

Referee Administrator Roundtable, EXPO 2023

Saturday, March 18, 2023, Pasadena Convention Center, Room 105

Scott Jarus, Area 1/D ARA

Steve Cooper, Area 10/E ARC

Scott provided the Regional Referee Administrator Job Description (from AYSO.org) Handout. He noted that it hasn't been updated since January 2009 (according to the footer).

He highlighted some takeaway items from the document:

1. Ensure all referees are properly registered and certified (item 2)
 - a. Some of the certification requirements are California law, so very important to focus on these (for the California regions).
 - b. It was noted by Steve Cooper that a region's Insurance policy references sexual abuse for compliance purposes. Coverage is \$2 million per incident.
 - c. Some regions do not allow signing up for games unless these certifications are in place (Sports Connect). Section 1 Website has certification list available for download. Does not include youth referees.
 - d. Scott noted that SafeSport allows for an adult of the same sex as the team (i.e., girls or boys) to be within the team area during practice and games *if both of the coaches are of the opposite sex*.
2. Responsible for referee scheduling (item 7). Consider moving away from spreadsheets to a referee scheduling system, e.g., CGI.
3. Plan early to Identify a successor (item 8)
4. Maintain a list of all registered and certified referees in the regions. Use this list to communicate with your referee population.
 - a. Weekly or bi-Weekly referee emails during the seasons, with some frequency of emails during the off-season to keep the referee population engaged. Use for education and engagement. In other words, work on year-round communications with the referee population.
 - b. WhistleStop (distributed by the National Referee Council) is a good communications tool for your referee population.
5. Building referee comradely is important. Nurture it. 1-2 referee events for the season (roundtables). Provide regular referee recognition.
6. Foster referee upgrades, particularly from Regional to Intermediate (the first step).
 - a. Use tournament invitations as a way of recognizing and encouraging certain referees.

Two topics *not* included in the job description, but should be:

1. RRAs (with the help of ARAs) are responsible for referee recruitment and retention.
 - a. Recruiting *youth* referees (high schoolers?). Talked about zero-tolerance policies for dissent against youth referees.
 - b. Recruiting and retaining *women* referees. Shared the need for a person within the Area to encourage participation from Women (women-only roundtables).
2. Referee uniform and supply coordination
 - a. Build in "referee recognition supplies", e.g., upgraded flags, wallets, jerseys, etc.

Some ideas were shared amongst the group on what has worked and what has not worked within their regions. There was also discussion on the differences between the capabilities of small regions and large regions.

Q&A

Q: What do you do to recruit/retain referees?

A: Various participants shared what works for them.

Q: How to engage High Schoolers?

A: Older children of players. High schoolers. PTO/PTA is a resource to contact. Have a "youth only" training session to prevent youth from being intimidated by adults.

Q: What are some of the other positions that can assist the RRA?

A: Other referee team staff positions are Direct of Referee Instructor, Director of Referee Assessment, Youth Coordinator, Women Referee Coordinator, Referee Scheduler. (As previously stated, this prompted discussion about the differences between small regions and large regions, and how the RRA (and RC) within small regions really do just about every job.

It was highly recommended that smaller regions should seek out Area support (ARA) to help with resources.

Q: What about *paying* referees?

A: Some situations, such as tournaments, allow for referees to be paid, but it is not encouraged by AYSO. This is counter to AYSO as an all-volunteer organization. AYSO referees are invested in the AYSO program, Club referees just go in, get out and get paid, with minimal to no investment in the AYSO programs or principles.

Comments:

- Affordability of paying for referees is a challenge for some regions.
- Paid referees will likely devastate any existing volunteer referee pool that a region may have. One of the RRAs spoke about this within his region.
- "Why should an AYSO referee work for free when someone else is getting paid?" (Ben statement on behalf of the volunteer referee)
- Having paid referees may result in some tax and administrative consequences that a volunteer staff does not.

Q: How many regions have quiet weekend?

A: Some do have it. Consider regular "silent Saturdays" where ONLY the coach can comment (no spectators)

Q: How do regions communicate the silent Saturday program to the spectators?

A: Some regions use signs on field.

Q: How do other regions encourage ARs to take the referee position?

A: Leverage a Mentor program.

- Have someone there to support the Referee so that they feel more comfortable taking the

center position.

- Hold practice scrimmages for ARs to get them comfortable being Referees
- Have the ARs referee 8U games (much less stress)