

Dear Referee Coordinators,

Each of you is one of the most important people in an organizational structure encompassing over 1,000 active, licensed referees in District V. Meeting the officiating needs of so many players and leagues over such a large area is a challenge for all of us. Thank you so much for your willingness to step forward to meet this need.

To make your job a bit easier we want you to know about the resources available to you as well as the procedures we must follow to provide training to our referees.

First, you should understand the organizational structure of referees. USSF licenses all soccer referees in the United States as well as setting the educational agenda, guiding our application of FIFA's laws of the game and developing educational materials. CNRA (California North Referee Administration) is the next "local" division and our state organization. It is the largest in the US with over 11,500 referees registered, which is a bit under 10% of all US referees. Our district has 10% of that, so we in District V serve roughly 1% of all US soccer referees.

Within District 5, there are three positions you should be aware of.

- District Youth Referee Administrator: The DYRA's job is to work with the League Referee Coordinators to improve the youth referee program in the District and to identify a male and a female District Youth Referee of the Year.
- District Referee Administrator: The DRA's job is to oversee any and everything pertaining to referees in the district.
- District Director of Instruction: The DDI's job is to direct referee education, part of which includes approving the classes you request and assigning instructors to those classes.
- District Director of Referee Assessment: The DDRA's job involves supervising the on-the-field evaluation of youth and adult referees. His role is particularly important to referees wanting to move up the referee certification ladder and/or work adult games.

Go to: <http://www.cysadistrictv.com/referee.htm> for contact information.

Your principle interaction with the DDI will be around scheduling classes. This includes entry level, refresher classes and any other referee instruction you want for your league. Details of course request procedures and the forms to request classes are available at:

<http://www.cysadistrictv.com/forms.htm>.

One example in this "other" category is our efforts to promote mentoring programs at the club level. Please contact the DDI if you have any questions about courses. As fully 80% of our entry level courses are scheduled between July 1 and August 15 every year putting a major squeeze on our instructors, it is very important that you familiarize yourself with the application procedures so you can plan ahead. Course applications, accompanied by a check to CNRA are due 60 days before the starting date of class. The earlier you apply, the greater the likelihood that we can find an instructor for your first choice dates.

You all work hard to schedule referee courses on convenient dates for your prospective referees but it is impossible to satisfy all of them. Remember, any referee candidate should be able to attend any referee course in the district. If your dates don't work for someone, tell them about other courses offered in the district. You or they can see the district courses listed at:

<http://www.cysadistrictv.com/refcourses.htm>

REMINDER – to keep their licenses current, referees have to get a minimum of 5 hours of instruction *every year*. The laws change and we ALL have lots more to learn to improve as referees. That is why you have refresher classes and why we have started an independent series of improvement seminars for referees. The refresher sessions scheduled by clubs have understandably usually been less than 5 hours (too much for most people to commit to in one day and a long time to sit). This means the 2.5 – 3 hour sessions have been a brush up on the annual law revisions and little more. The additional sessions we have been scheduling should help meet this gap in educational hours and content. Let us know if you want to sponsor such a class. Just like the entry level classes, your referees should be welcome in any other clubs refreshers (and vice versa). It is to your benefit to inform your current and prospective referees of these educational opportunities. Courses listed at:

<http://www.cysadistrictv.com/refcourses.htm>

Other resources

CNRA: <http://www.cnra.net/>

USSF Referee Pages: <http://www.ussoccer.com/referees/index.jsp.html>

FIFA: <http://www.fifa.com/en/index.html>

Finally, we are all on a never-ending treadmill. We should try to find our way off of it. We want to encourage you to move one step beyond the “crisis mode” of simply filling referee slots on your games. Please think about referee retention. The following was written to share ideas about solving this problem.

Best,
District V Director of Referee Administration

The Problem Of Referee Development

Every year we license 500 - 800 new referees in District 5. Every year we end up with 1,100 or so currently licensed referees. Referees quit as fast as we teach new ones. As a result the quality of officiating is not what it should be. The players and coaching have improved markedly over the years, but the quality of refereeing has lagged behind. Unfortunately, players and coaches recognize this, so they complain which makes more referees quit and keeps us stuck in this vicious cycle.

What to do?

- Support your referees
- Manage your referees
- Reward your referees

Support

1) Stop referee abuse

- Create, maintain and ENFORCE club/league policy against abuse from players, coaches and parents.
- Build respect for your referees and the difficult nature of the job.
- Help your referees earn that respect by working to improve.
- Ask your referees to document bad behavior on game card and report to coordinator.
- Reward teams displaying good sportsmanship (team of the month, team of the season in all age groups)

2) Communicate

- Listen to referee complaints.
- Let them know they have support.
- Encourage feedback from coaches to referee coordinators identifying good referees.
- Help your referees sort through the useful information embedded in the “feedback” coming from players and coaches and other referees.
- Hold regular meetings.
- Email contact – “foul of the week” discussion about current issues in your games.

3) Educate

- Encourage clinic attendance (equipment donation/door prizes).
- Reward clinic attendance with better assignments.
- Mentoring – Partner experienced referees with those who are promising but less experienced.
- Arrange for Direction and Guidance (informal assessments) at tournaments (contact the District Director of Referee Assessment)

MANAGEMENT

- Assigning referees to games beyond their abilities hurts everyone.
- Remember that some of the worst fan behavior is from the parents of the youngest players. They are excited and just don't know any better. Assign accordingly.
- Use good/more challenging assignments as rewards.

REWARD

- We need to make sure that all of our hard working youth Referee's are rewarded.
- Create an award for youth and adult referee of the month and the year.

- Identify promising referees and notify the district. Youth referees should be brought to the attention of our District Youth Referee Administrator. Adult referees should be brought to the attention of the District Referee Administrator, Director of Instruction, or Director of Referee Assessment

Other ideas

- Require competitive teams to make a significant monetary deposit before the season which they get back if that team provides at least one adult referee for one league game each week.
- Use your experienced referees to identify and develop the promising new ones. This problem is worldwide but it is not hopeless. By working to positively reinforce better behavior from our coaches, parents, players and referees we can improve the youth soccer experience for all concerned.

If you have any comments or suggestions, please send them to us.

For the Good of the Game,

District Referee Administrator
District Director of Instruction
District Director of Referee Assessment
District Youth Referee Administrator