

YOUTH REFEREE'S HANDBOOK

WACHUSETT AREA YOUTH SOCCER ASSOCIATION www.waysa-soccer.org

Thank you for agreeing to be a referee! While we pay fees for your services, we know that it is your love of soccer which brings you out to the field for the games.

The position of referee is a demanding one. A referee must be thoroughly familiar with the FIFA Laws, and physically capable of keeping up with a fast moving game. On top of this, a referee must be decisive and firm with his/her calls, while avoiding any flavor of arrogance that comes with a position of power. Finally, a referee is also a teacher for the younger players who are on a soccer field for the first time.

You have demonstrated your knowledge of the Laws of the Game by your certification as a referee by the Massachusetts Referee Committee, or by your town's selection of you as a referee for Under-8 or Under-10 games. This handbook is to acquaint you with the philosophy of WAYSA towards soccer, our working rules and the approach that we expect of our referees.

1. LAWS OF THE GAME

The FIFA Laws of the game are used in all games of the Wachusett Area Youth Soccer Association, as modified by our Working Rules, which are designed to meet the special needs of instructional youth soccer.

The Working Rules of the Wachusett Area Youth Soccer Association are in the back of this handbook. Read them! The coaches have studied these Working Rules and they expect you to apply them to the game.

2. REFEREE'S UNIFORM

Your appearance is important! When you referee a game you are a professional and you should look like a professional. The players, the coaches and the spectators will respond more positively to your authority when you are in full uniform.

If you are a certified referee, you are expected to wear a uniform that is approved by USSF and MRC, with your current badge sewn on the left pocket.

If you are a town selected referee for an Under-8 or Under-10 game, you will be supplied with a T-shirt with the words "WAYSAS REF" on it. The rest of your uniform should be the same: black socks with white tops and black shorts.

If it is a cold day, a dark jersey or sweatshirt may be worn under your uniform. If it is so cold that you have to wear sweat pants make certain that they are dark.

Other Equipment

For other equipment, you need a wristwatch or stop watch to time the game, a whistle, a pencil. Also, yellow and red cards if you are a certified referee, flags for the linesmen and a coin to toss to decide the kickoff. You should bring backup pencils as well as an extra whistle and stop watch.

Each coach will give you a MYSAs game report/roster form on which you will record the official results of a game. Most referees keep record of the game in a small folder (3"X4") which they keep in their pocket during the game.

If you are scheduled to referee more than one game, you will probably want to bring some water or other liquid refreshment, especially in warm weather. While any coach would probably be happy to give you a drink, you must avoid any appearance that you are particularly close to one team.

3. GETTING READY FOR THE GAME

You should arrive at the field at least 20 minutes before game time so that you can check the field, inspect the players, and do your own warm-ups. If you are more than 15 minutes late you will be docked \$5.00!

The Field

As referee, you are responsible for determining field conditions. Examine the goals and nets, the corner flags and the condition of the field. If there are any dangerous conditions you should instruct the coaches to correct these conditions.

You cannot allow a game to begin if there are any dangerous conditions. You must immediately stop the game if conditions become dangerous and you must terminate the game if a dangerous condition cannot be corrected.

The Players

After you have checked out the field, you should get the MYSA Game Report for each team and inspect the players. Examine their cleats, verify that they have shin guards, and instruct them to remove any wristwatches or jewelry (including earrings) which they are wearing. Underwear should not hang out below the uniform. Be sure that the numbers on their uniforms are visible, and that the goalie wears a shirt of a sufficiently distinctive color.

Most referees talk to the players and coaches for a few minutes. Even experienced coaches may need to be reminded about the length of the game or calling for substitutions, especially changes in goal. Particularly with younger players, the WAYSA League encourages you to remind the players about some of the Laws of the Game on which younger players often make mistakes, such as throw-ins, or too many steepes by the goalie. Many referees use this time to caution the players about pushing or shoving, but encourage them to play a fast, aggressive game.

Linesman

Ask each coach to select a linesman for one side of the field. You should meet with the linesman, give them each a flag, and instruct them in their duties. Remember that many parents did not play soccer, and will need to be reminded that the touch line is part of the field, and that the ball is not out until it has gone **completely** over the touch line. Remind the linesmen that they are to assist you, but that you make the calls. Generally, you should not allow a young child to be a linesman.

Start On Time

Every game must start on time. If each team has the minimum players to start a game (a goalie and four field players), you should begin the game on time. At most fields, games are scheduled throughout the day. It is not fair to the teams with later games for you to delay the start of a game. If a team does not have the minimum number of players necessary to play within 15 minutes of the scheduled kick-off time, that team shall forfeit the game.

4. REFEREEING THE GAME

Any soccer game requires close attention to the play, and decisive calls. Your soccer is particularly challenging because many calls depend upon your determination that the foul was intentional. With inexperienced, sometimes awkward players, your most difficult task will be to make that call. No one expects you to be perfect, but everyone wants you to be fair, impartial, and consistent.

Explaining Calls

Instructional soccer calls for special skills from a referee. WAYSA not only wants you to make the correct call, but also expects you to explain that call to the player if there is any confusion. For example, if the ball on a throw-in was not delivered with both hands over the head, or if the player's rear foot came up, tell the player. If a goal kick does not clear the penalty area and you whistle for the kick to be retaken, tell the players why you made the call. Your explanations do not have to be lengthy. "Foot came up!" "Both hands over the head!" "Ball must clear the penalty area before it is in play!" "Offside – ahead of the ball with no defenders!" This type of explanation should

be enough. If a player in the Under-8 or Under-10 divisions is really confused, you might take a minute at the end of the game to speak with the player and the coach.

Second Chances

For Under-8 and Under-10 players only, in the event of an improper throw-in, the player gets a second chance. You should explain the error, and allow that player to do the throw-in again. If the second throw-in is improper, the ball is awarded to the other team. During the post-season tournament only one throw-in will be allowed.

Expect for this situation, players do not get a second change, unless permitted by the FIFA Laws. For example, if a player touches the ball twice on a free kick before, it is touched by another player, the other team gets the ball. [Law XIII]. A goal kick that doesn't clear the penalty area is taken over. [Law XVI]

Don't Coach

While WAYSA expects you to explain your calls, you are a referee and not a coach. You should not delay the game to allow a team to setup, or help a team with its positions. While you should probably caution a young goalie on a penalty kick that he must stand with his heels on the goal line and cannot move until the ball is kicked, you should not give hints to the player taking the shot to aim for the corners.

5. GAME REPORTS AND PAYMENT

Before the start of the game, each coach will give you a copy of a MYSA game roster form that **MUST** be used for WAYSA games. The coaches should already have filled out the form report completely, except for the actual starting time and the score. You should check the date, time, division, and names of the teams and fill in the actual starting time. Make sure that the coach and any assistants have signed the form. This is also a good time to have the *home team* coach sign your completed WAYSA referee payment form and enter the WAYSAs game number.

At half time, and at the end of the game, you should fill in the scores, and sign the form. At the end of the game the completed game reports are to be given to the coaches of the opposing teams.

The properly filled out and signed WAYSAs referee payment forms should be mailed to the treasurer **for U-10 and higher games only**, indicated below, for payment on October 15th and November 15th. (Submit payment forms for U-8 games to your town treasurer, not to the WAYSAs treasurer).

Wayne Adams , WAYSAs Treasurer
PO Box 1127
Princeton, MA 01541

REMEMBER: YOU MUST SUBMIT THE WAYSAs REFEREE PAYMENT FORMS IN ORDER TO BE PAID!
Copies of the payment form can be downloaded from the WAYSAs website www.waysa-soccer.org

6. CAUTIONS

As referee, you have the authority and the responsibility to caution players and coaches for persistent infringement of the Laws, dissent, or inappropriate conduct. One of the hallmarks of the confident and experienced referee is his/her sparing use of this power.

Remember that younger players are both inexperienced and awkward. In the Under-8 and Under-10 divisions, most trips and body contact are not deliberate fouls intended to harm another player. While you should whistle (and explain!) all such fouls and award free kicks as provided by the Laws, you should hesitate before giving a formal caution. A brief word to a coach at the end of a game about a problem player may be all that the situation requires.

In the all the age divisions, you should not tolerate back talk, swearing, or other inappropriate conduct from players or coaches. If verbal warnings are insufficient then you may terminate the game and should immediately inform your referee coordinator and file a written report.

Problems With Spectators

A far more difficult situation may be with parents and other spectators, many of whom know little about soccer. They may not understand game strategy or the Laws of the Game, but this won't stop their comments. In extreme cases, you can terminate the game. Mostly, you should develop a "thick skin", and concentrate on the game itself.

7. INJURIES

While soccer is not intentionally a contact sport, any game will have its share of collisions. In addition, there will be twisted ankles, and players hit by hard-kicked balls. If a child is injured and close to the play, you should stop the play immediately and ask the coach to attend the child. Players are instructed to drop to the ground if they are injured.

If the injured player is well away from the play and not badly injured, and his/her team has possession, you may decide to let the team press its attack [Law V(b), the "advantage" clause], but you should stop play as soon as his/her team loses possession. As referee, you are NOT an emergency medical technician. Assessment of the injury, and a decision about obtaining medical treatment, is a matter for the coach.

Ordinarily, if play has been stopped because of an injury, the injured player should leave the field for at least a few minutes, even if he/she says "I'm okay!" Of course, the team is allowed to substitute for the injured player (and any others as well), and the other team may also substitute as many players as they wish.

After an injury, restart play with a dropped ball at the location of the ball when play was stopped. You should add on time at the end of the half to make up for the delay caused by the injury.

WACHUSETT AREA YOUTH SOCCER ASSOCIATION WORKING RULES (abridged)

Name and Affiliations

This association shall be known as the Wachusett Area Youth Soccer Association ("WAYS"). The League will be an affirmed member of the Massachusetts Youth Soccer Association ("MYSA") and an affiliated member of the United States Youth Soccer Association ("USYSA").

Equipment

Players shall wear numbered jerseys of the same color. Goalkeepers shall wear contrasting colors. In the event that the colors of two teams are not sufficiently contrasting in the opinion of the referee, it shall be the responsibility of the home team to change colors or wear pinneys.

All players shall wear shin guards and footwear with FIFA-approved cleats. Players shall not wear wrist watches, bracelets, necklaces, earrings, barrettes, or other hard objects which may endanger themselves or other players on the field. Players shall not wear hats. Players shall not have underwear that hangs out below the uniform.

Size of Teams

In the Under-8 and Under-10 divisions, teams shall have no more than 12 players on the roster, and shall play with one goalkeeper and six players on the field. If a team does not have at least one goalkeeper and four field players, it shall forfeit the game.

The Board may make exceptions to the size of the team for good cause shown, and subject to such restrictions or conditions as the Board in its sole discretion deems appropriate.

Referees

For all games during the regular season in the Under-10 division, it shall be the responsibility of the member towns to assign referees, who need not be registered with the Massachusetts Referees Committee (MRC).

If a registered referee is not available, the coaches may agree to play the game using a registered coach as a referee. If neither a registered referee nor a registered coach is available, the game shall **not** be played.

Upon request by the referee, each team will provide one linesman to assist the referee. During the final matches in post-season play, the League will try to provide referee assistants who are MRC registered referees. Before a game, each coach will provide the referee with a MYSA game form. The game forms will include the name and jersey number of each player, the town, team name and division, the town and team name of the opposing team, the date and the scheduled kick-off time. The game form shall be signed by the registered coach and the registered assistant coach, and by the referee.

All referees shall receive their fees when they submit their WAYSAs referee payment forms by the dates indicated on these forms to the League Treasurer. A Referee who is more than 15 minutes late for a game shall be docked \$5.00, unless the teams were notified in advance that the referee would be late. In the event that the assigned referee failed to appear for the game, the substitute registered referee or registered coach who actually refereed the game and submits the game form to the League Treasurer shall be paid.

Balls

Each team will provide one game ball. The referee will choose the ball to be used.

Under-8 and Under-10 teams will use a size "4" ball.

Length of Games

In the Under-8 and under-10 divisions the game shall consist of four – 13 minute quarters.

The half-time interval shall be five minutes. The teams shall change ends of the field at the end of the second quarter.

The interval between the first and second quarters, and the third and fourth quarter shall be two minutes.

There shall be no overtime periods.

Laws of the Game

The FIFA "Laws of the Game" shall apply to all games in WAYSAs, as amended by these "Working Rules."

Special Working Rules for:

Under-8 & under-10 Divisions

There will be no slide tackling. An indirect kick will be awarded for this violation.

There will be no offsides.

The League strongly discourages leaving players in the offensive zone while your team is in defense.

Throw-Ins. In the event of an improper throw-in, the referee shall explain the player's error and allow the player a second chance. If this throw-in is also improper, the ball shall be awarded to the other team. During the post-season tournament only one throw-in will be allowed.

Distance from Ball. Opponents shall be not less than 6 yards from the ball for the kick-off and for all free kicks, including goal kicks.

Size of Goals. The goals shall be not less than 6 feet or more than 7 feet high and not less than 12 feet or More than 14 feet wide.

Size of Field. The field shall not be less than 50 yards or more than 70 yards long, and not less than 40 yards or more than 50 yards wide. The field shall be longer than it is wide.

Penalty Area. The penalty area will be 12 yards out and 25 yards across and centered on the goal.

Goal Box. The size of the goal box shall be 6 yards out and 16 yards across. It shall be centered on the goal.

Goal Kicks. Goal kicks may be taken anywhere within the goal box area. All balls put into play by a goal kick must be touched by a player or land in the defensive half of the field, to remain in play. If not, an indirect free kick is awarded at the half way line to the opposing team.

Free Kicks. All free kicks will be **indirect** for any foul committed, there shall be no direct kicks. Any free kick awarded within the penalty area shall be taken from the penalty area line (the line that is parallel to the end line). The ball shall be placed on this line nearest to the point where the foul was committed.

Penalty Kicks. **There shall be no penalty kicks.**

Special Goalkeeper Rule. After the goalkeeper picks up the ball it may be thrown, dropped-kicked or punted but it must be touched by a player or land in the defensive half of the field, to remain in play. If not, an indirect free kick is awarded at the half way line to the opposing team.

Substitutions

Substitutions shall be **unlimited**. All substitutes shall enter and leave the field at mid-field. With consent of the referee, substitutions may be made at the following times:

- the team in possession of the ball. **If** the team in possession of the ball chooses to substitute, the opposing team may also substitute at that time. Players **must** be present at the midfield prior to substitution.
- prior to all goal kicks
- after a goal
- at half time
- between periods (Under-10 Division)
- for an injured player(s) if the referee has stopped play (the other team may also substitute players)

No substitution is allowed for a player ejected from the game.

Coaching During Games

Before start of a game, the home team shall designate a side of the field for the teams. The bench for both teams shall be on that side of the field, in the area of mid-field. Coaches and players not on the field shall remain in the bench area, at least one yard behind the touchline. Coaches shall not move more than 10 yards along the touchline, and shall not go onto the field during a game without the permission of the referee.

All spectators shall be on the opposite side of the field, at least one yard behind the touch lines. No coaches, players, or spectators shall stand near either goal. The referee shall stop play until all persons have moved away from the goal.

Excessive coaching and the constant yelling of instructions from the sidelines is strongly discouraged since it often distracts and confuses the players. In keeping with the recreational philosophy of the league, coaches should strive to create an atmosphere that allows the kids to just play the game and have fun. Violations may result in a warning from the referee.

Coaches are responsible for the conduct of the players, parents, and supporters of their team on and around the playing field, before, during, and after the game. In the event of continuing misconduct by a team's coaches, players, parents, or supporters, after issuing a caution, the referee may terminate the game. If the abuse comes from parents/spectators then the referee will inform the coaches and it is their responsibility to speak immediately to the offenders. If this action does not adequately curb this behavior then the referee may terminate the game. Coaches and parents are also subject to Article III, Section 3(a) of the WAYSA by-laws regarding suspension from all activities associated with WAYSA.

Schedule

The season shall begin on the first weekend after Labor Day. Regular season games may be scheduled on Saturday and Sunday. Saturday games will be scheduled no earlier than 9 AM and Sunday games will not be scheduled any earlier than 1 PM. Post-season schedules may have to vary slightly. All teams will be scheduled for 10 regular season games. No games will be scheduled over the Columbus Day weekend.

Teams will play according to the official schedule, unless field conditions prevent play. If the town president or his/her designee determines that the field is unplayable for any reason, the home team has the responsibility to notify the visiting team and the referee assignor not less than two hours before the scheduled start of the game. If the home team fails to notify the visiting team, and the visiting team appears for the game, the home team shall forfeit the game. If the referee appears then he/she shall be paid for that game and an additional fee will be charged to that town to cover the cost of the makeup game.

Games rescheduled because of school or church activities must be cleared through Town Representatives, and a makeup date established at the time of cancellation. No Saturday games shall be rescheduled after Wednesday, and no Sunday games shall be rescheduled after Thursday. The home team Town Representative is responsible for notifying the referee assignor of a rescheduled game. If the referee assignor is not notified within 24 hours of the start of the originally scheduled game and the referee appears for the game then the referee shall be paid for that game. The town which failed to properly notify the referee assignor will be assessed an additional fee to cover the expense of the make-up game.

If a team does not have the minimum number of players necessary to play within 15 minutes of the scheduled kick-off time, that team shall forfeit the game.

If the referee determines that the field is unplayable before play commences, the game shall be rescheduled as a make-up game.

If the referee terminates the game for field conditions before the end of the first half, the entire game shall be rescheduled. If the referee terminates the game for field conditions after the first half, only the second half shall be rescheduled. If both coaches agree, a terminated game may be treated as a complete game and not rescheduled.

Post-Season Tournament

Under-10 and Under-12 Divisions: At the end of the regular season there shall be a post-season tournament. This tournament will cover the two-day period on the first weekend following the end of regular season play. This will be a non-elimination tournament in which no scores or standings will be kept. There is an open invitation to all teams that participated in that fall's season. All teams will play three games that will consist of two 20-minute halves. There will not be a half time break, teams will just switch ends of the field and continue play. Each half will be continuous time in which there will be no stoppage of the clock for any reason. There shall be no overtime play in the event of a tie score.

