



Referee Administrator Manual

American Youth Soccer Organization

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everyone plays[®]





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Version History

| Revision | Date | Description |
|----------|---------------|---|
| 001 | 2015 | Initial version |
| 002 | 7/20/2020 | Updated publication year, replaced U-x with xU, changed FIFA LOTG to IFAB LOTG, updated links to AYSOVolunteers.org, format adjustments |
| 21 | July 30, 2021 | Updates to document references |
| 22 | July 8, 2022 | Update document location references, remove 8U to Regional Upgrade (no longer exists) |
| | | |



Introduction

This manual assists the Regional Referee Administrator (RRA) and the Regional referee staff to administer the AYSO National Referee Program at the Regional level. Specifically, the focus of this manual is to provide RRAs with the tools needed to successfully run and manage the local Regional referee program.

Please note: The “AYSO National Referee Program” manual is an additional resource used to manage the Regional referee program and is considered to be a “must-have” companion to this manual. It may be found at AYSOU in the Document Library.



AYSO Vision & Mission

The American Youth Soccer Organization was established in 1964 with the dream to bring soccer to American children. AYSO continues to be the 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 in a fun, family environment based on the AYSO 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 18 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, in order to maximize their enjoyment of the game



Some Surprising Statistics

Every two years, The Josephson Institute of Ethics, conducts a comprehensive survey of high school students from across the country. This survey, called the **Report Card on the Ethics of American Youth**, measures their self-reported values, attitudes and behavior.

In a survey of 4,200 high school student-athletes, the report concluded sports does teach positive values and build character, but in many cases young athletes – especially males – learn to cheat, engage in improper gamesmanship and indulge in excessive violence. The survey reveals that coaches and parents simply aren't doing enough to ensure that the experience is a positive one.

For detailed results visit their web site at charactercounts.org.

- According to the survey, questions designed to measure attitudes and behaviors, approximately half of the boys and a third of the girls surveyed see nothing wrong with behaviors such as cheating, using racial slurs, faking injuries, arguing with referees or resorting to violence, if it will help to win the game.
- 56% of the boys and 45% of the girls further felt that cheating is required to succeed in the “real world”.
- 68% of both boys and girls surveyed admitted to cheating on tests in school.
- 72% of both the boys and girls surveyed would still rather get playing time on a losing team than sit on the bench of a winning team.
- The pressure to succeed/win for many is taking precedent over integrity, honesty, fairness and sporting behavior.

The California Parks and Recreation Association also conducted an online survey and asked the question, “What is the biggest problem in youth sports today?” The following were the choices selected in order of the most to least frequent responses:

- Out of control parents/spectators 48.0%
- Win-at-all-cost coaches 30.6%
- Poorly run leagues 10.5%
- Poor sportsmanship by kids 7.0%
- Inexperienced officials 2.6%

The behavior we model as adults ultimately becomes the behavior and attitudes youth adopt. Our behavior as referees, coaches, spectators and league officials will have lasting effect on the character of the young players who watch and emulate us.

Remember:

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



Well You “Volunteered”, Now What?

RRA Summarized Duties and Responsibilities

- Take the RRA training online as a Webinar or in person at an Expo
- Learn and know the rules: Region, Area, Section, National
- Provide leadership and be an active role model
- Promote referee welfare within the Region
- Annually register referees
- Work with the CVPA
- Appoint a Regional Director of Referee Instruction (RDI)
- Prepare an annual budget
- Develop a match schedule for referees and assistant referees
- Appoint a Regional Director of Referee Assessment (RDA)
- Work with the Regional Commissioner and Regional staff
- Communicate important information
- Partner with the Area Referee Administrator
- Develop a Regional Mentor Program
- Represent the Regional referee staff at Area meetings
- Identify and train an assistant RRA and prospective successor
- Prepare a work plan which includes annual goals and objectives

What needs to be done before the start of the season?

- Develop a deadline calendar
- Confirm status of all current referees
 - Current year AYSO volunteer registration
 - All referees have completed AYSO Safe Haven
 - All referees have completed Concussion awareness training
 - All referees have completed Safe Sport
- Recruit referees
- Conduct training
- Schedule referees
- Retain referee



- Develop a budget

Though every Region is unique, it also shares a common set of problems and issues. AYSO guidelines provide for a variety of methods to address the needs and challenges of each Region. Avoid reinventing the wheel. Learn from previous RRAs, current referees and game schedulers to improve and correct past mistakes. Use this manual with other resources, combined with your own ingenuity and vision to set up a successful referee program. With these tools and preparation, you will experience a successful year as the Regional Referee Administrator.



Identifying Resources

People Who Can Help

- RC – Regional Commissioner
- RCA – Regional Coach Administrator
- CVPA – Child and Volunteer Protection Advocate
- Safety Director
- Previous Regional Referee Administrators and Region staff
- AD, ARA, ADRI, ADRA – Area Director, Area Referee Administrator, Area Director of Referee Instruction, Area Director of Referee Assessment
- SD, SRA, SDRI, SDRA – Section Director, Section Referee Administrator, Section Director of Referee Instruction, Section Director of Referee Assessment
- NRC – National Referee Council

These are the people whose task it is to support the efforts of Regions and its RRAs. The Region is where the action is; it is where AYSO really happens. Among the key objectives of the Area, Section and National staff is to render the Regions assistance in its management of the local program. If you don't know these people, either look them up on eAYSO or contact your Regional Commissioner.

Other sources of support are senior referees and the full-time staff at the National Office. Take advantage of their knowledge, skill and experience. There is no need to reinvent the wheel.

Where to Get More Information

Publications available to RRAs to assist you with your responsibilities:

- IFAB Laws of the Game

The following publications, forms and worksheets are found at AYSOVolunteers.org.

- AYSO National Rules and Regulations
- Regional Guidelines & Policies
- AYSO Official Lineup Card
- Referee Program Budget Form
- Referee Game Report Form
- Referee Observation Worksheet

The following publications are found at AYSOU under the Document Library

- National Referee Program Manual



- IFAB Laws of the Game
- AYSO Referee Guideline
- Recruiting and Retaining Referees
- Referee Mentor Handbook
- Referee Instructor Resource Book

Websites You Will Need

The above publications and referenced websites are some of the more popular ones that the RRA will need to become familiar with to better do his or her job. There are many other websites available filled with additional information that can be useful to the RRA. Here are the primary websites that AYSO manages:

<https://ayso.org>: This is the main AYSO website. It includes most of the necessary information and guidelines, etc. for running a Region, such as AYSO referee publications, lesson plans, instructor information, assessment and mentoring information, links to online training and webinars, sample tests, upgrade forms and general information. It also has links to the USSF and FIFA web sites.

<https://AYSOvolunteers.org>: This website contains documents, forms and general information for all AYSO Volunteers.

<https://ayso.bluesombrero.com/regionxx>: This is the portal to your AYSO registration, training and certification information. Change “xx” to your region number.

Sports Connect: Sports Connect is the service available to create & host an AYSO Section/Area/Region website and is used to manage a Region’s players and volunteers.

<https://ayso.sportsaffinity.com>: This is the Association Platform for program registration.

In addition to the AYSO-related websites, here are more websites you should know about:

<https://theifab.com>: This is the International Football Association Board (IFAB) website. The IFAB is the international governing board of soccer. The IFAB defines and maintains the Laws of the Game.

<https://fifa.com>: This is the Federation International de Football Association (FIFA) website. FIFA is the international governing body of soccer competitions.

<https://ussoccer.com>: This is the United States Soccer Federation (USSF) website which is the national governing body for soccer in the USA. AYSO is a member of USSF.



Fix It Before It Breaks

Proactive Management:

- Be proactive and make sure guidelines, policies and procedures that you need are all in place before the season officially begins. Be familiar with both National and Regional AYSO protocols. Develop a dispute resolution committee and publish the procedure.
- Create a long term plan for referee development for your Region, with the help of your staff and RC.

Appoint Key Staff and Delegate!

You can't do it alone. Appoint staff to help you manage your referee program. Delegation is the key to a successful program. Referee Administrators who try to do the job alone are setting themselves and others up for disappointment and frustration. It is often difficult to find volunteers willing to undertake responsibility, but the more you divide the responsibilities into smaller slices, the easier it will be to find people willing to help and the easier the administrator's job becomes. While it helps, not all these positions need to be filled with currently certified referees. Depending on the size of your Region appoint the following positions:

- Regional Director of Referee Instruction
- Regional Director of Referee Assessment
- Referee Scheduler (works closely with the Regional game scheduler)
- Regional Director for Youth and Women Referee Development
- Referee Mentor Coordinator

Develop close working relationships with other key staff:

- Regional Commissioner
- Regional Coach Administrator
- Child and Volunteer Protection Advocate (CVPA)
- Safety Director
- Area Referee Staff
- Section Referee Staff

Develop a Communication Plan

Poor communication is arguably the single most frequently blamed cause of poor performance. "It takes two to communicate." The RRA should be well versed in both roles.

The secret to good communication is to be clear, concise and easy to understand. Consistent information needs to be disseminated in more than one way to ensure it reaches its intended audience. Frequent and timely reminders are needed to ensure the information is received and



acted upon. Remember – the earlier and more often the information is publicized, the more likely the message will be heard.

Make sure that your communications are consistent with the rest of the Regional board.

Consider the following when developing a communication plan:

- Primary, secondary and fallback communication systems
- Hard copy and electronic systems
- Accountability – share responsibility for communicating information
- Access to phone numbers and email addresses. Regional referee staff members can publish an alternate email address and/or a Regional telephone number
- Establish and maintain up-to-date information on the Region/Area/Section websites.
- Publish and distribute a defined dispute resolution process for your referees.
- Publish procedures for documentation of game misconduct (red and yellow cards).
- Publish procedures for reporting serious injuries/incidents. The *AYSO Incident Report form* may be found at: <https://www.aysovolunteers.org/incident-report-form/>

Optional methods an RRA may deliver information:

- Newsletters
- Periodic referee meetings
- Email
- Region leadership meetings
- Parent handbooks
- Handouts
- Fliers in Registration Materials
- Region, Area and Section Websites

Understand and Support AYSO National Programs

With almost 60 years of existence, the AYSO National Program is recognized as one of the most robust soccer training programs in the country.

The National Referee Program is acknowledged by international referees as the best amateur referee development program in the world. It contains a wealth of support tools and information useful by RRAs.

The National Coaching Program contains significant referee related information; specifically, short-sided coaching manuals for the younger age groups. Referees need to know how the various age group rules differ in their application of the Laws of the Game (see Short-Sided Games Guide for Referees).

The AYSO National Management Program offers support for RRAs through Introductory Management and Dispute Resolution courses. Understanding and implementing the Kids Zone program becomes a partnership of the coaches and the referees.



Develop a Calendar of Events

Stay on track with your budget, training and scheduling of referees. Thirty days before your first Regional registration event might be a good time to start preparing a Calendar of Events for the upcoming season/next 12 months. This is a great time to have a meeting with your “staff” – previous RRA, fellow referees and coaches. Start a log and make notes throughout the season of what worked well and what will need to be changed.

Consider the following when developing a calendar:

- Regional Registration dates
- Start of season (first game day)
- End of season (last game day)
- Regional, Area and Section Playoffs
- "Silent Saturday" or other special Regional events
- Mentor field training
- Observations or Assessments for upgrade
- Annual Referee Update meeting
- Area and Section events
- Region, Area and Section Training events
- Region, Area, Section and National Tournaments
- Quarterly meetings with Regional Referees
- Other meeting dates
- End-of-season recognition

Sample Calendar of Events

| Date | Event |
|------------|--|
| July 7 | Last regular registration (middle school) |
| July 12/15 | Compulsory meetings for coaches/assistants (must attend one) |
| July 13-15 | Advanced Coaching, Intermediate Referee and Instructor Clinic |
| July 17-19 | Team Formation Nights (8U, 10U, 12U/14U) for coaches |
| July 24-26 | Team Assignment Nights (12U/14U/16U/19U, 8U, 10U/6U) for coaches |
| July 29 | Annual Referee Update Class from 12PM to 2PM at middle school |
| August 4-5 | Intermediate Coaching Clinic |



| Date | Event |
|----------------|---|
| August 9 | AYSO Safe Haven Certification Course |
| August 11 | 12U Youth Coaching Clinic |
| September 8 | Start of regular fall season |
| September 16 | Youth Soccer Day at high school stadium |
| September 22 | Picture Day - wear uniform |
| November 11 | 16U/19U Section Tournament |
| November 18-19 | 10U Tournament (Regional only) |
| December 1-2 | Area Tournament for 12U & 14U |

Tournaments are fun for the players, coaches and referees but can place a burden on the RRA because of the additional scheduling necessary. Try to get the game time slots at least two weeks prior to the tournament. Remind your referees to mark their calendars and to let you know of their time constraints. Highlight key activities that place a special burden on the referee organization. Remind referees to mark tournament weekends on their calendars.

Develop a Time and Task Deadline Calendar

Time and Task Deadline Calendars help ensure each step of a task is identified and scheduled for timely completion. Assign specific individual duties and responsibilities along with deadline dates. This will help you to stay ahead of the game and gives you a system to monitor and measure the progress of all the tasks. Remember that you can't do it all alone. A Time and Task Deadline Calendar with developmental input from your referee volunteers is essential. It is fundamentally good management to delegate responsibility, as it empowers others with authority assuming that you periodically monitor progress to ensure completion and accountability.

Deadline Calendars should be built backwards from the completion date.

Determine:

- What must be done by the day of the event?
- What is the logical order?
- What needs the longest lead time?
- What has the highest impact on success?
- Who has responsibility? Authority? Accountability?



- Start with the end in mind: work back from this date to determine the essential activities.

**Sample Deadline Calendar (built backwards)**

Calendar needed to conduct an Intermediate Referee Course:

| Date | Task | Volunteer |
|---------|--|------------|
| Sept 1 | Conduct the Intermediate Referee Course | D. Beckman |
| Aug 29 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confirm facility will be open • Purchase refreshments, plates, napkins, etc. • Set up room, check audio visuals, put up signs Set up field, mark lines, put up flags and nets Assemble handouts into booklets | L. Donovan |
| Aug 28 | Make copies of handouts | C. Ronaldo |
| Aug 27 | Contact and remind registered attendees Contact other potential attendees | M. Hamm |
| Aug 15 | Organize T-shirts, handouts and giveaways | L. Donovan |
| Aug 8 | Continue to advertise for Course | L. Messi |
| Aug 1 | Check status of material and supplies ordered | C. Ronaldo |
| July 15 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Registered Intermediate Referee Course on AYSOU Begin advertising Intermediate Referee Course • Order supplies needed for course • Identify handouts needed for course | L. Messi |
| July 7 | Reserve classroom, gym and field for clinic | L. Donovan |
| July 7 | Set date Identify supplies needed for course | L. Messi |
| July 1 | Download latest Intermediate Referee lesson plan, exam and answer key and review Develop list of equipment and supplies needed | D. Beckman |
| June 16 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confirm that Referee Instructor candidate attended and passed the Referee Instructor Course • Confirm with course instructor that AYSOU paperwork will be processed in a timely manner to ensure that candidate will be certified to instruct Intermediate Referee Course | L. Messi |
| June 15 | Send volunteer to the Referee Instructor Course | D. Beckman |

Similar **Deadline Calendars** should be developed for all the other referee activities planned as well as for various goals established, e.g., recruiting new referees, mid-season continuing education classes, periodic referee meetings, referee social events, post-season referee awards and recognition ceremonies.



Recruiting Volunteer Referees

Where Do We Get New Referees?

The highest volunteer involvement and interest among parents is when their children are 10 years old and younger. Concentrate your referee recruiting efforts here. Recruiting new referees from among the parents of younger players allows for a gradual approach to gaining experience through the less demanding games of very young players. It gives new referees time to gain experience and builds the confidence necessary to referee the more demanding older age groups.

Note about refereeing 5U through 8U games:

In these age divisions, you only need one referee. Club linesmen could be used. 5U through 8U are great age groups to recruit new referees, as the skill level required on the field is minimal and subject to less pressure from the touchlines. This has proven to be effective in developing competent referees. Knowledge and confidence increases as their children grow and mature as players.

How Do We Get New Referees?

The AYSO Recruiting and Retaining Referees Manual is a good reference source.

The job of recruiting referees should be never ending. Always be on the lookout for potential new referee candidates in any setting:

- Make the recruiting job fun and easy by talking it up with players and spectators at the pitch
- Understand that recruiting is a never ending task
- Recruit parents of young players because they can stay and grow with the program and don't forget that youths and moms are part of the talent pool
- If you see some interest but some reluctance too, use the buddy system (couples, pairs, friends, neighbors, teammates) to make them feel as if they are not alone

If your Region works hard to minimize problems outside the touch lines, your recruiting success will be higher.

When talking with a potential referee candidate, make sure to know all the requirements and the dates of the next training opportunity.



Training New and Established Referees

AYSO Referee Training Plans

The teaching times for the lesson plans and modules vary from 15-150 minutes, exclusive of introductions, breaks and exams:

| • Course | • Duration |
|--|-------------|
| • AYSO Safe Haven Course Online | • 1.5 hours |
| • AYSO Safe Haven Course w/Instructor | • 2 hours |
| • 8U Official Course | • 3 hours |
| • Assistant Referee Course | • 5 hours |
| • Regional Referee Course | • 6 hours |
| • Regional Referee Course Online | • 1.5 hours |
| • Regional Online Referee Companion Course | • 3 hours |
| • Intermediate Referee Course | • 8 hours |
| • Advanced Referee Course | • 8 hours |
| • National Referee Course | • 15 hours |

Self---Contained Teaching Plans

In addition to conducting a complete course in one or more sequential days, some training may be delivered in smaller increments of time (e.g. weeknights) using individual lesson plans. Each course consists of several modules as outlined on the next page.



Times in a given square indicate that particular Lesson Plan module is a part of the referee course indicated at the top of the column.

| Lesson Plan | 8U Official | Assistant Referee | Regional Referee | Intermediate Referee | Advanced Referee |
|---|-------------|-------------------|------------------|----------------------|------------------|
| The Game of Soccer | 25 min. | 25min. | 25min. | | |
| Understanding 8U Players | 25min. | 15min. | 10min. | | |
| Pre-game Duties | 20min. | 35min. | 20min. | | |
| Starting the Game | 20min. | 20min. | 10min. | | |
| Stopping the Game | 30min. | 20min. | 30min. | | |
| Restarting The Game | 35min. | 40min. | 55min. | | |
| Post-game Duties | 15min. | With#3 | 15min. | | |
| Offenses and Misconduct - Basic | | | 50min. | | |
| Offside - Basic | | 40min. | 40min. | | |
| Referee and Assistant Referee Mechanics | | 60min. | 60min. | | |
| Understanding 10U Players | | With#2 | With#2 | | |
| Understanding More Physically and Demanding Matches | | | | 45min. | |
| Fouls and Misconduct - Intermediate | | | | 120min. | |
| Offside - Intermediate | | | | 60min. | |
| Interaction with Coaches and Spectators | | | | 70min. | |
| The Referee Team and Diagonal System of Control | | | | 140min. | |
| The AYSO National Referee Program | | | | 30min. | 45min. |
| Understanding the Advanced Game | | | | | 150min. |
| Offside - Advanced | | | | | 60min. |
| Fouls in the Advanced Game | | | | | 30min. |
| Misconduct, Players, Subs and Others | | | | | 90min. |
| Reading the Advanced Game | | | | | 90min. |

Training

- Identify available and/or potential instructors



- Region, Area, Section or National staff
- Each class must be led by an AYSO certified Lead Instructor whose primary responsibility is to ensure the approved curriculum is followed
- Other volunteers that are not instructors may instruct or assist providing the course is led by a Referee Instructor
- Refer to the Referee Training Matrix found in the National Referee Program manual to understand what level instructor is required
- Schedule the first training for new referees soon after registration closes, perhaps 30-45 days before the start of the season. This first training will give you a gauge of how many more sessions to schedule closer to the start of the season. Be flexible, if you can, with evenings, half days or multi-day sessions.
- Remember to plan for a facility long in advance.
- Design a returning referee program
- Schedule an annual referee update meeting each season
- Create incentives to encourage referees to attend additional training
- Make the season fun, challenging and a growth experience for referees
- Upgrades take time
 - A pipeline of referees must be built and maintained
 - Must have the commitment of and careful coordination of the referee, the mentor, the assessor and the appropriate level of game
- Game schedules: Review, post and distribute clear, easy to understand instructions on how to sign up for games and who to call if they have questions or are having trouble logging into an electronic schedule system.
- Make sure referees understand the timelines and responsibilities should they need to turn back/cancel a game assignment.

Always share with your referee volunteers how much the Region, players, fellow referees, other volunteers and parents appreciate what they do as an AYSO volunteer.

Training Course Objectives

Course Objectives

- 6U/8U Official: Fun, fair and safe fundamentals
- Assistant Referee: Assistant referee duties
- Regional Referee: Basic knowledge needed to referee
- Intermediate Referee: Knowledge for more challenging matches
- Advanced Referee: Knowledge for most upper-level matches
- National Referee: Knowledge for the most challenging upper-level matches Stress the need for mentoring to providing sound, constructive feedback.



Some volunteers will be bitten by the referee bug. Make sure you are there with information, enthusiasm and support to draw them in. Build off the camaraderie of the returning referees. Find ways to get them together: pizza, coffee meetings, etc.

Reasonable Goals:

Many of your Regional Referees should be able to upgrade to the Intermediate Referee level by their third year. Advanced Referee and National Referee candidates are more self-selecting and the certification process takes longer. You will probably want to consult with your Area Referee Administrator to discuss the tender loving care of your higher-level candidates.

In addition to advancing your referees through higher level training, you will want to develop an inventory of experienced referees who are also available to instruct, observe, assess and evaluate. The following goals might be part of your planning:

- Add one more Referee Instructor or Advanced Referee Instructor in the next 12-24 months.
- Add one more Referee Assessor and Referee Instructor Evaluator in the next 12-24 months.

Set these expectations or they will not happen!



Scheduling Referees

Scheduling referees for your Region's matches is not a simple task. There are many challenges to developing a good schedule that incorporates not only the needs of the Region for covering games with referees but also takes into consideration the numerous variables of referee availability, conflicts, preferences, ability, and last-minute changes.

The importance of developing and managing a good referee schedule cannot be overemphasized. A well-organized, fair and flexible referee schedule that is readily available to all referees to verify their assignments and responsibilities is critical. The success or failure of the referee schedule is very closely associated with the overall success or failure of the entire Regional referee program.

The structured approach to successful referee scheduling can be broken down into five easy steps:

- Identify your requirements (players, games, dates, fields, referees)
- Develop a plan (how will you schedule referees)
- Schedule referees (implement the plan)
- Publish the schedule (let the referees know their schedule)
- Maintain the schedule (adjustments during the season)

Let's review each of these steps, identifying multiple ways to accomplish each of them and examine a sample scheduling effort. In our sample we will be following a typical AYSO Region X.

Identify your Local Requirements

Get together with your game scheduler (assuming your Region has appointed one; if not, recruit one!). Find out what age divisions your league will have, how many teams per division, how many games per day, how many fields per day and what days/dates will include games.

- Age divisions will dictate the skill levels of referees needed
- Number of teams and games per day will dictate the number of referees needed
- Field locations may impact referee availability

Referees – how many returning referees do you anticipate? How many new referees will you need?



Maintain a database of your referees. What information must you know?

- Name, telephone, email
- Certification level and skill level (what age levels are they qualified to officiate?)
- Are they a parent, coach or player – division, age and team #?
- Any availability constraints?
- Preferences
 - In the middle vs. on the lines
 - Boys vs. girls matches
 - Willingness to referee multiple games in a day
 - Willingness to referee outside their child’s division
- What else?

Develop a Plan

Now that you have determined what you need to do, the next step is to develop a referee scheduling plan that lists the goals of your scheduling effort. A good system for scheduling referees goes a long way towards solving a lot of potential problems. RRAs must ensure that careful thought and planning go into the scheduling of referees in the Region. Ask yourself:

What is the scheduling method I will use for each age division? For example, your plan may look something like this:

| Age Division | Scheduling Method |
|------------------------|--|
| Divisions 5U/6U: | Don't assign referees. The coaches will handle this responsibility. |
| Divisions 8U: | Don't assign referees. The teams involved in each game will provide referees. Each team will need to have at least 2 trained referee volunteers to take their turn. Each Saturday, assign an 8U Referee Monitor to the 8U fields to support new referees. |
| Divisions 10U to 14U: | Assign referees automatically based on the Referee Team (Buddy System) method. |
| Divisions 16U and 19U: | Assign referees using the self-scheduling process. Each referee accesses a copy of the game schedule on the Region's website and volunteers to referee one or more of the games. The referee scheduler makes the final decision and assigns the referee. |

There are several alternative methods to scheduling: none are 100% right or 100% wrong; they differ in the amount of risk and the level of effort required for them to succeed.

What are some of the scheduling methods? What is good or not about each one?



| Scheduling Method | Pros: | Cons: |
|---|-------|-------|
| Russian Roulette: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Give them a game schedule and hope they show | | |
| Midnight Caller: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Call and beg the night before | | |
| Do It Yourself: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The teams in each game draw from referee volunteers from their own teams | | |
| Assigned games: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Assigned in advance to specific games | | |
| The Referee Team approach: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Buddy System | | |
| Web based: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Self-scheduling | | |
| Computerized programs: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Self-developed Online programs | | |

Brand new referees may not be comfortable scheduling themselves to referee games and will sometimes react well to having their assignments laid out for them. As they become better trained to use your scheduling system, your involvement will lessen; keep in mind not to schedule new and/or youth referees to games without a mentor. Give them time to gain experience and confidence. It is especially important that you don't schedule new referees on games that are too challenging for their experience level.



The Referee Mentor Program

Ideally new referees should work side-by-side with experienced referees. One suggestion is to create referee teams as outlined in the Referee Mentor Handbook. Typically, four referees work games together for some period of time.

The entire referee team is scheduled to games. This requires close monitoring of the game schedule as well as each referee's weekly time commitment. The referee team needs to keep each other informed to insure game coverage for their assigned games. For details on this program and alternate methods of implementing it refer to the AYSO National Referee Program Manual.

The Buddy System

Referees like to have qualified Assistant Referees and also like to work games with their "buddy." They get to know each other's officiating style and, in time, build trust as a team. One method to consider for scheduling is to adopt a "Buddy" system, assigning referee teams to games.

Allow the experienced referee to develop and train their own referee crew who work together as a team. The experienced team leader now has a vested interest in recruiting a buddy or two to train and have fun working games together.

As the Assistant Referee "buddies" become more proficient and confident, the leader will give them opportunities to be the Referee. This system can create a friendly competitive environment among the senior referees to see who can develop and train the best team.

Schedule the Referees

Let's review the referee scheduling plan for Region X.

| Division | How to Assign Referees |
|-----------------|---|
| 5U / 6U | Coaches will manage these games |
| 8U | Assign referee only |
| 10U | Assign referee only, recruit club linesmen from each team |
| 12U through 19U | Assign using the Referee Team Method |

**First, get your game schedule.**

The game schedule for Region X looks like this:

| Region X Game Schedule • Week 1 | | | | | | |
|---------------------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Time | Field 1 | Field 2 | Field 3 | Field 4 | Field 5 | Field 6 |
| 8:00 | 8U | 8U | 10U | 10U | 12U | 14U |
| 8:30 | | | | | | |
| 9:00 | 8U | 8U | | | | |
| 9:30 | | | 10U | 10U | 12U | 14U |
| 10:00 | 8U | 8U | | | | |
| 10:30 | | | | | | |
| 11:00 | 8U | 8U | 10U | 10U | 12U | 14U |
| 11:30 | | | | | | |
| 12:00 | 8U | 8U | | | | |
| 12:30 | | | 10U | 10U | 12U | 16U/19U |
| 1:00 | 8U | 8U | | | | |
| 1:30 | | | | | | |
| 2:00 | 8U | 8U | 10U | | 12U | |
| 2:30 | | | | | | 16U/19U |
| 3:00 | 8U | 8U | | | | |
| 3:30 | | | | | 12U | |

Each Saturday you will have 36 games to be assigned, of which 11 will be assigned using the Referee Team method.

How many referees will you need to cover these games? Here is a quick rule of thumb calculator.

Consider the need for referees in each match according to age group and your possible supply of volunteers, with varying experience and desire to referee one or more games each weekend:

- 8U: It is unusual for 8U Officials to volunteer to officiate more than one game each weekend. It is reasonable to assume that you would need 14-16 8U Officials to cover 16 matches in a weekend.
- 10U: For 10U matches you can assume that a few of your Regional Referees will referee one game and AR a second. Most but not all of your linesmen will probably be club linesmen (as compared to ARs).



- 12U: You will want to cover a significant percentage of your 12U matches with Intermediate Referees, both in the middle and on the lines. You should strive to have ARs as your linesmen most of the time.
- 14U: By 14U the game is faster, the field is bigger and club linesmen really don't offer much help. You should strive to have Advanced and Intermediate Referees working a significant percentage of your referee slots. Fortunately, referees who get bitten by the referee bug are often happy to work two or three games which they find to be challenging.
- 16U/19U: These matches should be assigned to your most capable referees, but you should also make sure that you try to rotate in the next level down to make sure challenging matches are available as a motivational reward.

Note: Assume 25% will not be available to do games for various reasons in a given weekend.

Referees Needed in Region X:

Calculate the minimum number of experienced referees, new referees and assistant referees needed to cover the games each week in our case study of Region X.

| Division | Games per Week | Referee Needed |
|----------|----------------|---------------------------|
| 8U | 16 Games/Week | 14-16 8U Officials |
| 10U | 9 Games/Week | 8-10 Refs + Club Linesmen |
| 12U | 6 Games/Week | 8-10 Refs + Club Linesmen |
| 14U | 3 Games/Week | 4-6 Refs |
| 16U/19U | 2 Games/Week | 3-5 Refs |

37-49 referee total x 25% = 9-12 referees not available

48-61 total referees would be needed in Region X. If each team has at least one active, certified referee, the numbers work.

Determining the number of referees needed for a season can be a challenge, but if planned ahead of time, shortages can be minimized and a plan put in place for dealing with referee shortages to help minimize the impact.

Remember that although three referees per game are ideal, many 8U and 10U games are officiated with a single referee and two club linesmen. To help you schedule enough new classes and to help manage the referee scheduling calendar, start with last season's game schedule. Keep in close touch with the RC and Registrar on the number and age level of the teams for the current season.

It is important to be aware of the number of players registered during the registration period so you can establish referee recruiting goals.

Never let up on referee recruiting. The more referees you have, the easier it is to staff your Region's games. You will always have current referees leaving the program. Thus, it is essential to add new referees so that you can maintain your referee staff.



Identify the referees who you are going to match up as teams.

Region X only has 27 referees, so what do they do?

Using the Region X case study, the following is a sample of actually how the referees might be scheduled.

Available Volunteers Code Names

- Club Linespersons CL
- 3 Assistant Referees AR1 - AR3
- 2 8U Official 8UO1 – 8UO2
- 17 Regional Referees R1 - R17
- 3 Intermediate Referees I1 - I3
- 1 Advanced Referee A1
- 1 National Referee N1

Typically, some referees will have to work extra games. Remember that the RRA should not be that spare referee. Here is the roster of referees in Region X:

| Ref Team | Name | Email | Cert | Phone Number | Schedule Requests | Skill Level |
|----------|-------------------|------------------|------------------|--------------|----------------------------|-------------|
| 10-1 | David Beckham | beckham@ayso.org | Asst Ref | 123-456-7890 | Morning games only | 8U |
| 10-1 | Cristiano Ronaldo | ronaldo@ayso.org | Regional Ref | 123-456-7810 | Not when my son is playing | 10U |
| 10-1 | Lionel Messi | messi@ayso.org | Intermediate Ref | 123-456-7891 | Afternoon games only | 12U |
| 10-1 | Mia Hamm | hamm@ayso.org | Advanced Ref | 123-456-7892 | I'll ref anytime | 19U |
| 10-2 | | | | | | |
| 10-2 | | | | | | |
| 10-2 | | | | | | |
| 10-2 | | | | | | |
| 10-3 | | | | | | |
| 10-3 | | | | | | |
| 10-3 | | | | | | |
| 10-3 | | | | | | |



This roster lists 3 teams for U10 play. Each team consists of 4 people. Ideally there are two senior (returning) referees per team to instruct and mentor two new referees (Referee Mentor/Advisor Program).

When scheduling with the team approach, give all referees a copy of the roster, assign them games and tell them to contact each other to make changes if they have conflicts. Put the responsibility on them, but give them a framework in which to do it.

The team Leader (10U-1L) is responsible for getting the referee team on the field each weekend and for the mentoring of the new referees. You may want to rotate team leaders between age levels once or twice during the season so they do not suffer burnout or get frustrated by not having higher caliber games.

Schedule the referee teams into the game schedule.

Using the game schedule from Region X, develop a preliminary referee schedule.

| TIME | FIELD 1 | FIELD 2 | FIELD 3 | FIELD 4 | FIELD 5 | FIELD 6 |
|-------|----------------|----------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------------------|--|
| 8:00 | 8U R (8UO1) | 8U R (8UO2) | 10U R (R9) CL CL | 10U R (R8) CL CL | 12U R (I3) AR (R6) AR (R7) | 14UR (I1) AR (R10) AR (R11) |
| 9:30 | | | 10U R (R3) CL CL | 10U R (R8) CL CL | 12U R (I3) AR (R6) AR (R7) | 14UR (I1) AR (R10) AR (R12) |
| 11:00 | 8U R (R1) | 8U R (R9) | 10U R (R4) CL CL | 10U R (R8) CL CL | 12U R (I3) AR (R6) AR (R11) | 14UR (I2) AR (R12) AR (R13) |
| 12:30 | | | 10U R (R3) CL CL | 10U R (R4) CL CL | 12U R (A1) AR (R10) AR (AR1) | 16U/19U R (N1) AR (I1) AR (R13) |
| 2:00 | 8U R (R5) | 8U R (R2) | 10U R (R3) CL CL | | 12U R (A1) AR (AR2) AR (AR3) | 16U/19U R (I2) AR (N1) AR (AR1) |
| 3:30 | | | | | 12U R (I2) AR (AR2) AR (AR3) | |



Scheduler's Worksheet from Sample Region X

This worksheet is useful to check for potential scheduling problems such as proper time between games or for equity in the number of games assigned, etc.

| Time | 8:00 | 9:00 | 10:00 | 11:00 | 12:00 | 1:00 | 2:00 | 3:00 |
|---------|----------------------------------|------|-------|-------|-------|------|------|------|
| AR1 | | | | | | | X | |
| AR2 | | | | | | | X | |
| AR3 | | | | | | | X | |
| 8UO1 | X | X | X | | | | | |
| 8UO2 | X | X | X | | | | | |
| R1 | | | | X | | | | X |
| R2 | | | | | | | X | X |
| R3 | | | | | | | X | |
| R4 | | | | X | | | | |
| R5 | | | | | X | | X | |
| R6 | X | | | X | | | | |
| R7 | X | | | | | | | |
| R8 | X | | | X | | | | |
| R9 | X | | | X | X | | | |
| R10 | X | | | | | | | |
| R11 | X | | | X | | X | | |
| R12 | | | | X | | X | | |
| R13 | | | | X | | | | |
| R14-R17 | REFEREES R14 – R17 NOT AVAILABLE | | | | | | | |
| I1 | X | | | | | | | |
| I2 | | | | X | | | X | |
| I3 | X | | | X | | | | |
| A1 | | | | | | | X | |
| N1 | | | | | | | X | |

**REGION X SAMPLE REFEREE SCHEDULE**

Week 1

| | | Field 1 | Field 2 | Field 3 | Field 4 | Field 5 | Field 6 |
|----------|----------|---------------|---------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-------------|---------------|
| 8:00 AM | Teams | 08B1 v 08B2 | 08G1 v 08G2 | 10B1 v 10B2 | 10G1 v 10G2 | 12B1 v 12B2 | 14B1 v 14B2 |
| | Referees | R: 8UO1 | R: 8UO2 | RL:10U01 CL CL: | RL:10U02 CL CL: | Team: 10-1 | Team: 10-2 |
| 9:00 AM | Teams | 08B3 v 08B4 | 08G3 v 08G4 | | | | |
| | Referees | R: 8UO1 | R: 8UO2 | | | | |
| 9:30 AM | Teams | | | 10B3 v 10B4 | 10G3 v 10G4 | 12G1 v 12G2 | 14G1 v 14G2 |
| | Referees | | | RL:10U01 CL CL: | RL:10U02 CL CL: | Team: 10-1 | Team: 10-2 |
| 10:00 AM | Teams | 08B5 v 08B6 | 08G5 v 08G6 | | | | |
| | Referees | R: 8UO1 | R: 8UO2 | | | | |
| 11:00 AM | Teams | 08B7 v 08B8 | 08G7 v 08G8 | 10B5 v 10B6 | 10G5 v 10G6 | 12B3 v 12B4 | 14B3 v 14B4 |
| | Referees | R: 8UO3 | R: 8UO4 | RL:10U01 CL CL: | RL:10U03 CL CL: | Team: 10-1 | Team: 10-2 |
| 12:00 PM | Teams | 08B9 v 08B10 | 08G9 v 08G10 | | | | |
| | Referees | R: 8UO3 | R: 8UO4 | | | | |
| 12:30 PM | Teams | | | 10B7 v 10B8 | 10G7 v 10G8 | 12G3 v 12G4 | U19B1 v U19B2 |
| | Referees | | | RL:10U04 CL CL: | RL:10U03 CL CL: | Team: 10-3 | Team: 10-4 |
| 1:00 PM | Teams | 08B11 v 08B12 | 08G11 v 08G12 | | | | |
| | Referees | R: 8UO3 | R: 8UO4 | | | | |
| 2:00 PM | Teams | 08B13 v 08B14 | 08G13 v 08G14 | 10B9 v 10B10 | | 12B5 v 12B6 | U16G1 v U16G2 |
| | Referees | R: 8UO5 | R: 8UO6 | RL:10U04 CL CL: | | Team: 10-3 | Team: 10-4 |
| 3:00 PM | Teams | 08B15 v 08B16 | 08G15 v 08G16 | | | | |
| | Referees | R: 8UO5 | R: 8UO6 | | | | |
| 3:30 PM | Teams | | | | | 12B7 v 12B8 | |
| | Referees | | | | | Team: 10-3 | |

These steps will help you develop a more successful referee scheduling program for your Region. Realize that you must select the method, or combination of methods, that work best for you and your Region. Make sure your referees are all aware of your system. Solicit feedback from them to improve any weaknesses.

Publish the Schedule

Now that you have developed the schedule, you need to make sure that all parties know the schedule:

- Referees need to know to which games they are assigned
- Teams want to know if referees are assigned for their games
- Fill-in referees want to know if there are any openings available
- Post a copy of the referee schedule at the fields to resolve referee game assignment questions



Publication methods:

- Post the schedule on Regional website
- Use online referee scheduling system
- Email to each referee
- Hardcopy mailed to each referee
- Copy of the schedule posted at the fields on game days

Maintain the Schedule

Let everyone know what their scheduled referee assignments are.

Be prepared to make changes to the referee schedule during the season.

- New referees to be added to the schedule.
- Referees who can't make their schedule and need to be replaced.
- Shifting schedules around to make games available for upgrade assessments.
- Game schedules that get changed.

If you are a small Region, the Referee Scheduler should be able to handle all of it.

If you are a large Region you may want to have the Referee Scheduler maintain the master schedule, but recruit other referee staff members to help manage changes. Possibly ways to divide the work up might be by:

- Age and/or division
- Field assignments
- Day of week

Make sure that once you have changed the schedule you let everyone involved know. Publish the revised schedule with a revision date and time.



Automation – Can It Work For You?

Automation can make it possible for you to do more with less. Many Regions and large events (tournaments, National Games, etc.) have made it work for them.

Automation can include:

- A centralized database of referees
- Automated or manual assignments
- Web presentation

But is it right for you?

You must determine the most manageable and efficient way to schedule your referees based on your local conditions and the resources available to you. While AYSO does not recommend any specific service, some of the commercially available online systems include:

- CGISports.com
- Assignr.com
- Active Sports Network
- RefScheduler
- ArbiterSports

Larger Regions may choose to develop and maintain their own scheduling software.



Retaining Referees: Keep Them Coming Back!

Motivating Factors

A common enjoyable aspect of refereeing in AYSO is the camaraderie that develops among your referees. They are bound by a common thread of support for each other and support for the fundamental principles of AYSO and, of course, refereeing.

A sense of satisfaction develops in referees who are part of the magic that so often occurs in AYSO games because they contribute significantly to helping that magic happen. Referees love to reminisce and recant “war stories”. The RRA can facilitate such opportunities through periodic referee meetings, informal gatherings, special social events and developing a sense of belonging to this special group. Refereeing is fun; the fun is contagious and will spread with a little encouragement.

Don't forget to keep what you have

Recruiting needs are significantly lessened by taking good care of the referees you have. Retaining referees is critical. Perhaps returning referees may be given early registration at reduced costs with guaranteed player registration for their kids. Incentives such as jackets, additional jerseys, kit bags, etc. can be given to returning or senior referees. This is an area where you have to do what seems to work for the volunteers in your Region. The following are some key points regarding various ways new and experienced referees are supported, which results in camaraderie and retention:

- Nothing succeeds like success (well run programs make retention easy)
- Ensure referees are well-trained and supported
- Mentor help before, during and after games
- Support group socialization (regular meetings at a local eatery)
- On-line discussion groups
- Support structure – local to worldwide (web sites, referee organizations, etc.)

Motivational incentives

Minimize problems outside the touchlines by reducing or eliminating dissent, Firm limits and Regional guidelines must be supported by the entire Regional staff.

Have meetings to review games and game situations, etc. Provide continuing education and a support group, all of which is very important to referees. Typical referee events include regularly scheduled meetings with guest speakers or something more informal such as game day meetings at the end of the day. Select a convenient location to debrief, bond and swap stories. Also consider occasional separate events for both your youth and adult referees.



Be visible and positive

RRA's who develop good staff and empower them through meaningful delegation have more time to be free to circulate and be supportive on game days. They can get to know their referees better and spend time recruiting new ones. They will be more available to encourage the AYSO Team concepts and to proactively support the Kids Zone program, thus ensuring a more referee-friendly environment.

Walking the fields is a form of mentoring. The act of stopping by a game, giving a word of encouragement and showing appreciation will go a long way. The RRA will be seen as involved by the parents and coaches and supportive of the referees. Referees must know, not just assume, that they are supported by the Regional board and the AYSO family.

Kids Zone, the AYSO Team and Problems Outside the Touchline

Occasionally a parent, coach or referee may "lose it." Most of the time, the participants are regretful of the event. Retention is improved when it is emphasized that we are all there for the kids. RRAs should listen to parents and show empathy but at the same time help them to understand how the game becomes a vehicle for a child's growth and the importance of supporting the referee as an authority figure. Parents must be engaged in this process.

The importance of following the AYSO Team and Kids Zone principles is crucial for retention of referees. The abuse of referees, whether subtle or overt, must not be tolerated. The RRA must work with the RCA and RC to ensure all agree and are supportive.

See the Recruiting and Retaining Referees Manual found on AYSOU under the Document Library after login.

Remember:

In AYSO, it's about more than the game!



Developing a Budget

Developing a budget for the Regional referee program is a critical, often overlooked task. This budget, submitted to the Regional Commissioner, must be submitted in time to be considered and included in the approved Regional budget. Each Region must annually submit a completed Regional Annual Budget Form to the National Office by June 1 for the upcoming fiscal year ending June 30. The Referee Administrator should be prepared to provide the Regional Commissioner and Regional Treasurer with a detailed budget showing projected income (if any) and expenditures.

What are the referee budget needs?

- Training courses
 - Facilities rental: local school, community center, etc.
 - Course materials: Laws of the Game books, course books, handouts
 - Lunch, snacks and water
 - Videos, equipment rental, etc.
- Referee Equipment
 - Uniforms
 - Flags, whistles, cards, special awards (bags, jackets, etc.)
- Referee Meetings
- Miscellaneous expenses for support and camaraderie
- Staff Development
- Instructor and assessor training

Training

To support the Regional referee program, Regions are strongly encouraged to budget for and reimburse its volunteers for participation fees and other expenses incurred while attending AYSO training and certification courses, such as Expos and super camps.

Regional Referee Meetings

As the Regional Referee Administrator, you may want to hold periodic Regional referee meetings which could cover a variety of continuing education topics. Such topics might include new changes to the Laws of the Game, referee on-the-field experiences, mechanics review, Whistle Stop topics, a guest speaker, etc. In addition to the educational value, these meetings offer support and camaraderie, which are critical for referee satisfaction. One easy time option would be at the end of game day at a convenient location. Pick a venue and make it happen.



Staff Development

Funds should always be budgeted to develop or improve Regional referee and potential referee volunteers. Your Region will be more self-sufficient as it certifies more referees, instructors, assessors/mentors and instructor evaluators.

Budget sources of Information:

What sources of information are available to help build a budget?

- Previous year's budget
- Actual expenditures from previous year's budget
- Previous year's training rosters
- Estimate of referee training material requirements
- Estimated number of new referees
- Estimated number of referees desiring upgrade training
- Inventory of remaining referee uniforms and equipment
- Inventory of remaining training materials

Making the Budget Work

Once the Regional referee program has an approved budget from the Regional Commissioner or Treasurer, the RRA should provide them with a time schedule, identifying when during the year the budgetary expenses are expected to occur. This will ensure enough lead time for ordering training materials, uniforms, etc.

Out of Pocket Expenses

It is permissible to reimburse volunteers for normal and reasonable expenditures incurred during the performance of AYSO related duties. With prior authorization, volunteers who incur expenses at or on behalf of a Region are to be reimbursed by the Region. Contingency funds should be included in the budget to cover these expenses.

Purchase Approval

Prior to incurring any AYSO-related expenses or obligations, volunteers must obtain approval from the Regional Commissioner, who will review it for budgetary control and program impact. As a matter of practice and courtesy, authorized purchasers should notify the Regional Commissioner or Regional Treasurer in advance of making a purchase or submitting an order. This ensures approval and prevents surprises when invoices are received.

AYSO Supply Center

The majority of AYSO training materials are available from the AYSO Supply Center. They have all the official AYSO manuals and the AYSO edition of the Laws of the Game. Only volunteers designated as Authorized Purchasers by the Regional Commissioner may charge purchases from the Supply Center. You need to ensure you are an authorized purchaser or



you have access to someone who is an official purchaser. Without this authorization, the charges are the responsibility of the person placing the order.

AYSO Reimbursement Request Form

Other reimbursable expenditures require submitting an AYSO Reimbursement Request to the Regional Treasurer via Divvy. Advanced approval should always be obtained before making any purchases.

Instructions for how to process a reimbursement request can be found at:

https://ayso.mywikis.net/wiki/Divvy_Reimbursements

It is helpful to provide the instructions to the referee staff prior to their travel, attendance at a super camp, or material purchase so they are aware of what documentation is required. Receipts are required for every item, (e.g. meals, cab fare, etc.) and submissions are supposed to be made within 60 days of when the expense was incurred.

Regional Referee Program Annual Budget

A Referee Program Budget form is available at <https://aysovolunteers.org/forms-referee-administration/>.



Summary

You have volunteered for an important position as Regional Referee Administrator. AYSO is here to support your efforts and appreciate all you have done and will do for the children and referees in AYSO. It's not an event, but a process. Give the process a little time every week, surround yourself with well-trained staff and referees and you will be on your way to success.

Enjoy the ride and remember...

In AYSO, it's about more than the game!



