

U.S. SOCCER REFEREE PROGRAM - REFEREE MENTOR COURSE GUIDE

OUTLINE

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PREFACE

This booklet focuses on and provides information on the Referee Mentor Course. The curriculum is geared to meet the demands and standards of coaching Grassroots match officials in the youth and adult environments.

The course is designed to develop and apply the basic core concepts of mentoring match officials in the Referee Pathway for Grassroots performing environments with youth and adult players and coaches.

The goal of the course is to introduce candidates to U.S. Soccer’s Sports Development Education Philosophy and educate candidates to increase *competency* and success in performing the *tasks* (key qualities) of a Referee Mentor:

- Leading field sessions
- Leading video analysis sessions
- Observing performance of match officials

The course is designed to offer training for new and experienced candidates to work in the Grassroots performance environment. The course content focuses on the qualities and learning needs of individual candidates. The Profile of the Referee Mentor guides and connects the course content and assignments of the candidate. The profile also safeguards the quality and standards of the Referee Mentor License.

U.S. Soccer thanks you, the candidate, for your commitment to soccer in our country. Soccer is a remarkable sport that impacts the lives of many people, and it will undoubtedly continue to flourish into the preeminent sport in the nation with the support of individuals such as yourself.

Thank you for your continued support!

CONTENT

Course Guide Description

The course guide serves to provide information and guidance during the course, and it is divided into the following sections:

1. General information
2. The Profile of the Referee Mentor (separate PDF)
3. Candidate assignments

The General Information (Section 1) defines the course objectives, admission criteria, attendance requirements, fraud and plagiarism, due dates, and summarizes the course content.

The Profile of the Referee Mentor, Section 2, details the *tasks* of the referee mentor that works primarily with Grassroots Referees in youth and adult performing environments. The profile serves as a frame of reference for the Referee Mentor License. The profile consists of two main components: the *tasks* and underlying processes of the referee mentor within the performing environment, and the related *competencies*. The *competencies* are subdivided into ‘actions’ of the referee mentor and the desired ‘outcomes.’ The profile will also be used as a reference in the evaluation of the referee mentor’s *competencies*.

The importance of the candidate’s assignments is described in Section 3. Completing each assignment is key to the learning approach for this course. The assignments are designed for the candidate to carry them out immediately. Online assignments aid candidates to self-evaluate, demonstrate their experience, and practice based on the *competencies* of a referee mentor. Taking time to think about one’s practice and experience (self-reflection) and recognizing how this links to theory defines the basis of the learning process. The assignments ensure that the course will be meaningful and practically geared to the *competencies* of the referee mentor in the performing environment of match officials in the referee pathway at the grassroots level. Throughout the course (Online and In-Person Meeting) all assignments must be completed and approved.

Planning will be key for the successful completion of the course. The timeline table in Section 3 offers the candidate an overview of the due dates for each assignment.

SECTION 1 - GENERAL INFORMATION

1.1 Course Objectives

The overall goal of the Referee Mentor Course is to train and develop the candidates' basic core competencies (knowledge, skills, attitude, and personal traits) needed to work as a referee mentor for development of match officials working in the performing environment of the Grassroots Referee seeking an opportunity to develop and improve their experience in officiating games.

The main objectives of the Referee Mentor License are:

- developing and implementing leadership and teaching skills to train and develop match officials in the Preparation Phase of the Officiating Cycle (**Prepare**, Perform, and Reflect)
 - Leading field sessions (*task of a referee mentor*)
 - Leading video analysis sessions (*task of a referee mentor*)
- developing and implementing leadership and teaching skills to train and develop match officials in the Performance Phase of the Officiating Cycle (Prepare, **Perform**, and Reflect)
 - Observing performance of match officials (*task of a referee mentor*)
- developing and implementing leadership and teaching skills to train and develop match officials in the Reflection Phase of the Officiating Cycle (Prepare, Perform, and **Reflect**)
 - Self- and peer-reflecting

1.2 Admission Criteria

The minimum age to apply for the course is 18 years and must have officiated for 2 years as a U.S. Soccer Grassroots Referee. Having experience as a player or team coach, and/or experience as a teacher will benefit the candidate and will contribute to the successful completion of the course.

1.3 Attendance

Candidates are required to attend the In-Person Meeting of the course in addition to successfully completing the online component. Assignments and

performance will be used to determine, for each candidate, the level of competency under the *tasks* of a referee mentor, and the path for development their skills.

1.4 Fraud and Plagiarism

In the event of fraud or plagiarism, the candidate's enrollment will be terminated immediately. Fraud and plagiarism are understood as any illegitimate actions by a candidate that make it impossible to form a correct opinion of their *competencies*. Examples classified as fraud or plagiarism include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Copying another candidate's assignment
- Providing false information
- Handing in non-authentic work

1.5 Assignment Due Dates

The candidate must submit the assignments by the due date. The Member State Referee Committee will determine the due date to complete & submit the online component typically 7 or more days prior to the In-Person Meeting.

1.6 Course Content Summary

The course includes a theoretical (online) and a practical (classroom and/or on-field) component.

The theoretical component focuses on experiences of the candidates related to the objectives of the course (emphasizing the *tasks* of the referee mentor) and knowledge applicable to course assignments. The education approach will require candidate to exchange experiences on the topics, increase their theoretical knowledge, and apply the theory in games and/or reality-based situations.

During the two (2)-part course, the candidates have an opportunity to increase knowledge at their own pace via the online assignments, demonstrate their ability to refine and practice their skills via class and/or on-field assignments (during the 1 day Meeting), and engage in self- and team reflection with peers and course instructors/facilitators in the In-Person Meeting.

SECTION 2 – The Profile of the Referee Mentor is found in a separate PDF file.

SECTION 3 - ASSIGNMENTS

The candidate works on the development of *competencies* by carrying out assignments to practice and apply their skills and knowledge and to reflect on the performance of those assignments. The assignments are designed to provide a clear snapshot of the candidate's development and *competencies* to perform the *tasks* of the Referee Mentor.

Each assignment contains a self-reflection by the candidate. The following support the process of self-reflection:

- Use tips and resources to improve your approach while working in the assignment
- Answer the three self-reflection key questions:
 - Explain '**what went well**' and '**what did not**' in terms of achieving the goal(s)/objective(s)
 - Identify specific examples of '**why**' something went well and did not
 - Describe '**what you want to improve**' the next time and '**how**' you will do so

The candidate completes and submits the required assignments for evaluation by the course instructor(s). Note that an assignment is considered incomplete without the reflection component, and some assignments require a team reflection with an instructor(s) in addition to a self-reflection by the candidate.

Book of Experience (Reflection Journal)

An experience is an important step in the learning process. The development of *competencies* by a referee mentor takes shape, meaning, and authenticity from one experience to the next. Learning by reflection based on one's own actions (during the experience) is key.

A Book of Experience is an important resource to complete assignments. Collecting relevant experiences provides the foundation and detail needed to complete

the assigned task. Reflecting on these experiences can be seen as an interpretation of one's own experiences as they relate to their own learning process (identifying the needs and goals for further development).

How to use the Book of Experience

- Write down experience(s) of significance (related to assignments and personal development goals)
- Reflect on the experience(s) soon after (give meaning to the experience related to learning process)
- Connect the outcome of the reflection with the assignment and/or related *task*
- Attempt to identify a pattern or trend in the experience(s)
- Relate the identified pattern or trend to the personal development plan

Notes:

Read the assignments carefully before you begin. Don't hesitate to contact the instructor(s) if you have any questions and/or need clarification on the assignments.

ASSIGNMENTS – IN-PERSON MEETING – BRIEF DESCRIPTION

Assignment and Timeline

I. Online Component

Overview, basic knowledge, exercises, trivia, and quiz related to the *tasks* (key qualities) of the Referee Mentor

- Leading field session practical exercises
- Leading video analysis sessions
- Observing the performance of match officials

Notes:

- Done at learner's pace via the Learning Center and due prior to the In-person Meeting
- Due date is determined by the member State Referee Committee

II. In-Person Meeting Component

Tasks of the Referee Mentor:

Leading field sessions

1.1 Facilitate a practical exercise in a field session

Topics: challenge, penalty area decision, tactical fouls, handling, offside, and/or positioning & reading play

Leading video analysis sessions

1.2 Video analysis presentation

Topics: as above in 1.1

Observing performance of match officials

1.3 Review & analyze game clip of match officials' performance

Topics: as above in 1.2

1.3.1 Facilitate post-game reflection with the referee team

Notes:

- Done over 1-day period
- Video analysis in a classroom setting
- Field session on the field
- Game observation in the classroom or on the field

ASSIGNMENTS – IN-PERSON – DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Leading a field session’s practical field-exercise

1.1 Lead a field session in collaboration with other candidates, players, team coaches, and match officials.

Objectives

- Communicating clearly the goal(s)/objective(s) of the exercise and instructions for each of the participants
- Applying the P.E.A.C.E. model to engage participants in a practical exercise
- Offering constructive, instant feedback to match officials in collaboration with other Referee Mentors/Coaches based on exercise and practical guidelines consistent with IFAB’s Laws of the Game
- Adjusting practical exercise as needed on the field to accommodate the audience and environment
- Teaching the decision-making process that match officials apply in situation(s) during the game
- Self-reflecting on your performance of this *task*

Where can you carry out the assignment?

On the field, in a team of three or more candidates, as assigned by instructor(s) during the In-Person Meeting

How can you carry out the assignment?

1. Collaborate as a team (3 or more candidates as assigned by instructor)
2. Set up equipment (cones, etc.) for the practical exercise on the field
3. Instruct participants (players, team coaches, and match officials) on their task for the exercise
4. Monitor exercise to ensure each participant performs their assigned task
5. Offer instant feedback to match officials based on their actions (‘**positive points**’ and ‘**area for improvement**’)
6. Pause the exercise as needed to make adjustment, clarify tasks, or add a variation
7. Stop and wrap-up with summary of goal(s) and objective(s)
8. Document a self-reflection on the performance of this *task*

What should be the result of the assignment?

Meaningful, engaging, reality-based, holistic experience for match officials in which they can practice preparing, increase understanding of the game, the decision-making process, and/or display of clear and confident communication of decisions prior to their next game, and based on IFAB’s Laws of the Game

Support

- The instructor(s)
- Peer candidates
- Players and team coaches
- Team of participants (as assigned by educators)

Supporting tools/documents

- Course Guide and Profile of the Referee Mentor
- Key qualities (*tasks & processes*) of the Referee Mentor
- IFAB’s 2020-21 Laws of the Game (click [HERE](#))
- FIFA’s Teaching Material (click [HERE](#))
- Book of Experience

Completion

- Turn-in self-reflection page to Referee Mentor In-Person Meeting instructor/facilitator
- Feedback from the instructor(s)

ASSIGNMENTS – IN-PERSON – DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Video analysis presentation

1.2 Lead a video analysis presentation, with peer candidates and instructor(s) as the audience, following the FIFA Presentation Sequence for Video Analysis

Objectives

- Communicating clearly the goal(s)/objective(s) of the exercise and instructions for each of the participants
- Applying the P.E.A.C.E. model to prepare for and engage the audience
- Understanding and teaching decision-making process, IFAB’s Laws of the Game, FIFA Considerations for interpretation
- Checking for understanding by the audience
- Self-reflecting on your performance of this *task*

Where can you carry out the assignment?

In the classroom during the In-Person Meeting

How can you carry out the assignment?

1. Prepare by reviewing the FIFA Presentation Sequence for Video Analysis
2. Lead the video analysis within designated timeframe
3. Accept feedback from the audience (peers and instructors) – Post-Presentation Team Reflection
4. Document a self-reflection on the performance of this *task*

What should be the result of the assignment?

Meaningful, engaging discussion that describes the learning points of the video and that helps to increase understanding of the Laws of the Game and ‘**considerations**’ applicable to the incident

Support

- The instructor(s)
- Peer candidates

Supporting tools/documents

- Course Guide and Profile of the Referee Mentor
- Key qualities (*tasks & processes*) of the Referee Mentor
- USSF’s Resource Center – Instruction Resources for instructors/assessors (click [HERE](#))
- IFAB’s 2020-21 Laws of the Game (click [HERE](#))
- FIFA’s Teaching Material (click [HERE](#))
- Book of Experience

Completion

- Turn-in self-reflection page to Referee Mentor In-Person Meeting instructor/facilitator
- Feedback from the instructor(s)

ASSIGNMENTS – IN-PERSON – DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Observe the performance of match officials

1.3 Observe the performance of the referee team in video format or in a ‘live game’

Objectives

- Understanding the game and performance environment
- Taking notes of the challenges that the game offers to the referee team
- Identifying key match incidents, positive points, and area(s) for improvement
- Connecting and communicating clearly with the referee team prior to the game
- Coaching the referee team on decision-making process to increase accuracy in on-field decisions and competency in their *task* of the referee:
Officiating the Game
- Self-reflecting on your performance of this *task*

Where can you carry out the assignment?

On the field or in the classroom during the In-Person Meeting

How can you carry out the assignment?

1. Prepare by reviewing the Profile of the Grassroots Referee, specifically the *task of Officiating the game*
2. Take notes of behavior and decisions by the referee team during the game
3. Highlight, prioritize, and organize key match incidents, positive points, and area(s) for improvement to discuss in the post-game reflection
4. Document a self-reflection on the performance of this *task*

What should be the result of the assignment?

Notes that highlight key match incidents, positive points, and area(s) for improvement for each match official in the referee team

Support

- The instructor(s)

Supporting tools/documents

- Course Guide and Profile of the Referee Mentor
- Key qualities (*tasks & processes*) of the Referee Mentor
- USSF’s Resource Center – Instruction Resources for instructors/assessors (click [HERE](#))
- IFAB’s 2020-21 Laws of the Game (click [HERE](#))
- FIFA’s Teaching Material (click [HERE](#))
- Book of Experience

Completion

- Turn-in self-reflection page to Referee Mentor In-Person Meeting instructor/facilitator
- Feedback from the instructor(s)

ASSIGNMENTS – IN-PERSON – DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Facilitate post-game team reflection

1.3.1 Facilitate the post-game team reflection with match officials

Objectives

- Communicating clearly the goal(s)/objective(s) of the exercise and instructions for each of the participants
- Applying the P.E.A.C.E. model to engage match officials in the post-game team reflection
- Facilitating an optimal environment for team reflection and learning
- Guiding the discussion about ‘**positive points**’ and ‘**area(s) for improvement**’ based on performance
- Reinforcing the decision-making process that results in correct on-field decisions
- Delivering appropriate options/solutions that address area(s) from improvement consistent with current practical guidelines described in IFAB’s Laws of the Game & FIFA Considerations
- Self-reflecting on your performance of this *task*

Where can you carry out the assignment?

On the field or in the classroom during the In-Person Meeting

How can you carry out the assignment?

1. Connect with the referee team prior to the game to facilitate a trusting & learning environment
2. Find a place that can best serve for the post-game team reflection to occur
3. Guide the discussion by engaging the referee team in positive points and areas for improvement as individuals and as a team based on game situations
4. Identify and deliver appropriate mentoring options/solutions to reinforce positive behavior and to address areas for improvement
5. Document a self-reflection on the performance of this *task*

What should be the result of the assignment?

Meaningful, respectful discussion that facilitates learning to maintain positive points/habits and to adjust prior to next game for improving on the following performance

Support

- The instructor(s)
- Match officials

Supporting tools/documents

- Course Guide and Profile of the Referee Coach
- Key qualities (*tasks & processes*) of the Referee Mentor
- USSF’s Resource Center – Instruction Resources for instructors/assessors (click [HERE](#))
- IFAB’s 2020-21 Laws of the Game (click [HERE](#))
- FIFA’s Teaching Material (click [HERE](#))
- Book of Experience

Completion

- Turn-in self-reflection page to Referee Mentor In-Person Meeting instructor/facilitator
- Feedback from the instructor(s)