

Mid State Soccer League

Youth Referee Mentoring Program

Program Overview for Mentors

Thank you for participating in our program to develop youth referees. Your role as mentor is absolutely crucial to our success as we seek to advance the quality of refereeing in this area.

This plan is based on mentoring selected youth referees with the assumption that pre-selected youth referees who are individually encouraged and mentored will develop into fine and committed referees. This plan does not envision “training” as such (this, of course, is the province of designated USSF staff) but is designed to match youth referees in game situations with a seasoned and experienced referee such as yourself. Your overall tasks under this program are: (1) **to act as a role model**, (2) **to specifically encourage and support the youth referee**, and (3) **to offer any tips from your greater experience** that might be helpful to the young referee in the context of any specifics that may come out of the games you observe (or even work with the youth referee.) Hopefully, this mentoring relationship would exist outside the “formal” mentored games as you may encounter each other at other games throughout the season. You may find that you become a key important person in the young referee's life.

The specifics of our plan are these:

1. Your local youth soccer association participating in the MSSL has, in cooperation with the local referee assignor, identified youth referee candidates (either already grade 8 certified or willing to be so certified) age 16 or under. You have been identified as an experienced referee who would be willing to serve as a mentor.
2. The MSSL will handle all of the administrative details and arrange to pay a stipend to both the youth referees and to you, the mentor, for a minimum of 6 “mentored” games (or 12 “halves” at different games if you wish for scheduling flexibility.) under this program. (If you are actually refereeing the game, such payments would be in addition to the normal game fees received.) The stipend amounts are \$25 for each game you mentor while the youth referee will get \$20 for each game he or she is mentored in this program. (For payment, see the Youth Referee Program page on the MSSL website to print a reimbursement form. For convenience, you jointly submit this form with the youth referee.)

Mentoring Outline

3. Three phases of mentoring are anticipated.

Phase I, You as a mentor will be assigned to observe a youth referee program participant (YRPP) who would be an AR for at least two games on separate dates (or 4 “halves”.) In addition to the normal game communications with the assigned center referee (if it is not you), you and the YRPP would conduct pre and post game discussions involving support and encouragement, and dealing with specific issues as they may come up. In addition we would like you to specifically discuss such items as: **the importance of promptness, appearance, and deportment, AR mechanics, and relationships with players, coaches, and parents.**

Phase II, The youth referee will be assigned as a center and you as a mentor will observe (or be assigned as an AR) in at least two matches that are relatively non-challenging so as to allow the possibility for more confidence building with the youth referee. Again, your job as mentor would be to conduct supplementary pre and post game support and encouragement sessions where the focus would be on tips as they come up, but also regarding the **proper completion of paperwork, basic referee mechanics, foul recognition, and relationships with coaches, players, and parents.**

Phase III, (The youth referee is presumed to have at least one season of prior experience and four previous “mentored” games with you.) Again, at least two games would be assigned as “mentored” games where you as the mentor will be supporting the youth referee participant in more challenging matches. The emphasis here would be not only on items already the focus of Phases I and II, but might now include tips on **game control, game flow, and fully utilizing the entire refereeing crew.** As always, support and tips on **handling unruly coaches and parents** will be absolutely key in building confidence and developing good youth referees.

Again, we thank you for your services as a mentor. We have been impressed with how the presence of an interested adult at the right time in a youth's life can make a tremendous difference. Perhaps you will be in that role.

John Hunter, MSSL Commissioner