Area Director of Assessment (ADA) should provide support and encouragement to the RRA's and RDA's in their Area and should provide inter-Region support for the program.

Section Directors and Section Referee Staff should give the Mentor/Advisor Program high priority in the Section and provide support to the Area and Regional programs.

For a successful Mentor/Advisor Program, Regional Referee Staff must:

- Identify and appoint sufficient Mentor/Advisors to meet Region requirements
- Provide Mentor/Advisors with adequate training and material
 - Conduct a briefing on their duties and responsibilities
 - Consider conducting training consisting of role playing for new Mentor/Advisors before working with officials
 - Provide a copy of the Referee Mentor/Advisor Manual
- Assign Mentor/Advisors to officials immediately upon the official receiving training and certification
- Avoid scheduling a Mentor/Advisor as a referee in a game immediately before or after a game in which (s)he is advising an official
- Recognize Mentor/Advisors with awards or other recognition programs.

Alternative Administration of the Mentor/Advisor Program

While a one-on-one, ongoing Mentor/Advisor Program is most effective, there are times when resources are not available or where conditions exist that prohibit this structure. In these rare cases, interim steps can be taken to support a Mentor/Advisor Program until circumstances permit a one-on-one organization:

- Assign fields and times to Mentor/Advisors: A Mentor/Advisor will observe and support all officials on the fields during the times assigned. Officials should be informed, in advance, of the Mentor/Advisor's role. If necessary, a Mentor/Advisor may cover two fields at a time.
- Form teams of officials: A Mentor/Advisor should be assigned to a team of officials who will rotate duties during a series of games. The Mentor/Advisor should give feedback at the conclusion of the series of games.



- Assign in groups: Mentor/Advisors should be assigned refereeing duties in close proximity to an official who is to be advised. The Mentor/Advisor should be available to assist the official and respond to questions before and after the game.
- Recruit retired or injured referees to act as Mentor/Advisors. Some of these referees may not initially meet all of the prerequisites of a Mentor/Advisor. They should be carefully selected and thoroughly briefed on their duties. They should be encouraged to complete the necessary requirements as soon as possible.

Guidance for Mentor/Advisors

Initial Contact:

- Contact the official you are assigned to advise as soon as possible. Initial contact may be by telephone or e-mail. Personal contact should be made as soon as possible. **Do not expect the official to make initial contact with you.**
- Arrange an initial meeting in which you:
 - Introduce yourself and explain your referee experience
 - Describe the Mentor/Advisor Program
 - Make sure that the official understands that the Mentor/Advisory process is intended to be a positive experience
 - Learn as much about the official as possible
 - Understand the official's goals, objectives, experience and concerns
 - Answer any questions or doubts
 - Arrange for a next meeting, including attending the official's next game.
- Develop your objectives that meet the needs of the official and AYSO

As a Mentor/Advisor you:

- Act as a Mentor/Advisor in all of the roles outlined above
- Always present a positive attitude toward officiating and AYSO
- Create a safe, positive environment for improvement
- Be available as often as needed to provide support and answer questions
- Observe the official as often as needed
- Encourage the official to continue certification to higher levels of officiating
- Ask the official to serve as assistant referee for one of your games
- Participate with the official in continuing training and social activities offered by the Region
- Seek help from others to insure that the needs of the official are met
- Report to the Regional referee staff any special needs or problems that should be addressed for the official
- Actively recruit other volunteers to become officials and Mentor/Advisors
- Support the official at any game you observe. This includes positive comments to coaches, spectators, and players.
- Provide **positive** feedback to the official after all observations:
 - Make at least two or three positive comments
 - Identify no more than two areas for improvement by the official
 - Be specific in all comments made to the official using game experience or specific examples of performance.
 - Give small, attainable, immediately improvable goals for the official
 - Use positive language such as:
 - -You might consider trying..."
 - -Other referees often find that..."
 - -From my experience..."
 - -It may be easier for you if you..."
 - Avoid phrases such as:
 - -You should..."
 - -Always..."
 - -Never..."
 - -Always..."
 - End discussions of observations with a positive comment
- Encourage the official at all times.



Assessment: Requirements and Procedures

Assessments and observations, as elements of the referee upgrade process, have a somewhat more formal structure than the referee advising discussed above. Referees who are upgrading above the Regional Referee level have learned the basics of soccer officiating and seek certification of their greater skills and proficiency. Accordingly, the requirements for upgrade at each level are progressively more specific, and there is a recommended process for evaluation (observation or assessment). These processes are described below. If the recommended process is not followed, an assessment done by certified AYSO assessor must nevertheless be accepted.

Intermediate Referee Observation

Requirement: One observation as referee in a U-12 game. The game should be of regular AYSO length.

Recommended Process:

1. The candidate should contact the RDA or RRA of his/her home Region requesting an observation. It is recommended that the RDA and RRA be pro-active in scheduling observations as soon as possible for all Intermediate Referee candidates.
2. The RDA or RRA will schedule an Assessor (or, if necessary, a Mentor/Advisor) to conduct the observation.
3. The RRA or Regional Assignor will schedule a game for the observation. Where possible the following conditions should be observed:
 - a. The game will be conducted in the home Region of the referee to be observed.
 - b. Referee to be observed will not be assigned a game immediately before or after the game to be assessed.
 - c. Qualified Assistant Referees will be assigned to the game.
 - d. Game time, location, and names and contact information of Assistant Referees should be provided to the referee to be observed in advance of the game.
4. The referee to be observed is responsible for bringing to the observation the appropriate certification forms necessary to record the results of the observation.
5. The observation and the observation debriefing will be conducted in accordance with current guidelines. Observations are a learning experience where the referee observed is given guidance to improve his/her skills as a referee. Once the referee has been observed and debriefed, the referee has met the observation requirement for upgrade to Intermediate Referee.

Advanced Referee Assessment

Requirements: One assessment as referee and one as an assistant referee in a U-14 or above game. The game should be of regular AYSO length (preferred) or a game with each half not less than 30 minutes in duration (acceptable). Non-AYSO matches are acceptable as long as the game is refereed using the diagonal system of control and meets minimum duration requirement.

Recommended Process:

1. The candidate should contact the RDA or RRA of his/her home Region requesting an assessment.
2. The RDA or RRA will schedule an Assessor (or National Assessor) through the ADA or ARA. Assessments are a right of any referee. Regional and Area staffs must not refuse to schedule an assessment; their opinion of the likelihood of the candidate to be successful in the assessment is not relevant.
3. The RRA or Regional Assignor will schedule a game for the assessment. When the assessment is in an inter-Regional, inter-Area, tournament, or other game the appropriate approval authority referee staff will coordinate the game assignment. Where possible the following conditions should be observed:



- a. Referee to be assessed will not be assigned a game immediately before or after the game to be assessed.
 - b. Qualified Assistant Referees will be assigned to the game.
 - c. Assistant Referees will not be assigned a game immediately before or after the game to be assessed. The referee assessed should have the option of having the Assistant Referees available for part or all of the assessment debriefing.
 - d. Game time, location, and names and contact information of Assistant Referees should be provided to the referee to be assessed well in advance of the game.
 - e. Referee provided with a copy of the AYSO booklet "Preparation for Assessment" (Available on AYSO website [AYSO.org])
4. The referee to be assessed is responsible for bringing to the assessment the appropriate certification forms necessary to record the results of the assessment.
 5. The assessment and the assessment debriefing will be conducted in accordance with current guidelines.

National Referee Assessment

Requirements: Two assessments as referee and one as an assistant referee in U-19 games. When U-19 games are not available, U-16 games may be used for assessment with the approval of the SDA or SRA. The game should be of regular AYSO length or a game with each half not less than 30 minutes in duration. Non-AYSO games are acceptable as long as the game is refereed using the diagonal system of control and meets minimum duration.

Recommended Process:

1. The candidate should contact the RDA or RRA of his/her home Region requesting an assessment.
2. The RDA or RRA will schedule an Assessor through the SDA or SRA. The ADA or ARA should be informed of the assessment request. Assessments are a right of any referee. Regional, Area, and Section staffs must not refuse to schedule an assessment; their opinion of the likelihood of the candidate to be successful in the assessment is not relevant.
3. It is recommended that, where possible, games outside the home Region of the referee to be assessed be used for assessment for upgrade to National Referee.
4. The RRA or Regional Assignor will schedule a game for the assessment. When the assessment is in an inter-Regional, inter-Area, tournament, or other game the appropriate approval authority referee staff will coordinate the game assignment. Where possible the following conditions should be observed:
 - a. Referee to be assessed will not be assigned a game immediately before or after the game to be assessed.
 - b. Qualified Assistant Referees will be assigned to the game.
 - c. Assistant Referees will not be assigned a game immediately before or after the game to be assessed. The referee assessed should have the option of having the Assistant Referees available for part or all of the assessment debriefing.
 - d. Game time, location, and names and contact information of Assistant Referees should be provided to the referee to be assessed well in advance of the game.
 - e. Referee provided with a copy of the AYSO booklet "Preparation for Assessment" (Available on AYSO website [AYSO.org])
5. The referee to be assessed is responsible for bringing to the assessment the appropriate certification forms necessary to record the results of the assessment.
6. The assessment and the assessment debriefing will be conducted in accordance with current assessment guidelines.



Assessment: Assessor Techniques and Procedures

The techniques and procedures used by the assessor are critical to the outcome of the evaluation. The way an assessor approaches and communicates with a candidate and the efficiency with which the assessor conducts the process can determine the evaluations' success or failure. It is essential that the referee being assessed feels that the assessor's comments are worthwhile.

Assessor Expectations of Candidate Performance

Assessors must understand that candidates for upgrade are at the upper end of the skills required at their *current* certification level and at the lower end of the skills required for the level they are being assessed. Therefore, candidates should not be expected to perform at the highest possible level of the certification for which they are being assessed. An Advanced Referee candidate with a total of 50 games experience with 10 games at the U-14 level should not be expected to perform with the same level of competence as an Advanced Referee with 90 games experience and 30 games in U-16 games. Similarly, a National Referee candidate cannot be expected to perform at a level equal to a referee with many years of U-19 experience. As with any benchmark of proficiency, continued growth through experience is expected as referees mature professionally.

Forms

The AYSO website (AYSO.org) has forms for assessment and observation:

- Field work sheet
- Checklist - Referee
- Checklist - Assistant Referee
- Referee Observation Worksheet
- Assessment Verification Form
- Assessment Feedback Form

Assessor Techniques and Guidelines

Assessors should observe the following practices, which generally apply to both assessments and observations (see specific exceptions in the section "Concerning Observations", p. 40).

Pre-Game

- Contact the referee team before match and review ground rules, for instance should the entire referee team be assessed or only the specific candidate.
- Verify name of referee to be assessed and time and place of match.
- Arrive at the match at least 30 minutes before the start time.
- Dress conservatively and inconspicuously (do not wear a referee uniform or anything that identifies an assessor).
- Ensure all assessment forms are available and brought to the game.
- Remember what the goals and objectives of the assessment are.
- Review the assessment criteria and understand the standard.
- Observe the teams' and coaches' pre-game activities
- Observe but do not contribute to the officials' pre-game conference.
- Observe but do not interfere with player pre-game instructions by referee.

During the Game

- Observe the entire game:
 - The first 5 or 10 minutes of each half will set the tone for that half
 - The last 5-10 minutes of each half may become challenging to both the referee and the players as fatigue sets in and if the players feel pressure to score
- Avoid personal prejudices and showing any negative reactions
- The referee's style may differ from yours
- The referee's judgment may be different from yours
- Don't judge the referee's performance strictly on your view of an incident
- Don't be influenced by any over-reaction of players, coaches or spectators



- Avoid conversing or socializing with or responding to questions asked by players, coaches, or spectators
- Take good, specific game notes.
- Feel free to move around the field but stay inconspicuous
- Evaluate overall performance of the referee and do not overemphasize minor points
- Refrain from interfering with the referee team while the match is in progress. In particular, do not interfere with the referee team's half-time discussions.

After the Game

- Allow the referee team to complete their post-game duties. This is a good time to review your notes and decide what you will discuss.
- Greet the referee team with a smile and a friendly word of thanks. Give them time to "cool down".
- Quickly establish a peer or consulting relationship.
- Avoid showing any reaction to outcome of match.
- When the referee team is ready, move to a comfortable, quiet, and reasonably private area.
- Allow the candidate(s) to complete the self-evaluation portion of the Assessment Verification Form.
- Using the Referee Assessment Checklist, a Field Worksheet, or other notes conduct the post-game interview (see "Thoughts on Assessment and Suggestions for Assessors", p. 49).
- If only one member of the team is being assessed, quickly identify strengths and areas for improvement of the other members of the team and excuse them from further involvement unless agreed otherwise.
- Leave adequate time for discussion.
- Address the key strengths of the candidate. This is critical if the candidate is to perceive the experience positively. Substantiate with specific incidents in the match. No matter how poorly the referee performed, always find something positive to say.
- Respond to the referee's self-evaluation. Ask "How do you think you did?" and listen carefully to the response before offering your own opinion.
- Identify no more than three areas for improvement. Again use specific incidents to substantiate. Be frank, positive, constructive, and encouraging. Do not dwell on what you perceive as mistakes. Try to pick things that can be improved in the very next game. Offer concrete, specific suggestions for improvement.
- Stay away from "always" and "never". Use phrases like:
 - In my opinion ...
 - I believe ...
 - From my perspective ...
 - The way I see it ...
 - You might think about, you could ...
 - Others have ...
 - Another way to accomplish ...
- Use the interview as a teaching and learning experience. Involve the candidate in the discussion using questions like these:
 - How do you see this?
 - What do you think about ...?
 - How might you do this differently in the future?
 - What happened during a specific incident?
 - Were there any moments in the match that challenged you more than others?
 - Which players needed the most watching and why?
 - How did the tactics of the teams challenge your game control?
 - What were the key times in the match that you felt were "moments of truth"?
- Close by politely stating your recommendation and with a handshake. It is important that, whatever the recommendation, the candidate leave the interview feeling good about the experience and ready to continue to officiate. It is also important that the candidate understand the basis for your recommendation.
- Complete all assessment the forms, sign and give to the candidate for further processing. If your recommendation is positive, sign the candidate's AYSO Application for Referee Certification form. Retain the lower half of the Assessment Verification Form for your records.



- Provide the candidate with an Assessment Feedback Form and encourage the referee to complete and submit the evaluation.
- Keep the assessment confidential. Referee Administrators are the only persons other than the referee team who need to know your findings.

After the Assessment: Follow-up

- Send written evaluation as confirmation of discussion
- Phone for questions
- Offer yourself as a resource
- Help develop an action plan
- Make sure that the referee knows that you and AYSO have the resources to help him or her get better and to enjoy the experience. Good post-assessment activities can help ensure that your comments and constructive criticism are applied to the advantage of all.

Communication and Attitude of the Assessor

- Assessors must display integrity, professionalism and cordiality
- Assessors must convey a sense of friendly persuasion to the referee being evaluated
- Referees being assessed must never be made to feel inferior or put down in any way
- Feedback must be positive and constructive advice - not instructions or commands
- Referees must be given an opportunity to explain the circumstances of incidents from their point of view. Assessors must show respect for the referee's opinion.

Concerning Observations

Observations are unlike assessments for upgrade in two several respects:

- An observation is not a pass/fail situation.
- An observation does not usually involve a written report. A Referee Observation Worksheet is available to the observer.
- The Assessor (or Mentor/Advisor) conducting the observation need not be inconspicuous. If necessary, the Assessor should insure that the coaches and spectators are aware of his or her presence.
- Mentor/Advisors may participate with the official, when necessary, in pre and post-game activities. While not encouraged, limited discussion with the official may also take place during the halftime.

As with assessments, observations should be positive, win-win experiences. There **must** always be a post-game discussion with the official.

Assessment: Field Observation Narratives

This section describes the skills and proficiencies candidates for upgrade are expected to demonstrate.

Observing the Intermediate Referee Candidate

Recognize that candidates are being advised on the elements to successfully referee a typical regular season AYSO U-12 game. The observation should focus mainly on the abilities necessary to officiate matches beyond the basic level, which are more physically demanding and challenging. The candidate should be given feedback on his performance as an entry level Intermediate Referee.

Appearance:

The Intermediate Referee candidates should arrive at the game properly attired and have the required equipment.

Pre-Game

Intermediate Referee candidates should:



- arrive at the game at least 20 minutes before it starts, be properly equipped and be ready to walk onto the field
- administer the field, players and field equipment inspection
- provide simple but acceptable pre-game instructions to their assistant referees
- demonstrate acceptable techniques during the coin toss, and leadership in acquiring game cards and game ball
- properly position themselves for the kick-off, and direct the referee team and the players as to their position for the kick-off

Fitness

In general, candidates:

- keep up with play while traveling the diagonal
- sprint as required
- demonstrate the rudiments of anticipating play

Attitude

Candidates:

- should practice the —AYSO Team” philosophy at all times
- should be friendly and accommodating to fellow referees, players and coaches
- may indicate some nervousness but should demonstrate an aura of authority

Courage, character, and consistency

Candidates should:

- demonstrate willingness to call fouls equally for both teams when they occur
- be capable of recognizing and dealing firmly with any challenges to their authority on or off the field, and interference from the sidelines

Positioning, mechanics, and signals

Candidates should:

- demonstrate knowledge of the operation of the diagonal system of control
- position themselves correctly in advance of restarts
- direct assistant referees to preferred positions during a restart by the attacking team near the opponent’s goal
- orient themselves in a manner that maximizes their eye contact with their assistant referees
- indicate their awareness of proper restart signals and show a measure of professionalism while executing them
- use the whistle in a manner that reflects the seriousness of the offense

Accuracy of decisions

Candidates should:

- consistently recognize and whistle fouls which occur in a typical regular season AYSO U-12 game including DFK and IFK fouls
- recognize the difference between offside position and offside participation
- apply the proper penalties and restarts

Control

Candidates should demonstrate that they have control of the game at all times by:

- starting and stopping the game on time
- stopping and starting quarters and halves on time
- controlling substitutions
- handling injuries
- being aware of the readiness of players and the assistant referees
- providing sufficient whistle signal level so that players are aware that the referee has made a call

**Conclusion**

To satisfy the field certification requirements at the Intermediate level while refereeing a typical regular season AYSO U-12 game, candidates must complete the game and be debriefed by the Assessor, Mentor/Advisor.

Assessing the Advanced Referee Candidate

Recognize that candidates are being critiqued on their ability to successfully perform as referees and assistant referees in a typical regular season AYSO U-14 game. The assessment should focus on the candidates' ability to officiate beyond the Intermediate level sufficiently well to handle most AYSO matches with skill equal to an entry level Advanced Referee. See: Assessor Expectations of Candidates Performance on p. 38.

Appearance

Advanced Referee candidates are expected to arrive at the game properly attired and have the required equipment.

Pre-Game

Advanced Referee candidates are expected to:

- arrive at the game at least 20 minutes before it starts, be properly equipped and be ready to walk onto the field
- administer the field, players and field equipment inspection, and require correction or marking of unsafe conditions before the game is allowed to begin
- provide general, but acceptable pre-game instructions to their assistant referees that include: positioning and signaling on restarts, offside, and goal
- provide acceptable techniques during the coin toss, and leadership in acquiring game cards, and game ball
- properly position themselves for kick-off, and verify proper position of players and assistant referees for kick-off

Fitness

In general, candidates are expected to:

- be within 15 - 20 yards of play
- generally travel the diagonal while demonstrating their ability to cover the extremes of the field when required
- sprint as required
- demonstrate their ability to anticipate play by positioning themselves in advance of play

Attitude

Candidates are expected to:

- practice the "AYSO Team" philosophy at all times
- be friendly and accommodating to fellow referees, players and coaches including introducing assistant referees to team captains during the coin toss
- demonstrate confidence and be perceived by players and coaches to be confident
- control the game at all times

Courage, character, and consistency

Candidates are expected to:

- demonstrate willingness to call fouls equally for both teams when they occur
- be capable of recognizing and dealing firmly with any challenges to their authority on or off the field, and interference from the sidelines

Positioning, mechanics, and signals

Candidates are expected to:

- demonstrate knowledge of the operation of the diagonal system of control, and when it is appropriate, to deviate from the diagonal to follow play



- position themselves correctly in advance of restarts
- consistently orient themselves in a manner that maximizes their eye contact with their assistant referees
- indicate their awareness of proper restart signals and show a measure of professionalism while executing them
- use the whistle in a manner that reflects the seriousness of the call

Accuracy of decisions

Candidates are expected to:

- recognize and whistle less obvious as well as obvious fouls
- have no difficulty distinguishing between DFK and IFK fouls
- distinguish between offside position and offside participation
- apply the proper penalties and restarts
- demonstrate the use of advantage

Control

Candidates are expected to demonstrate that they have control of the game at all times by:

- starting and stopping the game on time
- stopping and starting quarters and halves on time
- controlling substitutions
- handling injuries
- being aware of the readiness of players and the assistant referees
- providing sufficient whistle signal level so that players are aware that the referee has made a call

Conclusion

To satisfy the field certification requirements at the Advanced level while refereeing a typical regular season AYSO U-14 game, candidates are expected to be mostly successful in demonstrating:

- knowledge of the Laws
- proper application of the Law
- the mechanics of the diagonal system of control
- proper positioning for restarts

Assessing the Advanced Referee Candidate as Assistant Referee

Recognize that candidates are being critiqued on their ability to successfully perform as assistant referees in a typical regular season AYSO U-14 game. The assessment should focus on the candidates' ability to officiate beyond the Intermediate level sufficiently well to handle most AYSO matches as an assistant referee. . See: Assessor Expectations of Candidates Performance on p. 38.

Appearance

Advanced Assistant Referee candidates are expected to arrive at the game properly attired and have the required equipment.

Pre-Game

Advanced Assistant Referee candidates are expected to:

- arrive at the game at least 20 minutes before it starts, be properly equipped and be ready to walk onto the field
- in response to direction from the referee, inspect players and field equipment
- be attentive to the referee's pre-game instructions, and when in doubt, ask questions
- assume proper position for the kick-off

Fitness

In general, candidates are expected to:

- maintain a position opposite the second to last defender
- sprint and side-step as required
- demonstrate their ability to anticipate play by positioning themselves in advance of play



- correctly position themselves for restarts

Attitude

Candidates are expected to:

- practice the “AYSO Team” philosophy at all times
- exhibit an appropriate professional attitude, and a spirit of cooperation and support for the referee team

Courage, character, and consistency

Candidates are expected to:

- maintain their composure and attention to their responsibilities
- demonstrate a willingness to make consistently fair and unbiased decisions

Positioning, mechanics, and signals

Candidates are expected to:

- demonstrate their knowledge of the operation of the diagonal system of control
- correctly position themselves in a manner that maximizes their eye contact with the referee
- correctly position themselves in advance of restarts
- indicate their awareness of proper restart signals and show a measure of professionalism while executing them
- maintain the flag unfurled and on the field side while moving up and down the field

Assistance: Offside, Goal line and Touch line

Candidates are expected to:

- provide timely and accurate assistance to the referee for ball out of play across the touch line or goal line and indicate the proper restart required
- provide accurate assistance for offside calls (participating players)

Assistance: Fouls and misconduct

Candidates must:

- indicate a willingness to flag infractions that are out of view of the referee
- ask for support when sideline interference is interrupting the game and their concentration

Conclusion

To satisfy the field certification requirements at the Advanced level while refereeing a typical regular season AYSO U-14 game, candidates are expected to be mostly successful in demonstrating:

- knowledge of the Laws
- proper application of the Law
- the mechanics of the diagonal system of control
- proper positioning for restarts

Assessing the National Referee Candidate

Recognize that candidates are being critiqued on their ability to successfully referee a typical regular season AYSO U-19 game. The observation should focus mainly on the candidate’s basic understanding of the “professional” aspects of refereeing, the application of the spirit and intent of *Laws of the Game* and the intelligent use of the diagonal system of control. The candidate should demonstrate skills equal to an entry-level National Referee. The candidate is not expected to perform at a level that would allow him or her to referee the **most** challenging AYSO game. See: Assessor Expectations of Candidates Performance on p. 38.

Appearance

National Referee candidates must arrive at the game properly attired and have the required equipment.

**Pre-Game**

National Referee candidates:

- should arrive at the game at least 20 minutes before it starts, and must be properly equipped and be ready to walk onto the field
- must administer the field, players and field equipment inspection, and require correction or marking of unsafe conditions before the game is allowed to begin
- is expected to provide acceptable pre-game instructions to their assistant referees that include:
 - positioning and signaling on restarts, offside, goals, and fouls close to the goal line
 - assigning senior assistant referee, keeping backup time
 - substitution mechanics
 - entering and leaving the field as a team, and at the center during the half-time interval
 - responsibility following the scoring of a goal
 - calling fouls in assistant referee's area
 - responsibility during penalty kicks
 - show acceptable techniques during the coin toss
 - exhibit leadership in acquiring game cards and game ball
 - verify proper position of players and assistant referees for kick-off
 - assume correct referee position for kick-off

Fitness

In general, candidates are expected to:

- be within 15 - 20 yards of play
- generally travel the diagonal while demonstrating their ability to cover the extremes of the field when required
- sprint and back-pedal as required
- demonstrate their ability to anticipate play by positioning themselves in advance of play

Attitude

Candidates must:

- practice the "AYSO Team" philosophy at all times
- be friendly and accommodating to fellow referees, players and coaches including introducing assistant referees to team captains during the coin toss
- demonstrate confidence and be perceived by players and coaches to be confident

Courage, character, and consistency

Candidates must:

- demonstrate willingness to call fouls equally for both teams when they occur
- be capable of recognizing and dealing firmly with any challenges to their authority on or off the field, and interference from the sidelines

Positioning, mechanics, and signals

Candidates must:

- demonstrate their knowledge of the operation of the diagonal system of control, and when it is appropriate, to deviate from the diagonal to follow play
- position themselves correctly in advance of restarts
- be capable of back-pedaling
- direct assistant referees to preferred positions during a restart by the attacking team near the opponent's goal
- consistently orient themselves in a manner that maximizes their eye contact with their assistant referees
- indicate their awareness of proper restart signals and show a measure of professionalism while executing them
- use the whistle in a manner that reflects the seriousness of the offense

Accuracy of decisions

Candidates:



- should recognize and whistle less obvious as well as obvious fouls
- must have no difficulty distinguishing between DFK and IFK fouls
- should be alert to, and deal with, subtle fouls and with players who *simulate* fouls to attract favorable calls
- should demonstrate the ability to distinguish between fouls and aggressive play
- must distinguish between offside position and offside participation
- must apply the proper penalties and restarts
- should demonstrate the use of advantage

Control

Candidates must demonstrate that they have control of the game at all times by:

- starting and stopping halves and the game on time
- controlling substitutions
- handling injuries
- being aware of the readiness of players and the assistant referees
- providing sufficient whistle signal level so that players are aware that the referee has made a call
- using dialogue to warn players of pending infractions in lieu of constant whistling
- being aware of, and dealing with infractions away from play
- properly managing the 10-yard rule
- positioning players for restarts within the penalty area
- providing protection for goalkeeper as well as ensuring proper goalkeeper conduct
- not tolerating time wasting or dissent

Conclusion

To satisfy the field certification requirements at the National level while refereeing a typical regular season AYSO U-19 game, candidates must be successful in demonstrating:

- knowledge of the Laws
- proper application of the Law
- the mechanics of the diagonal system of control
- proper positioning for restarts
- variation of positions as required from reading the game
- maintaining the flow and control of the match
- recognizing and dealing with players who are not in control of themselves
- adjusting referee style to experience and attitude of players for maximum enjoyment for all

Assessing the National Referee Candidate as Assistant Referee

Recognize that candidates are being critiqued on their ability to successfully perform as assistant referees in a typical regular season AYSO U-19 game. The assessment should focus mainly on the candidates' ability to officiate any AYSO soccer match at the most challenging level as an assistant referee. See: Assessor Expectations of Candidates Performance on p. 38.

Appearance

National Assistant Referee candidates must arrive at the game properly attired and have the required equipment.

Pre-Game

National Assistant Referee candidates:

- should arrive at the game at least 20 minutes before it starts, and must be properly equipped and be ready to walk onto the field
- in response to direction from the referee, must inspect players and field equipment
- must be attentive to the referee's pre-game instructions, and when in doubt, ask questions
- must assume proper position for the kick-off

Fitness

In general, candidates must:



- maintain a position opposite the second to last defender unless otherwise directed by the referee
- follow the ball to the goal line
- sprint and side-step as required
- demonstrate their ability to anticipate play by positioning themselves in advance of play
- correctly position themselves for restarts

Attitude

Candidates:

- must practice the “AYSO Team” philosophy at all times
- must exhibit an appropriate professional attitude and a spirit of cooperation and support for the referee team
- should assist the referee, not insist
- should maintain an even temperament in the presence of sideline and player criticism or misconduct

Courage, character, and consistency

Candidates must:

- maintain their composure and attention to their responsibilities
- demonstrate a willingness to make consistently fair and unbiased decisions

Positioning, mechanics, and signals

Candidates must:

- demonstrate their knowledge of the operation of the diagonal system of control
- correctly position themselves in a manner that maximizes their eye contact with the referee
- correctly position themselves in advance of restarts
- indicate their awareness of proper restart signals and show a measure of professionalism while executing them
- consistently maintain the flag unfurled and on the field side while moving up and down the field

Assistance: Offside, Goal line and Touch line

Candidates must:

- provide timely and accurate assistance to the referee for ball out of play across the touch line or goal line and indicate the proper restart required
- in response to the referee’s direction, provide “play on” signals for play along the touch line and goal line, and for onside
- provide accurate assistance for offside calls (participating players)

Assistance: Fouls and misconduct

Candidates must:

- indicate a willingness to flag infractions that are out of view of the referee
- ask for support when sideline interference is interrupting the game and their concentration

Conclusion

To satisfy the field certification requirements at the National level while refereeing a typical regular season AYSO U-19 game, candidates must be successful in demonstrating:

- knowledge of the Laws
- application of the Laws
- the mechanics of the Diagonal System of Control
- proper positioning for restarts
- full support for the referee



Training and Development of Assessors

The objective of the AYSO Assessment Program is to provide assistance to Advanced and National Referee candidates in becoming a better referee. The assessor should provide positive, constructive guidance in areas the assessor believes will help make the referee more confident in his/her performance and enhance the enjoyment of the game for everyone. This principle also applies to the Referee Assessor and National Assessor candidates being mentored to their new grades.

The certification requirements for AYSO referee assessors are listed in the Appendix of this manual. After completing the classroom training requirements, the assessor candidate performs practice assessments under the guidance of an experienced Referee Assessor or National Assessor. These practice assessments provide the candidate the opportunity to demonstrate the attributes of a knowledgeable, positive, caring assessor. Assessor mentors need to be careful when mentoring new assessor candidates to ensure that the referee candidates they are actually observing are not forgotten in the effort to help the assessor candidate in the post-game interviews. To help the referee candidates and the assessor candidates through the sensitivity of the post-games debrief with an assessor candidate, here are some Do's & Don'ts that should be followed by the assessor mentor.

Do's

DO remember that you are responsible for setting a positive tone for both the referee and assessor candidate.

DO spend time with the assessor candidate before meeting with the referee candidate to establish the procedure you intend to use to conduct the evaluation.

DO get to know the assessor candidate's methods and the techniques he/she intends to use or is comfortable practicing.

DO determine whether you need to stand with the assessor candidate during the match or let him/her observe the game alone. (This applies chiefly to Referee Assessor candidates).

DO tell the referee candidate that you are mentoring a new assessor candidate so that (s)he will understand why there appears to be two assessors.

DO record your findings as you would at any assessment.

DO compare your notes and observations with the assessor candidate at half-time and clarify questionable observations.

DO be sure that the assessor candidate uses the techniques and guidelines described in this manual (p. 38), especially those relating to the post-game discussion.

DO ask the assessor candidate how he/she would approach the selected topics with the referee candidate and make appropriate corrections, if necessary.

Before the interview, DO spend a little extra time privately with the assessor candidate to review the points to be covered and the technique to be used. See if the assessor candidate has been able to identify the personality of the referee candidate and the techniques that will lead to an atmosphere of meaningful exchange between the assessor candidate and the referee candidate.

DO let the assessor candidate conduct the interview.

DO help maintain a positive atmosphere and an open, honest discussion of the game observations.

DO listen carefully to the assessor candidate for any negative approach that might destroy the rapport established.

After the interview when the referee candidate has left, DO sit with the assessor candidate alone and go over your observations of the assessment. Discuss the various techniques that can be used to understand the referee candidate better and to conduct the interview.

DO determine if the assessor candidate should have another mentoring observation.

DO make your recommendations to the appropriate Referee Administrator or Director of Assessment.

**Don'ts**

DON'T gang up on the referee with a two-pronged approach.

DON'T allow negative comments from the assessor candidate to continue where the referee candidate is obviously becoming discouraged and has stopped listening.

DON'T dominate the post-game interview with your own observations and assessment knowledge.

DON'T fail to follow-up with the assessor candidate to answer any questions about the process or any other aspect of the program.

Thoughts on Assessment and Suggestions for Assessors

The Top Ten Ways to Help Referees Improve

1. Begin with praise and honest appreciation.
2. The only facts are the Laws of the Game. Everything else is an opinion, a suggestion, or a thought. Avoid the phrase: "You should..." Instead, use phrases like: "I suggest..." or "Perhaps you can try..." or "To avoid that happening again perhaps you can try..."
3. Call attention to mistakes indirectly by citing examples.
4. Talk about your own mistakes.
5. Ask questions instead of giving directives. For example, ask "How could you handle that differently the next time?"
6. Let the referee save face, don't argue.
7. Praise the slightest improvement and praise every improvement. Be hearty in your approval and lavish in your praise.
8. Use encouragement, make a fault seem easy to correct.
9. Assess the game you saw, not the game that might have been.
10. Make the referee happy about doing the thing you suggest.

How to Deliver the Message

Good assessment will allow referees the opportunity to review areas of strength and areas to strengthen. This means the referee will benefit from a candid assessment of both areas, presented in a positive manner.

The critical issue is how these subjects are addressed. The assessor can address poor performance in a positive way, but must think about how to do so. Consider these possibilities:

1. State the positives, but state what is wrong.
2. State the negatives, then the positives.
3. State how referee can improve and state the positive things (s)he is already doing.

Approach #1 generally results in a negative message because the referee forgets everything that was said before the "but". Approach #2 is better, but risks losing control of the conversation if the referee becomes defensive at a recitation of the negatives. Approach #3 generally works best because the referee's attention is focused on improvement: what can be done in the next game to be better and what can continue that is already good. That is, the focus is on the future, not the past. The purpose of assessment is improvement. Improvement implies the future. One cannot improve the past. One can only use the past as a guide to what might be accomplished in the future.

Reducing Resistance to Change

Convincing someone to change is almost always difficult. Unless the person sees some benefit to the change, (s)he will be reluctant. Here are some ideas to help induce positive change. While couched in general terms, they are specifically relevant for assessors.

- Recognize that others may not share your beliefs or approve of your attitudes.
- Realize that the beliefs and attitudes of others are habit patterns.
- Visualize the change from the viewpoint of those who will have to use or adapt to your recommendations.



- Anticipate difficulties in getting acceptance of your recommendations and devise ways to make the transition more acceptable. Solicit thoughts from the referee as to how improvements can be made in specific areas of concern.
- Carefully consider all consequences of a change and avoid recommendations for abrupt, sweeping change. It is almost always best to bring about gradual change a step at a time.
- Recognize that any significant change triggers emotional tension, either because old behavior is found to be inadequate or because new behavior must be acquired. The dissipation of tension may take some period of time. A clear incentive to change, where possible, helps those affected do so.
- When possible, maintain contact with people while change is being made.
- Think about your own behavior and actions:
 - How well do you listen?
 - Do you watch the speaker as well as listen?
 - Do you decide by the speaker's appearance and delivery whether what he has to say is worthwhile?
 - Do you consciously evaluate the logic and credibility of what you hear?
 - Do you listen primarily for ideas and underlying feelings?
 - Do you keep your mind on what the speaker is saying?
 - Do you interrupt immediately if you hear a statement you feel is wrong?
 - Do you think about your response before you have finished listening?
 - Do you determine your own bias, if any, and try to allow for it?
 - Do you make sure before answering that you have taken in the other person's point of view?
 - Do you try to have the last words?

Common Sources of Errors in Assessments

Regrettably, there are many ways in which assessments can go poorly. These are some common ones:

- Personal prejudices of the assessor. The assessment criteria in the field narratives (p. 40) are intended to help avoid this error.
- Unwillingness to do a thorough, well-documented assessment.
- Overweighing events that occur late in the game.
- Failure to consider the candidates point of view on specific situations.
- Reluctance to point out weaknesses.
- Communicating negatively rather than in a positive and constructive manner.
- Failure to use specific incidents as a basis for constructive criticism.

Watching a Game

This article is reprinted from the June 1997 Referee Magazine.

After you've become an official, attending games is different from when you were just a fan. Obviously you're much more aware of the officials and what they are doing. This becomes even more pronounced when you assume the title of Assessor. With that comes tremendous responsibility. You must watch a game the right way.

Be Invisible:

Maintain this philosophy; you don't want people to know you're an official. If you are identified as an official while attending games, you're opening yourself up for questions, contention and criticism. Every time there's a close call or controversial ruling, fans will look to you for an explanation. Don't look at that as an ego stroke, it's not, it is a tough situation to handle while maintaining your officiating integrity and professionalism. Avoid it all by staying in the background.

Don't Wear Your Uniform:

Whether you're a first-year official or a grizzled veteran, you're probably proud to be an official. You also might be proud of the officials' association you belong to or the league you work in. Attending a game is not the time to display your pride.



Do not wear your officiating uniform or association or league jacket or patches while attending a game. Wearing your uniform or any other items identifies you as an official.

If you're working multiple games and you've got a break between games, change into something else or don't sit in the stands. Remember, you're a potential target for the players, coaches and fans of the game you just worked and the game you're about to work. You don't want a confrontation and you don't want "schmoosing" either.

Sit Alone:

If there's an area away from fans, sit there. That way, even if people know you are an official, they have to go out of their way to talk to you.

Don't Criticize the Officials:

Sadly, for many officials, that's the most difficult part of attending a game. That's because some revel in other people's mistakes and enjoy pointing them out to others. It makes them feel good. It also ruins their professional reputations.

There's little more appalling than an official publicly bad-mouthing another official, especially while attending a game and watching that official work. Keep in mind how important the officiating brotherhood is and how violating that trust among officials hurts others. After all, if the officiating is really that lousy, you ought to be doing some positive things to help those officials (a post-game conference, a follow-up phone call, an association meeting topic, etc.) and not criticizing them.

Don't Comment to Fans:

If you're truly a member of the officiating community, you care about the officials working the game whether you know them or not. You feel good for them when they make a great call. You also hurt with them when things go awry.

One thing that happens in all games: fans criticize officials. Those comments are even more apparent when you're in the stands. Resist the urge to verbally fight back. Realistically, you're not going to change their outlook on us and you're surely opening yourself up for problems. If it gets too bad, move to another section or leave.

Be Careful Answering Questions:

If you're a locally known official in attendance, your role is difficult. Many fans will look to you for answers about things occurring in the game. Many of those questions will be about judgment calls. Resist answering them. The fans are often looking for support in their arguments. If you say "That was a bad call" or "I wouldn't have called it that way" you're fueling the fire.

Some questions are rules-related. Answer them carefully. If the officials handled a rule correctly, explain what they did. If they didn't, either avoid the question or explain the rule carefully without criticizing the officials. That's a very difficult thing to do.

Sometimes, your safest move is to say, "I didn't see the entire play" or "We don't have the same view as they do on the field". That little white lie hurts less than trashing the officials.

Keep Emotions in Check:

That's especially true when you're a parent watching your son or daughter play. Someone once said "Officials watch games with their eyes; players, coaches and fans watch games with their hearts." Even though your offspring is involved, you must avoid emotional displays created by watching a game with your heart. Many officiating reputations have been damaged when officials lost control and acted like fans. If you can't watch your son or daughter play without showing emotion against the officials, you have only two real options: Don't attend the games or quit officiating.

There's more responsibility and accountability when watching a game after you've become an official. Look at it as a great opportunity to learn from others while avoiding controversy and your attendance will help, not hurt, your career.



The AYSO Referee Assessor's Creed

When performing my duties as a Referee Assessor I will evaluate referees based upon the standards established, approved and set forth by the AYSO National Referee Program. My assessment will take into account the refereeing performance I am witnessing only and I will endeavor, to the best of my ability, to not be influenced by my own biases and expectations or the views of others.

Most importantly, as assessors and Mentor/Advisors, always remember that..."In AYSO, it's about more than the game!"



Appendix

AYSO Referee Training Matrix

Course	Description	Length	Prerequisites	Minimum Lead Instructor Requirements	Verification of Lead Instructor Requirement
Safe Haven Referee	This course certifies volunteers in child and volunteer protection issues for referees. This is the certification course for all AYSO Referees (not coaches).	1 hour	None	Referee Instructor	Regional Referee Administrator
U-8 Official	This course trains volunteers to officiate in U-8 matches.	3 hours	None	Referee Instructor	Regional Referee Administrator
Assistant Referee	This course trains volunteers in the basics of being an Assistant Referee for AYSO matches under FIFA Laws and AYSO National Rules and Regulations, and to officiate in U-8 matches.	5 hours	None	Referee Instructor	Regional Referee Administrator
Basic Referee	This course trains referees in the basic aspects of refereeing needed to do AYSO matches under FIFA Laws and AYSO National Rules and Regulations.	8 hours	None	Referee Instructor	Regional Referee Administrator
Intermediate Referee	This course trains referees to do more physically demanding and challenging matches under FIFA Laws and AYSO National Rules and Regulations.	8 hours	See page 54	Referee Instructor	Area Referee Administrator or Director of Referee Instruction
Advanced Referee	This course trains referees to do most matches under FIFA Laws and AYSO National Rules and Regulations.	8 hours	See page 54	Advanced Referee Instructor	Area Referee Administrator or Director of Referee Instruction
National Referee	This course trains referees to referee all AYSO matches under FIFA Laws and AYSO National Rules and Regulations.	15 hours	See page 54	National Referee Instructor	Referee Program Coordinator (NSTC) or eAYSO
Referee Assessor	This course trains assessors to assess officiating skills at the Advanced level.	4.5 hours	See page 57	Advanced Referee Instructor and either an Assessor or National Assessor	Section Referee Administrator or Director of Referee Assessment
National Referee Assessor	This course trains Assessors to assess refereeing skills at the National level.	5 hours	Referee Assessor	National Referee Instructor and National Referee Assessor	Referee Program Coordinator (NSTC) or eAYSO
Assessor Update	This training provides continuing education for Assessors and National Assessors on points of emphasis and a review of assessment requirements and techniques	1.25 hours	Referee Assessor	Advanced Referee Instructor and either an Assessor or National Assessor	Regional Referee Administrator
Annual Referee Update	This training provides continuing education for referees. Program overview, Law changes, and points of emphasis will be reviewed.	1.25 hours	None	Referee Instructor	Regional Referee Administrator
Annual Update for Referee Administrators, Instructors, and Assessors	This training provides continuing education for referee Administrators, Instructors and Assessors. Program updates and program requirements are reviewed.	1.25 hours	None	Advanced Referee Instructor	Section Referee Administrator or Director of Referee Instruction
Referee Administrator Training	This training teaches potential Referee Administrators the essential activities needed to manage a referee program.	2.5 hours	None	Referee Instructor	Area Referee Administrator or Director of Instruction
Introduction to Instruction	This training teaches potential instructors their role as instructors and general aspects of presenting AYSO courses using AYSO directed teaching plans.	3 hours	None	Advanced Instructor in any discipline	Area staff in any discipline
Referee Instructor	This training teaches Instructor candidates how to conduct introductory and intermediate referee training courses using AYSO teaching plans.	7.5 hours	See page 56	Advanced Referee Instructor	Area Referee Administrator or Director of Referee Instruction
Advanced Referee Instructor	This training teaches Referee Instructors how to conduct advanced referee training courses using AYSO teaching plans.	6.5 hours	See page 56	Advanced Referee Instructor	Section Referee Administrator or Director of Referee Instruction
Referee Instructor Evaluator	This training teaches Referee Instructors to evaluate other instructors and to provide positive constructive feedback.	5.5 hours	Referee Instructor	See page Error! Bookmark not defined. ⁵⁶	Section Referee Administrator or Director of Referee Instruction



AYSO Referee Certification Requirements

U-8 Official

Age: 10 or older
Training: Complete U-8 Official Course
Test: Take U-8 Official Exam
Notes: 1, 2, 3

Assistant Referee

Age: 12 or older
Training: Complete Assistant Referee Course or
Be a U-8 Official and complete U-8 to Assistant Referee Upgrade Course
Test: Take Assistant Referee Exam
Notes: 1, 2, 3

Regional Referee

Age: 12 or older
Training: Complete Basic Referee Course or
Be a U-8 Official and complete U-8 to Basic Referee Upgrade Course or
Be an Assistant Referee and complete AR to Basic Referee Upgrade Course
Test: Score 75% or higher on the Basic Referee Exam
Notes: 1, 3, 4

Intermediate Referee

Age: 14 or older
Games: 25 as referee with at least 5 in U-12 matches
Training: Complete Intermediate Referee Course
Test: Score 90% or higher on the Intermediate Referee Exam
Observation: One observation as a referee in a U-12 match is required
One observation as an assistant referee is recommended (not required)
Verification: Area (or Section) Referee Administrator or
Area (or Section) Director of Assessment
Notes: 1, 3, 4, 5, 6

Advanced Referee

Age: 16 or older
Games: 50 as referee with at least 10 in U-14 matches and
5 as assistant referee in U-14 matches
Training: Complete Advanced Referee Course
Test: Score 90% or higher on the Advanced Referee Exam
Assessment: One as a referee in a U-14 match, and
One as assistant referee in a U-14 match.
Fitness Test: Complete the AYSO Physical Fitness Test for the Advanced level
Service: Do a minimum of 5 service units
Verification: Area (or Section) Referee Administrator or
Area (or Section) Director of Assessment
Notes: 1, 3, 7, 9, 10, 11

National Referee

Age: 18 or older.
Games: 100 as referee with at least 30 in U-16 and U-19 matches, of which at least 15 must be in U-19 matches if available, and
25 as assistant referee with at least 10 in U-19 matches, if available
Training: Complete National Referee Course. It is strongly recommended that the candidate complete at least 80 matches as referee before attending the National Referee Course
Test: Score 90% or higher on the National Referee Exam
Assessment: Two as a referee in U-16 or U-19 matches with at least one in U-19, if available, and
One as assistant referee in a U-19 match, if available
Experience: A minimum of one year of experience as an AYSO Advanced Referee
Fitness Test: Complete the AYSO Physical Fitness Test for the National level
Service: Do an additional 5 service units
Verification: Section Referee Administrator or Section Director of Assessment
Notes: 1, 3, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13

Notes to Referee Certification Requirements:

1. Certification at all levels requires (one-time) completion of Safe Haven Referee certification.
2. No minimum score required on written exam.
3. The equivalent modules may be completed in lieu of the course(s).
4. Although there is no physical test requirement at this certification level, an introduction to the AYSO Physical Fitness Test is recommended.
5. An observation is not an assessment. See Assessment section of this manual for details.
6. Prior completion of the Basic Referee Course is recommended.
7. Prior completion of the Intermediate Referee Course is recommended.
8. Prior completion of the Advanced Referee Course is recommended.
9. Field assessments for upgrade must be done based on the officiating skills needed in a typical regular season AYSO match, in the age group specified, in any soccer game using the Diagonal System of Control. Matches used for upgrade assessments are recommended to be of the duration specified for that particular age group in the AYSO National Rules and Regulations (NRR). Where NRR length matches are not readily available, the duration of matches used for upgrade assessments may be reduced to no less than 30-minute halves with the concurrence of the ARA or ADA for Advanced, SRA or SDA for National.
10. If requested by the referee being assessed, a higher age group match or a non-AYSO match of the equivalent age level (or higher) may be used for the assessment.
11. The Regional Referee Administrator (RRA) awards service points in accordance with the following lists after verifying that a candidate has performed a listed service activity.

One service unit may be awarded for:

- Assisting RRA in scheduling, supervising, or training referees
- Assisting with season registration day
- Instructing or co-instructing a referee course/clinic
- Acting as a Referee Mentor/Advisor, observing a referee for development or upgrade
- (If certified to do so) Assessing a referee candidate for upgrade
- Attending a section conference

Two service units may be awarded for completing any referee training courses including:

- Administrator training
- Instructor courses
- Instructor Evaluator courses
- Assessor courses

Five service units may be awarded for serving in the following referee staff positions

- Regional Referee Administrator, Director of Assessment, or Director of Instruction
- Area Referee Administrator, Director of Assessment, or Director of Instruction
- Section Referee Administrator, Director of Assessment, or Director of Instruction
- Member of the National Referee Advisory Commission
- Serving on a National Task Force

Note the following additional provisions regarding service units:

- When opportunities outlined above are not available, the RRA may award service units for other activities as long as the activities benefit the AYSO National Referee Program.
- Activities for which service units are awarded must be performed after the candidate achieved the current badge level. (So, for example, service units required for Advanced Referee certification must be earned while the candidate is an Intermediate referee.)
- The requirement for performing service units is waived in the case of candidates who are under 18 years old.

12. The SRA may authorize substitution (for both game count and assessment) of U-16 matches for U-19 matches if U-19 matches are not available.
13. The experience requirement for National Referee is not a new requirement; it was inadvertently omitted from the 2009 edition of this manual.



AYSO Referee Instructor and Evaluator Certification

Referee Instructor

1. Be a registered AYSO volunteer
2. Be an Intermediate Referee and should be an Advanced Referee
3. Complete the AYSO Introduction to Instruction course
4. Complete Referee Instructor Course
5. Pass Referee Instructor Examination
6. Pass Referee Instructor evaluations:
 - a. As an instructor in a 30-minute presentation from the Basic Referee Course with a qualified Referee Instructor Evaluator, and
 - b. As an instructor in a 30-minute presentation from the Intermediate Referee Course preferably with a different certified Referee Instructor Evaluator
7. Application for certification verified by Area (or Section) Referee Administrator or Area (or Section) Director of Referee Instruction

Advanced Referee Instructor

1. Be a registered AYSO volunteer
2. Be a Referee Instructor
3. Be an Advanced Referee and should be a National Referee
4. Complete Advanced Referee Instructor Course
5. Pass Advanced Referee Instructor Examination
6. Pass Advanced Referee Instructor evaluation in a one-hour presentation from the Advanced Referee Course with a certified Referee Instructor Evaluator
7. Application for certification verified by Section Referee Administrator or Section Director of Referee Instruction

National Referee Instructor

1. Be a registered AYSO volunteer
2. Be an Advanced Referee Instructor
3. Be a National Referee
4. Be a Referee Instructor Evaluator
5. Be a Referee Assessor (or National Assessor)
6. Be recommended by Section Director of Referee Instruction (SDI)
7. Be recommended by a National Referee Instructor other than a member of the recommending SDI's section's staff based on teaching portions of the National Referee Course and satisfying the evaluation criteria for National Referee Instructor

Referee Instructor Evaluator

1. Be a Referee Instructor and should be an Advanced Referee Instructor
2. Complete Referee Instructor Evaluator Course
3. Pass two required practice evaluations
4. Application for certification verified by Section Referee Administrator or Section Director of Referee Instruction



AYSO Referee Assessor, Mentor/Advisor Requirements

Referee Mentor/Advisor

- Training: Successfully complete the Intermediate Referee Course class —the AYSO National Referee Program". Recommended, but not required, that the Mentor/Advisor be an Intermediate Referee
- Testing: Pass the Basic Referee Examination
- Appointment: Appointed as a Referee Mentor/Advisor by the Regional Referee Administrator or Regional Director of Assessment
- Authorized to: Advise U-8 Officials, Assistant Referees, and Regional Referees. When assessors are not available, observe Regional Referees for upgrade to Intermediate Referee.

Referee Assessor

- Experience: At least three (3) years of soccer experience as a referee, and must have performed five (5) observations for service or upgrade to Intermediate Referee. The candidate must be an Intermediate Referee or higher and must have the approval of the Regional Referee Administrator.
- Training: Successfully complete the Advanced Referee Course and the Referee Assessor Course.
- Testing: Pass the Advanced Referee Examination and the Assessor Examination.
- Assessment: Successful completion of two (2) practice assessments on referees officiating U-14 AYSO matches (or equivalent). These "over-the-shoulder" assessments must be mentored by a Referee Assessor or National Assessor.
- Approval: Approved as a Referee Assessor by the Area Referee Administrator or the Area Director of Referee Assessment.
- Authorized to: Advise U-8 Officials, Assistant Referees, and Regional Referees. Observe Regional Referees for upgrade to Intermediate Referee and assess Intermediate Referees for upgrade to Advanced Referee.

National Assessor

- Experience: Certified as a Referee Assessor with a minimum of one (1) year in grade and performed at least ten (10) assessments/observations, with a minimum of five (5) assessments on Intermediate Referees seeking upgrade to the Advanced Referee level. The candidate must be an Advanced Referee or higher and must have the approval of the Section Referee Administrator or the Section Director of Assessment.
- Training: Successfully complete the National Referee Course and the National Assessor Course.
- Testing: Pass the National Referee Examination and the National Assessor Examination.
- Assessment: Successful completion of one practice assessment of a referee officiating a U-16 AYSO match (or equivalent) and one practice assessment of a referee officiating a U-19 AYSO match (or equivalent). These "over-the-shoulder" assessments must be mentored by a National Assessor.
- Approval: Approved as a National Assessor by the Section Referee Administrator or the Section Director of Referee Assessment.
- Authorized to: Advise U-8 Officials, Assistant Referees and Regional Referees. Observe Regional Referees for upgrade to Intermediate Referee, and assess Intermediate Referees for upgrade to Advanced Referee and Advanced Referees for upgrade to National Referee.



AYSO Referee Physical Test

The referee physical fitness test is designed to test the referee's ability to stay up with play and to react to match situations encountered at these levels. All referees should warm up before taking the test by performing stretching exercises to prevent muscle pulls.

Administering Referee Physical Tests

Physical tests for certification as Advanced Referee are authorized by the Area Referee Administrator or Area Director of Referee Assessment. Physical tests for certification as National Referee are authorized by the Section Referee Administrator or Section Director of Referee Assessment. Others may be designated to administer the test. Fitness tests administered by USSF may be used to comply with AYSO fitness test requirements.

Physical Testing Conditions

Part of the upgrade requirements to Advanced and National referee include testing the candidate's physical condition. The following considerations are important for those who may be involved in administering physical tests:

- Suitable running surface (well marked, smooth, level, track or mowed grass)
- Weather conditions (temperature extremes, rain, natural or artificial lighting)
- Ample time (warm-up, rest between events and cool-down)
- Sufficient timers to avoid long waits to be tested (staff at start and finish lines)
- First aid precautions (availability to medical professionals)
- Proper Equipment (forms, stopwatches, cones, clipboards, first aid supplies)
- Remind the candidates that it is not a race to see who is the fastest but rather a test of their ability to meet minimum physical standards. (Avoid unnecessary exertion.)

Physical Requirements

All three parts of the physical fitness examination should be conducted on the same day, with 15 minutes between events. These parts are:

- **Endurance Run:** This event consists of a run/jog for the entire 12 minutes, regardless of the distance covered on a standard 400-meter track (440 yards).
- **Speed Run (50 meters or 55 yard dash):** This run is a straight 50 meters (or 55 yard) dash and must be completed in no more than the time allowed.
- **Speed Run (200 meter or 220 yard dash):** This run is a straight 200 meters (or 220-yard) dash and must be completed in no more than the time allowed.

Certification	Test	Requirements	
Advanced Referee	Endurance Run	Must run for 12 minutes and cover at least one mile (1600 meters)	
	Speed Run (50 meters)	Maximum 10.5 seconds	
	Speed Run (200 meters)	Maximum 42 seconds	
National Referee	Endurance Run	Must run for 12 minutes and cover:	
		Age	Minimum Distance
		Under 38	2200 meters (5.5 laps)
		38-45	2000 meters (5.0 laps)
		46 & over	1800 meters (4.5 laps)
	Speed Run (50 meters)	Age	Minimum Distance
Under 46		9.0 seconds	
46 & over		9.5 seconds	
Speed Run (200 meters)	Maximum 40 seconds		

AYSO Section Map



