

PHMSA Regional Referee Pre-Course Syllabus

This syllabus is intended to give the new referee some basic elements about the game of soccer and the art of refereeing. Most new referees have little or no background in soccer. Thinking about refereeing an entire soccer match is a scary proposition. Please download this and print it out. Reviewing this syllabus before the first class session will give you a basic understanding of refereeing.

The syllabus is separated into three parts: The first section deals with understanding the game of soccer, AYSO as an organization, strategies, and some history. The second part includes statements regarding the role of the referee and related challenges including the stages of ability development, understanding the laws, endurance, and conflict resolution. The last part of the syllabus is a glossary of commonly used terms including some commonly misused terms.

Additional information about PHMSA can be found on the website at www.phmsa.org. There is a referee link that takes you to a variety of information including updates, the online scheduling program, html and PDF copies of forms, and links to other referee sites that offer additional information on the Laws of the Game. Take a look at the website and bookmark it for future reference.

We hope that after reading this syllabus you will feel more comfortable attending the first class session.

Part I

Soccer and Referee Background

This section will give you some background of soccer and soccer refereeing. This is by no means an in-depth historical document, but it is intended to give the reader a cursory overview of soccer and its strategies.

History of Soccer as Pertains to the Referee:

There are many in-depth sources for the history of soccer. This is not one of them! A more detailed explanation will take place in the class. In short, two schools in England played a form of football we know today. One school, Rugby, wanted to be able to use the hands and tackle opponents, while the other school wanted a ‘foot-only’ form of the game. One style became rugby and the other soccer.

Soccer was a ‘gentleman’s’ game and there was no need for any sort of official. As the sport progressed and the success of the soccer teams were related to the reputation of the school, club or town associated with the team – the matches became more intensely contested. Consequently one school or club official from each team was stationed on the touchline (the sideline in soccer) to control the game. These ‘club’ linesmen would help determine who last kicked it over the line. As the game became more sophisticated, so did the officiating. It was apparent that a neutral referee was needed to help the game move along. This was the beginning of the three-man (person) system we use today. Eventually we moved to a referee team of three neutral referees. Neutral meaning that they had no ties to the teams. The general concept of officials not interfering with the flow of the game has been an underlying principal since the inception of the soccer referee.

The Organization of Soccer and how AYSO fits in:

As soccer developed, or football as it is known in the rest of the world, there soon was a need for standardization of procedures and the governing Laws of the Game. This is where FIFA (Federation Internationale de Football Association) comes in. FIFA is the governing body of all major soccer activities throughout the world. Each country has a governing body that FIFA has authorized as its representative in that country. The USSF (United States Soccer Federation) is the governing body in our country. USSF is authorized to approve or align itself with a variety of soccer activities in the country if these soccer activities abide by the USSF standards and rules.

AYSO (American Youth Soccer Organization) is one of the soccer organizations under the umbrella of USSF. In California the two most recognizable youth soccer groups are AYSO and CYSA (California Youth Soccer Association). Simplified, the AYSO is designed as a recreational league based in soccer instruction and development, while CYSA is the body that oversees the youth club activities and is based on tryouts and competitive activities. It should be noted that both youth organizations serve their purpose well for the soccer youths in our state.

AYSO is a national organization and is very large. For administrative purposes it is broken down into Sections, with several Areas in each Section, with several Regions in each Area. The Pleasant Hill/Martinez Soccer Association has an AYSO affiliation and is designated as *Section 2, Area C, Region 281*. You will be asked at times to write this information: 2C281.

Other AYSO regions in our Area include Stockton, Bay Point, Concord, Clayton (MDSA), American Canyon (Vallejo), Walnut Creek, and Richmond. The younger divisions play games during the fall season just within our region. Older divisions have fewer teams and will often play games against teams from other regions. The Winter Select season has PHMSA Select teams playing games against teams from all the other regions in Area C and Area D, which extends north to Sacramento.

The Referee Chain of Representation:

The referee hierarchy is just like the AYSO structure. There are similar positions at the National, Section, Area, and Regional levels that are responsible for overseeing the referee volunteers. Although each region has a slightly different referee administrative makeup, PHMSA has a Regional Referee Administrator, an Assistant Referee Administrator, a Director of Instruction, a Director of Assessment, and a Referee Advisory Committee.

The *Referee Administrator* is responsible for representing the referees at all meetings and to oversee the referee schedulers. He/she is also responsible for offering leadership in all aspects of referee development including instruction, assessment, and supplies.

The *Assistant Referee Administrator* assists the RA in accomplishing the said duties and usually is the successor to the RA. The Assistant Referee Administrator oversees the mentoring program.

The *Director of Instruction* is responsible for all courses offered by the region, including the referee update classes and the Regional courses for new referees.

The *Director of Assessment* is responsible for setting up all observations/assessments for badge upgrades and works with the Assistant RA on the mentoring program.

The *Referee Advisory Committee* is made up of the above officers and selected senior referees. The purpose is to offer input regarding all of the referee activities for the region.

Contact with any of the above representatives can be obtained by clicking on the 'board' link from the website at www.phmsa.org.

What kinds of referees are in the community?

There are two major bodies of referees in the community, AYSO and USSF referees. Each organization has specific instructional plans and although there is cross-certification, referees planning on cross-certification must meet certain criteria.

There are a few differences worth noting. First, AYSO requires all of its referees to pass a Safe Haven course as part of their training. USSF has no such requirement. AYSO and USSF referees should not work games in the other venue unless they are cross-certified. In AYSO, once you earn a new badge level

you remain at that badge level. USSF Referees must meet certain requirements each year to maintain an advanced badge level above Grade 8.

The AYSO progression of referee badges include Regional, Intermediate, Advanced, and National. The USSF badges are designated by Grades. Grades 8 and 7 are Referees and Grade 6 and 5 are State Referees. The numbers progress to Grade 1 but it is unlikely that anyone in the area has above a Grade 5. Most USSF Referees are Grade 8.

AYSO upgrades for Advanced and National badges include a physical fitness component. USSF upgrades to Grade 7 and above require a physical fitness component.

The organizations have different philosophies but both are charged with applying the Laws of the Game per FIFA guidelines. Because AYSO is instructional and developmental, the credo the referees must always remember is the game shall be “Fun, Fair, and Safe”. USSF referees do mostly club games and although they apply “fair and safe”, the games are usually a bit faster and more intense. Many AYSO Referees have become very good USSF representatives because they have developed their referee skills while the children were developing their soccer skills.

What games can AYSO Referees do?

Until recently, the AYSO referee could only referee certain age divisions depending on their badge certification. This has changed to allow those referees who have developed their referee skills more quickly a chance to work games that are a bit faster and more challenging. The truth is that every soccer game is a challenge but some referees feel like they enjoy the game more if they are involved in a faster, more skilled game. On the other hand, very experienced referees will sign up for U10 games to ‘clear their head’ and to remind them of why they love refereeing so much. It is all a matter of personal taste.

The PHMSA on-line scheduler uses a trust level system. Each referee is assigned a trust level according to their badge level and then each game has trust levels assigned for Center and for Assistant Referee assignments. New Regional Referees receive a trust level of 1. Returning Regional Referees receive a trust level of 2 and so on. Any referee wanting to move up in divisions may request a higher trust level from the Regional Referee Administrator. New Referees should not feel any pressure to do the older games. Starting as an Assistant Referee for upper division games is a good way to get a feel for the faster game. All new Regional Referees should start at the U8 and U10 levels.

Soccer – the basic game:

The objective of soccer is to score goals. Most Americans are not familiar with soccer strategy. We are accustomed to watching sporting events with high scores. Soccer, in direct comparison, seems boring to these people. Scoring often happens at the least expected times and sometimes so quickly that spectators miss the goal by just turning their heads for a moment.

This unexpected scoring does raise the anticipation of the spectators and the coaches and every missed opportunity is considered, perhaps, the last good chance to score a goal. That is why frustration levels go way up on a clear shot that is shanked to the side or some other way that the scoring opportunity was missed.

Soccer – the game on the field:

After the kickoff, especially for the younger divisions, it seldom looks like there is a pattern or plan for the players. Players run towards the ball, give it their best kick, and then run after the ball again. In the older divisions you can see the offensive and defensive patterns developing. As referees gain more experience, they begin to recognize these patterns, using them to position themselves for better game control.

Although there is extensive strategy in the upper divisions, there are some basics that will help you in the beginning. There are generally four tiers of positioning for a team: (refer to Part III, page 8 for descriptions of player positions)

1. The *goal keeper* – is the last line of defense. She is responsible for directing traffic during set plays (such as corner kicks) and attacks on goal. He is the only player on the field permitted to handle the ball, but only in certain areas of the field. The U10 keeper is new and unsure of herself. By U14, the keeper becomes a fearless ball hawk, often endangering himself to retrieve the ball.
2. The next level of defense includes the *fullback*, *stopper*, and *sweeper* positions. The sweeper roams around their end of the field and goes to the ball and is usually the last line of defense before the goal keeper. The fullbacks defend against the other team's forwards. A good fullback is aggressive.
3. The next tier is the group called *midfielders*. These players play both defense and offense. They are responsible for transitioning the ball from defense to offense and back again. The stopper takes the middle forward on an attack against her goal, sets up the offense around the halfway line, and plays in the middle on corner kicks by her team. These players are good ball handlers and good passers.
4. The last tier is the group called *forwards* or *strikers*. This group is comprised of two or three players who are fast, have good ball skills, and are willing to take shots on goal. The primary scoring threat is called the *striker*.

It is not important for new referees to be able to identify all the players by position, but it is helpful to start learning these positions in the younger divisions.

Part II

A Compendium of Thoughts on Refereeing

This is just a fancy title for a group of statements relating to soccer and refereeing. The following statements are in response to the normal questions that new referees usually have. They are in no order of importance, but make up concepts that the Referee may need to know or may be related to experiences on the pitch (field) during a match.

Knowing the Laws

When new referees first go on the field they are worried about remembering the laws, recognizing the fouls, and what to do after seeing a foul. Some referee candidates are very good at memorizing the Laws of the Game. Others study like mad and barely pass the exam. The learning process is hampered because there is no experience that accompanies the material. This is a normal concern and one which every referee has, no matter how much soccer background they have or how much soccer they have played.

Making Mistakes on the Field

The fear of making a mistake is always a concern of a referee. Every referee makes mistakes. In soccer, the decisions of the referee are final. Referee mistakes are a part of the game. Once the referee restarts the game, he cannot undo a mistake. Unlike baseball, soccer is a fast moving game. There is little time during the game to stop and review your decisions. You should review your games and learn from your mistakes. Ask your assistant referees for their input. We have referee mentors available that can help with any questions that you may have. Mistakes happen – but as long as you keep the game ‘fun, fair, and safe’ you have done your job.

New referees often get confused on throw-in direction. In the younger divisions, the opposing team controls most throw-ins. A throw-in direction, right or wrong, never determines the outcome of a game.

What if none of the referees actually saw which team kicked the ball out of play? The referee, careful not to award advantage to any team, will make the decision that creates no advantage for either team. This will be explained in class.

Being Judged by Your Peers:

PHMSA has quite a few referees who attend their children’s games. It is always a concern about an experienced referee judging a new referee on the field. New referees get nervous when they see someone else in a referee uniform watching the game. If the spectator is a good referee, they will not be judging the new referee but will be remembering how difficult it was for them when they started. After the game a peer may offer suggestions on improving your game. These suggestions should be *Positive, Instructional, and Encouraging*. The PHMSA referee family is very supportive and we are very interested in the success of new referees. Your success as a referee will improve our league.

Harassment by Spectators and/or anyone associated with a team on the field:

Many new referee candidates have observed a situation where the referee of a game is harassed or scrutinized by team officials, parents, or spectators. It is hard to imagine being in the middle of a soccer field and being yelled at by adults. The fact is that this does happen. For the most part it is a rare occasion that spectators get personal. There are ways to handle these types of incidents. PHMSA is committed to acting swiftly and severely with anyone who gets out of hand.

Parents are rooting for their child and the team. They get wrapped up in the moment and sometimes act out of character. If they think play was not fair or safe they may lash out at the most obvious person on the field, the referee. They want their children to have the best possible experience and to be safe. If a child goes down in proximity to an opponent, someone will cry 'foul'. The impulse to listen to this chatter can take the referee away from the game. Experience will teach you which of these comments you need to pay attention to and which you can ignore. PHMSA has no secret video to teach this. Experienced referees keep in mind that comments start out as thoughts with good intentions. Sometimes as these thoughts work their way to the lips, the tone has changed.

The Kid Zone program, the careful watch of referee mentors, and the cooperation of the Coach Administrator and other board members will ensure that the new referee receives every chance to have a successful experience on the field. If you do not have a successful experience, call the Referee Administrator (contact information on the website at www.phmsa.org). He will contact you immediately.

Conflict Resolution:

The PHMSA referee program includes a unit on *conflict resolution*. It is important that all referees know that the PHMSA board and the referee administrator will back them. Techniques learned in class will help new referees keep control of the game under extreme circumstances. The referee does have the ability and the right to stop the game for any external interference. This is an awesome power: use it as a last resort. The point is that the referee has the power, the right, and the ability to defuse a volatile situation.

Final thoughts:

There is a normal progression that occurs with most referees. First they have anxieties about their first experiences on the field. After several games the referee begins to feel better about the job they are doing. The more games they do – the better they get. The confident level soars – which often turns into arrogance. They can do no wrong and they are always right. They often lecture the spectators with a stern, authoritative tone of voice and almost dare coaches to challenge their authority. Then they take upgrade courses, learn more about the game of soccer and then they realize that there is so much more to learn about the art of refereeing. In other words – the referee comes full circle so new referees are on the same thought level as the very experienced referees – just with less experience.

PHMSA is very proud of its referee family and is always excited to bring new people on board. We believe we have an outstanding training program. We look forward to introducing you to the world of soccer refereeing. You might be one of those referees who will enjoy it so much that a weekend without soccer is a weekend without sunshine. Good luck in your class.

Part III

Glossary of Terms for the New Referee

This is a glossary of terms commonly used in the game of Soccer. It is not a definition of the Laws of the Game. It is only meant to acquaint the new referee with terms they may be unfamiliar with while learning how to referee. Please SEE the Laws of the Game for the complete and definitive wording. Field measurements listed are for regular sized fields, younger age groups play on smaller fields with smaller goals.

Common Acronyms

Acronym	Description (for a formal description, or more precise wording, see the AYSO manuals and the Laws of the Game)
AYSO Philosophy	Balanced Teams Everyone Plays Good Sportsmanship Open Registration Positive Coaching
AYSO	American Youth Soccer Organization
FIFA	Federation Internationale De Football Association. The world wide governing body of Soccer and the laws of the game.
PIE	Positive, Instructive and Encouraging
SFF	Safe, Fair and Fun
USSF	United States Soccer Federation. Under FIFA, the governing body of soccer in the United States. AYSO is recognized as an organization under USSF.

Common Terms for Players

Terms	Description
Striker	A player(s), usually a forward that the team tries to get the ball to. The main scoring threat.
Forward	The attackers, or the players on the offense
Mid-fielder	The players that run the most, plays defense and offense, take the ball from the defense and play it to the Forwards.
Fullback	The players that are all the way back, defenders, nearest their own keeper.
Sweeper / Stopper	A single fullback responsible for the last line of defense before the keeper
Keeper	Goalkeeper

Commonly Used Terms for the Field

Terms	Law	Description (for a formal description, or more precise wording, see the AYSO manuals and the Laws of the Game)
Center Mark	1	A small, filled in, approximately 9 inch diameter circle centered on the Half Line at the midpoint of the field.
Center Circle	1	A circle with a 10-yard radius centered on the Center Mark.
Corner Flag	1	A flag placed where the outermost parts of the touch line and goal line meet. (Cannot be less than 5 feet high)
Corner Arc	1	A quarter circle with a 1-yard radius on the field side of where the goal line and touch line meet.
Field, or Pitch	1	Rectangular area the game is played on.
Goal Line	1	The line on the short side of the field, where the goal is.
Goal	1	The goal is centered on the goal line, and is 8 yards wide and 8 feet high. (Regulation size field)
Goal Area	1	The smaller rectangular area on the field side of the goal, directly in front of the goal. It is 6 yards from the inside of each goal post and 6 yards into the field. (Regulation size field)
Halfway Line	1	A line dividing the field into two equal halves.
Penalty Area	1	The larger rectangular area on the field side of the goal line, encompassing the Goal Area. It is 18 yards from the inside of each goal post and 18 yards into the field. (Regulation size field)
Penalty Arc	1	The arc is a half circle with a 10-yard radius that is centered on the penalty mark that extends outside the penalty area.
Penalty Mark	1	A small, filled in, approximately 9-inch diameter circle inside the Penalty Area, 12 yards from the goal and centered with the center of the goal. (Regulation size field)
Technical Area	N/A	An area that coaches are allowed to instruct from, typically it extends 10 yards from the halfway line on either half of the field, 1 yard from the touch line. (Regulation size field)
Touch Line / In Touch	1	The line on the long side of the field. If the ball goes over the touch line, it is said to be “in touch” so that players may touch the ball with their hands.

Commonly Used Terms for the Game

Terms	Law	Description (for a formal description, or more precise wording, see the AYSO manuals and the Laws of the Game)
Assistant Referee	6	The two referees that assist the Referee and officiate from the touchline.
Ball	2	Size 3, 4 or 5 depending on the age group and should be round and safe.
Coach	N/A	The person who instructs the players.
Coin Toss	8	A coin is tossed before the game begins to decide which goal (direction) the winner of the toss will attack. The other team kicks off.
Foul	12	An offense for which a player can be penalized. Please SEE Law 12 in the Laws of the Game (LOTG)
Goal Scored	10	A goal is scored when the whole of the ball passes over the goal line, between the goalposts and under the crossbar.
Goalkeeper	4	The player that is recognized by the referee as the goalkeeper by wearing a different colored shirt than the other players and referees.
Golden Goal	N/A	A procedure to determine the winner of a game in a tournament. Please SEE the Procedures to Determine the Winner of a Match in the Laws of the Game.
Half-Time interval	7	Each match is divided into two halves of equal time.
Laws of the Game	All	The FIFA/AYSO manual that describes the laws of the game of soccer.
Misconduct	12	A sanction against a player or substitute for being reckless or excessive. Please SEE Law 12 in LOTG.
Non-Penal Fouls	12	Fouls that result in an Indirect Free Kick (IFK)
Offside	11	A non-penal foul. Please SEE Law 11 in LOTG.
Out of Play	9	If the ball has gone wholly over the touchline or the goal line and also when the referee has stopped the match.
Penal Fouls	12	Fouls that result in a Direct Free Kick (DFK)
Players Equipment	4	An AYSO jersey, shorts, socks, shoes and shin guards.
Players	3	The team members on the field during play.
Referee	5	AYSO certified person has the full authority to enforce the spirit and laws of the game to control the game in a safe, fair and fun manner.
Substitutes	3	The team members not on the field during play but on the game card.
The Match	7	A game of soccer for a specified period of time.

Commonly Used Terms for Kicks and Throw Ins (Starts and Restarts)

Terms	Law	Description (for a formal description, or more precise wording, see the AYSO manuals and the Laws of the Game)
Corner Kick (CK)	17	A kick taken to restart a match when the ball has crossed over the goal line last touched by a defending player. Please SEE Law 17.
Direct Free Kick (DFK)	13	A kick taken to restart a match resulting from penal foul; a goal can be scored directly from the first kick.
Free Kicks	13	A kick taken to restart a match after a foul or misconduct. A free kick can be either an indirect or direct free kick.
Goal Kick (GK)	16	A kick taken to restart a match when the ball has crossed over the goal line last touched by an attacking player. Please SEE Law 16.
Indirect Free Kick (IFK)	13	A kick taken to restart a match resulting from a non-penal foul; a goal cannot be scored directly from the first kick.
Kick off (KO)	8	A kick taken at the Center Mark to start the game at the beginning, at the start of the second half, or after a goal is scored. The ball must move forward to be considered in play.
Kicks from the Penalty Mark	N/A	A procedure to determine the winner of a game in a tournament. Please SEE the Procedures to Determine the Winner of a Match in the Laws of the Game.
Penalty Kick (PK)	14	A penalty kick is a direct free kick taken from the penalty mark. The ball must move forward. Please SEE Law 12 and Law 14.
Throw-In	15	A restart when the ball has gone out of play over the touch line, the ball is put back into play by a player using their hands in a proper manner.

Commonly Misused Terms

Terms	Description
“Quarter Break”	There is no official “quarter break” in soccer. In younger age groups in AYSO a substitution break is given mid way between EACH OF the two halves.
Goal Box	There are no “boxes” in soccer, they are called “areas”
Penalty Box	Ditto
Goalie	Goalies are players in Hockey, Soccer has Goalkeepers
Offsides	Offsides (with an “s”) occurs in American Football, Soccer has Offside (no “s”)
Hand Ball	Another game. Soccer has “Deliberately Handling the Ball”