National Referee Program Manual

American Youth Soccer Organization

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Version History

REVISION DATE	DESCRIPTION
8/23/2018	Replaced NRAC with Referee Council, Regional Referee Manual replaces AYSO Guidance, updated websites, division names changed to calendar year divisions, Regional Referee Course replaces Basic Referee Course, new Instructor certification – Regional Referee Instructor, clarified policies
6/1/2019	Fixed errors in the Instructor section, clarified referee socks
6/1/2020	Update year, update links, replaced references to "National Office", fixed inconsistency in titles for SDRI and SDRA and applied standard styles throughout.
6/12/2021	Update year, updated location of referee documents, incorporate National Referee Instructor certification guidelines (AYSOU), removed AYSO Supply Center replaced with AYSO Marketing
10/18/2021	Updated Intermediate Exam passing percentage to 85% Added note to Referee certification documenting recommendation for Officials to be 2 years older than the players in their assigned matches.
6/15/2022	Added Referee Instructor Continuing Education guidelines
8/17/2022	Added U8 Official – Online to the AYSO Referee Training Matrix in the Appendix
8/22/2022	Corrected even footers
1/17/2025	Updated Section Map
8/13/2025	2025 update; updated age requirements in AYSO Referee Training Matrix; incorporated Referee Instructor Evaluator Attachment 5 Minimum Standards as Evaluation – Course Observation Narratives;
10/2/2025	Deleted reference to Assistant Referee certification. Fixed internal page references.
10/7/2025	Fixed internal page references and link to assessment forms.
12/30/2025	Miscellaneous updates on Administration, Referee Instructor Evaluator and Instructor Training Courses
1/16/2026	Corrected typos in National Referee Instructor Candidate Prerequisites and Alternative fitness test
8/12/2026	Updates for 2026. Updated all links to the https://wiki.ayso.org/wiki/Category:Referee
9/3/2026	Added Policy on Restoration of Volunteer Certifications after Extended Lapse of Volunteer Registration

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Introduction

This manual is an easy-to-use source of information regarding the AYSO National Referee Program. It contains information of use to all AYSO Referees, Referee Administrators, Referee Instructors and Referee Assessors.

There are several additional publications that address specific aspects of running a referee program. The current *Laws of the Game* are available online at theIFAB.com. The Regional Referee Administrator Manual is a must-have for all Referee Administrators. The Regional Referee Administrator Manual, Referee Mentor Handbook, AYSO Recruiting and Retaining Referees, Referee Instructor Resource Book, AYSO Referee Guideline (including the AYSO Addendum to the LOTG) and a multitude of supporting materials and lesson plans are available on AYSOU under Document Library after login.

An elaborate support system is available to assist you in providing the best possible referee 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 Levels.

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 the AYSO National Referee Program depends upon your efforts as a member of the volunteer referee support staff. Those efforts are greatly appreciated.

-- Your National Referee Council

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AYSO Vision & Mission

The American Youth Soccer Organization, AYSO, was established in 1964 with nine teams and the dream to bring soccer to American children. Today, AYSO has nearly 900 Regions all over the country and internationally in the Virgin Islands and Trinidad and Tobago. Thanks to the efforts of over 250,000 volunteers and the vision of the founding members, AYSO continues to be a leader in providing quality youth soccer programs.

AYSO Vision

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

AYSO Mission

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

Everyone Plays

Our goal is for kids to play soccer–so we mandate that every player on every team must play at least half of every game.

Balanced Teams

Each year we form new teams as evenly balanced as possible–because it is fair and more fun when teams of equal ability play.

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.

Positive Coaching

Encouragement of player effort provides for greater enjoyment by the players and ultimately leads to better-skilled and better-motivated players.

Good Sportsmanship

We strive to create a safe, fair, fun and 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, 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!"

Administration

National Referee Program Organizational Overview

National Referee Program Administrator

The National Referee Program Administrator is responsible for supporting the AYSO National Referee Program in response to the overall needs of AYSO Referees and communicating strategies and direction of US Soccer that have potential impact on the AYSO referee community.

National Referee Council

The National Referee Council is a volunteer group of diverse and experienced volunteers and is recommended by the National Board of Directors. The mission of the Referee Council is to work collectively and cooperatively with AYSO Office and Volunteer professionals to produce high-quality products that support the referee community in their efforts to provide a world-class youth soccer program that enriches children's lives.

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.

AYSO National Referee Program: Three Main Elements

Administration

- Administrative training is available for Regional and Area Referee Administrators: Referee Administrator Training or Area Referee Administrator Training plus generalized management training courses, including Regional Management, Dispute Resolution and Due Process.
- The National Referee Program Manual (this document) provides details about responsibilities, operating procedures and guidelines for administering an AYSO referee program.
- Cross-certification opportunities with the United States Soccer Federation (USSF) are available for AYSO referees who have upgraded to the Intermediate Referee level or higher.

Instruction

- Six levels of Referee certification and training are available: U8 Official, Regional Referee, Intermediate Referee, Advanced Referee and National Referee.
- Special programs are offered for youth referees – children under 18 years of age.
- Four levels of Referee Instructor certification are available: Regional Referee Instructor, Intermediate Referee Instructor, Advanced Referee Instructor and National Referee Instructor.
- Certification as a Intermediate Referee Instructor Evaluator or Referee Instructor Evaluator is available.

Assessment

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

The Organization of Soccer

The International Football Association Board (IFAB)

The IFAB is made up of the four British football associations (England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland) and FIFA.

Laws of the Game

140th Annual General Meeting (AGM) of The International Football Association Board meet in Hensol, Wales and approved changes for 2026-2027 (The IFAB)., although competitions will retain the flexibility to introduce changes before that date.

The IFAB description of the changes for 2026-2027 is included in the IFAB *Laws of the Game*. A summary of changes and clarifications is available online. Also available is the official mobile app from The IFAB for IOS and Android.

All AYSO games are conducted following the current IFAB *Laws of the Game and* decisions of the International Board, subject to those modifications adopted by AYSO in the current AYSO National Rules & Regulations and summarized in part in the Appendix of the Referee Guideline available on AYSOU (Document Library).

Confederation of North, Central America and Caribbean Association Football (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 Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA), the worldwide governing body.

The United States Soccer Federation (USSF), also known as US Soccer, is made up of four councils:

- Youth Council
- Adult Council
- Professional Council
- Athletes' Advisory Council

The Youth Council members include US Club Soccer, the American Youth Soccer Organization (AYSO) and the United States Youth Soccer Association (USYSA).

As members of USSF, AYSO has voting representatives on the Referee Committee and Coaching Committee, as well as several 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 team's state association and the AYSO team's 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 several 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 the travel manual of their 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 a referee and two assistant referees. The diagonal system of control is the only 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 IFAB *Laws of the Game*.

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

The AYSO National Referee Program is designed to support and encourage the use of the diagonal system of control. The Regional Referee Administrator Course includes components that address the recruitment and scheduling of referees. The Referee Administrator 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 is **not permitted** in any AYSO match. 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 referees attempt the impossible task of remaining close to play and, at the same time, being correctly positioned to watch for offside offenses. This system can cause hesitancy on the part of the referees and/or unnecessary interruptions in play as the two referees attempt to consult with one another for a consensus.

If a neutral assistant referee is not available, the referee should recruit a "club linesperson" to assist in place of the neutral assistant referee. A "club linesperson," a person recruited from the "club/team," helps the referee by indicating when the ball has passed out of play over a touchline or goal line by simply raising the flag straight up (best if the "club linesperson" positions themselves at the corner flag to be able to see both the touchline and goal line). The referee will be solely responsible for making all other decisions when they are working with a "club linesperson." The referee should provide instructions to the "club linesperson" and make sure they are thanked for their support.

Administering the Regional Referee Program

Administrative training is offered in the Regional Referee Administrator Course and in management courses, such as Regional Management, Dispute Resolution and Due Process, which are available to all AYSO administrators.

The Regional Management course offers an incoming 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 necessary to establish and manage a viable Regional program.

The Dispute Resolution and Due Process courses offer an enhanced curriculum to the more experienced Regional management team with a unified, practical approach to managing volunteers. It is designed to upgrade the Regional management team with the dispute resolution and due process knowledge, skills and tools that they require to handle 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 administer and manage the aspects of the AYSO National Referee Program within their purview. This is an in/out process; the program must be both received and sent. Any referee administrator who receives training or program information and fails to pass it on makes that information 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 its 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 takes 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 of the AYSO hierarchy, 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 IFAB *Laws of the Game* and AYSO National Rules & Regulations. Sources of information include current editions of:

- IFAB Laws of the Game
- AYSO National Rules & Regulations
- Referee Guideline

Area, Section, or National referee staff can assist in interpreting these documents.

The first line of the Match Conduct section of the AYSO National Rules & Regulations states, "AYSO matches shall be conducted in accordance with the current IFAB *Laws of the Game and* decisions of the International Football Association Board…" The *National Rules & Regulations* clarify the specific exceptions that are permitted. The IFAB

Laws of the Game, in the front under "General Modifications," states that national FAs now have the option to modify all or some of the following areas of the *Laws of the Game* for youth, veterans, disability and grassroots football and then specifies the kinds of modifications permitted. These statements endeavor to make it clear how AYSO games should be played and how the Laws may be modified. Additional modifications may not be made without a change to the National Rules & Regulations *and* with the permission of IFAB. On occasion, Regions, Areas and even Sections erroneously make rules that do not fall within these parameters.

Making a local rule in the presumed interest of safety may be well-intentioned 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 rules were made to prevent all of them the Game 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 the 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. 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 clear.

It is the job of coaches to teach players correct techniques to help them avoid injury to themselves and 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 a local rule is made that takes away one or more of the skills used in playing the game, the opportunities are lessened for players to learn to execute the skills correctly, for coaches to teach the skill and for referees to recognize the skill performed legally.

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
- dispute resolution 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 the Regional officiating staff. Every RRA should appoint a Regional Director of Referee Instruction (RDRI) and a Regional Director of Referee Assessment (RDRA). 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 these individuals receive adequate training and instruction in their particular areas of responsibility so that they can perform their duties.

Registering Volunteer Referees

It is required that all volunteer referees be annually registered with AYSO. This is accomplished by registering through a local AYSO region. Registration ensures that referees are on file with the AYSO Office, are subject to AYSO's Safe Haven provisions and are covered by AYSO's Soccer Accident Insurance.

Training and Certifying Volunteer Referees

Every volunteer referee and coach in AYSO must be suitably trained and certified, including AYSO's Safe Haven certification. Concussion Awareness training and Sudden Cardiac Arrest training are highly recommended and may

be required by your State; check with your Region. This ensures the maximum possible protection for our children and for the volunteers who work with them. The RRA should ensure that all of the Region's referees have completed their Referee training and certification including AYSO's pre-requisite safety courses before they are given any assignments. The Safe Haven, Concussion Awareness and Sudden Cardiac Arrest training are available online at AYSOU.

Equipping the Referees

Referees must be properly equipped with a complete proper uniform and the necessary accessories for the job. A referee should look the part to feel the part. A sharp-looking referee, in proper uniform, will likely receive more respect than an equally trained but improperly- or 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 referees 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

AYSO referees should wear the shirt style and colors currently recommended by the United States Soccer Federation. The colors are as follows:

Acceptable shirt colors:

- Yellow
- Black
- Red
- Blue
- Green
- Pink

REFEREE SHORTS

- Solid black shorts
- Length not more than 7 inches above the knee

REFEREE SOCKS

- Official black referee socks, the style currently recommended by the United States Soccer Federation
- Pulled up over the calf

REFEREE BADGE

During AYSO games, the only badge appropriate for a referee to wear is the highest AYSO referee certification level badge earned by the referee, subject to the following exceptions:

- An International Referee may wear a FIFA badge
- If provided, special referee tournament badges may be worn by referees during that tournament's games

A referee may not wear more than one badge on the uniform.

REFEREE FOOTWEAR

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

REFEREE HATS

If hats are worn for sun-protection health reasons, the following guidelines should be observed:

- Solid black or predominately black with white trim
- Hats should bear no logo or slogans, with the exception that AYSO logos (traditional, Regional, or tournament) and National corporate apparel sponsor logos are permitted.

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 referees 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 Region's referees 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 the 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, every registered referee must be provided each year with the current IFAB *Laws of the Game*, the AYSO National Rules & Regulations and the *AYSO Referee Guideline*.

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 referees, who are already giving substantial amounts of their time, to also absorb the total costs associated with the implementation of a successful Regional refereeing program. Imposing a significant financial burden on the volunteer referee can severely limit your ability to recruit and retain all but the most dedicated and affluent volunteers. Therefore, a Region must 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 referees, 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 the AYSO Wiki. 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.

The policy approved in 2009 by the National Board of Directors regarding payment for services in the AYSO Reference Book, National Policy Statements, Article Two, Section 2.5 Payment for Outside Services.

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 Region's referee 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 before the registration of players and volunteers, after registration but before the commencement of the playing 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 end of the playing season(s), Regional play-offs or tournaments, etc. Special events outside the Region, such as Area meetings, Section Meetings and the 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 refereeing 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 the 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	A 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	REGISTRATION DAY. Register all referees on Volunteer Application Forms. Recruiting is a year-round activity.
May thru Aug	Train and certify referees, ARs and assessors and mentors	If there are summer games, use them for training, observation/assessment and recruiting
Aug	Referee Annual Update	The current IFAB *Laws of the Game* and *Changes to the Lasw of the Game* should be part of all referee training.
Aug	Coach presentations	The current IFAB *Laws of the Game* and *Changes to the Lasw of the Game* should be part of all coach training.

Representing the Region's Referees

It is often said that there are three teams on the field during every soccer match: two teams of players and a team of referees. The AYSO volunteer referees at the Regional level must recognize that they are also part of a larger team that extends to all other volunteer referees at the Area, Section and National levels.

The Regional Referee Administrator (RRA) is the conduit between officiating volunteers 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 Council

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 Region's referees. Equally important, since AYSO is a "grassroots up" organization, the concerns, needs and problems of the Region's 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 Region's referees during the season. The RRA must also be committed to active participation in Area and Section referee meetings, instructional clinics, camps and other activities so that the information provided in these forums can then be passed along to the Region's referees.

The Regional Referee Administrator also serves the important role of recognizing and reinforcing the efforts of the volunteer referees within the Region. The RRA can demonstrate the fact that AYSO appreciates the efforts of our volunteer referees in several 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 referees at the end-of-the-season picnics or banquets is another way of providing public recognition in front of players and parents. Volunteer referees 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 Mentors, 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.

Recruiting Referees

Recruiting volunteer referees is the most challenging responsibility of the Regional Referee Administrator. Frequent surveys of Regional Referee Administrators identify the recruitment of referees as their biggest challenge.

To maintain a qualified and competent referee staff, it is necessary to pursue and recruit new referees continually. A general rule of thumb suggests that the recruitment effort should attempt to bring new referees 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's player registration, the effort has to be intensified to increase the referee corps. In general, there is rarely 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 Region's 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 Region's 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 referee with the training necessary to perform the job.

The greatest opportunity for referee recruitment usually occurs at Regional player registration events. 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 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 in uniform present at registration. Men, women and youth referees should be part of this referee team at registration so that all sources of volunteers have a very visible presence. The referee team can indirectly help the registration process 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 recruiting 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 referees 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 that they will be prepared to take the “pitch”.

Another source of referee recruits is U8 Officials and club linespersons, who Referee Mentors should encourage to become trained as certified referees. (The Referee Mentor 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 AYSO Office. Valuable information on developing a youth referee program can be found in the *Recruiting and Retaining Referees* manual, Appendix 9: “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.

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 AYSOU (Document Library).

Training and Certifying Referees

Proper training is the cornerstone of any effective Region’s 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 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: U8 Official, Regional Referee, Intermediate Referee, Advanced Referee and National Referee. Special programs are available for youth referees.

Four levels of instructor training are also available: Regional Referee Instructor, Intermediate Referee Instructor, Advanced Referee Instructor and National Referee Instructor. Two levels of assessor training are available: Referee Assessor and National Referee Assessor.

Two levels of Administrator training are also available: Regional Referee Administrator and Area Referee Administrator.

Each RRA should ensure their Regional Director of Referee Instruction and all their referee instructors obtain a copy of this manual.

One of the most important elements of the AYSO National Referee Program is the AYSO Referee Certification and Training Program. All referees 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 this program. The philosophy of the AYSO Referee Certification and Training Program includes:

- Protecting referees through AYSO Safe Haven Certification
- Helping referees to improve their officiating skills
- Assisting referees to advance in certification 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 (U6) to the more advanced play common among our 19-year-old (19U) teams.

Rationale for AYSO Referee Certification Levels

- **U8 Official:** Trained in the fundamental skills needed to officiate short-sided games for players 8 and under years of age.
- **Regional Referee:** Trained in the basic skills needed to referee AYSO matches under the IFAB *Laws of the Game,* AYSO Referee Guideline and AYSO National Rules & 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 IFAB *Laws of the Game,* AYSO Referee Guideline and AYSO National Rules & Regulations.
- **Advanced Referee:** Trained in the advanced skills needed to referee most upper-level AYSO soccer matches under the IFAB *Laws of the Game,* AYSO Referee Guideline and AYSO National Rules & Regulations.
- **National Referee:** Trained in the professional aspects of refereeing needed to manage more challenging upper-level matches under the IFAB *Laws of the Game*, AYSO Referee Guideline and AYSO National Rules & Regulations.

AYSO Safe Haven Certification and training for the U8 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 and submittal of a Volunteer (Adult or Youth) Application Form according to the AYSO-approved method in use by the Region.

Cross-certification opportunities with the United States Soccer Federation (USSF) are available upon application for AYSO Intermediate, Advanced and National Referees. The application is available on the AYSO Wiki.

Training Courses

The AYSO National Referee Program is designed to provide training to referees and prospective referees that will prepare them to referee an AYSO soccer match under IFAB *Laws of the Game and* the AYSO National Rules & Regulations. This program intends to standardize the course requirements for consistency throughout AYSO. Except for the U8 Official training, referee designations and training are not directly associated with any specific age group. The U8 Official Course prepares volunteers to officiate AYSO matches for players in the U8 program but does not adequately prepare them for any other level of AYSO play.

AYSO believes that Regional Referees with match experience, physical conditioning, mental preparation and additional training (upgrade training and certification) will prepare them to referee higher-level soccer matches. Training in AYSO is a continuing process. All 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 initiative in developing how the material may be presented. Each instructor, however, must ensure that the lesson

goals and learning objectives of the lesson plans are met.

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

- U8 Official Course: 3 hours
- Regional Referee Course: 6 hours
- 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.

AYSO referee training courses are incremental; that is, each course above the entry-level builds on the content of the preceding one. For this reason, for a course to count toward certification, a referee must take it after having completed the prior-level course and after passing the associated exam. This implies that a referee who attends a referee training course without these prerequisites will not be credited with satisfying an upgrade requirement and therefore, to upgrade, will have to take the course again after fulfilling the prerequisites. Note, that anyone may attend any AYSO referee training; however, the training will count toward an upgrade only if the specified prerequisite is met at the time. (See full details in the Referee Training Matrix located in the Appendix.) Naturally, the value of a training course will be reduced if the individual lacks the appropriate background.

While training courses must be taken in sequence to satisfy upgrade requirements, there is no requirement that course attendees be certified at the prior level. Thus, for example, a referee may take the Advanced Referee Course without being certified as an Intermediate Referee and the course will count toward eventual certification as an Advanced Referee provided that the referee had satisfied the prerequisite for the Advanced Referee Course at the time he/she took it.

Every referee must have a sound foundation in the IFAB *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 upgrade requirement and are not a required part of the referee training courses, though they are usually offered in conjunction with a course.

Certification

Referees may enter the certification process at the U8 Official, or Regional Referee level. Certification at the Intermediate, Advanced, or National level requires prior certification at the Regional, Intermediator Advanced level, respectively.

Detailed certification requirements for referees are listed in the Appendix of this manual.

Exemption Process

Exemption from AYSO referee certification requirements may be granted to deserving individuals who wish to assist with the implementation of the AYSO National Referee Program and have demonstrated technical expertise at a level that justifies waiving certain certification requirements.

Section Referee Administrators may exempt a deserving individual from referee certification requirements.

Restoration of Volunteer Certifications after Extended Lapse of Volunteer Registration

To re-certify as Referee, Referee Instructor or Referee Assessor after extended lapse of registration as an AYSO Volunteer (8 years or more), the volunteer needs to:

1. Register, complete background check & complete all currently required Health & Safety training.
2. Complete the Online Regional Referee training as a refresher on the current Laws of the Game, current procedures and current practice. No need to attend the Online Companion Course (encouraged but not required).

3. Depending on the certification being restored:
    a. To re-certify as a Regional Referee or an Intermediate Referee, no further action is required.
    b. To re-certify as a Advanced Referee, the volunteer will need to retake (not for pass/fail) the Advanced written exam and complete one service assessment as Referee. **NOTE: National 2 Referee re-certifies as Advanced Referee.**
    c. To re-certify as a National Referee, the volunteer will need to retake (not for pass/fail) the National written exam and complete one service assessment as Referee and one service assessment as Assistant Referee.
    d. To re-certify as an Instructor, retake and pass the current written exam at the appropriate level of prior certification and complete one evaluation at the appropriate level of prior certification. **NOTE: Certifications prior to Referee Instructor must also complete the Regional Referee Instructor course to be recertified.**
    e. To re-certify as an Assessor, retake and pass the appropriate Assessor written exam and complete one over-the-shoulder at the level of prior certification.

Referee Upgrade Process

The Application for Referee Certification form must be completed by the candidate for upgrade to Intermediate Referee level and above. An appropriate referee staff member verifies that all requirements have been met and signed off by individuals authorized to do so. After meeting all requirements and obtaining the verifying signature, the referee must send the form to their Section Referee Administrator. A list of the current SRAs and their contact information can be found on the AYSO Wiki.

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 Referee Assessment. For National Referee upgrades, the verification of requirements is performed by the Section Referee Administrator or Section Director of Referee Assessment.

At all levels, verification of requirements is chiefly an administrative action, the purpose of which is to verify that the individuals who have signed the form indicating completion of the requirements for upgrade are authorized to do so. In addition, by signing the upgrade, the verifier attests that the candidate is registered as an AYSO volunteer for the current membership year.

Verification must be completed within 30 days of the submission of the completed upgrade form by the referee to the individual responsible for verification. If the verifier is unable to complete the verification for any reason, the verifier must notify the referee of the reason in writing within 30 days.

Obtaining Certificates and Badges

U8 Official and Regional Referee badges (and, optionally, certificates) are awarded by the course instructor upon completion of the associated course and exam. These entry-level badges and certificates may be ordered directly from Sports Pins International. Intermediate, Advanced and National badges and a certificate of completion are provided to the upgraded referee by the Section Referee Administrator or their designee upon receipt of a completed, signed and verified Application for Referee Certification form.

Green badges are available from the same source for 8U Official, Regional and Intermediate Youth Referees.

Scheduling Referees

A thorough review of the various ways referees can be scheduled can be found in the *Regional Referee Administrator Manual*, which is available in the AYSOU Document Library. Scheduling is one of the most important aspects of the Region's referee program. If done haphazardly, scheduling can undermine the morale of the referees and hinder the Region's 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' 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. 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 Region's referee staff positions that does 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 the available referees and guidelines for the level of 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 officiating 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 the field where youth referees are working games. When necessary, the responsible adult can remind others that negative comments about the referees are inappropriate and are not tolerated in AYSO. This is especially critical when youth referees are involved.

The National Referee Program recommends that youth referees be assigned to matches involving players younger than themselves. If a youth referee shows an exceptional capability to officiate older players, the Region should determine how to assign the referee for Regional play. When a youth referee officiates outside of the Region, Regions are encouraged to inform the Area and Section staff of the referee's capabilities. Regions should assure that youth referees are adequately supervised by an adult mentor or board member.

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

Be sure to obtain a copy of the Regional Referee Administrator Manual 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 Referee Guideline* on the *AYSO Referee Wiki*.

The referee administrator has many concerns 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 the Region needs referees and fit referees are less likely to miss games due to injury.

At clinics, have a sport trainer teach your referees the best way to stretch and warm up before a game to minimize the chance of injury. Get referees to help each other to remember to stretch before and after games. Stretching should be a regular feature of 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 year-round.

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 Safety Director.

The safety of the players and referees is of utmost importance. Holes and uneven ground on the fields and sidelines can cause the Region to lose the services of its referees. The goals must be safe (no structural damage) and anchored before the start of every match. Work with the field director and spare no effort to get the fields in the best condition possible. Encourage referees to contact the Regional Safety Director when they discover dangerous field conditions. 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).

AYSO Severe Weather Policy

AYSO policy, incorporated in AYSO's Safe Haven training, states that when thunder is heard, lightning is within striking distance, therefore games and practices should be suspended and participants should seek shelter immediately. Games should be restarted only after no thunder has been heard for 30 minutes or when an "all clear" siren has been sounded. The entire policy can be found in the AYSO Reference Book, Severe Weather.

Inspecting Players' Equipment

The referee's opinion as to dangerous equipment is the final authority in the IFAB *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, including casts, splints, braces, medical alert bracelets and other medical devices, can be found in the AYSO *Referee Guideline* manual. Make sure all your referees are supplied with a current edition.

Dealing with Player Injuries

In AYSO, the coaches have a Player Registration 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, referees need to stop the game and bring the coach on the field when a player appears injured. 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.

EMTs, paramedics, or doctors should be invited to address your referees at clinics or meetings to teach the signs of possible injury. The referees can thereby feel better prepared to deal with an emergency if one arises.

Dealing with Bleeding

Law 5 of the IFAB *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 and there is no blood on the equipment." 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 following AYSO's Safe Haven guidelines.

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 *AYSO Referee Guideline*.

Allowing Additional Clothing

Regions in colder climates must decide what additional clothing may be worn for warmth. The Region should have a printed cold-weather clothing policy that is distributed to coaches, parents and referees. Sweats and other types of long pants, jackets and sweatshirts are often allowed. Jackets that have zippers or snaps should not be worn. Hooded sweatshirts that are worn should have the hood tucked into the jersey so it cannot be accidentally grabbed. Long pants should be allowed only when the weather is cold enough to warrant it.

Checking players' equipment is a required pre-game duty taught in detail at referee clinics. The more prescribed the ritual, the less likely that it will be skipped. Some Regions have both teams line up for the coin flip and/or equipment check, which has the benefit that the referee's instructions are then heard by everyone. However it is performed, the mandatory equipment check must be thorough. With older players, the preference is for minimum pre-game instructions, usually involving only the team captains and for player equipment inspections done individually by the team.

Managing Monitored ("Free") Substitution

The purpose of this program is to explore different ways to enable Sections, Areas and Regions to attract and keep U14/16U/19U players in the AYSO program. The board also affirmed that this monitored substitution policy applies to U14/16U/19U play only in the 2026 Reference Book, Section 13. The following is taken verbatim from that policy.

U14/16U/19U Play

MONITORED SUBSTITUTION

Free substitution will be permitted in the U14/16U/19U Program, but only if it is handled in a manner which will ensure that every participant plays at least one half of every match by requiring a separate time monitor, independent of either team or coach, who checks each player in or out of the match.

Where Monitored Substitution is being used in AYSO U14, 16U and 19U matches, substitutions will be permitted with the referee's permission during any stoppage in play as specified in the Laws of the Game, Law 3 (The Number of Players) as well as in the section titled "Interpretation of the Laws of the Game and Guidelines for Referees". Substitution rules used in High School, College or other soccer organizations do not apply to AYSO matches. The substitution procedures used in matches played according to the Laws of the Game will be in effect. Namely, when a substitution is requested (the assistant referee signals a substitution has been requested), the referee will determine when there is an appropriate stoppage in play and will then allow the substitution to occur as outlined by the Laws of the Game.

Stoppages in play include the eight identified restarts plus other stoppages where, in the opinion of the referee, the substitution will not unfairly interfere with play, e.g., injury stoppages, outside agent stoppages, stoppages to administer misconduct sanctions and free kicks where the team taking the kick has not elected to take a quick kick.

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, 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 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. The subtler aspects of being an RRA are not part of the normal job description.

Although you oversee all of your Region's referees, your responsibilities are not limited to them. As the RRA, you are the link between the referees and the other members of the Region's 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 other rules 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 by actively implementing a Referee Mentor 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 spokesperson 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 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 IFAB *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!"

Instructor 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 both the IFAB *Laws of the Game* and the spirit behind the Laws, as well as 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 four levels: Regional Referee Instructor, Intermediate Referee Instructor, Advanced Referee Instructor and National Referee Instructor. The certification process for instructor requires formal evaluations by certified Intermediate Referee Instructor Evaluator (Regional Referee Instructor and Intermediate Referee Instructor only) or Referee Instructor Evaluators (Regional Referee Instructor, Intermediate Referee Instructor and Advanced Referee Instructor). The AYSO Referee Instructor Program also provides a 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**: Participants practice teaching in real course situations with evaluation and mentoring by certified Intermediate Referee Instructor Evaluator or Referee Instructor Evaluators as appropriate.

The criteria and requirements for certification as an AYSO Referee Instructor, Intermediate Referee Instructor Evaluator or Referee Instructor Evaluator are listed in the Appendix of this manual.

Questions or concerns related to the AYSO Referee Instructor Program may be emailed to your Section Referee Administrator or your Section Director of Referee Instruction.

Becoming a Referee Instructor

When you stand up in front of a class of AYSO volunteers, especially new volunteers, you are the embodiment of our organization. Your students will respect and appreciate AYSO if they respect and appreciate you. So remember to model the behavior you want from them. Since over 80% of our volunteers only take one AYSO course, the AYSO Referee instructor is generally the most prominent role model our referee volunteers experience for their first year or two in the program. Instructors are seen as the experts on the Laws of the Game as well as experts about the AYSO organization and its policies. Because of this we need to hold ourselves to a very high standard and always make sure that the information we give out is correct.

Effective classroom teaching requires that Instructors prepare the instructor team in advance, communicate in advance of the course to the volunteers registered to take the course to set expectations, to arrive sufficiently early to set up the classroom properly and use a few simple techniques that will enhance any presentation, regardless of the participant teaching method.

Being Evaluated as an Instructor

One of the requirements in the referee instructor upgrade process involves the evaluation of the classroom performance of the instructor candidate. This evaluation serves at least three purposes. First, it ensures instructional competency at the level required to teach at the entry, intermediate and advanced level. Second, it provides a mechanism for referee instructor candidates to obtain helpful and constructive feedback and to measure the progress of their instructional skills. Third, it provides a means of recognition for that progress.

Evaluation of a referee instructor for certification must be performed by an AYSO Referee Instructor Evaluator. An evaluation is an opportunity for the Evaluator to observe a referee instructor in the classroom setting, evaluate his or her performance and subsequently provide balanced, constructive feedback. The evaluator also decides whether the instructor candidate has demonstrated the skills and proficiency necessary for the certification.

Evaluators Expectations of Candidate Performance

Evaluators must understand that candidates for evaluation are at the lower end of the skills required for the level they are being evaluated. Therefore, candidates should not be expected to perform at the highest possible level of the certification for which they are being evaluated. As with any benchmark of proficiency, continued growth through experience is expected as referee instructors mature professionally.

Required Process for Assigning an Evaluator and Scheduling an Evaluation:

1. To request an evaluation, a referee instructor candidate should contact the RDRI or RRA of the Region where the referee is registered. The RDRI/RRA will coordinate the evaluation with the Lead Instructor of an upcoming course, a qualified Intermediate Referee Instructor or Referee Instructor Evaluator (as appropriate to the Instructor certification sought) and the Area or Section referee staff as appropriate.
2. Evaluations for Advanced Referee Instructor candidates:
    a. Whenever possible, the evaluation should be performed by a Referee Instructor Evaluator who is not active in the Region where the candidate is registered.
    b. If the evaluation will occur within the Area where the candidate is registered, the evaluation coordinator must contact the referee's home ADRA (or ARA or a designee) to assign a Referee Instructor Evaluator.
    c. If the evaluation will occur outside the Area where the candidate is registered but within the Section where the candidate is registered, the evaluation coordinator must notify the SDRI (or SRA or a designee). The SDRI (or SRA or designee) has the responsibility for ensuring coordination between the relevant staff of the candidate's Area and the Area in which the evaluation will occur. In particular, the assignment of the evaluator may more logically be handled by the staff of the Area in which the evaluation will occur, working in collaboration with the candidate's Area staff.
    d. If the evaluation will occur outside the Section where the candidate is registered:
        i. The evaluator is assigned by the designated Area referee staff member of the Area in which the evaluation will occur.
        ii. The candidate's ADRI (or ARA) is informed in advance of the evaluation by the evaluator assigner where the evaluation is to be conducted.
        iii. The candidate's ADRI (or ARA or designee) should work closely with the evaluator assigner to provide information that is pertinent to the assignment of an evaluator.

Evaluation: Course Observation Narratives

This section describes the skills and proficiencies that candidates for Referee Instructor certification are expected to demonstrate.

Evaluating the Regional and Intermediate Referee Instructor Candidate

Instructors must always try to use proper soccer language and terminology. Instructors should note improper terms and misleading or incorrect statements that instructor candidates make during their presentations. These should be corrected during the feedback portion of each presentation. There must be an emphasis on ensuring that instructor candidates understand the need for providing correct, factual responses to students in their classes. The candidate should be given feedback on his or her performance as an entry-level Referee Instructor.

The Regional Referee Instructor and Intermediate Referee Instructor Candidates are, prior to the class, expected to:

- Ensure proper training aids are available
    - As required by lesson plan
    - As necessary to teach module
- Provide class materials/handouts available as required by lesson plan
- Ensure their appearance is professional and appropriate
    - Neatly dressed – uniform if required
- Utilize space to best advantage
    - Adequate/appropriate space for lesson plan requirements
    - If inadequate made adjustments to help compensate
    - Possibly re-arranged room for better learning experience

The Regional Referee Instructor and Intermediate Referee Instructor Candidate are, during the presentation, expected to:

- Give an adequate introduction
    - Introduces self (if first module presented)
    - Introduces module and module goals
- Gives complete introduction including goals and objectives
- Provide bridge from previous material
    - Provide the context within course
    - Provide proper AYSO context
    - Tie the upcoming material directly to previous material
- Meet lesson plan goals for the module
    - Should confirm this learning using proper techniques (e.g. adequate summaries of material and seeking confirmation via questioning)
- Meet lesson plan learning objectives
    - Provide the class with an adequate understanding of material that meets all of the related learning objectives.
    - Demonstrate confirmation of understanding using proper techniques

- Obtain adequate class participation
    - Avoids all lecture presentation
    - Should have significant class participation that is well managed and remains on topic
    - Encourages questions from class and is expected to use proper questioning techniques throughout the presentation and answer questions directly and accurately
- Answer questions adequately
    - Listened to questions even to the point of repeating the question for clarification
    - Answered directly to the point of the question
    - Gave proper factual information in answering
    - Expected to acknowledge when they don't know the answer
- Maintain adequate control of class
    - Keep class on topic
    - Recognize and manage any student(s) monopolizing class
    - Complete the module without undue disruption from any student(s).
    - Effectively controls any challenges of class control in a positive manner.
- Use training aids properly
    - Use appropriate training aids for proper emphasis
    - Avoid "talking" to training aids
    - Demonstrate the ability to use training aids effectively using them to enhance learning
    - IRIs should demonstrate the ability to use multiple training aids effectively and must use training aids to enhance learning
- Manage time appropriately
    - Manage time well to cover all material
    - Allocated time within lesson providing appropriate emphasis to each lesson requirement
    - Complete presentation within the allocated time frame
- Provide an adequate summary for the module content
    - Provide adequate summary of the given modules lessons
    - Provide bridge to future presentation(s) providing context for this lesson within the course
- Demonstrate a style that supports learning
    - Style and gestures do not detract from presentation
    - Pronunciation, enunciation is good
    - Voice level audible and varied
    - Humor appropriate
    - Stories are relevant and illustrate and underscore lesson content

The Regional Referee Instructor and Intermediate Referee Instructor Candidate, during the presentation, must:

- Demonstrate general Law and AYSO knowledge commensurate with experience and referee level
    - Does not "make up" or guess at laws or AYSO rules
    - Admits when instructor does not have law knowledge and obtains answer

- Must provide factually correct information within the scope of the training being offered in the course.
    - Must demonstrate general knowledge of AYSO R&R and AYSO modifications to the game
    - Should not give local (Regional) rules as AYSO doctrine
    - Present accurate AYSO knowledge specific to topic
    - Demonstrate appropriate knowledge of AYSO National Referee Program in context of lesson plan

NOTE: Providing incorrect information, especially within the Laws of the Game or failure to correct incorrect information provided by others <u>may</u> result in an additional evaluation.

Evaluating the Advanced Referee Instructor Candidate

Recognize that candidates are being advised on the elements to successfully instruct referees in the U14 and older game. The evaluations should expect instruction & experience on those abilities necessary to officiate matches beyond the basic level, which are more physically demanding and challenging. The candidate should be given feedback on their performance as a new Advanced Referee Instructor.

In addition to those expectations for the Regional Referee Instructor and Intermediate Referee Instructor Candidates, the Advanced Referee Instructor candidate is, prior to the class, expected to:

- Demonstrate creativity in instructor-created training aids, visuals, videos and supplemental value-added material

In addition to those expectations for the Regional Referee Instructor and Intermediate Referee Instructor Candidates, the Advanced Referee Instructor candidate, during the presentation, MUST:

- Have significant class participation that is well managed and remains on topic
- NOT “talk-down” to any student
- Demonstrate the ability to use multiple training aids effectively and must use training aids to enhance learning
- Allocate appropriate time to each teaching requirement (this is an emphasis for ARI candidate).
- Demonstrate a teaching style that enhances learning.
- Provide factually correct information within the scope of the training being offered in the course.
- Have thorough knowledge of AYSO R&R, the AYSO NRP and FIFA & USSF supplemental information appropriate to topic.
- Demonstrate accurate Law knowledge specific to topic
- NOT give local (Regional) rules as AYSO doctrine
- Demonstrate the ability to use multiple training aids effectively
    - Uses proper training aid for appropriate emphasis
    - Employs training aids to enhanced learning

In additional to the above criteria, candidates for Advanced Referee Instructor are expected to:

- Adapt presentation to needs of students
    - Identifies needs of students
    - Does not allow students to fall too far behind others
    - Identifies learning deficiencies and adjusts lesson plan to compensate
    - With adjustments, continues to achieve learning objectives of lesson
- Demonstrate proper questioning techniques
    - Uses questions to provoke thought and enhance learning
    - Uses questions that are on topic and appropriate

    - Must not use questions to embarrass student
    - Expected to use appropriate questioning techniques throughout the presentation and answer questions directly and accurately
- Demonstrate creativity
    - Uses creative approach to subject material
    - Recognizes when teaching approach is not working and demonstrates flexibility to adjust to meet student learning objectives (e.g., smoothly provide a “Plan B”)
    - Demonstrates creativity that enhances the student learning experience
- Involve all students and co-instructors
    - Emphasizes demonstration and guided participation
    - Encourages class participation appropriately
    - Encourages questions from class
    - Effectively uses co-instructors
    - Generates significant class and co-instructor participation that is well-managed and on topic
- Understand and demonstrate the requirements of being an instructor role model
    - Respectful of students and co-instructors
    - Supports co-instructors throughout presentation
    - Instructor is “professional” at all times during class

NOTE: Providing incorrect information, especially within the Laws of the Game or failure to correct incorrect information provided by others <u>will</u> result in an additional evaluation.

Planning a Referee Training Course

Whether you are putting on your first or your thirty-first referee clinic, the steps you must go through are the same. You must 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 years ago. Information in this document will help you to prevent making the mistakes made in the past. Perhaps the best advice you can get is, “If you fail to plan, then plan to fail.”

Planning starts with the need you are trying to address. 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 backward from there. The steps used might be similar to the following list.

1. Contact the appropriate Director of Referee Instruction.
2. Determine the total time available from the present to the training date.
3. Determine the amount of planning time required before the first class. Include time for notification of attendees and 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 the use of the facility.

6. Contact potential instructors, determine availability, assign classes and register the course in AYSOU.
7. Initiate the recruiting program. Let potential participants 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 a projector
- Internet availability (have your materials on your laptop or tablet; bring everything you need on a thumb drive)
- Electrical outlet (always bring your extension cord)
- Tables or desks for participants
- Enough space in the room for demonstrations
- Possible locations:
    - Soccer field (gym, if necessary, when no field is available)
    - School classroom: junior high, high school, college (elementary schools should be avoided due to the 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 participants. The most important consideration to remember is to teach the information that is needed for the experience level of the participants. For example, when teaching entry-level referees who will only be assigned to a lower division or short-sided matches (U6 to U8), it is neither advisable nor productive to teach aspects of the game that are rarely present at this level of play. Likewise, when teaching more advanced referees, it would not be worthwhile to schedule lengthy sessions on such aspects as the 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 demonstrates the knowledge and competence of women referees – a positive message for both female and male referee candidates.

A newly certified instructor, although designated as the lead instructor for a course, is well-advised to use experienced instructors in co-instructor roles. The lead instructor retains overall course responsibility but gains the benefit of valuable experience.

If you have not worked with a particular instructor before, it is a good idea to go over the particular class that the instructor 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 will be used 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, “I 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 participants.

With this in mind, instructors should focus their efforts on delivering lesson plans with a minimum of lecturing, exploiting demonstration and guided participation whenever possible. Simply relying on the PowerPoint slides that generally accompany AYSO training courses produces a less-than- satisfactory experience for the attendees, since such slides, although they are visual aids, tend to encourage lecturing. Instructors should treat the lesson plan, not the PowerPoint slides, as the definitive specification of the course content and should focus their efforts on effective presentations of the lesson plan materials, for which the PowerPoint slides may not always be the best visual aid.

The National Referee Program has produced several very good teaching aids which are available on AYSOU (Document Library). These aids are constantly being produced and improved. Contact your referee staff or other instructors for assistance in finding the most recent list of available teaching aids. You can also use your imagination and 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 participants’ 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 participants.
- 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 of the IFAB *Laws of the Game,* AYSO Referee Guideline, AYSO National Rules and Regulations.
- 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 participants.
- 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 is does not become a distraction for the participants.

Knowing Your Audience

In most referee classes, instructors encounter a range of knowledge and proficiency among the attendees. To make the training of maximum value to all, the instructor must discover and evaluate the participants’ knowledge and experience and tailor the presentation appropriately.

Volunteers should ordinarily follow the natural progression of training courses as part of certification. However, volunteers who are not seeking to certify may wish to attend training courses outside of this progression (that is, without the specified prerequisites). This is permitted but it can pose challenges for instructors. If an instructor determines that a course attendee’s lack of knowledge or experience is likely to prove a significant barrier to learning or potential disruption to others, the instructor should tactfully discuss the matter with the attendee privately at the earliest opportunity. Few volunteers want to waste their time and the instructor should take pains to encourage enthusiasm for learning while channeling it productively, both for the individual and the other course participants.

Using Written Examinations Effectively

All AYSO referee certification levels require taking a written exam. For entry-level courses, the exam is an integral part of the course; for higher-level courses, the exam is separate but 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 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 candidates 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 candidates read the instructions on the cover page of the exam. Encourage them to ask the instructor if the meaning of a question is unclear. Emphasize that there are no "trick" questions.
- Be available during testing so you can answer questions.
- As candidates 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 each answer and give credit if you are convinced that the candidate 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 candidates 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 following the AYSO National Referee Program's Retesting Policy (see below). However, if a candidate fails the exam badly, the instructor should encourage the candidate not to take a second exam without taking some time to study.

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

Referee	U8 Official	
	Regional Referee	
	Intermediate Referee	Sample Intermediate Referee
	Advanced Referee	Sample Advanced Referee
	National Referee	Sample National Referee
Instructor	Referee Instructor	
	Advanced Referee Instructor	
Assessor	Referee Assessor	
	National Referee Assessor	
Mentor	Referee Mentor	

Note that the exams are password-protected, except for the Regional Referee and below and sample exams. Sample exams are not password-protected so that candidates can become familiar in advance with the kinds of questions that will appear on the exam. Answer keys for sample exams are password-protected to give instructors the option of using the sample exams as a "pre-test" for which the answers are given in the classroom. 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 candidates to retain exams. After the exams have been reviewed, they must be collected and destroyed.

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

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

Instructors who wish to provide suggestions for improving an AYSO referee exam should complete the feedback form at the end of the exam.

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, the candidate will generally have to wait four weeks before trying again.

Roster Completion Policy

To ensure attendees receive credit for completed training, training rosters must be entered into the AYSO database promptly. Attendees must be added to and signed into the roster. On completion of the course, the lead instructor should only check under Event 1 those modules attended and the exam and fitness exam (if applicable and passed) and the course marked as "Completed" (under the vertical ellipsis in the upper right corner).

Any lead instructor who has failed to account for a roster within the sixty days following the scheduled training date may be subject to being suspended until the past due roster is returned or its status satisfactorily resolved.

Continuing Education

The AYSO National Referee Instruction Program is designed so that all instruction at all levels of instruction will be taught the same regardless of where the instruction takes place. This design requires that AYSO instructors keep up to date on changes in the IFAB Laws of the Game, the AYSO National Rules and Regulations and The AYSO National Referee Program. Therefore, continuing education and preparation are a vital part of every Referee Instructor's job. This is particularly important because of the significant changes from year to year in the Laws of the Game and AYSO's National Referee Program.

The following are the minimal requirements for AYSO Instructors:

1. Must be registered volunteers for the current membership year

2. Must be compliant with all current legal and program requirements in their locality for Safe Haven, Concussion Awareness and any other required training (e.g., Sudden Cardiac Arrest, SafeSport).
3. Must periodically check your Region's AYSO Volunteers website for state legal requirements for these and other training.

Annually, the instruction materials and exams are updated and rewritten. The primary responsibility for remaining current on instructional material lies with the individual instructors and with the AYSO officials who assign those instructors to teach AYSO courses. Here are some recommendations for individuals to be sure to be up to date. Once you have accepted an assignment to teach a course

1. Review the current lesson plan and exams for the particular course on the AYSOU site.
2. Review the most current version of the Laws of the Game
3. Review the most recent AYSO National Rules and Regulations
4. Review the most recent AYSO Referee Guideline
5. Review the most recent AYSO National Referee Program Manual

Every year, most of the Referee Courses and exams materials are updated and revamped as necessary to be current. Every instructor must use the most recent lesson plan and exam for any instruction. The following have been recommended for all levels of referee instructors to help improve their abilities to instruct.

1. Take the new Online U8 Official Course at least once every 3 years.
2. Take the Online Regional Referee Training at least once every 3 years.
3. Take the Online AYSO's Safe Haven at least once every 3 years.
4. Take the Online Concussion Training at least once every 3 years.
5. Take the Online Sudden Cardiac Arrest Training at least once every 3 years.
6. Take the Online SafeSport Training (adults only) annually.
7. A referee instructor (of whatever grade) that is the lead instructor for a Regional Referee Course, whether the full course or companion course, is encouraged to take the following within the 12 months preceding the course:
    a. Online Regional Referee Training
    b. Online AYSO's Safe Haven

By implementing these continuing education recommendations, we can allow AYSO to be one of the best soccer referee training programs in the United States.

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 Program

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

The goal of the Assessment and Mentor Program is to help referees improve, gain confidence and become more effective in a positive, encouraging and supportive manner.

Assessor and Mentor Training Program Overview

The AYSO Referee Assessor and Mentor Training Program is a program in which referees and other qualified volunteers 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 Mentors need not be current referees. The program is administered by AYSO Directors of Referee Assessment at the Regional, Area and Section levels.

Referee Mentors and Assessors

The first level of developmental support for AYSO referees is the Referee Mentor 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 referees. This helping hand consists of frequent contact to support and encourage the development of referees. Experience has shown that the Mentor Program is important to referee development, retention and recruiting.

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

Observation and Assessment

One of the requirements in the referee upgrade process involves the evaluation of the on-the-field performance of the referee. 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 referees to obtain helpful 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 may be either for upgrade or for service. The field evaluation of referee performance for the 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 the upgrade. Whether for upgrade or service, Assessments and Observations are conducted using the same criteria and processes outlined later in this section.

Observation of a referee for an upgrade should be performed by an AYSO Referee Assessor (or National Referee Assessor); however, if a qualified assessor is not available, the observation for the upgrade may be performed by a Referee Mentor. Observations are an opportunity to observe a referee under game conditions and to provide helpful and constructive feedback. These observations are intended to be part of an informal and relaxed activity designed to assist in the development and improvement of a fellow referee's skills. Upon completion of the game and after receiving a debriefing, the candidate for upgrade has fulfilled the observation requirement. (Observation for upgrade applies only to Intermediate Referee certification.) An Observation may also be used as a development tool and may be conducted independent of the upgrade process, in which case it is sometimes called an "informal

observation."

Assessment of a referee for upgrade must be performed by an AYSO Referee Assessor or National Referee Assessor. An upgrade assessment is an opportunity for the assessor to observe a referee under game conditions, evaluate his or her performance and subsequently provide balanced, constructive feedback. The assessor also decides whether the referee has demonstrated the skills and proficiency necessary for the upgrade. Both the requirements for the upgrade and the training and development of assessors are described later in this section.

Referee Mentor Program

The Mentor

The Referee Mentor acts as a helping hand for new and developing referees. The Mentor plays many important roles in the development of referees:

- As a Friend, the Mentor must be persuasive in his or her comments to the referees. The referee must trust the motives as well as the judgment of the Mentor and believe that the Mentor gives freely of time and effort.
- As an Observer, the Mentor must provide sound, simple advice and assistance that leads the trainee on the shortest path to success. The referee must believe in the sincerity and credibility of the assistance given.
- As a Supporter, the Mentor offers encouragement in unlimited supply. In this view, the referee 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 is obligated to take the part of the referee in all encounters. No criticism or dissent can go unchecked; no party can challenge without the proactive, positive involvement of the Mentor.
- As Choreographer, the Mentor helps the new and developing referee to stage the officiating process. From the opening – arrival and inspection of the field – to the closing – the post-game ceremony and bookkeeping – the Mentor helps the referee to move with purpose and direction from one part of the process to the next. The Mentor also encourages and assists the referee in moving through upgrades in certification.
- As Advisor, the Mentor provides accurate, factual information that gives the referee additional insight and understanding.
- As a Coach, the Mentor offers tactical instructions that help the referee to operate at the top of his or her game and provides the referee with practical suggestions to improve performance.
- As a Role Model, the Mentor gives the developing referee a real person to emulate. The Mentor's attitudes, values and behaviors set the example that the referee is likely to follow on the field.

The Mentor Program can be a great tool for any AYSO Region's retention and upgrade efforts. If successful, the program also aids the recruiting effort, and potential volunteers realize the safety net that surrounds each new referee.

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

Mentor Qualifications

The Mentor should:

- Be committed to AYSO and the AYSO philosophies
- Be willing to devote time and energy to the Mentor Program
- Have clear and concise verbal communication skills
- Learn to properly observe a referee's performance
- Have a positive attitude in presenting information
- Develop an aptitude for listening and responding to a referee's questions and concerns
- Encourage referees and understand a referee's shortcomings
- Serve as a role model to other volunteers
- Know the Laws of the Game and referee mechanics

Administration of the Mentor Program

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

The Regional Referee Administrator (RRA) supports and encourages the Regional Director of Referee Assessment (RDRA) to develop and administer the program. Support must include ensuring that scheduling is done in such a manner as to support the Mentors and referees being assisted.

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

- Recruiting and training Mentors. It is recommended that sufficient Mentors be assigned to provide a Mentor to each U8 Official and Regional Referee. Mentors should be assigned no more than three referees at any one time.
- Developing a specific program that will ensure the assignment of an Assessor to each new U8 Official and Regional Referee during the first season of new referees' games in the Region.
- Encouraging Mentors to continue their education to become Referee Assessors and National Referee Assessors.

The Area Referee Administrator (ARA) and Area Director of Referee Assessment (ADRA) should provide support and encouragement to the RRAs and RDRAs in their Area and should provide inter-Region support for the program.

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

For a successful Mentor Program, Regional Referee staff must:

- Identify and appoint sufficient Mentors to meet Region requirements
- Provide Mentors with adequate training and material
- Conduct a briefing on their duties and responsibilities
- Consider conducting training with role-playing for new Mentors before working with referees
- Provide a copy of the Referee Mentor Manual
- Assign Mentors to referees immediately upon the referee receiving training and certification
- Avoid scheduling a Mentor as a referee in a game immediately before or after a game in which the mentor is mentoring a referee
- Recognize Mentors with awards or other recognition programs.

Alternative Administration of the Mentor Program

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

- Assign fields and times to Mentors: A Mentor will observe and support all referees on the fields during the times assigned. Referees should be informed, in advance, of the Mentor's role. If necessary, a Mentor may cover two fields at a time.
- Form teams of referees: A Mentor should be assigned to a team of referees who will rotate duties during a series of games. The Mentor should give feedback after the series of games.
- Assign in groups: Mentors should be assigned refereeing duties close to a referee who is to be advised. The Mentor should be available to assist the referee and respond to questions before and after the game.
- Recruit retired or injured referees to act as Mentors. Some of these referees may not initially meet all of the prerequisites of a Mentor. They should be carefully selected and thoroughly briefed on their duties. They should be encouraged to complete the requirements as soon as possible.

Guidance for Mentors

Initial Contact:

- Contact the referee you are assigned to mentor 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 referee to make initial contact with you.**
- Arrange an initial meeting in which you:
- Introduce yourself and explain your referee experience
- Describe the Mentor Program
- Make sure that the referee understands that the mentoring process is intended to be a positive experience
- Learn as much about the referee as possible
- Understand the referee's goals, objectives, experience and concerns
- Answer any questions or doubts
- Arrange for the next meeting, including attending the referee's next game.
- Develop your objectives that meet the needs of the referee and AYSO

As a Mentor you:

- Act as a Mentor 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 referee as often as needed
- Encourage the referee to continue certification to higher levels of officiating
- Ask the referee to serve as assistant referee for one of your games
- Participate with the referee in continuing training and social activities offered by the Region
- Seek help from others to ensure that the needs of the referee are met
- Report to the Regional referee staff any special needs or problems that should be addressed for the referee

- Actively recruit other volunteers to become referees and Mentors
- Support the referee at any game you observe. This includes positive comments to coaches, spectators and players.
- Provide **positive** feedback to the referee after all observations:
  - Make at least two or three positive comments
  - Identify no more than two areas for improvement by the referee
  - Be specific in all comments made to the referee using game experience or specific examples of performance.
  - Give small, attainable, immediately improvable goals for the referee
- 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…"
  - "I always…"
  - "Never…"
  - "Always…"
- End discussions of observations with a positive comment
- Encourage the referee at all times.

Assessment: Requirements and Procedures

Observations and Assessments, as elements of the referee upgrade process, have a somewhat more formal structure than the referee mentoring discussed above. Referees who are upgrading above the Regional Referee level have learned the basics of soccer refereeing and seek certification of their greater skills and proficiency. Accordingly, the requirements for the 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 a certified AYSO assessor must nevertheless be accepted.

Policies governing observations and assessments:

- It is the right of every AYSO referee to request and to obtain promptly an observation or assessment by an appropriately trained AYSO assessor. Regional, Area and Section staff must not refuse to schedule or indefinitely delay an assessment or observation when one is requested.
- A referee seeking an assessment or observation must recognize that suitable advanced notice is required to permit the necessary scheduling of an assessor or observer. The required time may vary with the geography, time of year and level of upgrade sought, among other factors. Whenever possible, referee staff should honor a request for observation or assessment within 2-3 weeks.

Requirements for Observations and Assessments for Upgrade

- *For upgrade to Intermediate Referee:* One observation as the referee in a U12 game. The game should be of regular AYSO length.
- *For upgrade to Advanced Referee:* One assessment as the referee and one as an assistant referee in a U14 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 the minimum duration requirement.

- *For upgrade to National Referee:* Two assessments as the referee and one as an assistant referee in 19U games. When 19U games are not available, 16U games may be used for assessment with the approval of the SDRA 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, meets the minimum duration requirement and we have the approval of the organization authorizing the match.

Required Process for Assigning an Assessor and Scheduling an Assessment:

1. To request an assessment, a referee should contact the RDA or RRA of the Region where the referee is registered. The RDA/RRA may coordinate the assessment or may delegate the coordination of the assessment to another individual, such as an Area or Section referee staff member.
2. Assessments for Advanced Referee candidates:
    a. Whenever possible, the assessment should be performed by an assessor who is not active in the Region where the candidate is registered.
    b. If the assessment will occur within the Area where the candidate is registered, the assessment coordinator must contact the referee's home ADRA (or ARA or a designee) to assign a Referee Assessor or National Referee Assessor.
    c. If the assessment will occur outside the Area where the candidate is registered but within the Section where the candidate is registered, the assessment coordinator must notify the SDRA (or SRA or a designee). The SDRA (or SRA or designee) has the responsibility for ensuring coordination between the relevant staff of the candidate's Area and the Area in which the assessment will occur. In particular, the assignment of the assessor may more logically be handled by the staff of the Area in which the assessment will occur, working in collaboration with the candidate's Area staff.
    d. If the assessment will occur outside the Section where the candidate is registered:
        i. The assessor is assigned by the designated Area referee staff member of the Area in which the assessment will occur.
        ii. The candidate's ADRA (or ARA) is informed in advance of the assessment by the assessor assigner where the assessment is to be conducted.
        iii. The candidate's ADRA (or ARA or designee) should work closely with the assessor assigner to provide information that is pertinent to the assignment of an assessor.

- Assessments for National Referee candidates:
    a. Whenever possible, the assessment should be performed by an assessor who is not active in the Area where the candidate is registered.
    b. If the assessment will occur within the Section where the candidate is registered, the assessment coordinator must contact the referee's SDRA (or SRA or a designee) who assigns a National Referee Assessor. The SDRA (or SRA or designee) has responsibility for ensuring coordination between the relevant staff of the candidate's Area and of the Area in which the assessment will occur.
    c. If the assessment will occur outside the Section where the candidate is registered:
        i. The assessor is assigned by the designated Section referee staff member of the Section in which the assessment will occur.
        ii. The candidate's SDRA (or SRA) is informed in advance of the assessment by the assessor assigner where the assessment is to be conducted.
        iii. The SDRA (or SRA or designee) from the candidate's Section should work closely with the assessor assigner to provide information that is pertinent to the assignment of an assessor.

- Wherever possible the following conditions should be observed for assessments for upgrade:
    a. The candidate should not be assigned a game immediately before or after the game to be assessed.
    b. If being assessed as the referee, the candidate should be allowed to pick the other members of the officiating team.
    c. If being assessed as the referee, the candidate's assistant referees should not be assigned a game immediately preceding or following the assessment game. The candidate should have the option of having the assistant referees available for part or all of the assessment debrief.
    d. Game time, location, names and contact information of assistant referees should be provided to the candidate well in advance of the game.

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. The referee being assessed must feel 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 U14 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 16U/19U games. Similarly, a National Referee candidate cannot be expected to perform at a level equal to a referee with many years of 19U experience. As with any benchmark of proficiency, continued growth through experience is expected as referees mature professionally.

Forms

The AYSO Wiki has forms for assessments and observations:

- Referee Assessor Upgrade Application
- Assessment Field Worksheet
- Referee Assessment Checklist
- Assessment Verification Form
- Assistant Referee Assessment Checklist
- Assessment Feedback Form
- Referee Observation Worksheet
- Referee Physical Fitness Test

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" on page 40).

Pre-Game

- Contact the referee team before the match and review the ground rules. For instance, determine if the entire referee team is to be assessed or only a particular candidate.
- Verify the name of the referee to be assessed and the time and place of the 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 referees' pre-game conference.
- Observe but do not interfere with player pre-game instructions by the 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 or 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 display of 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 the 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 the outcome of the 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" on page 51).
- If only one member of the team is being assessed and if you are asked to do so, 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 forms, sign them and give them 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 the 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 enjoy the experience. Good post-assessment activities can help ensure that your comments and constructive criticism are applied to the benefit 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 allowed 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 in several respects:

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

As part of the certification process for Intermediate Referee upgrade, an observation of a candidate's performance is required. During this observation, the candidate is expected to exhibit a significant majority of the skills and proficiencies defined below (see "Observing the Intermediate Referee Candidate" below). If, in the judgment of the observer, the candidate does not fulfill this expectation, the observer should use this as a mentoring opportunity and communicate clearly what skills and proficiencies have been adequately demonstrated and which require further observation, so that the candidate understands how he/she has progressed toward the upgrade and what remains to be demonstrated. Ideally, this should be in writing, to avoid confusion or ambiguity. Additional observation(s) will need to be conducted to demonstrate skills and proficiencies to complete this requirement of the upgrade process. The observer should also encourage the candidate to ask for another observation when he/she feels ready.

Observers must remember their objective is to help a candidate meet expectations, not to create a barrier to upgrade. In particular, an observation is a less formal evaluation than an assessment. Observers must not unreasonably require a second observation and should do so only if they observe a significant gap between the skills and proficiencies expected of Intermediate Referees and those demonstrated by the candidate.

An observation, like an assessment, should be a positive, win-win experience. There **must** always be a post-game discussion with the referee.

Assessment: Field Observation Narratives

This section describes the skills and proficiencies that 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 U12 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 or her 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 30 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 the 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 the play

Attitude

Candidates:

- should always practice the “AYSO Team” philosophy
- 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 are expected to:

- demonstrate a 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
- 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 are expected to:

- consistently recognize and whistle fouls that occur in a typical regular season AYSO U12 game including DFK and IDFK fouls
- recognize the difference between offside position and offside offenses
- apply the proper sanctions and restart

Control

Candidates are expected to demonstrate that they always have control of the game 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 U12 game, candidates must complete the game and be debriefed by the Referee Assessor or Mentor.

Assessing the Advanced Referee Candidate

Recognize that candidate is being critiqued on his or her ability to successfully perform as a referee and or assistant referee in a typical regular season AYSO U14 game. The assessment should focus on the candidate's 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 Candidate Performance on page 36.

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 30 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 the 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 a 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 IDFK fouls
- distinguish between offside position and offside offenses
- apply the proper sanctions 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 U14 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 the candidate is being critiqued on his or her ability to successfully perform as an assistant referee in a typical regular season AYSO U14 game. The assessment should focus on the candidate's ability to officiate beyond the Intermediate level to successfully handle most AYSO matches as an assistant referee. See Assessor Expectations of Candidate Performance on page 36.

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 30 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 the 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, 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 Touchline

Candidates are expected to:

- provide timely and accurate assistance to the referee for the ball out of play across the touchline 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 U14 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 the candidate is being assessed on his or her ability to successfully referee a typical regular season AYSO 19U game. The assessment should focus mainly on the candidate's basic understanding of the "professional" aspects of refereeing, the application of the spirit and intent of the IFAB *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 Candidate Performance on page 37).

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 30 minutes before it starts, 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
- are 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 meeting at the center during the half-time interval
    - responsibility following the scoring of a goal
    - calling fouls in the 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 the proper position of players and assistant referees for kick-off

- assume the correct referee position for kick-off

Fitness

Candidates are expected to:

- be within 15 to 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 a 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 the 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 IDFK 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 offenses
- 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 place of constant whistling
- being aware of and dealing with infractions away from the play
- properly managing the required minimum distance on free kicks, corner kicks and throw-ins
- positioning players for restarts within the penalty area
- protecting the 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 19U 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 the experience and attitude of players for maximum enjoyment for all

Assessing the National Referee Candidate as Assistant Referee

Recognize that the candidate is being assessed on his or her ability to successfully perform as an assistant referee in a typical regular season AYSO 19U game. The candidate should demonstrate skills equal to an entry-level National Referee acting as an assistant referee. The candidate is not expected to perform at a level that would allow him or her to act as an assistant referee at the **most** challenging AYSO game (see Assessor Expectations of Candidate Performance on page 37).

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 30 minutes before it starts, 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 the proper position for the kick-off

Fitness

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 Touchline

Candidates must:

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

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 19U 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 assist 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 or her performance and enhance the enjoyment of the game for everyone. This principle also applies to the Referee Assessor and National Referee 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 Referee Assessor. These practice assessments provide the assessor 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 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 Dos & 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 the candidate intends to use or is comfortable practicing.
- DO determine whether you need to stand with the assessor candidate during the match or let him or 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 they will understand why there appear 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 Assessor Techniques and Guidelines (page 37), especially those relating to the post-game discussion.
- DO ask the assessor candidate how he or 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 when the referee candidate is becoming discouraged and has stopped listening.
- DON'T dominate the post-game interview with your 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, to make a fault seem easy to correct.
9. Assess the game you saw, not the game that might have been.
10. Make the referee understand and accepting of the improvements you suggest.

How to Deliver the Message

A 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 positively.

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 referees can improve and state the positive things they are 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, they will be reluctant. Here are some ideas to help encourage 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 one 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 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 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 or she 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 word?

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 Observation Narratives, page 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 candidate's 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

The following 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. 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 referee 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 on and the game you're about to work on. You don't want a confrontation and you don't want "schmoozing" 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 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 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 referees.

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.

There is 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, expectations, or the views of others.

Most importantly, as assessors and mentors, 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 by
REFEREE TRAINING COURSES					
U8 Official	This in-person course trains volunteers to officiate in U8 matches.	3 hours	None	Regional Referee Instructor	Regional Referee Administrator
U8 Official - Online	This online course trains volunteers to officiate in U8 matches.	3 hours	None	None	None
Regional Referee Online Training **and** **Regional Referee Online Companion**	This two-part training consists of an online, self-paced training course located at AYSOU and a separate class with a live instructor. Together provide training equivalent to that of the Regional Referee Course.	Online: 1.5 hours Class: 3 hours	Online training must be completed before attending the Companion course.	Regional Referee Instructor (for Companion course)	Regional Referee Administrator
Regional Referee	This course trains referees in the basic aspects of refereeing needed to do AYSO matches under IFAB *Laws of the Game* and AYSO National Rules & Regulations.	6 hours	None	Regional Referee Instructor	Regional Referee Administrator
Intermediate Referee	This course trains referees to do more physically demanding and challenging matches under IFAB *Laws of the Game* and AYSO National Rules & Regulations.	8 hours	Regional Referee Course and Pass Regional Referee Exam	Intermediate Referee Instructor	Area Referee Administrator or Director of Referee Instruction
Advanced Referee	This course trains referees to do most matches under IFAB *Laws of the Game* and AYSO National Rules & Regulations.	8 hours	Intermediate Referee with 12 months experience	Advanced Referee Instructor	Area Referee Administrator or Director of Referee Instruction
National Referee	This course trains referees to referee all AYSO matches under IFAB *Laws of the Game* and AYSO National Rules & Regulations.	15 hours	Advanced Referee with 12 months experience	National Referee Instructor	Section Referee Administrator or Director of Referee Instruction

Course	Description	Length	Prerequisites	Minimum Lead Instructor Requirements	Verification of Lead Instructor Requirement by
REFEREE ADMINISTRATOR TRAINING COURSES					
Regional Referee Administrator Training	This training teaches Regional Referee Administrators the essential activities needed to manage a referee program.	2.5 hours	None	Advanced Referee Instructor	Area Referee Administrator or Director of Referee Instruction
Area Referee Administrator Training	This training teaches Area Referee Administrators the essential activities to manage an Area Referee program.	1.25 hours	Regional Referee Administrator Training	Advanced Referee Instructor	Section Referee Administrator or Director of Referee Instruction
ASSESSOR TRAINING COURSES					
Referee Mentor	This course trains already-certified referees to be certified mentors for less-experienced referees, youth referees and referees seeking upgrades.	1.5 hours	Regional Referee	Intermediate Referee Instructor	Area Referee Administrator or Director of Referee Instruction
Referee Assessor	This course trains assessors to assess officiating skills at the Advanced level.	4.5 hours	18 years of age or older Advanced Referee	Advanced Referee Instructor and either a Referee Assessor or National Referee 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 with 12 months experience	National Referee Instructor and National Referee Assessor	Section Referee Administrator or Director of Referee Assessment
INSTRUCTOR TRAINING COURSES					
Regional Referee Instructor **Intermediate Referee Instructor**	This entry-level training teaches instructor candidates how to conduct Regional and Intermediate Referee training courses using AYSO teaching plans.	11 hours	18 years of age or older Introduction to Instruction Intermediate Referee	Advanced Referee Instructor	Area Referee Administrator or Director of Referee Instruction
Advanced Referee Instructor	This training teaches Intermediate Referee Instructors how to conduct advanced referee training courses using AYSO teaching plans.	10.8 hours	Advanced Referee Intermediate Referee Instructor	Advanced Referee Instructor	Section Referee Administrator or Director of Referee Instruction
National Referee Instructor	This certification (not a course) is accomplished through mentoring while assisting with National Referee Courses.	Variable	Advanced Referee Instructor National Referee Referee Instructor Evaluator National Referee Assessor	SRA or SDRI assigns a mentor	Section Referee Administrator or Director of Referee Instruction
Intermediate Referee Instructor Evaluator	This training teaches Intermediate Referee Instructors (or higher) to evaluate other instructors and provide constructive feedback.	5.5 hours	Intermediate Referee Intermediate Referee Instructor	Advanced Referee Instructor	Section Referee Administrator or Director of Referee Instruction
Referee Instructor Evaluator	This training teaches Referee Instructors (or higher) to evaluate other instructors and provide constructive feedback.	5.5 hours	Advanced Referee Advanced Referee Instructor Intermediate Referee Instructor Evaluator	Advanced Referee Instructor	Section Referee Administrator or Director of Referee Instruction

Notes:
- This table shows training information only. For certification requirements, see the next section.
- Volunteers may attend training courses without having the listed prerequisites, but that course may not be used to satisfy a certification requirement.

AYSO Referee Certification Requirements

NOTE: It is highly recommended that all Referees be a minimum of two years older than the oldest player in the division matches to which they have been assigned.

U8 OFFICIAL	
Age:	10 or older
Training:	U8 Official Course
Test:	Complete the U8 Official Exam
Notes:	1, 2, 3, 15
REGIONAL REFEREE	
Age:	12 or older
Training:	Regional Referee Course or be an U8 Official and complete U8 to Regional Referee Course
Test:	Score 75% or higher on the Regional Referee Exam
Notes:	1, 3, 4, 15
INTERMEDIATE REFEREE	
Age:	14 or older
Games:	25 as a referee with at least 5 in U12 matches
Prerequisite:	Certification as Regional Referee
Training:	Intermediate Referee Course
Test:	Score 85% or higher on the Intermediate Referee Exam
Observation:	One observation as a referee in a U12 match is required
Verification:	Area (or Section) Referee Administrator or Area (or Section) Director of Assessment
Notes:	1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 12, 15
ADVANCED REFEREE	
Age:	16 or older
Games:	50 as a referee with at least 10 in U14 matches and 5 as an assistant referee in U14 matches
Prerequisite:	Certification as Intermediate Referee
Training:	Advanced Referee Course
Test:	Score 90% or higher on the Advanced Referee Exam
Assessment:	One as a referee in a U14 match and one as an assistant referee in a U14 match
Experience:	A minimum of one year of experience as an AYSO Intermediate Referee
Fitness Test:	AYSO Physical Fitness Test for the Advanced level
Verification:	Area (or Section) Referee Administrator or Area (or Section) Director of Assessment
Notes:	1, 3, 7, 9, 10, 12, 13, 15
NATIONAL REFEREE	
Age:	18 or older
Games:	100 as a referee with at least 30 in 16U and 19U matches, of which at least 15 must be in 19U matches if available and 25 as an assistant referee with at least 10 in 19U matches, if available
Prerequisite:	Certification as Advanced Referee with 12 months experience
Training:	National Referee Course. It is strongly recommended that the candidate complete at least 80 matches as a referee before attending the National Referee Course
Test:	Score 90% or higher on the National Referee Exam
Assessment:	Two as a referee in 16U or 19U matches with at least one in 19U, if available and one as an assistant referee in a 19U match, if available
Experience:	A minimum of one year of experience as an AYSO Advanced Referee
Fitness Test:	AYSO Physical Fitness Test for the National level
Verification:	Section Referee Administrator or Section Director of Referee Assessment
Notes:	1, 3, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 14, 15

Notes to Referee Certification Requirements:

1. Certification at all levels requires (one-time) completion of AYSO's Safe Haven certification and current registration as an AYSO volunteer. Adult volunteers are required to complete a background check annually. Concussion Awareness training and Sudden Cardiac Arrest are required by some states and are otherwise strongly recommended. For adults, SafeSport is required annual training. See AYSOU for details.
2. No minimum score is required on the written exam.
3. In exceptional cases, certification requirement(s) may be waived through the use of the exemption process (see page 14).
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, though it has some similarities. See the section "Concerning Observations", page 40.
6. As indicated in the Referee Training Matrix (page 55), Regional Referee certification is a requirement is a requirement for Intermediate Referee certification.
7. As indicated in the Referee Training Matrix (page 55), Intermediate Referee certification with 12 months of experience is a requirement for taking the Advanced Referee Course.
8. As indicated in the Referee Training Matrix (page 55), Advanced Referee certification with 12 months of experience is a prerequisite for the National Referee Course.
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 & 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 ADRA for Advanced Referee candidates, SRA or SDRA for National Referee candidates.
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 SRA may authorize substitution (for both game count and assessment) of 16U matches for 19U matches if 19U matches are not available.
12. The verifier of certification requirements for upgrade must serve in one of the specified roles in the Region, Area, or Section in which the upgrade candidate is registered. The verification must be completed within 30 days of the submission of the completed upgrade form by the candidate to the verifier. If the verifier is unable to complete the verification for any reason, the verifier must notify the upgrade candidate of the reason in writing within 30 days.
13. The assessor for an Advanced Referee upgrade assessment will be assigned by the candidate's Area Director of Referee Assessment (or designee) if the assessment will take place within the Area in which the candidate is registered; the assessor assignment will be coordinated with the candidate's ADRA (or designee) if the assessment will take place outside the Area in which the candidate is registered.
14. The assessor for a National Referee upgrade assessment will be assigned by the candidate's Section Director of Referee Assessment (or designee) if the assessment will take place within the Section in which the candidate is registered; the assessor assignment will be coordinated with the candidate's SDRA (or designee) if the assessment will take place outside the Section in which the candidate is registered.
15. See Restoration of Volunteer Certifications after Extended Lapse of Volunteer Registration (page 14).

AYSO Referee Instructor and Evaluator Certification

Regional Referee Instructor

In the following order:

1. Be a currently registered AYSO volunteer and have completed Safe Haven and current SafeSport. Also, CDC Concussion training and Sudden Cardiac Arrest training, each where required by law.
2. Be an Intermediate Referee or higher (or Regional Referee with SRA waiver)
3. Complete the AYSO Introduction to Instruction course
4. Complete the Referee Instructor Course
5. Pass Referee Instructor Examination
6. Pass Referee Instructor evaluation as an instructor in a 30-minute presentation from the Regional Referee Course or Regional Referee Online Companion Course with a qualified Referee Instructor Evaluator
7. Application for certification verified by Area (or Section) Referee Administrator or Area (or Section) Director of Referee Instruction

Intermediate Referee Instructor

In the following order:

1. Be a currently registered AYSO volunteer and have completed Safe Haven and current SafeSport. Also, CDC Concussion training and Sudden Cardiac Arrest training, each where required by law
2. Be an Intermediate Referee or higher
3. Be a Regional Referee Instructor
4. Complete 4 hours of in-class instruction in Referee training classes (maybe multiple classes)
5. Pass Referee Instructor evaluation as an instructor in a 30-minute presentation from the Intermediate Referee Course preferably with a different certified Referee Instructor Evaluator
6. Application for certification verified by Area (or Section) Referee Administrator or Area (or Section) Director of Referee Instruction

Advanced Referee Instructor

In the following order:

1. Be a currently registered AYSO volunteer and have completed Safe Haven and current SafeSport. Also, CDC Concussion training and Sudden Cardiac Arrest training, each where required by law
2. Be an Intermediate Referee Instructor with a minimum of one (1) year experience
3. Be an Advanced Referee and should be a National Referee
4. Complete the 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 who must be an Advanced Referee Instructor
7. Application for certification verified by Section Referee Administrator or Section Director of Referee Instruction

National Referee Instructor

The AYSO National Referee Instructor (NRI) is the top certification in the AYSO Referee Instructor program. The NRI certification differs from all other AYSO instructor certifications in that there is no associated formal course or written exam. Instead, the NRI certification is achieved through a robust mentoring process. The NRI candidate is mentored by current NRIs while teaching portions of the AYSO National Referee Course (NRC). This process will typically occur over several courses to allow the candidate to teach the different modules from the NRC. The candidate will coordinate with the Section Director of Referee Instruction (or Section Referee Administrator) to find opportunities to instruct in the NRC as well as identify mentors. Because the number of NRC classes is typically small the process to complete the certification may take significant time. In that vein, mentoring received and experience obtained by teaching the modules in the National Referee Assessor Course can be used to measure progress toward the NRI certification.

This certification does not require a formal evaluation by an AYSO Referee Instructor Evaluator. Rather, the certification will be awarded when, in the opinion of the mentors, the candidate has demonstrated the ability to successfully teach the various NRC modules.

Responsibilities

The NRI is authorized to lead the National Referee Course, the National Referee Assessor Course, as well as all other referee, referee instructor and referee assessor courses. The NRI is expected to be a role model and resource for all instructors.

Candidate Prerequisites

The NRI candidate must satisfy these prerequisites:

- Be a currently registered AYSO volunteer
- Have completed Safe Haven, CDC Concussion Training and Sudden Cardiac Arrest Course
- Have current SafeSport training
- Be a National Referee for at least one year
- Be an Advanced Referee Instructor for at least one year
- Be an above-average Advanced Referee Instructor
- Be a Referee Instructor Evaluator (RIE) for at least one year
- Be a National Referee Assessor for at least one year
- Has extensive AYSO instruction experience:
    - Instructed many different referee program certification courses at all levels
    - Instructed the complete National Referee Course and National Referee Assessor Course
    - Instructed at AYSO EXPOs
    - Instructed courses outside their home Area and, if practical, outside their home Section
- Consistently demonstrates creativity in instruction including appropriate use of non-AYSO (e.g., USSF, IFAB, FIFA) materials to enhance the learning experience
- Consistently demonstrates techniques to effectively engage students in the learning process
- Has a thorough understanding of the Laws of the Game, the AYSO National Rules & Regulations and the AYSO National Referee Program Manual
- Is familiar and comfortable with supplemental teaching materials from USSF, FIFA and IFAB
- Consistently demonstrates respect for students and co-instructors
- Consistently works effectively with co-instructors (is a “team player”) including providing informal mentoring
- Is an active mentor for other instructors in the role of Referee Instructor Evaluator
- Is an active referee assessor and mentor

Candidate Characteristics

The Section Director of Referee Instruction (SDRI) is responsible for formally identifying and recommending NRI candidates. Potential candidates may be identified by the SDRI directly or by the recommendation of another AYSO volunteer or by the potential candidate themselves. The SDRI will be looking for the candidate to have had a positive and broad impact on all aspects of the AYSO referee program.

In general, the NRI candidate should satisfy the following expectations:

NRI Certification Process
The specified certification process is captured in the AYSO Application for Referee Instructor Certification form:

- The candidate must be recommended by the candidate's Section Director of Referee Instruction, who assures that the candidate has met all prerequisites and has the necessary characteristics expected of an NRI. The recommendation is formalized by the SDRI's signature on the certification form.
- The candidate must be recommended by a National Referee Instructor, preferably other than a member of the recommending SDRI's Section staff, based on performance while teaching portions of the National Referee Course. The recommendation confirms that the candidate has satisfied the evaluation criteria explained below. The recommendation is formalized by the NRI's signature on the form.
- Finally, the candidate's certification must be authorized by the candidate's Section Referee Administrator, which is formalized by the SRA's signature on the form.

To prepare for NRI certification, the candidate must be mentored while teaching a substantial portion of the National Referee Course. Typically, this will require the candidate to participate in several courses and may involve more than one mentor. The SDRI will need to work with the candidate to find opportunities to participate in a course. If practical the SDRI and candidate should look for opportunities outside their Section to get feedback from a broader range of NRI mentors; this has the added advantage of expanding the instructor candidate's resource network.

Evaluation Criteria
The purpose of the NRC is to train National Referee candidates in the art of people and game management. As a result, the course focuses heavily on managing interactions between the various participants (players, coaches and referees) rather than focusing on the technical details of the Laws of the Game. This means that the NRI candidate must be comfortable with instructing modules on such topics as interpersonal conflict, decision-making and working towards win-win problem solutions. The building of the candidate's comfort level doing this is part of the purpose of the mentoring process. In addition, the mentor will be working with the candidate to reinforce the use of effective teaching and student learning techniques which is simply a continuation of the process that started when the candidate first became a certified AYSO instructor. The NRC uses scenarios, role-playing and student interactions extensively and the mentor is looking for the NRI candidate to develop and hone skills as a facilitator to focus and guide these types of discussions.

The NRI certification does not require a formal RIE evaluation. Therefore, there is no formal evaluation checklist exists for the Regional Referee Instructor (RRI), Intermediate Referee Instructor (IRI) and Advanced Referee Instructor (ARI) certifications. However, since the candidate is expected to be an above-average ARI, it is recommended that the mentor use the ARI evaluation checklist to guide part of the mentoring process. The candidate is expected to demonstrate performance at the highest level. In addition, the mentor will be looking for the candidate to demonstrate competence in teaching the NRC:

- Candidate demonstrates thorough understanding of all NRC module content
- Candidate effectively guides student interactions to achieve desired learning objectives
- Candidate demonstrates an understanding of the instructor's role as a facilitator (or guide)
- Candidate demonstrates creativity in successfully engaging all students
- Candidate inspires and facilitates students to actively contribute to the learning process by allowing them to share relevant experiences in a respectful environment
- Candidate demonstrates flexibility in meeting student needs
- Candidate creates a positive and inclusive learning environment
- Candidate makes efficient use of time; avoids wasting time

In the mentoring process, the candidate should come to appreciate that the underlying methodology of the National Referee Course is not merely to convey information to the students but to have the students and instructors interact, think and reason so that the students learn that being a National Referee is more than knowing a set of rules and procedures.

Intermediate Referee Instructor Evaluator

In the following order:

1. Be a currently registered AYSO volunteer and have completed Safe Haven, CDC Concussion, Sudden Cardiac Arrest (where required by law) and current SafeSport training
2. Be an Intermediate, Advanced or National Referee Instructor
3. Complete the Intermediate Referee Instructor Evaluator Course
4. Pass two required practice evaluations
5. Application for certification verified by Section Referee Administrator or Section Director of Referee Instruction

Referee Instructor Evaluator

In the following order:

1. Be a currently registered AYSO volunteer and have completed Safe Haven, CDC Concussion, Sudden Cardiac Arrest (where required by law) and current SafeSport training
2. Be an Advanced or National Referee Instructor
3. Be an Intermediate Referee Instructor Evaluator
4. Pass one required practice evaluations on an Advanced Instructor candidate
5. Application for certification verified by Section Referee Administrator or Section Director of Referee Instruction

AYSO Referee Assessor and Mentor Requirements

REFEREE MENTOR	
Experience:	Certified as a Regional Referee
Training:	Successfully complete the Referee Mentor Course
Testing:	None
Appointment:	Appointed as a Referee Mentor by the Regional Referee Administrator or Regional Director of Assessment
Authorized to:	Advise U8 Officials and Regional Referees. When assessors are not available, observe Regional Referees for the 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 Advanced Referee or higher and must have the approval of the Regional or Area Referee Administrator.
Training:	Successfully complete 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 U14 AYSO matches (or equivalent). These "over-the-shoulder" assessments must be mentored by a Referee Assessor or National Referee Assessor.
Approval:	Approved as a Referee Assessor by the Area Referee Administrator or the Area Director of Referee Assessment.
Authorized to:	Advise U8 Officials and Regional Referees. Observe Regional Referees for the upgrade to Intermediate Referee and assess Intermediate Referees for the upgrade to Advanced Referee.
NATIONAL REFEREE 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 an upgrade to the Advanced Referee level. The candidate must be a National Referee and must have the approval of the Section Referee Administrator or the Section Director of Referee Assessment.
Training:	Successfully complete the National Referee Assessor Course.
Testing:	Pass the National Referee Examination and the National Referee Assessor Examination.
Assessment:	Successful completion of two practice assessments of a referee officiating a 19U AYSO match (or equivalent) or 16U AYSO match (or equivalent) if 19U is not available. These "over-the-shoulder" assessments must be mentored by a National Referee Assessor.
Approval:	Approved as a National Referee Assessor by the Section Referee Administrator or the Section Director of Referee Assessment.
Authorized to:	Advise U8 Officials and Regional Referees. Observe Regional Referees for the upgrade to Intermediate Referee, assess Intermediate Referees for the upgrade to Advanced Referee and Advanced Referees for the upgrade to National Referee.

AYSO Referee Physical Fitness 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 an Advanced Referee are authorized by the Area Referee Administrator or Area Director of Referee Assessment. Physical tests for certification as a 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 referees 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)
- Volunteer safety provisions (tent or another shady area, cot, water/orange juice, availability of first aid, cell phone in case of medical emergency)
- Proper Equipment (forms, stopwatches, cones, clipboards)
- 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.)

NOTE to Instructors:

Either the current or alternative fitness test may be used for the course (only one version may be administered)

Physical Requirements / Current Fitness Test

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. A minimum distance must be completed.
- **Speed Run (50-meter dash):** This run is a straight 50-meter dash and must be completed in no more than the time allowed.
- **Speed Run (200-meter dash):** This run is a 200-meter dash and must be completed in no more than the time allowed.

<table>
<tr><th>CERTIFICATION</th><th>TEST</th><th colspan="2">REQUIREMENTS</th></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="3">Advanced Referee</td><td>Endurance Run</td><td colspan="2">Must run for 12 minutes and cover at least 1600 meters</td></tr>
<tr><td>Speed Run (50 meters)</td><td colspan="2">Maximum 10.5 seconds</td></tr>
<tr><td>Speed Run (200 meters)</td><td colspan="2">Maximum 42 seconds</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="8">National Referee</td><td rowspan="4">Endurance Run</td><td colspan="2">Must run for 12 minutes and cover:</td></tr>
<tr><td>Age</td><td>Minimum Distance</td></tr>
<tr><td>Under 38</td><td>2200 meters (5.5 laps)</td></tr>
<tr><td>38-45</td><td>2000 meters (5.0 laps)</td></tr>
<tr><td>46 & over</td><td>1800 meters (4.5 laps)</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="3">Speed Run (50 meters)</td><td>Age</td><td>Maximum Time</td></tr>
<tr><td>Under 46</td><td>9.0 seconds</td></tr>
<tr><td>46 & over</td><td>9.5 seconds</td></tr>
<tr><td>Speed Run (200 meters)</td><td colspan="2">Maximum 40 seconds</td></tr>
</table>

Alternative Fitness Test

(give candidates and instructors feedback form to be completed after test)

All three parts of the physical fitness examination must 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 100m long field (or marked grass area).

Pro 40 Box: This tests the physical movements of the referee to transition quickly from sprinting to sidestepping, to back peddling in a short distance.

AR movement shuttle run: This tests the speed and agility of a candidate to keep up with play in short sprints and transition to/from AR sidestepping when necessary.

<table>
<tr><th>CERTIFICATION</th><th>TEST</th><th colspan="2">REQUIREMENTS</th></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="5">Advanced Referee</td><td rowspan="2">Endurance Run</td><td colspan="2">Must run for 12 minutes and cover:</td></tr>
<tr><td>Age</td><td>Maximum Time</td></tr>
<tr><td>All</td><td>1600 meters</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">Pro 4- Box</td><td>Age</td><td>Maximum Time</td></tr>
<tr><td>All</td><td>40 seconds</td></tr>
<tr><td>AR Movement Shuttle Run</td><td colspan="2">2 repetitions in maximum 90 seconds</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="5">National Referee</td><td rowspan="2">Endurance Run</td><td colspan="2">Must run for 12 minutes and cover:</td></tr>
<tr><td>Age</td><td>Maximum Time</td></tr>
<tr><td>All</td><td>1800 meters</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">Pro 4- Box</td><td>Age</td><td>Maximum Time</td></tr>
<tr><td>All</td><td>32 seconds</td></tr>
<tr><td>AR Movement Shuttle Run</td><td colspan="2">3 repetitions in maximum 120 seconds</td></tr>
</table>

The Alternative Fitness test should be completed on a soccer field with a length of 100 meters (or an open field of adequate size).

** The distance should be marked with tall cones at either end **

The order of the fitness test must be followed to ensure for proper testing and to reduce any chance of injury.

Test 1: 12-minute distance run

- Completed in an out and back fashion (see diagram)
- This is intended as a warm-up while simultaneously testing the referee's overall fitness regarding continuous movement
- Candidates must continue to move (walk, jog, run, etc.) for the entire 12-minute duration (Note: a short break to get water is allowable, but the clock continues to run).

Passing Standard:

- Advanced Candidates must complete 1600 meters in 12 minutes
- National Candidates must complete 1800 meters in 12 minutes

**** Break of at least 5 minutes between tests 1 and 2 ****

Test 2: Pro 40 Box

- See diagram for setup instructions
- Instructor should demonstrate test to students to ensure understanding
- Each Candidates will complete this test individually (timed by an instructor)
  - Time begins at the candidates first movement (sprinting forward)
  - Time ends when the student back peddles past the finish cone (cone #1)

Successful Candidates will:

- Demonstrate proper mechanics throughout the test
  - Side stepping laterally (no cross stepping)
  - Crisp maneuvers around comer cones (must Stay within 1 Step Of the cone)

Passing Standard:

- Students must stay tight to the cones
- Movements must be crisp (no cross stepping)
- Must complete the entire box
  - Advanced Candidates: 40 seconds
  - National Candidates: 32 seconds

*** Break - 5 minutes between test 2 & 3 (from completion of last student) ****

Test 3: AR Movement Shuttle Run

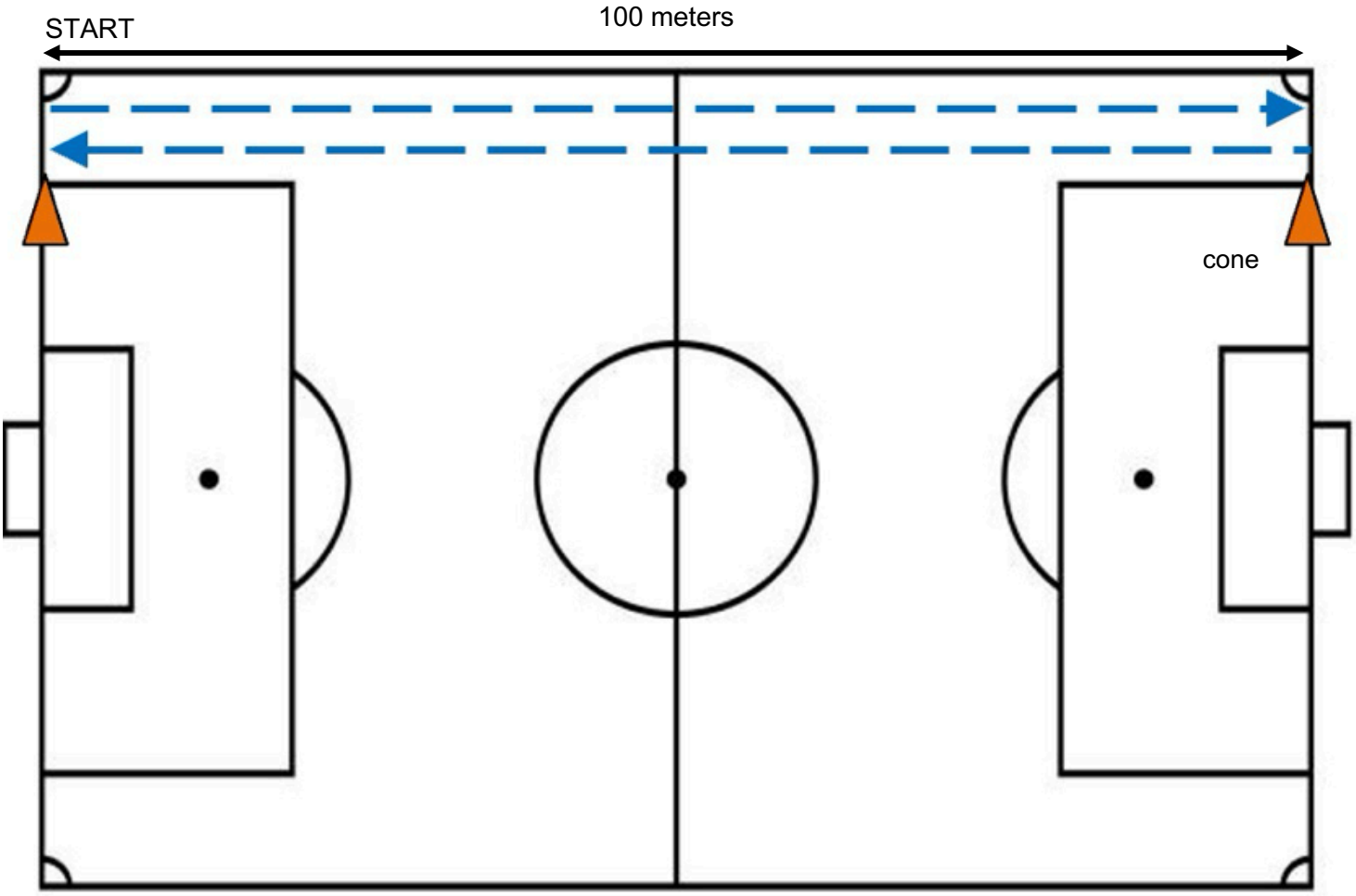
- See diagram for setup instructions
  - 2-meter wide lane for sidestep/sprint & recovery jog (this mimics the AR's primary running area during a match)
  - Flat cones to mark transition points (cones at: 0m, 10m, 40m, 50m)
  - Cones or a drawn line to mark the running area (2 meters wide)
- AR flags must be used during this test to better simulate proper movements and demonstrate proper flag mechanics
- Instructor should demonstrate one repetition of the test to students to ensure understanding
- Each student will complete this test individually (timed by an instructor)
  - Time begins at the students first movement (sprinting forward)
  - Time ends when the student completes the recovery jog past the finish cone

Successful Candidates will:

- Demonstrate proper mechanics throughout the test
  - Side stepping laterally (no cross stepping)
  - Flag in proper hand for movements (facing field during sprint, visible to referee (Instructor) during side stepping)
  - Recovery must be at a jogging pace; walking is not allowable)

Passing Standard:

- Advanced Candidates must complete 2 repetitions in 90 seconds
- National Candidates must complete 3 repetitions in 120 seconds

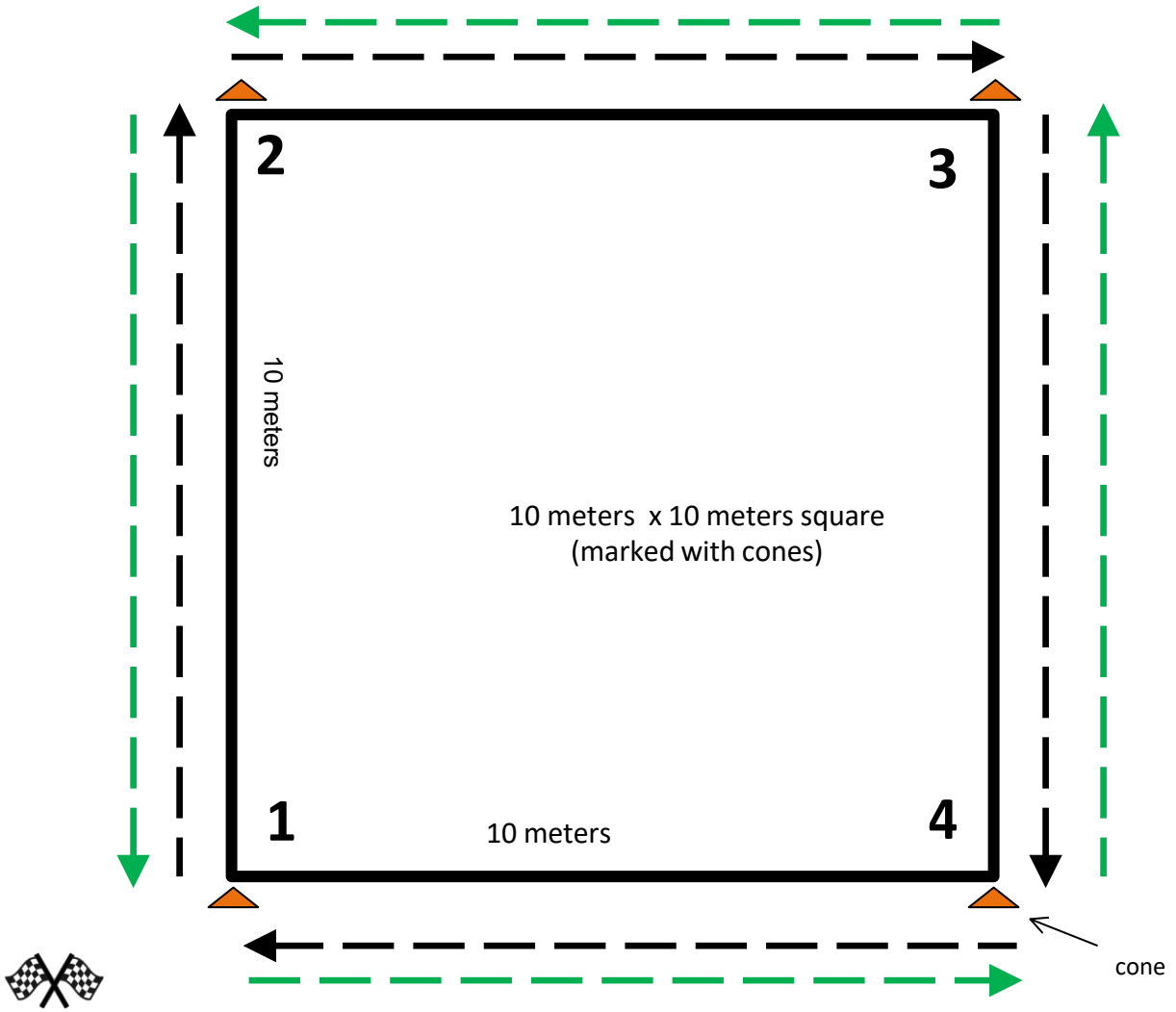


- Students run out and back

Passing Standard:

- Advanced Candidates must complete 1600 meters in 12 minutes
- National Candidates must complete 1800 meters in 12 minutes

ALTERNATIVE FITNESS TEST - NATIONAL REFEREE
– PRO 40 BOX –



Start / Finish

FORWARD DIRECTION

Start/finish at cone 1

- Sprint forward [to cone 2]
- Sidestep right [to cone 3]
- Back pedal [to cone 4]
- Sidestep left [to cone 1]

REVERSE DIRECTION

- Sidestep right [to cone 4]
- Sprint forward [to cone 3]
- Sidestep left [to cone 2]
- Back pedal [to cone 1]

Passing Standard

- Students must stay tight to the cones
- Movements must be crisp (no cross stepping)
- Must complete the entire box
  - Advanced Candidates: 40 seconds
  - National Candidates: 32 seconds

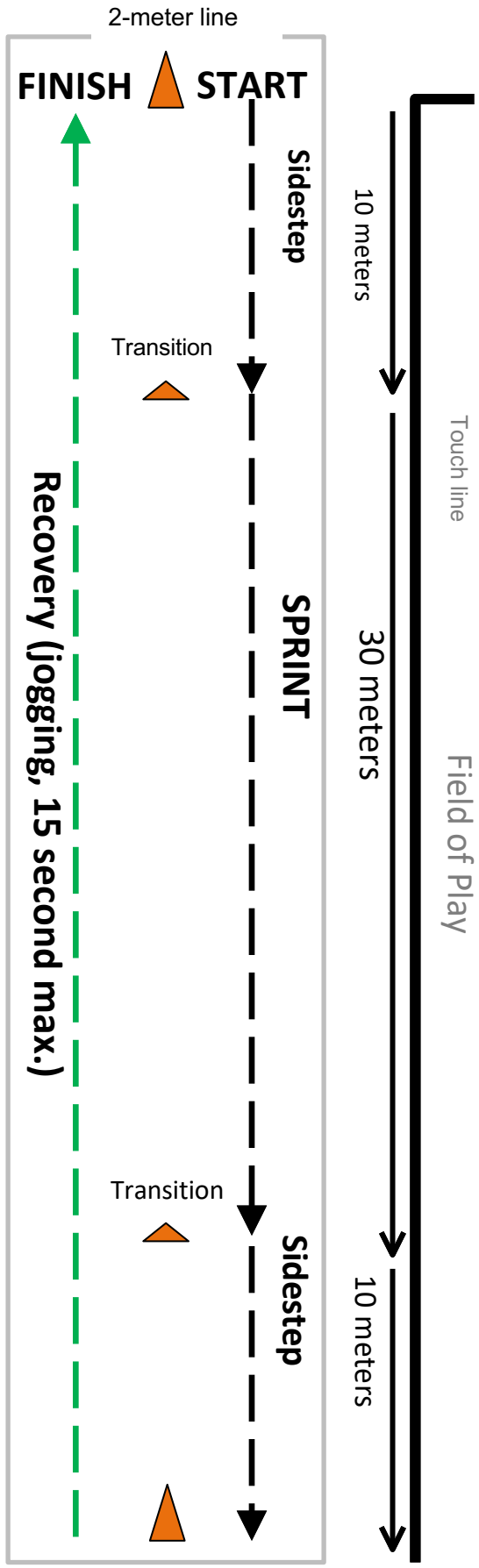
ALTERNATIVE FITNESS TEST - NATIONAL REFEREE
– AR MOVEMENT SHUTTLE RUN –

DIRECTIONS

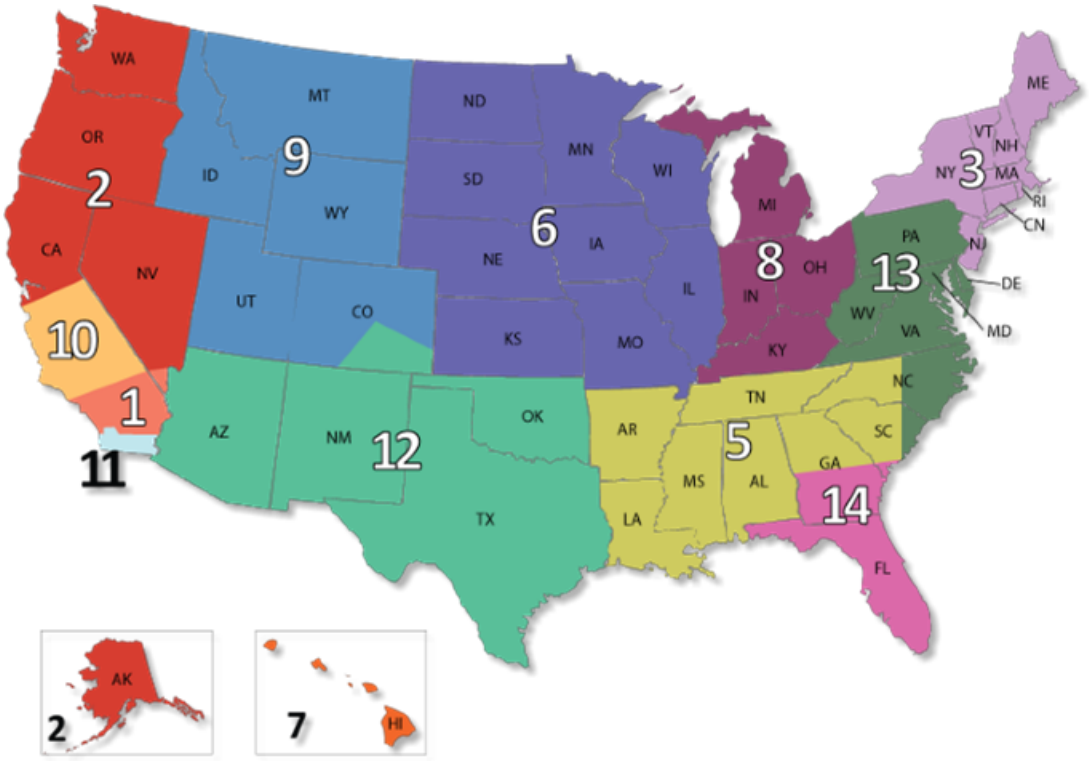
- Must be completed with AR flag in hand (proper mechanics are expected)
- Time begins at first movement
- Sidestep 10 meters (facing field)
- Sprint 30 meters (watching field)
- Sidestep 10 meters (facing field)
- Recovery run 15 seconds max. (jogging)
- REPEAT in a row

Passing Standard

- Must utilize proper side-stepping (no cross stepping)
- Must utilize proper flag mechanics (flag in proper hand, facing field of play/ref)
- Completion:
  - Advanced Candidates: 2 repetitions in 90 seconds or less
  - National Candidates: 3 repetitions in 120 seconds or less



AYSO Section Map



Contact your Section Referee Administrator.

Notes

“In AYSO, it’s about more than the game!”