



Sponsored by AYSO Region 37 Corona/Norco, California

2026 AYSO Pony Express Tournament

Referee Plan

The following are guidelines that the AYSO Pony Express Tournament will apply for referees in our 2026 tournament:

Commitment Requirements

Each team participating in the 2026 Pony Express Tournament must provide at least 1 crew consisting of 3 qualified referees.

The Pony Express Referee Information Form must be completed, approved by the Region Referee Administrator, and returned with the Team Application.

Each referee team will be asked to officiate a minimum of 3 matches during the tournament. These may be game assignments or standby assignments, which will be considered equal in terms of earning the referee deposit refund.

If all assignments are completed, the entire referee deposit of \$300/350 will be refunded within 14 days of the completion of the tournament. If only partial assignments are completed, then a partial refund will be provided equal to the proportion of assignments completed.

The deposit refund check will be returned to the address shown on the Team Application form.

Remember: the quality of officiating is largely dependent upon the experience and abilities of the referees you provide.

Qualification Requirements

Each AYSO referee must have a current season volunteer form in file with NSTC, provide their AYSO Identification Number, and be Safe-Haven, Sudden Cardiac Arrest, SafeSport, and CDC Concussion Certified. USSF referees with AYSO cross certification is acceptable.

Each referee must be versed in the Laws of the Game, including current law changes and capable of applying the laws according to the spirit of the game.

Each referee may only represent one team in the tournament.

Players in the tournament will not be allowed to officiate.

Coaches in this tournament are strongly discouraged from officiating so that scheduling of referees with the best experience and without conflicts can be accomplished. If an exception is warranted due to lack of other referee volunteers, this must be approved in advance by the Pony Express Tournament Referee Administrator.

Youth referees (center referees) must be at least 2 years older than the age group they are refereeing. (10U-14U tournament only)

Youth referees will not be utilized at this tournament due to the age of the teams at this tournament. (16U-19U tournament only)

Uniform Requirement

All referees must be in full Uniform as defined by AYSO and USSF, including the AYSO Badge.

The Gold uniform will be considered the primary color of referee uniform for this tournament. The referee crew will be expected to change to an alternate color in case of conflict with either of the teams' uniforms.

Referees not in uniform will not be permitted to referee games, and their team's referee deposit may be subject to forfeiture.

Competency Requirements

Referees should be assigned to games as follows:

Referees for 17U/18U/19U games should be Advanced level or equivalent USSF level or above.
Referees for 15U/16U games should be Advanced level or equivalent USSF level or above.
Referees for 13U/14U games should be Advanced level or equivalent USSF level or above.
Referees for 11U/12U games should be Intermediate level or equivalent USSF level or above.
Referees for 9U/10U games must be Regional or equivalent USSF level or above

Any exceptions must have the prior written approval of the Pony Express Referee Administrator.
Every effort will be made to assign referees to neutral games at their level of competency or below.
In rare cases, referee crews may be asked to split up in order to meet these goals.

Tournament Rules

Referees will be expected to familiarize themselves with and uphold the tournament rules, AYSO guidelines and FIFA laws. Any failure of the referee to uphold these rules may be cause for dismissal from the tournament, and will place a team's referee deposit refund in jeopardy.

Only the diagonal system of control will be used.

Referees will be expected to fill out the game cards and to keep track of substitutions.

Referees will be expected to note on the back of the game cards and to fill out misconduct reports immediately after the game in which a misconduct (caution and/or send-off) was issued to a player or coach, or if there were spectator interference problems, or any other action that merits a report.

Referees will be expected to turn in all completed game cards and misconduct reports to the Referee Station immediately after each game.

Referee Schedules

Referee schedules will be emailed out to each team and also made available on the tournament website within 1 week of the tournament. Each team will be expected to ensure that the referee schedule and check-in instructions have been provided to their referee crew.

Use of Local Referees

Additional referees will be provided by the host region, including from the surrounding regions and Areas to ensure all games are covered by qualified referees. These referees will be provided assignments on a stand-by or fill-in basis. Priority will be given to referee crews to ensure an opportunity to earn their deposit refund.

Referee Check-In

All referees will be expected to check in at the Referee Station upon their arrival at the tournament, to register and to collect their Referee Voucher.

At check-in, each referee team will be provided with a summarized set of tournament rules that they will be expected to administer.

Referees are expected to check in at the Referee Station at least 30 minutes prior to their assigned game. Failure to appear on time may result in a replacement referee crew being assigned to the field. Once a replacement crew has been assigned, they will have priority and the original crew must report to the Referee station for alternative assignment.

Upon completing each game assignment (or standby assignment), each referee will have their Voucher Stamped/punched by the Referee Station. When all their game assignments have been completed, the referee crew must turn in their completed voucher at the referee station. The completed voucher will be the basis for determining the referee deposit refund amount for the tournament.

Referee Mementos

Referees will be provided with a meal ticket for food and drink at the concession stand for each day that they officiate. Chilled water and snacks will also be available at the Referee Station.

Participating referees will receive a tournament t-shirt and flipping coin as mementos to thank them for their contribution.

Referees participating in two or more semi-final/final matches will receive a thank you gift determined by the tournament director.

Assessments

The Pony Express Tournament will provide referees for opportunities to be assessed for upgrades. These opportunities will be provided on medal-round matches only. Referee Assessors will be arranged through the local Area or Section staff. To take advantage of this opportunity, referees

must register in advance with the Pony Express Tournament Referee Administrator (see contact section).

Contact Information

Referee forms must be emailed with the Team Application to: tournaments@ayso37.org

Questions regarding referee requirements should be directed to: tournaments@ayso37.org

Web site www.ayso37.org