



Referee Administrator Reference Guide



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Introduction

This reference guide is intended to assist Regional Referee Administrators (RRAs) and regional staff to administer the AYSO National Referee Program at the regional level. It focuses on the essential activities needed for RRAs to successfully manage their local regional referee program including:

1. The Big Picture
 - Some surprising statistics
2. Regional Referee Administrator duties
 - Brief review of position description
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3. Getting organized
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 - Establish guidelines
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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 tens of thousands of teams and over 550,000 players in nearly 1,000 Regions. Thanks to the efforts of over 200,000 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 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 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, in order to maximize their enjoyment of the game.



Some Surprising Statistics

In a survey of 4,200 high school athletes conducted by the Josephson Institute of Ethics, it was concluded that "...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 athletic experience is a positive one.

(For detailed results visit their website at charactercounts.org/sports/survey2004)

- 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 officials 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.

California Parks and Recreation 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 costs" 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 representatives 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?

Here’s the Short List: RRA Summarized Duties and Responsibilities

- Annually register referees
- Work with the CVPA
- Appoint a regional Director of Referee Instruction
- Appoint a regional Director of Referee Assessment
- Develop a Regional Mentor Program
- Develop a schedule for referees and assistant referees
- Identify and train a successor
- Prepare an annual budget
- Communicate important information
- Provide leadership and be an active role model
- Promote referee welfare within the region
- Represent the region at area meetings
- Know the rules: Region, Area, Section, National
- Work with the RC and regional staff
- Cooperate with the Area Referee Administrator

What needs to be done?

Identify the elements needed to run the regional referee program:

- Developing a deadline calendar
- Recruiting referees
- Conducting training
- Scheduling referees
- Retaining referees
- Developing a budget

Every region is unique but there are also common problems. It is the manner in which problems are addressed that differs in subtle ways from region to region and determines how well the referee program functions. Within the guidelines of AYSO there are many ways to address the needs and challenges of each region. Try to avoid reinventing the wheel and learn what worked well in your region from the previous RRAs, review and learn what you can from this reference guide and combine all this with your own ingenuity and vision and you will be on the road to a successful year as the referee administrator.



Identifying Resources

People Who Can Help

- Previous Regional Referee Administrators and staff
- RC – Regional Commissioner
- ARA, ADI, ADA – Area Referee Administrator, Area Director of Instruction, Area Director of Assessment
- SRA, SDI, SDA – Section Referee Administrator, Section Director of Instruction, Section Director of Assessment
- NRAC – National Referee Advisory Commission
- NRPA – National Referee Program Administrator
- RCA – Regional Coach Administrator
- CVPA – Child and Volunteer Protection Advocate
- Fields and/or Safety Director and other local sources

These are the people whose job is to support the efforts of regions and RRAs. The region is where the action is; it is where AYSO really happens. The sole purpose of area, section and national staff is to support the regions.

Other sources of support are senior referees and the full-time staff at the National Support and Training Center. Don't reinvent the wheel. Use material from last season and use the work done by previous RRAs as a reference model.

Where to Get More Information

Publications available to RRAs to assist them with their jobs:

- AYSO National Referee Program Manual
- AYSO Guidance for Referees and Coaches (includes the AYSO National Rules and Regulations)
- Laws of the Game - AYSO Edition
- Recruiting and Retaining Referees – Includes Youth and Women Referee Resources
- Manual for Youth Referees
- Referee Mentor Handbook
- Pre-Game Card
- USSF guidance documents: Advice to Referees and Guide to Procedures
- Regional, Area and Section Guidelines



Useful Websites

WWW.AYSO.ORG: This is the main AYSO website for anyone curious about AYSO soccer. It includes most of the necessary information and guidelines for running a region in AYSO. This is also the most important AYSO web site for all AYSO referees and includes many AYSO referee publications, lesson plans, instructor information, tests, general information and links to USSF and FIFA web sites.

WWW.AYSOTRAINING.ORG: This website hosts online training courses as well as a number of AYSO program publications. You will need to know your AYSO ID number to access this site.

WWW.EAYSO.ORG: This is the AYSO electronic registration and database system. AYSO volunteer registration and certification information resides on this site. You will need to create your own password and user ID to get access to this site.

WWW.ASKTHEREF.ORG: This is a fun website to use to refresh your Law memory or ask questions about refereeing. This is not an official AYSO or USSF website but the information presented here is usually very useful.

WWW.FIFA.COM: This is the Federation International de Football Association (FIFA) website. FIFA is the international governing body of soccer. This web site has the FIFA Laws of the Game. Note: Futsal is FIFA's version of indoor soccer.

WWW.USSOCCER.COM: This is the United States Soccer Federation (USSF) web site. AYSO is a member of USSF which is the national governing body for soccer in the United States. You can find Advice to Referees, Guide to Procedures, Law memorandums and more on this site.

Fix It Before It Breaks

Proactive Management:

- Be proactive and make sure guidelines, policies and procedures are all in place before the season officially begins:
- Standard Regional Guidelines
- Policies and Procedures
- Protest Committee
- Dispute Resolution Procedures

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 referee 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 pieces the easier it will be to find people willing to help and the easier the administrator's job becomes. Depending on the size of your region appoint the following positions:



- Assistant Regional Referee Administrator
- Regional Director of Referee Instruction
- Regional Director of Referee Assessment
- Referee Scheduler(s)
- Regional Director for Youth and Women Referee Development

Develop close working relationships with other key staff:

- Regional Commissioner
- Child and Volunteer Protection Advocate
- Field and/or Safety Director
- Area Referee Staff
- Section Referee Staff
- National Referee Staff
- Regional Coach Administrator

Getting Organized

Develop a Communication Plan

Poor communication is arguably the single most frequently blamed cause of poor performance. “It takes two to communicate,” namely a sender and a receiver, and RRAs should be well versed in both roles.

The trick to good communication is repetition. Information needs to be disseminated in more than one way to ensure it has a better chance of reaching the intended audience and frequent reminders are needed to ensure the information is received and acted upon. In addition, the more information is publicized the more likely it will be understood.

Consider the following when developing a communication plan:

- Primary, secondary and fall back communication systems (don't put all your eggs in one basket)
- Hard copy and electronic systems (use both)
- Accountability – share responsibility for communicating information
- Access to phone numbers and email addresses (public and private)
- Web site information and updates
- Procedures for documentation of misconduct (red and yellow cards)
- Defined dispute resolution process
- Process for hearing and dealing with questions and suggestions.

Optional methods for delivering information:

- Newsletters
- Parent handbooks
- Law books
- Handouts
- Copies of the National Rules and Regulations
- Monthly referee meetings
- Web sites
- Email
- Fliers
- Radio
- TV



Understand and Support AYSO National Programs

After many years of experience, AYSO has developed a strong overall national program and it is the RRA's duty to be familiar with and follow those programs.

The National Referee Program has been recognized by international referees as being the best amateur referee development program in the world. A wealth of support and information is available for use by RRAs.

The National Coaching Program contains considerable referee related information and specifically the short-sided coaching manuals for the younger age groups. Regional referees must be trained and knowledgeable regarding how the various age group programs differ in application of the Laws of the Game (see Short-Sided Games Guide for Referees).

The AYSO National Management Program also offers support for RRAs in the Introductory and Advanced management courses where additional useful management training is offered. Implementing the Kids Zone program is a must in all good regional referee programs.

Develop a Calendar of Events

Developing a calendar of events makes it easier to plan for and accomplish all you need to do to run a great referee program. Have a planning meeting and begin developing a calendar of events at least 30 days before your region's first registration meeting. Get your staff together in a relaxed atmosphere; turn off the cell phones and get to work laying out your calendar for the upcoming season and year. As the year goes by make notes of what worked well and what needs to be adjusted.

Consider the following when developing a calendar:

- Registration dates
- Referee preseason meeting and annual referee update
- Training – Region, Area, Section and National
- Start of season (first game day)
- Mentor field training
- Assessments for upgrade (list)
- Area, Section and National events
- Tournaments – Region, Area, Section and National
- End of season (last game day)
- Playoffs
- End-of-season recognition

**Sample Calendar of Events**

Date	Event
July 7	Last regular registration
July 12/15	Compulsory meetings for coaches/assistants (must attend one)
July 13-15	Advanced Coach, Intermediate Referee Course and Instructor Course
July 17-19	Team Formation Nights (U-8, U-10, U-12/U14) for coaches
July 24-26	Team Assignment Nights (U-12/14/16/19, U-8, U-10/U-6) for coaches
July 29	Regional Referee Course and Annual Referee Update Class
August 4-5	Intermediate Coach Course
August 9/23	Referee Safe Haven Certification Course
August 11	U12 Coach Course
September 8	Start of fall season
September 16	Youth Soccer Day at high school stadium
September 22	Picture Day - wear uniform
November 11	U-16/U-19 Section Tournament
November 18-19	U-10 Tournament (regional only)
December 1-2	Area Tournament for U-10 through U-14

Tournaments are key activities to take note of as they put a special burden on the referee organization. Tournaments typically require the presence of all the region's referees. Remind referees to have these weekends marked on their calendars.

Develop a Time and Task Deadline Calendar

Time and Task Deadline Calendars help ensure each step of each task is identified and scheduled for timely completion. Assign specific individuals duties and responsibilities along with deadline dates. This will help you to stay ahead of the game and give you a system to monitor and measure the progress of all the tasks. Remember, you can't do it all alone. You must delegate and then follow up and hold your volunteers accountable.

A Time and Task Deadline Calendar which your volunteers have input into developing is essential. It is fundamentally good management to delegate responsibility, empower others with authority and then periodically monitor progress to ensure completion.

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: if possible, work backwards from the end date to determine the essential activities.

Sample Deadline Calendar (built backwards)

Deadline Calendar needed to conduct an Intermediate Referee Course

DATE	TASK	VOLUNTEER
Sept 1	Conduct the Intermediate Referee Course	D. Beckham
Aug 31	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	L. Donovan
Aug 27	Contact and remind registered attendees Contact other potential attendees	M. Hamm
Aug 15	Assemble handouts into booklets Organize tee-shirts, handouts, and giveaways	L. Donovan
Aug 1	Check status of material and supplies ordered Make copies of handouts	C. Ronaldo
July 15	Reserve classroom, gym and field for clinic	L. Donovan
July 7	Set date and begin advertising Intermediate Referee Course Order supplies needed for course	L. Messi
July 1	Download latest Intermediate Referee Course lesson plan and review Develop list of equipment and supplies needed	D. Beckham
June 15	Send volunteer to the Referee Instructor Course	D. Beckham
May 15	Identify a candidate to attend the Referee Instructor Course Budget funds for instructor training Budget funds for Intermediate Referee Course	L. Messi

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, midseason 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 involvement interest among parents is when their children are 10 years old or younger. This is therefore the most target-rich environment for recruiting referees. Recruiting new referees from among these parents of younger players allows for a more gradual approach to gaining experience with the less demanding games of very young players and gives them time to gain experience and build confidence necessary to officiate the more demanding older age groups.

Note about refereeing U-5 through U-8 games:

If you use referees in these age divisions, you only need one official. Club linesmen could be used in lieu of assistant referees. U-5 through U-8 are great age groups to recruit new referees as the job on the field is minimal and subject to less pressure from the sidelines. This has proven to be effective in developing competent referees whose knowledge and confidence increase as their children grow and mature as players.

How Do We Get New Referees?

A good reference source is available in the AYSO Recruiting and Retaining Referees Manual. Recruiting referees should be an ongoing activity:

- Make the job fun and easy
- Minimize problems outside the touch lines
- Recruit parents of young players, both genders
- Recruit and develop youth referees
- Use the “buddy system” (couples/pairs)

Try to avoid forced recruiting techniques such as requiring each team or each coach to referee. This has not proven to be conducive to developing long term motivated volunteer referees on a large scale and at best is temporary crisis management.

For more information on recruiting referees, please review the Recruiting and Retaining Referees handbook.



Training New and Established Referees

Self-Contained Teaching Plans

In addition to conducting a complete course (one day), some training may be delivered in smaller increments of time (week nights) using individual lesson plans.

AYSO Referee Training Plans

XX Indicates the lesson plans included in the referee course indicated at the top of the column.

#	Lesson Plan	U-8 Official	Asst. Ref	Basic	Int.	Adv.
1	Safe Haven for Referees	XX	XX	XX		
2	The Game of Soccer	XX	XX	XX		
3 & 11	Understanding Younger Players	XX	XX	XX		
4	Pre-game and Post-game Duties	XX	XX	XX		
5	Starting the Game	XX	XX	XX		
6	Stopping the Game	XX	XX	XX		
7 & 12	Restarting The Game	XX	XX	XX		
8	Fouls and Misconduct - Basic		XX	XX		
9	Offside - Basic		XX	XX		
10	Referee and Assistant Referee Mechanics		XX	XX		
13	Fundamental Coaching Concepts			XX		
14	Understanding More Physically and Demanding Matches				XX	
15	Fouls and Misconduct - Intermediate				XX	
16	Offside – Intermediate				XX	
17	Interaction With Coaches and Spectators				XX	
18	The Referee Team and Diagonal System of Control				XX	
19	AYSO National Referee Program				XX	
20	Understanding the Advanced Game					XX
21	Offside - Advanced					XX
22	Fouls in the Advanced Game					XX
23	Misconduct: Players, Substitutes and Others					XX
24	Reading the Advanced Game					XX



The teaching times for the lesson plans vary from approximately 30 minutes to 2 hours. Exclusive of introductions, breaks, written tests, or physical tests, the suggested teaching times for the complete stand alone courses are:

- Safe Haven for Referees Course 1 hour
- U-8 Official Course 2 hours 50 minutes
- Assistant Referee Course 4 hours 25 minutes
- Basic Referee Course 5 hours 30 minutes
- U-8 Official to Assistant Referee Course 2 hours 35 minutes
- U-8 Official to Basic Referee Course 3 hours 40 minutes
- Assistant Referee to Basic Referee Course 1 hour 50 minutes
- Intermediate Referee Course 7 hours 30 minutes
- Advanced Referee Course 7 hours
- National Referee Course 15 hours 15 minutes

Training – Food for Thought

- Identify available/potential instructors
 - Region, Area, Section and National staff
 - There must be an appropriately certified lead instructor present to teach the course and to ensure the approved curriculum is followed.
- Provide training in a manner that makes sense for your region
 - Schedule training for new referees
 - Be flexible: offer courses evenings, half day, multi-day
- Design a returning referee program
 - Schedule an annual referee update meeting each season
- Offer 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
- Make sure the referees understand that the organization appreciates them



Training Course Objectives

COURSE	OBJECTIVES
U-6/U-8 Official	Fun, fair and safe fundamentals
AR	Assistant referee duties
Basic	Basic knowledge needed to referee
Intermediate	Knowledge for more challenging matches
Advanced	Knowledge for most upper level matches
National	Knowledge for the most challenging upper level matches

Stress the need for mentoring to providing sound, constructive feedback that helps develop newer referees. All senior referees should be trained mentors.

Some will be bitten by the referee bug; make sure you are there with a published program to catch them. Build off the camaraderie of the returning referees. Find ways to get them together: pizza, coffee meetings, etc.

REASONABLE GOAL: Referees should be able to easily upgrade to the Intermediate Referee level by their third year.

Set these expectations or they will not happen! Schedule periodic evening sessions where training courses are presented. These sessions should be advertised and open to everyone (referees, coaches, players, parents). Use the Referee Mentor Program.



Scheduling Referees

Scheduling referees 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 officials but also takes into consideration the numerous variables of referee availability, conflicts, ability and last minute changes.

Have you ever experienced problems with your personal game assignments? Have you struggled into the night trying to ensure all the games are covered? Relief from the challenges of developing and managing a referee schedule is possible.

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 5 easy steps:

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

Let's review each of the 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.



Step 1: Identify your Local Requirements

- Get together with your game scheduler. 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. In other words, get the game schedule.
 - Age divisions will dictate what skill levels of referees you will need.
 - Number of teams and games per day will tell you approximately how many referees you will need.
 - Days / dates of games will tell you when you need the referees – Saturdays, Sundays, weekday evenings, etc.
- The available pool of 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 do?)
 - Are they a parent, coach or player – team #?
 - Any availability constraints?
 - What else?

Step 2: 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 decide:

AGE DIVISION	SCHEDULING METHOD
Divisions U-5/U-6:	Don't assign referees. The coaches will handle this responsibility.
Divisions U-8:	Don't assign referees. The teams involved in each game will provide their own referees. Each team will need to have at least 2 trained referee volunteers to take their turn. Each Saturday, assign a U-8 referee monitor to the U8 fields to support new referees.
Divisions U-10 to U-14:	Assign referees automatically based on the Referee Team method.
Divisions U-16/U-19:	Assign referees using the self-scheduling process. Each referee accesses a copy of the game schedule on the region's website, and volunteers for one of the games. The referee scheduler makes the final decision and assigns the referee.

There are several methods to scheduling. None are completely right or 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 bad 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"> Assign referees in advance to specific games 		
The Referee Team approach: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Buddy System 		
Web based: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Self-scheduling works for the self-motivated 		
Computerized programs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Self developed Commercial <ul style="list-style-type: none"> www.arbitersports.com www.assignr.com www.clubspaces.com 		

Your plan is quite likely to involve several different scheduling methods.

You'll find that brand new referees may have trouble scheduling themselves on games and will often be more comfortable if their assignments are laid out for them



by “The Management” (i.e. you). Once confronted with a scheduled assignment, the new referees will put their time in and begin to learn the ropes. It is especially important that you don’t schedule new referees on games that are too challenging for their experience level; let them gain experience and confidence.

The Referee Mentor Program

Ideally new referees should work side-by-side with experienced referees. A method for doing this using the Referee Mentor Program is the creation of Referee Teams. Typically four referees work games together for some period of time (perhaps half the season). When referees are assigned as teams, the teams are scheduled to games. For details on this program and alternate methods of implementing see the AYSO National Referee Program Manual or the Referee Mentor Manual.

The Buddy System

Referees like to have qualified assistant referees and prefer to work games with a crew of officials they know and respect. One method of scheduling which also is a very good recruiting tool as well is to adopt a “Buddy System” for scheduling referees. The Buddy System involves allowing experienced senior referees to develop and train their own referee crew who always work games together as a team. In order for the system to work, they must have the assurance that the team will not be split up for at least a season. 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 leader’s 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.

Step 3: Schedule the Referees

Now that you have developed a plan and you know which method(s) you will use to schedule referees, it is time to implement the plan.

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

Divisions U-5 / U-6	coaches will manage these games
Division U-8	assign referee only or teams will provide
Division U-10	assign referee only, recruit club linesmen from each team
Divisions U-12 through U-19	assign using the Team Referee Method

1. 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	U-8	U-8	U-10	U-10	U-12	U-14



8:30						
9:00	U-8	U-8				
9:30			U-10	U-10	U-12	U-14
10:00	U-8	U-8				
10:30						
11:00	U-8	U-8	U-10	U-10	U-12	U-14
11:30						
12:00	U-8	U-8				
12:30			U-10	U-10	U-12	U-16/19
1:00	U-8	U-8				
1:30						
2:00	U-8	U-8	U-10		U-12	
2:30						U-16/19
3:00	U-8	U-8				
3:30					U-12	

Each Saturday you will have 36 games to be assigned.

2. How many referees will you need to cover these games? (rule of thumb)

Consider the relative need for referees in each match according to age group. If you try to only assign each referee for a half a day or less of time commitment, the following is a general rule of thumb for assigning referees:

- U-8 1 experienced referee or U-8 Official to do 4 games
- U-10 1 experienced ref + 2 ARs or 2 club linesmen to do 3 games
- U-12 1 experienced ref + 2 new referees or ARs to do 2-3 games
- U-14 1 experienced ref + 2 new referees to do 2 games
- U-16+ 3 experienced referees to do 2 games

Note: Assume 15% will not be available to do games for various reasons.

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.

- U-8 16 Games/Week 4 Exp Refs or U8 Officials
- U-10 9 Games/Week 3 Exp Refs + Club Linesmen
- U-12 6 Games/Week 3 Exp Refs + 6 New Refs or ARs
- U-14 3 Games/Week 2 Exp Refs + 4 New Refs
- U-16/19Combined 2 Games/Week 3 Experienced Refs

25 referee total x 15% = 4 referees not available

25 + 4 = 29 total referees needed in Region X



Determining the number of referees needed for a season can be both sobering and frightening. But if planned for ahead of time, shortages can be minimized and a plan for dealing with scarce referee resources implemented so as to minimize the impact.

RRA should work with the RC and RCA to arrive at a plan for how to spread thin referee resources over the required games. For example, you may agree with the RC and RCA that U-12 games and below will use club linesmen.

Remember that although 3 referees per game are ideal, many U-8 and U-10 games are done with a single referee and club linesmen. As you go into registration keep tabs with the RC and Registrar on the number and age levels of the teams.

Assuming you do not have enough referees, where do you start backing off? And how do you make this a policy or guideline for the season? Review the time commitment and make sure you budget enough referees to meet the demand. DO NOT let the referee organization become UNKNOWLINGLY over-extended!

It is important to do a running calculation of this during the registration period so you can establish recruiting goals. Be sure to avoid burnout; this ranks as one of the major reasons for referees not returning the following year.

3. Next, 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
3 Assistant Referees	ar1 - ar3
2 U-8 Officials	u8o1 - u8o2
17 Regional Referees	r1 - r17
3 Intermediate Referees	i1 - i3
1 Advanced Referee	a1
1 National Referee	n1

Someone will have to work extra but remember; the RRA should not be the spare referee.



Here is the roster of referees in Region X:

Ref Team	Name	Email	Cert	Tel Number	Schedule Requests	Skill Level
10-1	David Beckham	beckham@asyo.org	Asst Ref	555-123-4567	Morning games only	U-8
10-1	Cristiano Ronaldo	ronaldo@ayso.org	Reg Ref	555-123-4567	Do not schedule when son is playing	U-10
10-1	Lionel Messi	messi@ayso.org	Inter Ref	555-123-4567	Afternoon games only	U-12
10-1L	Mia Hamm	hamm@ayso.org	Adv Ref	555-123-4567	I'll ref anytime	U-19
10-2						
10-2						
10-2						
10-2L						
10-3						
10-3						
10-3						
10-3L						

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.

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 (U-10-1L) 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.

**4. Next, 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	U-8 R (u8o1)	U-8 R (u8o2)	U-10 R (r9) CL CL	U-10 R (r8) CL CL	U-12 R (i3) AR (r6) AR (r7)	U-14 R (i1) AR (r10) AR (r11)
9:30			U-10 R (r3) CL CL	U-10 R (r8) CL CL	U-12 R (i3) AR (r6) AR (r7)	U-14 R (i1) AR (r10) AR (r12)
11:00	U-8 R (r1)	U-8 R (r9)	U-10 R (r4) CL CL	U-10 R (r8) CL CL	U-12 R (i3) AR (r6) AR (r11)	U-14 R (i2) AR (r12) AR (r13)
12:30			U-10 R (r3) CL CL	U-10 R (r4) CL CL	U-12 R (a1) AR (r10) AR (ar1)	U-16/19 R (n1) AR (i1) AR (r13)
2:00	U-8 R (r5)	U-8 R (r2)	U-10 R (r3) CL CL		U-12 R (a1) AR (ar2) AR (ar3)	U-16/19 R (i2) AR (n1) AR (ar1)
3:30					U-12 R (i2) AR (ar2) AR (ar3)	



This worksheet showing assignments per referee can be used to check for potential scheduling problems such as not enough or too much time between games, and to ensure equity in the number of games assigned.

Time	8:00	9:00	10:00	11:00	12:00	1:00	2:00	3:00
ar1						X	X	
ar2							X	X
ar3							X	X
u8o1	X	X	X					
u8o2	X	X	X					
r1				X				X
r2							X	X
r3		X				X	X	
r4				X		X		
r5					X		X	
r6	X	X	X					
r7	X	X						
r8	X	X	X					
r9	X			X	X			
r10	X	X				X		
r11	X			X		X		
r12		X		X		X		
r13				X		X		
r14-r17	Referees r14 – r17 Not Available							
i1	X	X				X		
i2				X			X	X
i3	X	X	X					
a1						X	X	
n1						X	X	

**REGION X 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: U801	R: U802	RL: U1001 CL: CL:	RL: U1002 CL: CL:	Team: 10-1	Team: 10-2
9:00 AM	Teams	08B3 v 08B4	08G3 v 08G4				
	Referees	R: U801	R: U802				
9:30 AM	Teams			10B3 v 10B4	10G3 v 10G4	12G1 v 12G2	14G1 v 14G2
	Referees			RL: U1001 CL: CL:	RL: U1002 CL: CL:	Team: 10-1	Team: 10-2
10:00 AM	Teams	08B5 v 08B6	08G5 v 08G6				
	Referees	R: U801	R: U802				
11:00 AM	Teams	08B7 v 08B8	08G7 v 08G8	10B5 v 10B6	10G5 v 10G6	12B3 v 12B4	14B3 v 14B4
	Referees	R: U803	R: U804	RL: U1001 CL: CL:	RL: U1003 CL: CL:	Team: 10-1	Team: 10-2
12:00 PM	Teams	08B9 v 08B10	08G9 v 08G10				
	Referees	R: U803	R: U804				
12:30 PM	Teams			10B7 v 10B8	10G7 v 10G8	12G3 v 12G4	U19B1 v U19B2
	Referees			RL: U1004 CL: CL:	RL: U1003 CL: CL:	Team: 10-3	Team: 10-4
1:00 PM	Teams	08B11 v 08B12	08G11 v 08G12				
	Referees	R: U803	R: U804				
2:00 PM	Teams	08B13 v 08B14	08G13 v 08G14	10B9 v 10B10		12B5 v 12B6	U16G1 v U16G2
	Referees	R: U805	R: U806	RL: U1004 CL: CL:		Team: 10-3	Team: 10-4
3:00 PM	Teams	08B15 v 08B16	08G15 v 08G16				
	Referees	R: U805	R: U806				
3:30 PM	Teams					12B7 v 12B8	
	Referees					Team: 10-3	

These steps should help you develop a more successful referee scheduling program for your region. You should select the method that works best for you and your region. Whichever system you use, make sure your referees are all made aware of the system and solicit feedback from them to improve any weaknesses for future schedules.



Step 4: Publish the Schedule

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

- Referees need to know which games they are assigned to.
- Teams want to know if referees are assigned for their games (or if there is a hole).
- Fill-in referees want to know if there are any openings available.
- There needs to be a copy of the referee schedule at the fields in case there are questions regarding which referee is assigned to which game.

Publication methods:

- Email to each referee
- Post the schedule on your region website
- Hardcopy mailed to each referee
- Copy of the schedule posted at the fields each week

Step 5: Maintain the Schedule

Now that you have let everyone know what their scheduled referee assignments are, the first thing that happens is that one of the referees calls you and says that he has been called to work this Saturday and can't make his referee assignment.

You will need to 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 can 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. Divide the work up by:

- Age division
- Field assignments
- Day of week
- Make sure that once you have changed the schedule you let everyone involved know (publish the revised schedule).



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 efficient way to schedule your referees based on your local conditions and the resources available to you. Some of the commercially available automated systems are:

- Assignr.com – www.assignr.com
- Club Spaces – www.clubspaces.com
- ArbiterSports – www.arbitersports.com

Retaining Referees

Keep Them Coming Back!

Motivating Factors

A commonly expressed enjoyable aspect of refereeing in AYSO is the camaraderie that frequently develops among our referees. Our referees are bound by a common thread of support for each other and support for the fundamental principles of AYSO.

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” among themselves of past games. The RRA can facilitate such opportunities through periodic referee meetings, informal gatherings at specified times and places, special social events and generally trying to develop a sense of belonging to a 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 also significantly lessened by taking good care of (retaining) the referees you have. Retaining referees is critical. Returning referees may be given early registration at reduced costs with guaranteed spots for their kids. Favors such as jackets, 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 touch lines by not allowing negative comments, establishing firm limits and working with the RCA and RC

Have meetings to review games, situations, etc. and to provide the function of continuing education and a support group which is important for referees. Common practices include having regularly scheduled meetings with guest speakers or something more informal such as game day meetings following the games at a convenient location to debrief, bond and swap stories.



Be visible and positive

RRAs 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 regret 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.

Remember: In AYSO, it’s about more than the game!

For more information on retaining referees, review the Recruiting and Retaining Referees handbook.

Developing a Budget

A critical task which is often overlooked in the development of the regional referee program is providing the Regional Commissioner with a budget request in sufficient time for it to be considered and included into the approved regional budget. Each region must submit a copy of the Region Annual Budget Form to the National Support and Training Center (NSTC) thirty days prior to the beginning of each fiscal year (the fiscal year for all regions begins on July 1st). The Referee Administrator should be prepared to provide the Regional Commissioner and Regional Treasurer with a detailed budget showing projected income and expenditures.

What are the referee budget needs?

- Training courses
- Facilities rental: local school, community center, etc.
- Course materials: Law books, course books, handouts
- Lunch, snacks and water
- Videos, equipment rental, etc.
- 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 (i.e. super camps, Road Shows).

Local Meetings

As the Regional Referee Administrator you may want to hold meetings to review game situations, provide continuing education, cover changes to the Laws of the Game, etc. In addition to the educational value, these meetings also serve as support group gatherings which are critical for referees. Plan for regularly scheduled (pizza) meetings with guest speakers or something more informal such as game day meetings at a suitable location near the fields. Pick a venue and make it happen.



Staff Development

Funds should always be budgeted to develop or improve local volunteers who can help the region be more self sufficient by having more certified local instructors and assessors.

Sources of information for budgeting:

- Previous year's budget
- Previous year's actual expenditures
- 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 RC/Treasurer, the referee administrator should provide them with a schedule of when the expenses will occur during the year. This will help 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. 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 appropriate executive member who will review it for budgetary control and program impact. The Regional Commissioner is the approving executive member for a region. As a matter of practice and courtesy, authorized purchasers should notify the RC 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 the 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 official purchasers by the appropriate executive member (RC) may charge purchases from the Supply Center. You need to ensure you are an official 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 Store

The same process is followed for purchases of referee uniforms and equipment from the AYSO Store. Only volunteers designated as official purchasers by the appropriate executive member (RC) may charge purchases from the AYSO Store.

AYSO Reimbursement Request Form

Other reimbursable expenditures require submitting an AYSO Reimbursement Request Form to the Regional Treasurer. Advance approval should always be obtained before making any purchases. The form is available from your treasurer and is used to reimburse volunteers for purchases they have made (i.e. training snacks and drinks, training site rental, travel expenses to Road Shows, AYSO training course registration fees, etc.).

It is best to get the latest copy of the form from the web site when you need it. Instructions for the use of the form are also included in the download. It is helpful to provide the form and 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 (i.e. meals, cab fare, etc.).



Regional Referee Program Annual Budget

This budget is based on _____ referees (_____ referees per team for _____ teams)

Referee Uniforms	Number	Unit	Cost	Budgeted
Uniform shirts (short sleeve)	_____	_____	_____	_____
Uniform shirts (long sleeve)	_____	_____	_____	_____
Uniform shorts	_____	_____	_____	_____
Uniform socks	_____	_____	_____	_____
Complete uniform set	_____	_____	_____	_____
			Sub-total	_____

Equipment	Number	Unit	Cost	Budgeted
Whistles	_____	_____	_____	_____
Lanyards	_____	_____	_____	_____
Referee data wallets w/cards	_____	_____	_____	_____
Assistant referee flags	_____	_____	_____	_____
Equipment bags	_____	_____	_____	_____
Other (Identify on attached sheet) _____	_____	_____	_____	_____
			Sub-total	_____

Referee Books and Manuals	Number	Unit	Cost	Budgeted
FIFA Laws of the Game	_____	_____	_____	_____
Guidance for Refs and Coaches	_____	_____	_____	_____
National Referee Program Manual	_____	_____	_____	_____
Other: _____	_____	_____	_____	_____
			Sub-total	_____

Referee Instructional Materials	Number	Unit	Cost	Budgeted
Videos	_____	_____	_____	_____
Handouts	_____	_____	_____	_____
Books & other materials	_____	_____	_____	_____
Other (Identify on attached sheet) _____	_____	_____	_____	_____
			Sub-total	_____



(List each clinic or course on attached pages and summarize expenses below)

Referee Course Expenses	Number	Unit	Cost	Budgeted
Room rentals	_____	_____	_____	_____
Instructor costs (travel, meals, lodging)	_____	_____	_____	_____
FIFA Laws of the Game	_____	_____	_____	_____
National Rules and Regulations	_____	_____	_____	_____
Guidance for Refs and Coaches	_____	_____	_____	_____
Handout materials (copies)	_____	_____	_____	_____
Flip charts, markers, etc.	_____	_____	_____	_____
Refreshments	_____	_____	_____	_____
Referee examinations	_____	_____	_____	_____
New badges	_____	_____	_____	_____
Referee certificates	_____	_____	_____	_____
Referee pins	_____	_____	_____	_____
Other (identify on attached sheet)	_____	_____	_____	_____
			Sub-total	_____

(List each course on attached pages and summarize expenses below)

Training Courses and Meetings	Number	Unit	Cost	Budgeted
Registration fees	_____	_____	_____	_____
Travel reimbursement	_____	_____	_____	_____
Meals	_____	_____	_____	_____
Lodging	_____	_____	_____	_____
			Sub-total	_____

Referee Recognition	Number	Unit	Cost	Budgeted
Banquet	_____	_____	_____	_____
Awards	_____	_____	_____	_____
Referee warm-ups	_____	_____	_____	_____
Referee bags	_____	_____	_____	_____
Alternate referee uniforms	_____	_____	_____	_____
Other	_____	_____	_____	_____
			Sub-total	_____



Regional Referee Staff Expenses	Number	Unit	Cost	Budgeted
Telephone	_____	_____	_____	_____
Envelopes	_____	_____	_____	_____
Stationary	_____	_____	_____	_____
Postage	_____	_____	_____	_____
Printing	_____	_____	_____	_____
Miscellaneous office supplies	_____	_____	_____	_____
Publicity	_____	_____	_____	_____
Other (identify on attached sheet)	_____	_____	_____	_____
			Sub-total	_____
			TOTAL EXPENSES	_____

Fees Charged to Participants	Number	Unit	Cost	Budgeted
U-8 Official Course	_____	_____	_____	_____
Assistant Referee Course	_____	_____	_____	_____
Basic Referee Course	_____	_____	_____	_____
U-8 Official to AR	_____	_____	_____	_____
U-8 Official to Basic Referee	_____	_____	_____	_____
AR to Basic Referee	_____	_____	_____	_____
Intermediate Referee Course	_____	_____	_____	_____
Advanced Referee Course	_____	_____	_____	_____
National Referee Course	_____	_____	_____	_____
Stand Alone Courses	_____	_____	_____	_____
Other (identify on attached sheet)	_____	_____	_____	_____
			TOTAL INCOME	_____
			TOTAL REGIONAL REFEREE ANNUAL BUDGET	_____



Summary

You have volunteered for an important position as Regional Referee Administrator. AYSO is here to support your efforts and appreciates 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!

