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REFEREE FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q. How do I become a referee?

A. Prospective referees must attend and pass a course sponsored and taught by the United States Soccer Federation. Visit the State Referee Program website and follow instructions there to find and register for a class: <http://www.vadcsoccerref.com>

Q. How much does a course cost?

A. A new referee for either Grade-8 or Grade-9 costs \$70.

Q. Is there an age limit to ref?

A. Yes. Recently passed federal law restricts the youngest referee age to 13 (a referee must be 13 in order to register for a class). In addition, most assignors require a youth center referee to be at least two years older than the age group they referee. Most competitive leagues require centers to be at least 16 years of age.

Loudoun Soccer strongly urges you to be at least 14 years of age, however 13 year old referees are welcome.

Q. Which course do you recommend to start?

Loudoun Soccer sponsors Grade-8 New Referee Courses. We don't offer Grade-9 classes, but we do allow Grade 9 referees to work games. We do not use grade-12 referees. Once you pass your New Referee course, Loudoun Soccer assignors will work with you to receive assignments at the appropriate age and skill level for you. As you obtain more experience and are comfortable at the current age and skill level and can ask your assignor for more challenging games.

Q. What's the difference between a Grade-8 and a Grade-9?

A. A Grade 8, USSF Referee Class 2, is authorized to referee competitive (travel) soccer matches as well as recreational (house) games. A Grade-8 course will qualify a referee to be both a Center Referee and Assistant Referee (AR) (often erroneously referred to as linesman). A Grade-9, USSF Recreational Referee, is authorized to referee on recreational games age under-14 and younger. Like a Grade-8, a Grade-9 will be qualified to be a Center or AR. Loudoun Soccer begins assigning ARs as young as the U-9 level.

Q. How long is the course?

A. Courses are generally about 9-10 hours in length, as a mixture of classroom and on-field (Field Training Module) meetings. A typical model for a Grade-8 course would be to meet for six hours on a Saturday, and then three hours on one weeknight for the FTM. Every course will be different.

Prospective referees must also pass an online test before attending the class.

Q. If I become a Grade-9 can I become a Grade-8 later?

A. Yes. A Grade-9 referee can always attend a New Grade-8 course later or can take a special "Bridge" Course designed to take Upgrade Grade-9 referees to Grade-8.

Q. Does everyone pass the course?

A. No. There is an exam and one must qualify by passing. Bottom line is that almost everyone



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who listens to the instructor's instructions and prepares by reading the Laws of the Game and the USSF Publication Advice to Referees on the Laws of the Game will do well.

Q. How long does the certification last for?

A. Certification lasts for the calendar year (e.g. if you pass a course in February, you are certified through December). Some certification classes held in August and September will be considered valid through the following calendar (e.g. pass in September 2019, good through December 2020).

Referees must re-certify each year to accept assignments. Re-certification courses are offered throughout the year, and typically consist of a one-day class (approximately six hours) plus an online exam completed before the class is held.

Q. Where can I locate information about courses?

A. All approved courses are listed on the State Referee web site (<http://www.vadcsooccerref.com>). Check under [Clinic Listing](#). We sponsor clinics and our current offerings are always listed under our [Training Clinics](#) link. But you don't need to train with us to work with us and if you train with us you are free to work elsewhere.

Q. How do I register?

A. Go to the Virginia State Referee web site (<http://www.vadcsooccerref.com>). The web site is titled Metro DC-Virginia State Referee Program. Click on the link for [Online Registration](#). Select USSF Referee Registration and follow the on-screen commands. Quirky feature: Even though you are not in the database you must enter your name for it not to find you. After it does not locate you only then will you be prompted to add your personal information. You will be taken to a screen with the message: Match Not Found.

There select "Register as a NEW referee." You will be prompted to create a password. After creating a password you will be taken to a screen to enter your information. (Skip the Affiliated Game Experience table.)

Once you pay the USSF fee (\$70) by credit card you will be registered as a referee for the year requested. You then have to wait at least 24 hours to register for a particular class, as the database updates every night. Then you can select a clinic from the same site. If you select the "Bring Check to Class Option" the instructors may require you to mail the check in advance in ensure your participation.

Find a clinic (New-8 or New-9) that fits your schedule and register. Select a class that you can make all instructional hours. Attend the course and have fun!

You will be able to print both a USSF registration form and a clinic enrollment form once registered. If you cannot produce a clinic enrollment form then you have not successfully registered for a clinic a may be turned away at the door. You can always go back to registration to manage your profile and select a clinic at that time. Additional information on the registration process can be found on the Virginia State Referee web site (<http://www.vadcsooccerref.com>).

Q. I registered and paid the \$70 fee online but now the clinic also has a fee. It's \$0. What does that mean?



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A. Some advanced referee clinics have an associated fee for registration. The entry level referee clinics do not. The fee you pay is \$70 to register as a referee and \$0 to attend the clinic.

Q. Does it matter which course (Loudoun Soccer-hosted or those hosted by other organizations) I attend to certify?

A. No. Referees may certify at a course location that is convenient for them, and can accept assignments inside and outside of Loudoun Soccer. Most referees prefer to work games near their home, and Loudoun Soccer hosts games nearly every weekend, making it easy for local referees to accept local assignments.

Q. What equipment do I need? Where do I purchase it?

A. A referee needs a uniform and basic equipment. A basic uniform (jersey, shorts, socks) package will cost around \$50-\$60. The packages typically include accessories such as flags, whistle, data wallet, and red/yellow cards. A referee at the recreational level can usually get by for the first season with one short-sleeve yellow jersey. Additional details are available at the Uniforms, Equipment & Payment page.

Q. What can a referee wear when the weather turns cold?

A. The referee jersey must be on the outside and visible to the players and coaches. Under your referee shirt you can wear a black sweatshirt or "heat gear". A long sleeve is ok. If you are wearing a long-sleeve shirt, the shirt (or sweatshirt) should not be a hoody. The referee can wear pants but they should be black athletic pants. If you have to wear sweatpants, they should be black in color, they should be pulled up and your referee shirt tucked in. You can also wear gloves and a hat. The hat should be black or a black skull cap. Under no circumstances should the referee wear a "hoody" up over their head.

Q. Can a referee keep time with their cell phone?

A. No! The referee needs to have a watch. If doing high level games, the referee should have two watches, one for backup. When a referee uses a cell phone to keep time during a game, it gives the impression that they are checking their email and not watching the game.

Q. Can a referee wear sunglasses during their game?

A. No. Neither the referee, assistant referees, or players are allowed to wear sunglasses during their games. A referee, assistant referee, or player can wear the photo grey glasses (the kind that change shades in sunlight) if they are corrective lenses. If needed, the referee or assistant referee can wear a hat to keep the sun out of their eyes.

Q. What if I paid for my referee kit and I don't pass the class?

A. Loudoun Soccer will refund your money if you don't pass the class.

Q. How much are referees paid per game?

A. Rates vary widely. Center refs make more than Assistant Refs. The higher the age (and the longer the game) the more one is paid. For one game as center for U8 or U10 the rates can be approximately \$15-\$20. Center refs for a U19 can pay \$30 – \$50 or more. Center referees for the oldest Travel age groups can earn \$60+ per game.



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Loudoun Soccer also awards “bonus” points to referees for games they work – the more Loudoun Soccer games worked, the more bonus points earned and the more money paid.

More information is available on the Uniforms, Equipment & Payment page.

Q. How are referees assigned games?

A. Once certified, a new referee needs to contact an assignor for a local club or league. The assignor should work with you to give you appropriate skill level games based on your age and qualification. If you would like to work for Loudoun Soccer, we ask that you contact Tammy Mitchell at (refassignor@loudounsoccer.com).

Q: What are referee mentors?

Referee mentors are senior (adult) referees who have been trained to work with and provide feedback to younger referees. Periodically, Loudoun Soccer may schedule mentors to observe and assist referees during game days. During breaks in the game, the mentor will offer you advice on how to improve your refereeing. You can also contact the Referee Director (refdirector@loudounsoccer.com) and ask for a mentor to come and watch your game.

Q. Why should someone watch me work a game?

A. A mentor is an experienced referee that will watch you work your game. Before, at half time and after the game, the mentor will make observations and suggestions on your game. What you are doing well and what you can change to become a better referee. The mentor will also write up a report, which will be provided to the referee.

Q. Will I be certified to referee high school matches?

A. No. High school games are not played under the Laws of the Game but rather under rules written by the National Federation of High Schools. Contact the DARK Associates (Loudoun County) or [Commonwealth Soccer Officials Association](#)(Fairfax County) for information about high school officiating.

Q. I have additional questions. Who can I contact for information?

A. Tammy Mitchell (refassignor@loudounsoccer.com) is our Ref Assignor. Jeff Rae (refdirector@loudounsoccer.com) is our Ref Director. Both are good contacts for additional referee information.