



**AYSO Area 11V Referee
Mentor Program**



AYSO AREA 11V REFEREE MENTOR PROGRAM

Document Change History

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I. THE PROGRAM

A. AYSO National Referee Program

The AYSO National Referee Program is intended to develop the best-qualified referees possible for the conduct of all AYSO games. An integral part of this program is providing advice and support to referees to help them improve individual performance and maintain the highest standards of officiating performance throughout AYSO.

B. Background

The AYSO Area 11V Referee Mentor Program provides a means of developing quality soccer referees which are an essential element of a successful soccer program. Referees at any level, whether newly certified Regional Referees or longtime volunteers moving up to older age groups, can make use of mentoring.

For the Regional referee, the entry level referee classes teach the Laws of the Game, but do little to develop the real-time decision making, positioning, and management skills necessary to cultivate confident, effective referees. The more experienced referee, can benefit from having good habits reinforced and bad ones brought to light.

Referee retention also suffers if entry-level referees are not nurtured. Some may be uncertain of how to handle a situation or may be afraid to make a mistake.

The AYSO Area 11V Referee Mentor Program provides the referees someone they can talk to, ask questions of, and share their concerns with as well as gain knowledge through the experiences of the Mentor.

C. Purpose

Referee development is a major responsibility of the AYSO National Referee Program and the first level this support for AYSO referees is the Referee Mentor Program. Under this program, Regional Referee Administrators and Regional Referee Directors of Assessment identify and assign qualified referees to act as a helping hand to new and less experienced referees. Mentoring is not assessing in that the purpose of the program is not to test the referees, but to provide constructive feedback that will build confidence and improve their refereeing ability.

The purpose of the Area 11V Referee Mentoring Program is to advise our referees on ways that they can enhance their game management skills, knowledge of the laws, confidence and enjoyment of the game by providing feedback and being available as a trusted advisor and guide.

The Area 11V Referee Mentoring program is designed to work hand in hand with the instruction and assessment programs to retain referees at all levels and ensure our referees are given the opportunity to advance. This helping hand consists of frequent contact to support and encourage the development of the referee; experience has proven that mentoring is a valuable aspect to referee development, retention and recruiting.



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D. Development and Training

Support for referees of all experience levels is critical for success. Training and development provides this support and is a vital element of a mentoring program. Training can vary from one-on-one discussions, to a large group of referees in a formal setting. Training can be based on US Soccer's Week in Review articles or issues that come up in your region or a discussion centered on a game being watched live, with a mentor leading the discussion. Regions are encouraged to communicate with each other about such trainings so referees can take advantage of any region's training sessions.

E. Area Referee Mentor Qualifications

The Area Referee Mentor will have the following minimum qualifications:

- At least 18 years of age
- Intermediate Referee Certification
- Current Safe Haven Certification
- Completed Current Year Volunteer Form

The Area Referee Mentor recommended additional qualifications:

- Be committed to AYSO and the AYSO philosophies
- Referee Assessor Certification
- Advanced Referee Instructor Certification
- Advanced Referee Certification
- At least six (6) years of experience as a Referee
- At least three (3) years of experience as a Regional Referee Mentor
- Be willing to devote time and energy to the Referee Mentor Program
- Good people and communication skills
- Serve as a role model to other volunteers
- Good observer
- Positive teacher
- Good listening skills
- Encouraging and understanding
- Proficient knowledge of the LOTG and referee mechanics

F. Area Referee Mentor Appointment

The Area Referee Administrator with the assistance and support of the Area Director and the Area Referee Director of Assessment will identify and appoint Referees to act as the Area Director of Referee Mentoring.

The Area Director of Referee Mentoring with the assistance and support of the Area Referee Administrator, the Area Commissioner, and the Area Referee Director of Assessment will appoint referees as Area Mentors and work with the Regional Referee Administrators to help facilitate the Area Mentor Program.



G. Regional Referee Mentor Qualifications

The Regional Referee Mentor will have the following minimum qualifications:

- At least 18 years of age
- Regional (Basic) Referee Certification
- Current Safe Haven Certification
- Completed Current Year Volunteer Form
- Completed Module 19 of Intermediate Referee Course, “The National Referee Program”

The Regional Referee Mentor recommended additional qualifications:

- Be committed to AYSO and the AYSO philosophies
- Referee Instructor Certification
- Intermediate Referee Certification
- At least three (3) years of experience as a Referee
- Be willing to devote time and energy to the Referee Mentor Program
- Good people and communication skills
- Serve as a role model to other volunteers
- Good observer
- Positive teacher
- Good listening skills
- Encouraging and understanding
- Proficient knowledge of the LOTG and referee mechanics

H. Regional Referee Mentor Appointment

The Regional Referee Administrator with the assistance and support of the Regional Commissioner, the Area Referee Administrator and the Area Referee Mentor staff will identify and appoint Referees to be trained to act as a Regional Referee Mentor.

The Regional Referee Administrator will assign the Referee Mentors to Referees or Referee Teams that have been identified by the Regional Referee Administrator or that have requested a mentor.

After appointment as a Regional Referee Mentor, the Regional Referee Mentors will be supplied with The Area 11V Referee Mentor Program Document.



II. GUIDE FOR REGIONAL REFEREE MENTORS

A. The Mentor Role

The Referee Mentor plays many important roles in the development of referees:

As a **Friend**, the Mentor must be persuasive in his comments to the referee. The referee must trust the motives as well as the judgment of the Mentor and believe that the Mentor gives freely of time and effort.

As an **Observer**, the Mentor must provide sound, simple advice and assistance that leads the referee on the shortest path to success. The referee must believe in the sincerity and credibility of the assistance given.

As a **Supporter**, the Mentor offers encouragement in unlimited supply. In this view, the referee can do no wrong, but can always be encouraged to do better. *This is unconditional support for the person, not for everything the person does.*

As an **Advocate**, the Mentor is obligated to take the part of the referee in all encounters. No criticism or dissent can go unchecked; no party can challenge without the proactive, positive involvement of the Mentor.

As a **Choreographer**, the Mentor helps the new and developing referee to stage the officiating process. From the opening -- arrival and inspection of the field -- to closing -- the post-game ceremony and bookkeeping.

As an **Advisor**, the Mentor provides accurate, factual information that gives the referee additional insight and understanding. The Mentor can encourage and assist the referee to move through the upgrade process.

As a **Coach**, the Mentor offers tactical instructions to help the referee manage his games with practical and realistic suggestions in improving his performance and enjoyment of the game.

As a **Role Model**, the Mentor gives the developing referee a real person to emulate. The Mentor's attitudes, values and behaviors set the example that the referee is likely to follow on the field.



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B. Mentor Conduct

As a Mentor You Should:

- Act as a Mentor in all of the roles outlined above.
- Always present a positive attitude toward officiating and AYSO.
- Create a safe, positive environment for improvement.
- Be available as often as needed to provide support and answer questions.
- Observe the referee as often as needed.
- Encourage the referee to continue certification to higher levels of officiating.
- Ask the referee to be an Assistant Referee for one of your games.
- Participate with the referee in continuing training and social activities offered by the Region.
- Seek help from others to ensure that the needs of the referee are met.
- Report to the Regional referee staff any special needs or problems that should be addressed for the referee.
- Actively recruit other volunteers to become referees and Mentors.
- Support the referee at any game you observe. This includes positive support to coaches, spectators and players.
- Provide positive feedback to the referee after all observations including:
 - At least two or three positive comments.
 - Not more than two areas for improvement by the referee.
 - Specific comments made to the referee using game experience or specific examples of performance.
 - Small, attainable, immediately improvable goals for the referee.
- Use positive language such as:
 - “You might consider trying...”
 - “Other referees often find that...”
 - “From my experience...”
 - “It may be easier for you if you...”
- Avoid phrases such as:
 - “You should...”
 - “I always...”
 - “Never...”
 - “Always...”
- Encourage a two-way dialog with the referee.
- End discussions of observations with a positive comment.
- Encourage the referee at all times.



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C. Referee Contact

Contact the referee you are assigned to mentor as soon as possible. Initial contact may be by telephone or e-mail. Personal contact should be made as soon as possible. Do not expect the referee to make the initial contact with you.

Arrange an initial meeting, at the field before the match, in which you:

- Introduce yourself and explain your referee experience.
- Describe the Mentor Program.
- Make sure that the referee understands that the mentoring is intended to be a positive experience.
- Learn as much about the referee as possible.
- Understand the referee's goals, objectives, experience and concerns.
- Answer any questions or allay any doubts.
- Arrange for a next meeting, including attending the referee's next game.
- Develop objectives that meet the needs of the referee and AYSO.

D. Check List for a Mentor Observing a Referee

These observations are unlike observations for upgrade or assessments. These are not pass or fail situations and usually there is no written report prepared for the referee. All observations should be positive win-win experiences. Unlike an assessor, the Mentor need not be inconspicuous. If necessary, the Mentor should ensure that the coaches and spectators are aware of his presence. Mentors may participate with the referee, when necessary, in pre and post-game activities. While not encouraged, limited discussion with the referee may take place during the halftime break. There must always be a post-game discussion with the referee.

1. Pre-Game: Did the referee –

- a. Arrive at an appropriate time for the game?
- b. Dress properly and have all necessary equipment?
- c. Check the field?
- d. Check the players?
- e. Collect game cards?
- f. Check the ball?
- g. Do a player's safety check?
- h. Introduce himself to the coaches?
- i. Count the number of players?
- j. Conduct a coin toss and kick off?
- k. Begin the game on time?

2. Communications with Assistant Referees: Did the referee –

- a. Give clear instructions?



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- b. Use the Assistant Referees well?
- c. Treat all persons with respect?

3. Positioning: Did the referee –

- a. Maintain proper positioning during play?
- b. Remain close to play?
- c. Maintain proper position on restarts?

4. Signals: Did the referee–

- a. Whistle with authority?
- b. Use proper hand signals?
- c. Communicate with players and coaches by effectively using voice and positive body language?

5. Law Knowledge and Mechanics: Did the referee demonstrate –

- a. Correct applications of the Laws?
- b. Consistent application of the Laws?
- c. Recognition of proper restarts?
- d. Proper administration of restarts?
- e. Good foul recognition?

6. Interaction with players and coaches: Did the referee display –

- a. An attitude of helpfulness and tolerance?
- b. Respect?
- c. Friendliness without familiarity?
- d. Credibility in responses and decisiveness?
- e. Positive action even in disciplinary situations?

7. Post-Game: Did the referee –

- a. End the game on time?
- b. Participate in the post-game handshake?
- c. Thank the Assistant Referees?
- d. Complete administrative duties such as game cards?

Most importantly, as mentors, always remember that...

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

