

How to Become a Referee

Becoming a referee is a fairly simple process - you attend a clinic, take a test, pass the test, buy a uniform and get your first game. Sounds easy, but nothing is that easy.

We can help you get started. Here is what's involved in becoming a referee:

The Basic Referee Clinic

Find out where a clinic is to be held in your area. Visit the Referee Clinics page on the Michigan Referee Committee web site <http://www.msysareferee.net/> to find one close to you. Clinics will be listed for the entire state of Michigan, and listed by geographical areas. Find one that is convenient for you and follow the instruction to sign for the class; if you have questions call the person listed as the contact. There is no minimum age required to become a Referee, but US Soccer requires that people, who have not attained the age of 14 years, should first register as "Grade 9 Recreational Referees".

Now that you have the first step out of the way things get better.

You will be attending a 16 hour course to become a referee. Usually this is broken down over two weekend days, or four weekends usually Saturdays or several evenings over a few weeks. Instructors will cover the FIFA Laws of the Game that will be on the 100 question test. A score of 75 or better is needed in order to register with USSF and become a certified referee (Grade 8). If you score less than 75 you can retake the test at a later date, but you cannot register or work games as a referee until you pass the test. Take the time to study before test date and take good notes during the classes.

The Uniform and Equipment

Now that you've passed the test and have registered with USSF it's time to go out and buy your first uniform. The basic uniform for referees is a yellow shirt, black referee shorts, black socks with three stripes and shoes. There are no particular shoes that we recommend, but get a pair that won't cause blisters or cause discomfort when you run. In addition to a uniform, you will need a watch, preferably one that counts down time. You'll need a whistle, a small book to keep score, a flipping coin, red and yellow cards and a set of flags.

Now you ask yourself where I get all this stuff. Not to worry. During the clinic your instructor will let you know where to purchase it.

Getting Games

Now that you've passed the test, bought your uniform and all the stuff, you'll need to talk to an assignor who will schedule your games. Not sure who your local assignor is - not to worry. Again your instructor will give information on how to find the name and phone number of the assignor for your local association. Or if you feel daring you can look on the Michigan Referee Committee web page under Assignors to find out who to call.

Your First Year

Well you've been out on the fields for a year now and you've learned how to issue cards, deal with coaches and parents and suffered through the heat and cold. Now what. Every year you will be required to take a re-certification test and attend five hours of training. This will happen in November and December of every year. At this clinic you will again have to take a test, but this time you will have to score 70 % or better to continue refereeing. If you do not, you may be asked to come back another day to retake the test.

Local Referee Assignor: Stuart Collis (stuartcollis@sbcglobal.net)