

Referee Guidance for League Playoffs 2025

Thank you for stepping up to referee what should be challenging, competitive matches. Please adhere to the following guidelines which take priority over any policies or practice unique to your region.

Dates: Saturday, 12/13, and Sunday, 12/14

Bracelets required – no exceptions: Players will wear wristbands from check-in through conclusion, tournament style. No wristband, no play. If they lose it, they will need to get a new one from the field monitor.

3-quarter rule in effect for all players: No one sits twice until everyone sits once. No goalkeeper maximum in any division.

Player development initiatives are in effect (buildout line and no punt or drop kick by goalkeeper, 10U; no deliberate heading, 12U).

Teams need the minimum number of players (divide the division age by one half) within 10 minutes of match time, or the match is abandoned, in which case the field monitors will enter it as a forfeit.

Producing a winner: THIS IS A CHANGE FROM PRIOR YEARS, SO BE SURE TO READ.

FOR ALL MATCHES ON SATURDAY, 12/13:

Games are full length. If tied at the end of regulation, then you proceed DIRECTLY TO A PENALTY SHOOTOUT (see below for details on conducting the shootout). You follow the same process as matches with overtime periods, however, the players taking the kicks are not limited to those on the field and may be chosen from players who were substitutes during the last “quarter.” Prior to the toss for the shootout, the coach will identify the 7, 9 or 11 players (10U, 12U, or 14U respectively) who will be taking the kicks. If the team is playing short because of sendoffs, it will continue to play short during the shootout, with the the opposing team’s being required to reduce to equate (details below).

FOR ALL MATCHES ON SUNDAY, 12/14 (SEMI-FINAL, THIRD PLACE AND CHAMPIONSHIP MATCHES):

If tied at the end of regulation, there will be two 5-minute overtime periods (no golden goal or sudden victory), and, if still no winner, a penalty shootout.

Lineup card submission: Please complete both sides of the lineup cards, including the final score and any misconduct, injuries and coach/spectator issues. The referee shall email photos of the cards (best done by taking a picture of the front of one card next to the back of the other and then flipping the cards over and taking another picture) to league@ayso1c.org. In the subject line, please provide the date, time, field and division (ex. 12/14/24, 8:30am, Arcadia High School, B14U). Please then turn the cards into the field monitor at that location. If none is present, please retain the cards.

Proper attire: Referees shall wear official, approved uniforms (shirts, shorts and socks) for all matches. Let's look professional out there, please.

If any issues comes up which cannot be addressed by the field monitors, you may contact Gary Barseghian, League Playoffs Program Coordinator, at 818-331-3344 or Larry Abelson, Area Referee Administrator, at 310-920-4765.

Procedure for penalty shootouts (aka, penalty kicks or kicks from the penalty mark):

In the event that the score is still tied at the conclusion of the overtime periods, the winner shall be determined by a penalty shoot-out consistent with IFAB Law 10.3 and the following procedure:

The referee chooses the goal at which the kicks will be taken, giving first consideration to the goalkeepers (i.e., position of the sun and/or condition of the goal area). If no other consideration exists, the referee tosses a coin to determine the goal to be used.

For matches with overtime period, only players who are on the field of play or temporarily off the field of play (injury, adjusting equipment, etc.) at the end of the second overtime period are eligible to take kicks.

If, before or during the taking of the kicks, one team has a greater number of players than its opponents, it must reduce its numbers to equate with that of its opponents and inform the referee of the name and number of each player excluded. The team captain has this responsibility in consultation with the team coach. Also, note that cautions issued to players and team officials during the match are not carried forward into the shootout.

The referee tosses a coin, and the team whose captain wins the toss decides whether to take the first or the second kick. Subject to the conditions explained below, both teams alternate in taking five kicks each. (The referee need not be told in advance the order in which the players will take the kicks.)

If, before both teams have taken five kicks, one has scored more goals than the other could score, even if it were to complete its five kicks, no more kicks are taken. If, after both teams have taken five kicks, both have scored the same number of goals, or have not scored any goals, kicks continue to be taken in the same alternating order until one team has scored a goal more than the other team from the same number of kicks.

Each kick is taken by a different player, and all eligible players must take a kick before any player can take a second kick. It is not necessary for either team to maintain the same kicking sequence order during a second round of kicks or during any subsequent rounds.

An eligible player may change places with the goalkeeper at any time. A goalkeeper who is injured and is unable to continue as goalkeeper may be replaced by any player on that team (including a substitute or player who had been excluded to equalize) who will take the goalkeeper's place in the team kicking rotation. The original goalkeeper may not return once they are replaced.

Under the laws, only the referee team, eligible players and one coach are permitted to remain on the field. Players not participating in the taking of kicks, other coaches and spectators should remain on their respective touchline on the halfway line side of the penalty area. If your crew is comfortable allowing the entire roster and assistant coach to be on the field, you're welcome to do so.

All players, except the player taking the kick and the two goalkeepers, should remain within the center circle. You may allow them to spread out along the halfway line as they watch the shootout unfold.

The goalkeeper who is the teammate of the kicker must remain on the field of play, outside the penalty area in which the kicks are being taken, on the goal line where it meets the penalty area boundary line.

If the referee determines the kicks cannot be completed due to safety factors (darkness, weather, etc.), they will utilize a coin toss to determine the winner of the game.