

Match Tips for New Referees (U10)

This document covers very little of the Laws of the Game so please refer to other resources.

1. This builds upon the [Match Walkthrough for New Referees \(U8\)](#) and does not repeat information from it, so know that information first.
2. Remember per AYSO, “the referee is expected to interfere with the game as little as possible, avoiding making calls for doubtful and trifling [insignificant] offenses.” Also remember that yellow and red cards should not be used at the U10 level and rarely at U12.
3. Unlike in U8 games, you now have the full set of laws to enforce. The [Laws of the Game Summary Sheet](#) is a very useful reference to have printed and in your bag. If you are unsure about the various DFK and IFK offenses (including those done by the goalkeeper), refer to the [Direct and Indirect Free Kick Cheat Sheet](#) on the mentoring website.
4. Have a pregame chat with the ARs. Discuss backup timekeeping, making eye contact on dead balls and coordinating signals (who waits for who and when), throw-in responsibilities, PK mechanics, how to get your attention, unofficial hand signals, and answer any other questions. For a longer list of pregame topics you can print the [Ref Wallet Cheat Sheets for Pre-Game Chat & Penalty Kicks](#).
5. Consider writing down the team and direction of the initial kickoff in your referee wallet to help you remember for the second half. See [Referee Wallet Match Report Card Instructions](#).
6. Be familiar with [Player Development Initiatives \(PDI\) in AYSO](#) and remind attackers to retreat behind the build-out line when needed.
7. Remember that offside is not entirely the responsibility of the AR and you should wave down the AR’s incorrect flag if necessary. For all the criteria for an offside offense, refer to the [Offside Cheat Sheet](#).
8. Review teamwork and referee positioning guidelines for every scenario in [IFAB Practical Guidelines for Match Officials](#).
9. Get in the habit of using a stopwatch counting up rather than a timer counting down with an alarm. You do not want players hearing your watch beep just before a shot on goal and then arguing the validity.
10. Do not ignore your ARs. By running a proper “diagonal”, you can keep active play between you and your nearest AR. When play is towards the goal line, try to keep your shoulders square toward the goal which can help keep your AR within your peripheral vision.

11. Each referee needs a technique for keeping track of team direction (particularly near midfield) so you can properly signal the direction of throw-ins or fouls. One option is to periodically say to yourself “Blue attacking” if play is in Red’s half.
12. Look at AR for throw-in calls, even if you are closer to where the ball went out. They will appreciate you looking and it is a good habit to also look during every dead ball. Hold your signal until after you look and try to signal together. Give ARs thumbs up signal occasionally.
13. Whenever there is a pass up to a player that could possibly be offside, quickly look at your AR to see if they will be raising their flag.
14. When watching for fouls, remind yourself to lift the focus of your vision from the ball and legs of the players so you learn to take in the whole area of active play and see upper-body fouls just as readily.
15. Be decisive in your calls; players/coaches may try to take advantage of the situation if you seem unsure. A firm whistle will eliminate 50% of arguments. Vary the strength of your whistle depending on the infraction – for a serious foul, blow the whistle very loudly.
16. Your first experiences with fouls in the penalty area may be nerve-racking. It’s OK to have a slightly higher tolerance for fouls in the penalty area, but fouls that impact the attacking team’s scoring opportunity warrant a PK. Try not to award a PK for a handball that is simply because a player is protecting themselves unless they have made themselves unnaturally bigger. Be familiar with the procedure, where to spot the ball, and what to look for at the time of the kick.
17. At half time, ask the players for the game ball then motion for the ARs to join you at the center circle. Agree on the halftime score, write names on the back of the game cards, and politely give any feedback or suggestions to your ARs.
18. After the match, avoid doing paperwork while the teams are giving “high-fives”. Instruct the ARs to stand on the opposite side of the halfway line as you and to spread out following each line of players looking for misconduct while you stay still in the center.
19. If the last match of the day, instruct coaches to have parents put away goals/flags in accordance with the Fields page on [ayso114.org](#)