

Attachment 12

Referee Mentor Program Guidelines

BACKGROUND

The St. Mary's Youth Soccer (SMYS) Mentor Program provides a means of developing quality soccer referees which are an essential element of a successful soccer program. Entry level referee classes teach the Laws of the Game, but do little to develop the real-time decision making, positioning, and man-management skills necessary to cultivate confident, effective referees. In addition, many "new" referees are teenagers who are thrown into scenarios where they must be the authority figure and deal with adults – a first for most. 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 SMYS 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. Mentoring is not assessing in that the goal of the program is not to test the referees, but to provide constructive feedback that will build confidence and improve their refereeing ability. It also provides a protective environment where the referee has an adult "on their side" should issues arise with coaches, spectators, parents, etc.

GOALS

The goals of this program are to:

- Promote consistent understanding and application of the Laws of the Game (LOTG), USSF procedures, and local SMYS modifications.
- Improve referee decision-making skills.
- Help novice referees develop the knowledge, skills and confidence to become effective arbiters.
- Discourage, and address as necessary, inappropriate behavior by coaches and spectators.
- Provide feedback to the SMYS assignor.
- Provide the SMYS organization a means of ensuring high-quality games in a safe and responsible environment.

QUALIFICATIONS

A Mentor for this program must be:

- At least 18 years old,
- Current USSF Grade 8 or higher referee with demonstrated knowledge of the Laws of the Game, USSF procedures and mechanics, and SMYS modifications,
- Good interpersonal communication skills, and
- Recommendation from SMYS Head Referee with concurrence from SMYS Referee Assignor.

RESPONSIBILITIES

- The Mentor is NOT responsible for ensuring the fields are marked or that corner flags are set – that is still a coach's responsibility.

- The Mentor may serve as an off-field observer or as an on-field game official, as assigned. It is desired to have the Mentor as an observer whenever possible so they can give their undivided attention to the referee crews.
- Mentors shall be dressed in a referee uniform and to the extent possible, a different color jersey. By being in a recognizable uniform, the Mentor can easily be sought out by coaches or parents with questions or comments.
- The Mentor is the acting head referee for that site and provides the SMYS organization an on-site presence. SMYS delegates responsibility and authority to the Mentor to take appropriate actions to ensure player safety, game execution and proper coach and spectator behavior.
- The Mentor must intervene and diffuse the situation when coach(es) or spectators act irresponsibly and the referee is incapable or unsure of how to handle it. The Mentor may speak with the referee and provide the moral support and mechanics necessary for the referee to caution or expel the coach. But, if the situation warrants, the Mentor has authority from SMYS to dismiss coaches and spectators.
- While not getting involved in judgment calls made by the referee, the Mentor may provide real-time guidance during stoppages where grave misapplication of the LotG may occur (especially regarding restarts).
- Before the game and after the first and/or second half of the game, the Mentor should speak with one or more of the referee crews to answer any questions and provide constructive criticism to both the referee and assistant referees, as appropriate. Attention should be paid to proper attire, mechanics and positioning, decision making, and communication, for example.
- The Mentor must submit notes to the assignor in a timely manner for each referee crew mentored but no later than the following Thursday. The assignor uses these notes, in part, to determine proper age-group assignments and the earlier they are received, the more useful the notes are.