

The National Referee Program – Assignor Policy

Objective

It is the objective of the National Program for Referee Development that all league and tournament matches sanctioned by affiliated members of the Federation are officiated using the diagonal system of control and that all referees are provided with proper assignments that ensure their development, retention, and opportunities for advancement.

Structure

The Referee Assignor Program should consist of four positions within a State Association:

- 1) State Assignor Coordinator (Jointly appointed as per policy 531-8.)
- 2) State Games Assignor
- 3) League Assignors
- 4) Tournament Assignors

(CSSA has League Assignors; CJSA has League, Tournament and Club Assignors.)

Training

The State Director of Instruction, making use of certified Referee Assignor Instructors and/or Certified Referee Assignor Instructor Trainers, may conduct Referee Assignor Training Courses within a State Association to improve the quality and consistency of the assigning process.

Registration

All referee assignors who successfully complete the introductory Referee Assignor Training Course and pass a background check may register as assignors with U.S. Soccer through the State Referee Administration. Registration fees for referee assignors shall be recommended by the U.S. Soccer Federation Referee Committee and approved by the U.S. Soccer Board of Directors.

Assignor Appointment

Referee Assignors should be selected by the playing associations/leagues being served, with the advisement of the State Referee Committee. The appointment should be made for a period of at least one year and be based on experience as a referee and/or as an assignor, organization skills, and character. The assignor should be familiar with the process of becoming a registered referee.

Only in an emergency should a certified assignor officiate in leagues or conferences for which he or she serves as an assignor. It is permissible for assignors to officiate in leagues other than those in which they assign.

Registered Assignors

No one shall assign or appoint a referee, assistant referee or fourth official in any match under the jurisdiction (direct or indirect) of the Federation who is not registered as a Referee Assignor with the Federation for the current year. The state association, league or tournament may appoint an unregistered assignor in an emergency who may not serve past the end of the current seasonal year without becoming registered. This section does not apply to an assignment to any youth recreational or house league match.

Referee Assigning Program

1. A list of currently registered referees must be furnished to certified registered referee assignors by the State Referee Administrator once the assignor has passed his/her background check. Assignors should review the directory prior to making any assignment and prior to the start of each season.

2. The Referee Assignor may not sell or otherwise transmit any directory of currently registered referees received from the State Referee Administrator to any outside third party without the express written approval of the US Soccer Referee Committee and the Board of Directors.
3. A standardized rating system should be documented by the Assignor with updated input from developmental and formal assessments, coaches' reports, mentors, evaluations, the referee, and other input available to the assignor.
4. Assignors and referees must recognize that officiating where familiarity of family relationships with clubs/teams/coaches and/or players exist should be avoided. Assignors should limit the number of times a referee officiates for any one team or club.
5. Referees and assistant referees within a given experience/rating group should be rotated on a regular basis among all the assigned leagues and all the teams within a league. No referee should be assigned to any one league or club exclusively. When the assignor is an active referee, the assignor should be designated within a given experience/rating group and be part of the same rotation system of assignment in leagues outside of the league where servicing as an assignor (unless in an emergency situation).

Equal Opportunity for Assignment

Referee assignors should offer equal opportunity to all qualified referees and avoid discrimination against any individual or group regardless of age, race, color, religion, sex, national origin, or disability.

Standards of Conduct - (Page 13 RAHB)

Purpose

To define general guidelines to determine whether members of the National Referee Development Program act within acceptable limits so far as ethical conduct or conflict of interest are reflected in their conduct as soccer officials and members of the U.S. Soccer Federation.

Policy

Membership is a privilege offered and granted to individuals who perform capably as State Referee Administrators, referees, referee assignors, referee instructors and referee assessors during U.S. Soccer Federation sanctioned activities. It carries with it an obligation for each individual member to uphold and promote the stated goals and objectives of the Federation and do nothing to bring the Federation into disrepute or work against its goals and objectives. Any conduct which is considered unethical or as a conflict of interest shall be subject to possible disciplinary actions.

Referees as Administrative Officers, Conflict of Interest - (Page 42 2009 RAHB)

An active referee may serve on the administrative committees or board of a league or state association including being the chief officer (except as restricted in USSF Policy 531-1), and may referee in the league or state association while also being a member, but the referees:

- shall disqualify themselves from participating in any disciplinary proceeding in which the subject is a team, player or other person where there is a vested interest,
- shall be recused from participating in any disciplinary proceeding involving a game where they served as a game official.
- should not referee in any match where there is a vested interest.

“Vested interest” is defined as when the referee or a member of the referee's family (spouse, child or parent) or that person's team may be affected by the outcome of the proceeding or match.

Conflicts of interest occur when members (assignors) are in a position to influence a decision on a game where they might directly or indirectly receive financial benefit or give improper advantage to associates. Conflicts of commitment arise when assignor's involvements in games substantially interfere with their primary commitments to the State Association.

The same conflict of interest and "Vested interest" applies to assignors.

Assignors:

- Shall NOT referee a match of the Club that they assign for. It does not make any difference if the assignor is paid by the club or if the assignor is a volunteer
- Shall NOT assign a member of the assignor's family (spouse, child or parent) of the Club that they assign for.
- Shall NOT assign a board member of the Club that they assign for.
- Shall not assign a board member of the District that they assign for in State competitions.
- An assignor shall NOT participate as a player or as a coach/manager in a match they have assigned a fellow official to.

Assignor Code of Ethics

The SAC and referee assignors shall adhere to the Assignor Code of Ethics and ensure that all referees receive equal consideration for match assignments consistent with the state's minimum game requirements and the referee's ability and desire for advancement.

Code of Ethics for Assignors (Page 13 2009 RAHB)

- (1.) I will maintain the utmost respect for referees and other officials of the game and I will conduct myself honorably at all times.
- (2.) I will make the assignments based on what is good for the game and what is good for the referee.
- (3.) As a member of the U.S. Soccer Federation, my actions will reflect credit upon the organization.
- (4.) I will contribute to the continuous development of referees in the National Referee Development Program.
- (5.) I will conduct myself ethically and professionally in the assignment process.
- (6.) I will respect the rights and dignity of all the referees and I will not criticize them unless it is in private, constructive, and for their benefit.
- (7.) I will offer equal opportunity to all qualify referees and I will not discriminate against or take undue advantage of any individual or group on the basis of race, color, religion, sex or national origin.
- (8.) I will cooperate fully in the timely resolution of any grievance hearing or complaint.
- (9.) I consider it a privilege to be a part of the United States Soccer Federation and my actions will reflect credit upon that organization or its affiliates.
- (10.) I will safeguard the confidentiality of the USSF registered referee list.
- (11.) I will give priority to USSF affiliated games.
- (12.) The use of U.S. Soccer affiliated game assignments shall not be used to persuade U.S. Soccer registered referees to accept game assignments for non-members of U.S. Soccer.

Misconduct of Game Officials - Terms and References

(A) "Game Officials" includes the following:

- (1) all currently registered USSF referees, assistant referees, 4th officials or others appointed to assist in officiating in a match.

- (2) any non-licensed, non-registered person serving in an emergency capacity as a referee (under Policy 531-8).
- (3) any club assistant referee.
- (4) any referee development program person performing any official function at a match.

(B) "Referee Development Program Person" includes any referee, referee administrator, referee assessor, referee instructor, referee assignor, or other person serving in such capacity in a line or supervisory position, including members of any referee committee appointed by the Federation, its Divisions, Affiliates or Associates, a State Association, or a competition, tournament or other appropriate authority.

(C) Misconduct at a Match. When any game official is accused of having committed misconduct toward another game official, participant, or spectator at a match, or of having a conflict of interest, the original jurisdiction to adjudicate the matter shall vest immediately in the State Association or Organization Member through which the accused game official is registered. In the situation where Adult and Youth State Associations exist in a state, and the incident of alleged misconduct occurred at a match sanctioned by on State Association, jurisdiction shall vest with the State Association sanctioning the match in question.

(D) Misconduct Away From a Match. When any game official, referee, referee assistant or referee development program person is accused of unethical conduct, misuse or abuse of authority or conflict of interest in any matter in the pursuit of or may affect the individual's official dealings within and as authorized by the Federation, its Divisions, Affiliates or Associates, a State Associations or Organization Member, or a competition, tournament or other appropriate authority, the matter shall vest immediately in the State Association through which the accused game official is registered or through which the referee development program person is appointed.