



Recruiting & Retaining Referees



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Introduction

Good referees are essential to the success of our AYSO soccer program. The most important thing that referees do is to ensure that AYSO games are FUN, SAFE and FAIR. That means referees should understand the spirit of "Laws of the Game" and apply the laws appropriately. Referees need to manage any unacceptable behavior or comments by players, coaches or spectators that spoil the enjoyment of everyone. Referees are expected to maintain their composure and set a good example as an authority for our impressionable young players. Recruiting and retaining volunteers to assume these responsibilities can be challenging. In this booklet, the AYSO National Referee Program offers some suggestions that have proven successful in recruiting and retaining referees.

Nothing succeeds like success. Recruiting and retaining volunteers is much easier if you have a successful, well-organized program. The fewer problems you have, the more likely people are to volunteer to help. This is particularly true when recruiting referees.

Refereeing should be fun. However, if there are frequent problems during the games and referees are having difficulty conducting the games in an enjoyable atmosphere, it will be difficult to recruit new referees. If you are experiencing some of these problems, the first thing you should do is minimize the problems. Make sure the board takes misbehavior seriously. Have parent orientation meetings. Work cooperatively with coaches, particularly the Coach Administrator. Once everyone sees that bad behavior is dealt with firmly, you will eliminate the vast majority of it and the job recruiting and keeping referees will be easier.

In developing an AYSO regional program, the concepts of sportsmanship, fair play, and respect for the authority of the referee must be stressed. We provide better role models for the young players to emulate, make refereeing more enjoyable, and make the prospect of becoming an AYSO referee more attractive.



Recruiting Recruiters

The job of recruiting referees is the responsibility of the Regional Referee Administrator and the Regional Referee Staff. Whether one person or a recruiting staff does the recruiting, there are certain characteristics that would be desirable to have in a recruiter. Referee recruiters are somewhat like salespersons, because they are trying to sell the idea that refereeing is an enjoyable and worthwhile volunteer activity. And all it will cost is some of your free time. The recruiters need to be personable, reasonably articulate, and knowledgeable about AYSO national and local procedures and philosophies concerning officiating. Good salespersons, and good recruiters, understand that a little persistence can produce results, but they also need to understand the difference between being persistent and being "pushy."

Second, the recruiters should be willing to seek out and talk to prospective volunteers and to follow up on any interest expressed.

Third, it is helpful to have some recruiters who are the same sex and general age of the people they will be trying to recruit. This is particularly true when recruiting youth and women. Although it is not absolutely necessary that recruiters be referees, it would greatly improve their credibility with potential new referee recruits. Most of all, as good "salespeople" the recruiters must believe in their product. That is, the recruiters should be referees and assistant referees who genuinely enjoy refereeing and who enthusiastically support the AYSO program. This enthusiasm will be obvious to a potential volunteer and can be the most convincing aspect of their recruiting efforts.

Training Recruiters

To prepare your recruiters, you might suggest they become familiar with some basic recruiting techniques, and be ready with some good responses to the frequent concerns expressed in regard to becoming a referee. In the initial contact with a potential volunteer, for example, the precise manner in which people are asked to volunteer often determines whether they will be receptive to the idea. One can often put the volunteer in a negative and defensive frame of mind if the question is asked, "How would you like to be a referee?" A more receptive frame of mind and positive response is likely if you say something like, "Hi, I see you at a lot of games. It's nice to see a parent spend as much time as you do supporting the team. Would you be willing to help the referees while you're here?" There will, of course, be lots of questions in the mind of this potential volunteer, but at least he or she may be willing to talk about it.

Go slowly. Do not put the volunteer in a position where he is uncomfortable making a large time commitment. It is nice to be able to find individuals willing to be trained as referees, however, more often the response is that they would be willing to "help" some, but they do not think they would want to referee. The recruiter may now suggest that he or she could help by assisting the referee as an assistant referee or possibly just becoming a U-8 Official. If the volunteer is reluctant to take the training necessary to become a qualified assistant referee or U-8 Official, then the recruiter could suggest he or she could help the referee by being a "club linesman" for which you could provide immediate training. In a short time and with a little positive reinforcement, this volunteer may become interested in doing more.

Recruiters should understand that most AYSO referees do not start out with a burning desire to become referees and only begin to enjoy refereeing after having officiated a few games. With good training from the beginning and positive support from fellow referees, the challenges and rewards of refereeing should be enough to motivate a reluctant volunteer to work at becoming a good referee.

In the Appendices, you will find several tools and ideas to help with recruiting. Review them and use the ones that you think will work best in your region.



Common Excuses for Not Refereeing and Some Suggested Responses

I don't know anything about the game!

Many AYSO referees understood little about soccer when they first volunteered. All we ask of you is a little of your time, and we will train you. The training can be done a little at a time or all at once, whatever is most convenient. AYSO has a referee training program which many consider to be the best you will find anywhere in the world and can be completed in short evening sessions over an extended time or all at once in a full day training course. The more you take advantage of the available training, the better referee you will become. We will not ask you to do anything you do not feel ready to try. Even if you have never refereed a game in your life, with a few hours of training, you will know more about the game of soccer than most of the people you know. We believe that with training your appreciation and enjoyment of the game will increase.

I don't have the time!

We do not ask our referees to obligate themselves to be constantly available to referee. What we need is a little help. Referees are free to choose the games they can do, which can be scheduled at your convenience; possibly just before or after the game your child is playing.

I don't think I could put up with the behavior of some coaches and spectators!

Boy, am I glad to hear you say that. We do not want our referees to put up with it! The majority of players and adults involved in our program are here because we do not allow unsporting behavior. Regions have strict policies governing such behavior, and we are strongly committed to these policies. We actually have few problems. As a referee, we can teach you how to deal with situations in a dignified and appropriate manner. You can help maintain the AYSO philosophy, while setting a good example for our impressionable young players.

I'm not the right kind of person to be a referee. I'd be embarrassed!

To be the "right kind of person" to referee AYSO games, all you need is to enjoy watching kids having fun playing soccer. We can teach you the rest. Believe me; you would make a good AYSO referee because I know you care about kids. There is no need to feel embarrassed at making mistakes because we are all volunteers and even our most experienced referees were beginners at some point.



I'm a woman and women don't referee!

Women certainly do referee, and make good ones, too. This is exactly why I am asking you to volunteer, because we would like to have more women involved as referees. Many of our players are girls and they love having women referees. They are comfortable with them and look up to them as role models. If you are a mom, you already are used to making quick decisions and multi-tasking. (If you are the mother of two or more children, you already know what it means to be a referee!) Don't worry. We will teach you and support you and start you with younger children. We will be there to mentor you until you feel comfortable and confident.

I can't afford the equipment

Don't worry about expense, because the region will provide you with a uniform and all the necessary equipment.

I'm too old.

As long as you can still think and move around, you can do it. Lots of people your age are referees. Many of our referees are older than you are. One of the reasons they keep doing it is because it keeps them young!

I'm too young.

If you are 10 years old, you are not too young to be a U-8 official. Regional Referees and Assistant Referees only have to be 12 years old. There are thousands of boys and girls around the country who referee.

I don't think I could keep up with the players. Some of them are pretty fast!

Don't worry, most of us can't keep up with them either. We give the older age division games, with the faster players, to our fitter and more experienced referees. We still have plenty of younger division games on smaller fields where you would be able to keep up. You know, refereeing is also a good way to get a little exercise and to have fun at the same time.

I don't think I could handle the responsibilities of the referee!

In time, I'm sure you would develop the confidence to referee. You can also provide vital assistance to the center referee by being an assistant referee. We have several qualified volunteers who only work as assistant referees. Every good referee will tell you that having good assistant referees can make all the difference.



When and Where to Recruit

Since it normally takes several seasons to develop an effective referee, recruiting must be ongoing and continuous. However, there are certain times when recruiting efforts should be intensified. Prior to registration, consider sending a letter to the parents of all previously registered players to remind them of the need for volunteers and suggest that each family help in some way. You may want to include a list of the jobs for which you need help.

During registration it is worthwhile to have recruiters available to talk to the parents. If possible, have both adult and youth referee recruiters present, in uniform, and smiling. Use female referees to recruit females. These recruiters can informally talk to potential volunteers in their own peer group. Anyone who indicates they would be willing to help should be considered a potential referee, even if they did not specifically volunteer to referee. The fact they are willing to help is half the battle. Do not fail to follow up with these volunteers.

Another good opportunity to recruit is during practices and games. Parents who are present to encourage and support their child's team are a good source of potential referees because they are already devoting the time and demonstrating an interest in the program. During games, recruiters should also look for the spectator who is frequently concerned with the accuracy of the referee's decisions. These people have already demonstrated a willingness to express their opinion as to whether a foul was committed or not. The recruiter could suggest to them that if they would be willing to attend a training course they could become "real referees." If your recruiting efforts are unsuccessful, at least the spectator may be a little less critical of the officiating in the future, particularly if you detail all of the training and experience necessary to become a referee.

Another great source of referees are youth. Regions have found many sources for recruiting youth referees. Among these are:

- the children of referees and other AYSO volunteers
- U-14, U-16, and U-19 teams, especially if there is a close-knit team or group of players that would love more chances to be involved with soccer
- high school and college coaches will sometimes reward players who get involved with refereeing because they know that experience as a referee will improve the players
- scouts may be able earn community service merit badges
- church groups often encourage "public service"



- schools in some areas require students to perform a minimum number of “community service hours” in order to graduate
- students with plans to attend college can add to their list of "organizations and activities" on their college admissions applications. Colleges want to see examples of leadership and responsibility which volunteer refereeing provides with abundance
- students who want to apply for a job. Youth referees who can list soccer refereeing on a job application have a better chance of getting a job. Employers are impressed with a youth referee who has the courage, confidence and discipline to be a referee.

It pays to advertise! You might consider publicizing your need for referees in the local newspapers, on radio stations, or with flyers. This is particularly worthwhile prior to any referee clinics you will be having. The more people know of the need for referees, the more likely you are to get volunteers. Of course, always include a statement about the need for referees in any of your regional publications, such as newsletters, parents' handbooks, etc.



Who and How to Recruit

There are certain people who will be more likely to be recruited as referees and to remain active in the program. Obviously, parents of players are the primary source of AYSO referees. Parents of younger players will be involved in the program longer than the parents of older players, and you will generally find that the former attend more games as spectators. Therefore, you may want to concentrate your recruiting efforts among the parents of U-6 and U-8 teams. Often, you will find that the parents of the child who is particularly motivated to play soccer are usually supportive and make excellent volunteers. Of course, the best referees are those who referee because they enjoy it, and it makes no difference whether they have children playing or not.

Another excellent source of referees is your players. You can begin with players as young as age ten and train them as U-8 officials. Twelve-year-olds can become Regional Referees and Assistant Referees. If they become interested, they may even want to try refereeing younger age divisions. Players that are drawn as referees from the older divisions, high school and college, as a group, already have some of the qualities of a good referee, which are sometimes difficult to teach to adults who have never played soccer. That is, players have a firsthand knowledge of the game and have an understanding of the meaning of such things as, "the Spirit of the Laws," "the flow of the game", "trifling and doubtful," "advantage" and "intentional vs. unintentional."

For more information on the use and training of youth referees please refer to the www.aysohelp.org website.

After determining those you want to recruit, you must determine how you should go about it. There are several general methods of recruiting, and you must determine what works best for your region's particular circumstances. You can start by designating specific individuals as recruiters. This is often an effective method when there are a sufficient number of these recruiters available with the free time to spend soliciting volunteers and following up with the necessary arrangements for their training.

You can rely on the response to various kinds of publicity appeals. This method requires the least amount of work; however, you should not expect this method alone to be sufficient.

Some regions have adopted various kinds of "forced recruiting" policies. This technique may entail requiring every coach to referee at least one game a season, or requiring each team to send one person to a referee clinic, or requiring each team to provide an assistant referee for all of their games. This "crisis management" is not recommended and does not encourage the development of good referees who



will continue their involvement with refereeing. It often meets with considerable resistance, is difficult to enforce, and may even lead to the loss of volunteers.

One method which has proven to be very effective is to encourage a "buddy system" type of recruiting. The "buddy system" is simply encouraging the experienced referees to recruit and become their advisor. The experienced referee would, in effect, take this new volunteer "under his/her wing" and personally support and encourage his/her development under the AYSO Advisor Program.

The goal of the experienced referee and his/her "buddy" would be to recruit and train a third person to become a "team." This "team" would be scheduled to work games together. One of the enjoyments of refereeing is the special kind of camaraderie which develops among good refereeing teams. The "buddy system" encourages the development of referee teams that work well together and take pride in their performance as a team.

The AYSO National Referee Program has special programs designed specifically to provide a means for qualified Advisors to work with new referees to ease them into refereeing and support their development. Once in place in a region, these programs can be a powerful tool to aid in recruitment and retention of referees.

Use of the Diagonal System in Recruiting and Training

"We have difficulty getting one official on the field, how do you expect us to get three?" This is probably the most common response to requests for three officials per game instead of one or two. We do not intend to discuss the relative merits of the diagonal, dual, or single refereeing systems here. Suffice it to say that the diagonal system is the recommended system in AYSO. The vast majority of experienced referees prefer it, and it is the way the "big boys" do it all over the world.

One of the advantages of the diagonal system is that it lends itself nicely to recruiting and training potential new referees. If there is only one official available per game, the official should be encouraged to enlist the aid of two volunteers as "club linesmen." This can be done prior to game time (using the "buddy system) or two volunteers could be "recruited for one game" from among the spectators. If refereeing teams are allowed to develop, the experienced referee will probably want to find a couple of "buddies" to recruit and train to ensure that he/she will have a "team" of three officials for all of his/her games. If only two officials are available for games, the referees should still implement the diagonal system by using one of the officials as a qualified neutral assistant referee and recruiting a "buddy," or getting a volunteer from among the spectators to serve as a "club linesman."

When using "club linesmen," an experienced referee will make them feel as comfortable with the job as possible and to express appreciation for assistance. As with any new job, there is a certain amount of apprehension about not doing well. If the referee can help these club linesmen overcome this feeling and make them understand that they were, in fact, helpful, this might make them feel more confident and willing to try it again. When only one or two referees are available for a game and they make no attempt to recruit a club linesman or two to help them, they are missing a very good opportunity to stimulate the interest of a potential new referee.



Provide Adequate Training

Once you have recruited a potential referee, the first step in retaining is to provide them with adequate training. It is extremely important that new referees understand not only the Letter of the Law but also the "Spirit of the Law." Soccer refereeing is different from refereeing in most other sports. New referees should be made aware of the kind of authority they will have and the manner in which they should use it. Make sure all new referees are exposed to a presentation on the "philosophy of refereeing" and that they understand the important role they will play in your youth soccer program. Getting off to a good start is important in any new endeavor, and this is particularly true with soccer refereeing. If you provide your new referees with good training, they will be better for it and have fewer problems with games. If games go well, referees will want to keep doing them. Also, you are more likely to retain them because they will be enjoying themselves.

Regions often provide excellent training for the beginner, but tend to forget about providing training for the more experienced referees. Refereeing a considerable number of younger division games is not the only requirement needed to begin refereeing in the older divisions. Experience is the best teacher, but do not make your referees learn the "hard way." If referees are given games for which they are not well trained, they will not have a lot of fun, and it may result in the loss of a volunteer.

The National Referee Program has comprehensive referee training programs and materials, for all levels. Further information is available from the National Support and Training Center at (800) 872-2976 and at www.aysohelp.org.



Establish Good Communication

Make sure "the left hand knows what the right hand is doing." Keeping your referees informed and up to date is important. Volunteers may become dissatisfied and disillusioned if they feel they are not well informed. There should be timely and reliable communication with all of the referees in your region. Do not rely on word of mouth to convey important information. This communication should be conveyed in writing. While it may seem like unnecessary paperwork to some, it will prevent undue confusion, avoid the misinterpretation sometimes common with verbal communication, and will help avoid the need for numerous last-minute phone calls.

All referees should have the following:

- the current AYSO edition of the "FIFA Laws of The Game" (with AYSO modifications)
- AYSO National Referee Program Manual
- AYSO Guidance for Referees and Coaches
- USSF Advice to Referees on the Laws of the Game
- USSF Guide to Procedures for Referees, Assistant Referees and Fourth Officials
- any local regional or inter-regional guidelines governing play
- names, addresses and phone numbers of the volunteers to notify for changes and game misconduct reports.

The referees should receive copies of the game schedule and assignments as far in advance as possible. Whenever there are changes, they should be notified in writing, if possible.

Make sure all of your referees complete the Safe Haven Referee Certification course, and are registered with AYSO.

The distribution of certain kinds of information to everyone in your region can help eliminate problems for your referees during games by having knowledgeable players, coaches, and spectators. This kind of information can be compiled into a "regional handbook" which can be routinely distributed to all new members. The specific information needed by referees and coaches could be compiled into separate "handbooks" for each. Once these "handbooks" are completed, they can



be reproduced and stocked for distribution as needed and this eliminates the need to repeat the effort each season. If everyone knows what to expect, and what is expected of them, you will encounter a smoother running program with fewer problems and increase your ability to recruit and retain volunteers.



Form a Referee Club

Most referees enjoy having the opportunity to exchange "war stories," discuss various ways to deal with problem situations, and, in general, enjoy the fellowship and support of fellow referees. Referees are often under considerable pressure during games and tend to be criticized more than praised. It is beneficial for the referees to be reassured by respected and "knowledgeable sources" (other referees) when they have made correct, albeit controversial decisions, or to be offered constructive suggestions for alternative ways to handle difficult situations. Referee clubs can offer these opportunities and they are fun.

Referee clubs are structured in various ways depending upon the number of referees in the region and their general interests. If only a few referees are involved, meetings could be scheduled at the homes of the referees or at a suitable local restaurant or meeting location. The meetings should have some organized format but still allow plenty of time for social interaction and idea exchange. A member may be selected to present a particular aspect of refereeing, such as dissent, alternative positioning for restarts, pregame instruction, etc., and possibly formulate a few interesting questions for discussion. There should be time allotted for "war stories" and perhaps ask volunteer referees to discuss his/her worst refereeing challenge since the last meeting (it's therapeutic). An effort should be made to give ample opportunity for everyone to be involved. Perhaps all the referees could meet jointly for a presentation by one of the members or a guest speaker and then break into smaller groups for discussion and social interaction. Regardless of the size or format of the meetings, try to have them regularly. A referee club will encourage the development of mutual support and fellowship among referees, aid in developing uniformity of refereeing, and help retain interest.

Women referees may also want to form their own group where they can meet with other women referees and share experiences. Women find that what works for them on the field may not work for men and vice versa. Another woman may offer insights no one else has.

Many regions have had great success in recruiting and retaining youth referees through the formation of a youth referee organization. The Developing and Maintaining a Youth Referee Program book is available from the AYSO Supply Center (888 243 2976) and can be downloaded from the www.aysohelp.org website.

Offer Motivational Incentives

Don't make refereeing a "thankless job." You could begin expressing your thanks and appreciation to your referees by providing them with a uniform. Referees should always wear the proper attire when they are refereeing to be readily visible as a "trained official." Referees should receive a certain amount of respect from players and coaches. Being properly dressed, referees show respect for themselves, the game, the players, the coaches and the spectators. They look the part, they are taking the job seriously and they should be respected in return. Additionally, giving your referees uniforms is a way of demonstrating that you appreciate their efforts. At the same time, it ensures that all of your referees will be in uniform for your games.

Everyone likes to be appreciated, so encourage the players and coaches to express gratitude to the referees after the games. Too often, we forget that referees are volunteers just like the rest of us and are contributing their time and energy free of charge. A simple "thanks for reffing" from the players or coaches, regardless of the outcome of the game, can go a long way toward keeping a referee motivated. It is customary for players and coaches to shake hands and to display good sportsmanship towards one another after the game. Why not include the referee?

If you give awards or recognition to players and coaches each season, include the referees as well. Public recognition of referees in your program is a way to express appreciation and also to motivate others. The exact manner in which you try to offer incentives to your referees can take many forms, as people respond in different ways. What may work for some may not work for others, but in general, most people will continue to volunteer to help if they know their efforts are genuinely appreciated!



Abuse of Referees

Abuse of referees and assistant referees, whether verbal or physical, has absolutely no place in AYSO. Any offending actions against match officials must not be tolerated under any circumstances. Regions must be proactive in preventing this through the education of coaches and parents in the AYSO philosophy, especially the principle of "good sportsmanship." Regions must also set an example by dealing immediately and firmly with all such incidents.

Coaches and spectators acting in an abusive, offensive or insulting way is a particular obstacle to the recruiting and retaining of women and youth referees. Every region should have a "zero tolerance" policy regarding abuse of youth referees. Coaches should be reminded that these referees are kids too and the most positive thing they can say to them is "Thank you."

A region that doesn't deal effectively with this problem will fail to recruit and retain any but the most strong-minded and self assured.

Regions should have a special task force to focus on the coaches and parents who cause problems for referees. The regional board needs to back this group by removing from the program anyone whose negative behavior towards referees does not change.

The region's Coach Administrator needs to be convinced that a negative coach is worse than no coach. Referee input should be elicited when deciding which coaches will represent AYSO. This does not mean that a first-year coach who had problems should not be asked to coach a second year. The coach would get more guidance and training before beginning the next season.

Shaping the Referee's Image

Regions that want a wide variety of volunteers to join their referee staff should first look at their current program. Does the region's recruitment program communicate to the potential volunteers that anyone can become a good referee, or does it give the impression that only adult men who know a lot about soccer need apply? Is the region's referee retention program directed at the needs of all types of referees, or does it also subtly say that only adult men really belong?

The general soccer public's perception of who is a good referee has a great effect on both recruitment and retention of referees. Many coaches and parents see "good referees" as being strong men with plenty of soccer experience. This image becomes self-fulfilling as parents and coaches question, and don't trust, any referee that doesn't fit their image of a "good" referee. This perception affects recruitment, as potential volunteers avoid involvement because they don't fit their own idea of a "good referee." Retention is affected when excellent referees are frequently questioned and not trusted simply because they don't look the part (women and youth referees frequently fall into this category).

- The region can and must change this perception.
- All referees should be recognized publicly at AYSO meetings and gatherings.
- Newsletters and other AYSO communications shall be used to tell parents and coaches about the training that the referees completed.
- Newsletters can make an extra effort to highlight the accomplishments of women and youth referees
- The Regional Referee Administrator must look for opportunities to put women and youth referees in positions of high visibility.
- Parents and coaches should be shown at every opportunity that all referees, regardless of sex or age, are knowledgeable and competently trained officials.



Referee Advisor

The AYSO National Referee Program offers a full range of referee services. One of the more important aspects to improve performance and ready referees for badge upgrades is referee assessment. The Regional Referee Program's component is a very different type of service. The Regional Referee Administrator, or his or her delegate, is responsible for developing Referee Advisors. The Referee Advisor Handbook can be obtained from the AYSO Supply Center (888 243 2976).

The Advisor program is designed for new and developing officials with guidance from experienced referees to provide support and encouragement. Regions can use current, injured or retired referees to implement the important program that fosters improvement, upgrading and recruiting.



Appendices



Appendix 1: Why I Can't Be a Referee

To save you the trouble of having to create an excuse of your own, we have listed the most of the common excuses for non-participation in this critical function in the AYSO program.

You can just put an 'X' next to the excuse which best applies to you, sign your name and hand it in with your child's application OR...sign up to be a referee and learn how much fun soccer can be, not just for your child, but for you as well!

I Don't Know Anything (Enough) About the Game

Most of us knew little, or less than you, about soccer when we became referees. Not to worry...for the investment of a day (8 hours) we will train you with more knowledge of the Laws of the Game than most Americans ever possess.

I Don't Have Time

Becoming a referee is the perfect slot for those AYSO parents who have crowded schedules. Your commitment consists of eight hours of class and, when the season begins, games scheduled around your child's games (when you would be at the fields anyway). You may do as many or as few games as you choose.

I'm Not the Right Kind of Person

Yes you are. You obviously care about your child. This is a youth development program run by volunteers. Would you want your child involved with someone who is not as good as you? Who would be better than a concerned parent like you?

I'm in too High a Tax Bracket to be Able to Handle the Extra Income

Not to worry. When we last heard, satisfaction and enjoyment were not yet taxable. Since that will be your only compensation (AYSO is a volunteer organization) we suggest you collect as much compensation as you can.

I'd Look Silly in That Uniform

Good heavens.... You obviously haven't seen the Referee Administrator.

I'd Be Embarrassed

Everyone makes mistakes (even those of us who have been officiating for years). The import thing is to approach the job with enthusiasm and enjoyment, because that will be passed on to the players and coaches (and we can team you up with an experienced referee to help you through the initial learning process).



I'm A Woman – I Never See Them Referee

Wrong! We have quite a few qualified women referees – AND THEY ARE GREAT! We could use many more. What other time in your life will you ever...with just one breath (or tweet)...be able to make 22 kids stop what they are doing, actually listen to you, and then do what they are told? Besides lots of players are girls and they look up to women referees.

I'm Too Old/Too Young

As long as you can move and think, you are never too old. Lots of people your age are referees. As long as you are 10 years old, you are not too young. There are thousands of boys and girls across the country who referee.

I Don't Care

Well here it is...if in fact you are signing up your child to play AYSO soccer and you honestly don't care about the quality, safety or enjoyment involved in this program...then you have come up with the correct excuse and we no longer have to ask why. Because if you really don't care, YOU CAN'T BE A REFEREE, and that is that.

However, if this last excuse does not apply to you (and we hope it doesn't), then we need you badly.

In return, we promise you:

- Enjoyment
- Exercise
- Commitment
- A Free Uniform
- AND, ON TOP OF THAT...the kids will be glad to that you were there.

ONE FINAL NOTE...if you still don't think you are the right kind of person for this job...you took the time to read this whole flyer...that means you care...that means you are exactly the right kind of person.

Appendix 2: Motivating Factors

Some Reasons Why People Volunteer to Referee:

- Help out.
- Benefit kids.
- Want to fill a program need of not enough referees.
- People who have been involved in soccer, e.g., former players, who "want to give something back to the game."
- Feel they have something to offer.
- Talked into it.
- Fun.
- Physical and mental challenge.
- To be part of game or of own kids' activity.
- Want to be in charge of important kid activity. (This could be positive or negative.)
- To get exercise.
- Spouse signed you up. ("He did? I didn't know that! Yeah, OK, I'll do it").

Some Reasons Why People Do Not Volunteer to Become Referees:

- Don't know Laws of the Game.
- Don't know soccer.
- Lack of self-confidence.
- Don't want to be yelled at (scared of possibility of abuse).
- New to AYSO.
- Don't know what is required of a volunteer.
- Want to get paid for refereeing.



- No time either for refereeing or to go to clinic.
- Not willing or scared to be "Out there on field." i.e., alone and in charge.
- Spouse signed you up ("She did? I'm not doing that!")
- Anything else they can think of.

Some Ideas of What to Tell Potential Referees:

- "We need your help in order to give all kids the opportunity to play."
- "Your kid is in the program and we need your help." (This can be a simple statement or a virtual demand for help.)
- "We'll train and support you, but you need to give us time to do the job properly." (That is, you'll be there for them, but they need to take the time to be trained, and to continue improving through additional training.)
- Tell them how they will be supported: training, mentoring, equipment, not allowing abuse, dealing with problem coaches, etc.
- Tell them, how they can help make games more fun for the kids by keeping games fair and safe.
- Explain the AYSO Team concept.
- Talk about the philosophy and goals of the program.
- Emphasize things that make refereeing enjoyable: fellowship, challenge, interaction with players, enjoyable physical activity; respect and appreciation, feeling good that you help kids to have a fun and positive experience.
- Anything else you can think of.

Appendix 3: Some Considerations When Interacting with Potential Volunteers

Develop an approach to counter negatives that people present while you are trying to recruit them or to counter any resistance you might run into.

Be patient, chose your words carefully, try to employ positive body language, show understanding toward the resistance, listen to the person, and be friendly.

Give the flyer, "Why I Can't Be a Referee" to potential volunteers and be ready to talk to them about their reaction.

At registration, either show "Ready, Set, Ref!" or have someone give a "we need volunteers" pitch to people standing in line at registration. Then present a "Give it a Try" scenario (Appendix 4.)

At registration, require every parent to stop by the volunteers' station. Remind them that in AYSO there is one volunteer for every 2.5 players. Tell them that if the person in front of them didn't volunteer, it's now up to them. Don't forget to follow up! Not contacting a volunteer is an insult. That person will not step forward to help again.

At the field - present the "Oh Yes, You Can" strategy. (Appendix 5.)

At parents meeting - give a "Referee Fun Test." (Appendix 6.)

More Ideas:

- Have recruiters in uniform (and smiling)
- Use females to recruit females
- Use youth volunteers to recruit youths
- Post biographies of some of your referees
- Show a video of a local referee having fun
- Have a picture display of referees in action

Around Town

- Put brochures in medical offices



- Set up a display in a local store
- Put a kiosk or stand in a mall
- Visit sports medicine clinics to inform therapists and staff
- Get a referee announcement or article in the local paper or on public TV
- Post information in fire, police and civic offices

For The Kids

- Recruit at Boy Scout and Girl Scout meetings, high schools, etc. Refereeing may fulfill merit badge or community service requirements
- Start a PRO (Player Referee Organization) club for referees under eighteen

In The Beginning

- Have every new referee assigned an Advisor
- Create a referee organization that meets regularly

During The Year

- Feature a referee in the local newsletter
- Create a special patch for referees' jackets
- Treat referees and spouses to a special night
- Send thank you notes to the spouses
- Provide quality equipment and up-to-date books
- Have visible referee center on game day
- Send dedicated referees to camp

Appendix 4: Give-it-a-Try Scenarios

Instructions:

Tell the participant(s) to listen carefully as you present each scenario. If they feel the referee should stop play, they should activate their noisemaker to stop play as soon as they think there's a problem. If they don't see a problem, they do nothing. You or an assistant should keep track of the participant(s)'s score(s) on the score sheet(s) to hand to them after the five scenarios are done. Three or more correct means they're referee material.

Scenario #1:

The red player and the blue player are running after the ball, which is rolling toward the touchline nearest the "referee." The red player is faster and the blue player holds onto the red player's arm to keep up. The red player still reaches the ball first.

If the "referee" stops play, he or she has correctly identified the foul "holding."

Scenario #2:

The red player is dribbling the ball across the halfway line. The blue player intercepts him and, in trying to get the ball, misses and snags the ankle of the red player, who falls down. The blue player gathers the ball and heads up field.

If the "referee" stops play, he or she has correctly identified a careless trip.

Scenario #3:

The red player is dribbling the ball across the halfway line. The blue player intercepts him and puts his foot on the opposite side of the ball. The red player trips over the ball and falls down. The blue player keeps the ball and moves in the opposite direction.

If the "referee" does not stop play, he or she has allowed a fair tackle of the ball.

Scenario #4:

The red player dribbles the ball down the touchline, then shoots at blue's goal. The blue player (not a goalkeeper) is standing on the goal line inside the goal mouth and stops the ball right on the line. The blue player then kicks the ball up field.

If the "referee" does not stop play, he or she recognizes the ball is still in play when any portion of it is over the line. The entire ball must cross this line to be out of play or to score.



Scenario #5:

The red player is trying to control a bouncing ball. The blue player tries to kick the ball by raising his foot head high. The red player backs away, and the ball falls to the feet of the blue player.

If the "referee" stops play, he or she recognizes dangerous play.

Appendix 6: Referee Fun Test

If you had the chance to referee age five or six players, could you do it? Read and answer these questions to find out. No prior experience necessary.

1. During a game, a red-shirted player trips a blue-shirted player.

You would:

- a. Blow your whistle and give a free kick to the blue team.
- b. Blow your whistle and tell the red player he's a very bad boy.
- c. Tell the blue player to stop falling down like a baby.
- d. Tell the red player it was a great trip.

2. During a game, a red-shirted player punches a blue-shirted player.

You would:

- a. Blow your whistle and tell the blue player to hit the red player back.
- b. Blow your whistle, tell the red player that you will not let her play if she continues to hit, and give a free kick to the other team
- c. Tell the red player she hits like a girl.

3. During a game, a red-shirted player kicks the ball over the touchline (sideline).

You would:

- a. Tell the red player to leave the field and never come back.
- b. Tell the red player to apologize for kicking the ball out.
- c. Give the ball to the blue team for a throw-in.

4. During a game, a red-shirted player seems afraid of the ball. She finally kicks it very cautiously, but doesn't follow up. The blue team gets the ball.

You would:

- a. Tell her it was a nice try and to keep it up.



- b. Tell her she just lost the ball and she'd better wake up.
 - c. Keep quiet and hope that she drops out as soon as possible.
5. During a game, a red-shirted player is continually yelled at by her mother.

You would:

- a. Think her mother is only trying to make her a better person.
 - b. Think that someone should tell the mother about AYSO's positive coaching philosophy - it's not just for coaches.
 - c. Think you'd like to run over to the mother and call her names to see how she likes it.
6. During a game, a red-shirted player is called names by players from the blue team.

You would:

- a. Yell very loudly, "Knock it off, you brats."
 - b. Blow your whistle, then make all the blue players run five laps around the field.
 - c. Tell them sternly to "stop calling names," then when the ball goes out of play, bring them together and tell them that name calling is wrong and anyone who does it again will have to leave the game.
7. During a game, a red-shirted player spits on another red-shirted player.

You would:

- a. Take him over to his coach and tell the coach that this player can't play anymore today and why.
 - b. Have all the other red players stand around and spit on him.
 - c. Make him apologize, then let him have a free kick to show you're not angry with him.
 - d. Tell his mother she has a very bad child and she'd better punish him.
8. During a game, a red-shirted player gets hit by a ball kicked by a blue-shirted player. He falls to the ground crying.

You would:

- a. Tell him to stop being a baby and get up.



- b. Blow your whistle and have the coach look at him (and probably his mom and dad too).
 - c. Yell "keep playing" and order the coach and parents to stay off the field until you give them permission to come on.
 - d. Blow your whistle and yell at the blue-shirted player for kicking the ball.
9. During a game, a red-shirted player scores a goal against the blue team.

You would:

- a. Award the goal and allow the red team to kick-off.
 - b. Award the goal and allow the blue team to kick-off.
 - c. Disallow the goal because the blue goalkeeper is crying.
 - d. Give the red player a high five and congratulate her on smoking the goalkeeper,
10. After the game, several players from both teams run up to you and say "Thank you for reffing our game."

You would:

- a. Tell them not to talk to the referee.
- b. Hold a grudge against those who didn't say thanks.
- c. Feel pretty good about yourself.

ANSWERS:

1. a 2. b 3. c 4. a 5. b 6. c 7. a 8. b 9. b 10. c

If you scored six or more right, with a little training you can be a first class referee! Don't dodge destiny. Enroll now!

Appendix 7: Methods for Retaining Referees

Mentoring: New referees who have been assigned an Advisor are generally more successful. Referees who have a high level of support are more likely to stay in the program.

Training: Well-trained referees are more likely to feel comfortable on the field. Referees do their best jobs when they are confident that they know what to do and how to do it.

Uniforms and equipment: Providing referees with uniforms and equipment demonstrates that the regions value their contributions.

Meetings: In-service, regular (monthly?) meetings, guest speakers, specific topics and social events all provide opportunities provides opportunities to exchange ideas and gain support. Keeping in touch with other referees will prevent referees from becoming isolated and frustrated.

Encourage further training and explain how it helps the referee and the program. Taking additional training helps volunteers become better referees.

Encourage further opportunities (advisor/assessor, instructor, administrator, etc.). There are a many additional opportunities to contribute to the program. Volunteers who are fully committed to the program are most likely to continue to participate as referees.

Show appreciation for Regional Referees. Emphasize their importance. The largest percentage of games is in the younger age divisions where the need is greatest (although taking intermediate training helps volunteers become better referees).

Provide referees with water/drinks. If your region has a snack bar, make sure water or drinks are provided free of charge to referees throughout the day. One drink and item from the snack bar for a day's work is another small way to show appreciation for the referees.

Any other ways of saying "Thank you."

Appendix 8: Grow Some Volunteers

(Reprinted from InPlay)

We need to reach out to women and men who fear involvement in what they perceive as a macho-dominated environment.

We need to persuade reluctant volunteers that they will grow and have fun as they learn to help children grow and have fun.

We need to target and solicit volunteers for whom nurturing children is their primary motive. Thus, we increase the number of women and men who understand and facilitate the AYSO mission.

Of course, the people best equipped to do this are those of you who already coach and referee in AYSO. You are the front line of volunteer recruitment. To help your regions and yourselves consider sponsoring a volunteer event.

Have a Party!

At player registration, find women and men who are interested in learning how AYSO helps their children grow and develop through soccer. (That should be just about every parent.) Invite them to an evening or weekend session of two hours or less, in which they will learn how the program works and how they can have an impact on its quality and effectiveness. As an incentive, perhaps everyone who attends, whether they sign up as a volunteer or not, receives a pair of shinguards, or a practice ball, or a clipboard, or some other token of appreciation. (Note: Free food is always a big draw too. If you feed them, they will come.)

What To Say: Divide the time among these topics:

- AYSO Philosophy.
- Coaching skills demonstration and "hands on" participation (Keep it simple. Focus on the kids more than the game).
- Officiating skills demonstration and "hands on" participation (Keep it simple. Focus on the kids more than the game).
- Board and staff skills demonstration and "hands on" participation (Keep it simple)!
- Volunteer discovery time to discuss questions/concerns.



- AYSO Team Training (set aside time to divide the group by gender to offer the opportunity to discuss gender fears, concerns, and other issues regarding coaching, refereeing, and being an AYSO volunteer).
- Of course, be sure to have volunteer registration forms on hand and a list of the positions in the region that need filling!

Appendix 9: AYSO Team Opening Game Scenario

Objectives:

Reinforce the importance of the AYSO team, made up of the volunteer coaches, referees, and parents/supporters.

Remind all members of the AYSO Team (coaches, referees, and parents/supporters) that the performance of the AYSO team is critical to the success of AYSO.

Show that the game is played in a positive environment, with all members of the AYSO team working together to the best of their abilities.

Positioning on the field: two circles of people, made up of:

- Outer circle: The players
- Inner circle: The coaches, referees, and team parents/supporters.

The Trainer states the following:

Welcome to AYSO; the American Youth Soccer Organization. AYSO is the premier Youth Development Organization in the world. AYSO trains our volunteers, coaches, and referees to create a safe, fair, fun, and positive environment for our children. All the volunteer coaches and referees work very hard for our kids so they can have fun and develop a healthy, positive self-image.

All soccer games have three teams: two teams of soccer players, and the AYSO team.

The AYSO team is made up of the trained volunteer coaches and referees, and the parents, grandparents, and others who care about the kids (point around at the players).

Every volunteer on the AYSO team has a job:

- Parents/supporters: to encourage and support all the players.
- Coaches: to give positive instruction and encouragement to the players.
- Referees: to control the game; to make it safe, fair, and fun.



All members of the AYSO team need to work together and support each other so the team is successful in helping the kids develop a positive self-image.

Demonstration:

Have the volunteers (coaches, referees, and team parents/supporters) in the inner circle form a circle and hold hands. Tell them to hold tight and then lean back. State "the only way they can keep from falling is to hold on and support each other. This is the essence of the AYSO team; working together and supporting each other to help the kids succeed." Have them return to a normal position.

Trainer:

All of the members of the AYSO team: coaches, referees, and parents need to work together, support each other, and never forget, "It's for the kids."

While the players are displaying their soccer skills, the members of the AYSO team need to display their skills as:

- Positive, encouraging, supportive parents
- Positive, instructive coaches
- Positive and caring referees.

If all the members of the AYSO team concentrate on doing their job the best way they can, then AYSO will work as a soccer program, and more importantly, as a youth development program; the biggest winners of all will be the kids.

Thank you all for being here and for caring about the kids. Have a good game and a wonderful season!!