



Referee Instructor Resource Book



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Introduction

This manual is intended to provide the AYSO Referee Instructor with a quick reference to some of the tips and tools useful for providing high quality instruction to our referee volunteers. It is intended to supplement the information contained in the AYSO National Referee Program Manual (hereafter designated as the NRP Manual) and the Introduction to Instruction Resource Book. Both of these other manuals may be found online:

1. The NRP Manual is found at aysovolunteers.org under the Referee Resources tab.
2. The Introduction to Instruction Resource Book is located at aysou.org under the Resources tab.

The NRP Manual provides the AYSO Vision and Mission statements and includes the Six Philosophies that are the foundation of the organization. It also provides an overview of the AYSO Referee Instruction program with a focus on administration. In addition there is information on scheduling and managing referee training courses.

The Introduction to Instruction Resource Book summarizes the key information and techniques provided in the Introduction to Instruction Course. This includes information about Lesson Plans and teaching methods. Every AYSO referee training course has an approved Lesson Plan, tests, and other relevant documents which may be found at aysou.org under the Resources tab.

The six fundamental principles described in our Vision and Mission statements are the foundation of AYSO, and distinguish us from all other youth sports organizations. Referee instructors must teach and model these principles in every class when they teach. Soccer is our game and no one does a better job than AYSO at providing the referee instruction needed for AYSO games. Indeed, the AYSO National Referee Program has been recognized by International FIFA referees and referee instructors as:

“The best amateur referee training program in the world.”

The quality of our referee program is unsurpassed in the soccer community and we continue to develop, maintain and update our programs according to the wisdom of experience and the thinking of the most respected referee experts in the world.

Referee Instructors must instill the knowledge and desire in the volunteers’ hearts to perpetuate our wonderful organization and ensure our vision and mission statements are truly implemented. Referee Instructors will thus help ensure we maintain our fundamental philosophies and our unique leadership position among youth sports organizations.

Indeed, the impact our referees have on the personal development of countless young



players' lives will far outlast their memories of the won/loss records of the teams on which they play. This aspect of AYSO sets us apart and makes us special. We know how to teach referees to referee. But it is just as important that we teach our volunteers to remember the crucial role each of them plays in ensuring there is truth in the motto:

“In AYSO, it’s about more than the game!”



AYSO National Programs

AYSO has developed extensive programs to educate and protect our players and volunteers. All coaches, referees and board members are required to be trained and certified to understand the child specific and discipline specific aspects of their particular jobs.

Job or position training is the training required to perform the specific duties and responsibilities of a position. As instructors, you will provide job training. Volunteer certification requires competency in three areas: job duties and responsibilities (job training), child and volunteer protection (Safe Haven training) and in AYSO's policies, procedures and guidelines as outlined in AYSO's Reference Book.

Safe Haven®

The AYSO Safe Haven® Program provides education and protection for both players and volunteers and has become a model used by other youth organizations. It consists of four basic components:

- Registering and Screening all volunteers
- Training and Certification
- Providing Child and Volunteer Protection Guidelines
- Promoting Safety and Injury Prevention

AYSO volunteers must submit an annual Volunteer Application Form, provide references and agree to background checks in order to be considered for a volunteer position. Considerable attention has been given to both state and federal legislation for the protection of children and for volunteers working with children.

AYSO's Safe Haven program helps fulfill the promise of a safe, fun, fair and positive environment or "safe haven" for experiencing the benefits of AYSO and youth sports.

Referee Program

Incremental training is available for referees in the AYSO National Referee Program. These courses range from training brand new volunteers to officiate 8U matches to training experienced referees to manage 18U/19U matches. The primary training course is the Regional Referee Course (and its online equivalent), which trains new volunteers to manage 10U games. AYSO games are regulated by the IFAB Laws of the Game and AYSO National Rules & Regulations with some permitted adjustments to accommodate the age of the players participating.

AYSO referees are taught, as are AYSO coaches, to take into consideration the age group involved. The Laws of the Game require the enforcement of the spirit behind the Laws rather than the letter of the Law and the AYSO referee training emphasizes this fact to ensure minimum interruption and maximum fun for the players.



Coaching Program

The AYSO National Coaching Program is a nationally accredited training program that offers age and skill appropriate training courses for coaching 5U to 18U players. The AYSO Coaching Program is designed from the National Association for Sport and Physical Education (NASPE) and has been reviewed and accepted for accreditation by the National Council for Accreditation of Coaching Education (NCACE) following national standards.

The emphasis is on youth players in the AYSO coach training program and, in addition to the development of young players' athletic skills through age-appropriate coaching, emphasis is placed on the social and psychological needs of children. Children play games to have fun and that is what AYSO coaches are taught.

Management Program

Administrative training is available for all volunteer management positions in AYSO. Running a community soccer program (the Region) requires the extensive efforts of many volunteers and involves the management of considerable funds. AYSO provides support for these efforts through numerous programs and training courses to assist volunteers with understanding and implementation.

Several layers of management support are available at the Area and Section level to assist local Regional programs. Additionally, the AYSO Office staff monitors the day-to-day business of AYSO and is available for assistance, as needed by the volunteers.

AYSO Online Resources

AYSO provides a number of online resources. There are three (3) websites that are available to AYSO volunteers.

- ayso.org is the main informational site. It provides organizational information aimed at new and prospective players, parents, members and volunteers. There are links to various documents as well as background describing the AYSO organization and history.
- aysovolunteers.org is a resource repository for volunteers. It contains links for all important documents related to various disciplines in the organization.
 - Some of the more important administrative documents are:
 - The AYSO Reference Book at aysovolunteers.org/ayso-reference-book
 - The National Rules & Regulations at aysovolunteers.org/national-rules-regulations
 - The documents under the Referee Resources tab include:
 - Referee forms for upgrades, assessment, cross-certification, and others
 - The Referee Guideline Manual at aysovolunteers.org/referee-guideline
 - The NRP Manual at aysovolunteers.org/national-referee-program



- [manual](#)
 - Contact information for Section Referees Administrators at aysovolunteers.org/sra-contact-list
 - Other administrative documents
 - It is recommended that AYSO Referee Instructors become familiar with this resource
- aysou.org is the AYSO site for online learning and management of in-person courses. Unlike the other websites AYSOU is exclusively for registered AYSO volunteers and requires a formal login to access. Some functions are available only to certified instructors and administrators. AYSO Referee Instructors must know how to use this website to register classes, manage rosters, and award credit for completed classes.



The Instructor as a Role Model

When you stand up in front of a class of AYSO volunteers, especially new volunteers, you are the embodiment of our organization. Your students will respect and appreciate AYSO if they respect and appreciate you. So remember to model the behavior you want from them. Since over 80% of our volunteers only take one AYSO course, the AYSO Referee instructor is generally the most prominent role model our referee volunteers experience for their first year or two in the program. Instructors are seen as the experts on the Laws of the Game as well as experts about the AYSO organization and its policies. Because of this we need to hold ourselves to a very high standard and always make sure that the information we give out is correct.

Here are some guidelines for instructors:

- Be supportive, caring, and open to discussion and questions
- Remember to have fun and let it show!
- Prior to the class find out what equipment/teaching aids will be available at the facility and what you need to provide
- Allow sufficient time to understand and prepare class material.
- If you do not know the answer to a question:
 - Acknowledge that you (or a co-instructor) do not have an answer
 - Agree to get the answer for the student and then get it to them as quickly as feasible.
- Always be respectful to all participants
- There is exactly one person about whom you may safely tell jokes: yourself!
- Remember that the participants have given AYSO the precious gift of their time. Do not squander it!
 - Maintain the published agenda time budget
 - Have a backup plan if something unexpected happens



Judging the Mood

First and foremost, teaching is about the students, and only secondarily about the material being taught. Further, learning is an individual process, and instructors must work to personally connect with each class participant. The following items can assist you in analyzing the class in terms of how participants may be interpreting and/or receiving what you are teaching. (Courtesy of Essential Manager's Manual by Heller and Hindle)

Involving the Audience

Judge the mood of your audience – by assessing their reactions to previous speakers, for example. You can then decide on a strategy to deliver your message effectively. If any members of the audience appear bored or drowsy, stimulate them by asking questions that can be answered by a show of hands or by turning to the person next to them to give an answer. If the audience is hostile, you could start the presentation with a joke or humorous story, but make sure your body language is giving out positive signals. Be extremely careful with your use of humor to avoid misinterpretation and further alienate your audience – remember that we need to be sensitive to cultural, age, and gender perceptions and norms.

Looking for Signals

You will have rehearsed your own body language as part of your preparation for a presentation. Now you need to learn to read the body language of the members of the audience. Watch for signs, and do not expect everyone to be expressing the same thing. Some may be straining forward eagerly to ask a question, while others may be sinking into their seats, wishing they were somewhere else.

Spotting Negativity

There is a wide range of ways in which members of an audience can indicate disapproval or hostility. Watch out for people leaning over and criticizing your presentation to a neighbor. Alternatively, look for people frowning directly at you with their arms folded or looking into the air as if the ceiling is more interesting than anything you have to say. Remember that looking at one piece of body language in isolation may give a false impression. Look at the whole picture before coming to a conclusion.

Seeing Signs of Interest

Stances indicating interest are easy to spot – look for people smiling, nodding, or leaning forward in their seats and watching you intently. The expressions on their faces may reveal faint frowns or concentration. People manifesting any of these signs can probably be won over to your point of view, so make sure that you involve or engage them in your presentation.



Reading Facial Signs

In terms of body language, the face is most expressive. If you are close enough to members of your audience, you will be able to pick up a multitude of small signals. As with general body language, always remember to read the face as a whole. One sign in isolation may not be a true indication of what the person is feeling.

Reading Hand and Arm Gestures

Hand and arm movements are helpful in adding to the impact of speech and can tell you a lot about the person using them. During question and answer sessions, note the hand and arm gestures of the people asking questions. If you cannot see them clearly, ask the individual to stand up when speaking. The gestures people use have a strong cultural content, so bear this in mind when interpreting body language.

Using Your Ears

You do not need to have all the lights on to pick up your audience's body language; much of it can be picked up aurally. You can hear the rustle of people fidgeting or the sound of whispering, both of which may indicate that your audience is bored or confused. It is easy to block yourself off when you are concentrating on presenting, but it pays to be alert to noise at all times – it is a valuable clue for judging the mood of your audience.

Noticing Habits

Most people unintentionally reinforce their body language with habitual fidgeting with their personal props, such as glasses, watches, pen, cell phone, or earrings. Looking at a watch can betray boredom or even impatience, while chewing on a pen or glasses suggests contemplation. On the positive side, sitting still and an absence of any of these habits can often indicate total involvement and agreement with the content of your presentation.



Small Group and One-to-One Teaching

Teaching students in small groups or in a one-to-one setting provides some opportunities, challenges, and flexibility not found in large class situations. Small groups might be formed within the context of a large class in order to better engage the students on a specific topic (e.g., see the chapter on Scenarios). Alternatively a class may simply be very small. In either case the instructor needs to effectively engage and teach the participants. Here are some considerations for teaching small groups:

Less formal: Teaching small groups or one-to-one offers the instructor an opportunity to step off of the stage and become a part of the group as a guide. Think about this type of teaching as occurring around the dinner table as a discussion.

More time for addressing individual participant needs: The instructor has the time to ask each participant what they need or want to learn and can respond in more depth. The instruction can be totally planned to meet individual needs.

Recruit co-instructors to facilitate small group work in large classes: In a large class, after you determine the optimum size of the small groups, make sure you have enough co-instructors so that each group can have adequate instructor attention. Make sure the co-instructors all have the same learning objectives before this module starts.

Can be done in a variety of settings: Most often in AYSO instruction, small group work is done as a short breakout in a class. Sometimes, however, there are very small classes where renting a classroom is not cost-effective (or a room is not available). In these cases the class can meet in a home, an office, an auditorium, or even in a public place like a restaurant (provided that distractions can be minimized). In any case, it is important to consider the size of the learning location to maximize interaction among the group members. For example, it might be possible to rearrange furniture in a large room to provide a more intimate setting. It is also important to consider any potential impediments to learning imposed by the location (e.g., noise, traffic, acoustic issues).

Time and location can be tailored to meet the participants' needs for very small classes: Instructors are able to respond quickly to the need for a course or workshop or individually tailored instruction. Because there are few limitations on time and space the group can meet anytime and anywhere that is convenient and suitable. For example, it might be feasible to conduct a class over several evenings rather than a weekend.

Questioning by both the instructor and the participant can increase: Both the instructor and participants have the opportunity to ask many questions to ensure that complete understanding of the material. The instructor can extend learning by asking questions that require a higher level of thinking from the participant. In beginners'



classes, it is especially important that instructors NOT ask questions about subjects likely to be above the learning level of the class as that can intimidate students and make them wonder if they are unlikely to succeed applying the material being taught.

More conversational than lecture: In very small classes, it is often very uncomfortable for the instructor and the students to have the instructor lecture on a topic. It is advisable to try to create a conversational environment by starting with some questions about student experiences with the topic and any particular concerns or interests. Sitting with the students is an effective way to set the tone and atmosphere.

More ability to create hands-on opportunities: Having one participant or a small group gives the instructor the opportunity to set up hands-on learning opportunities that might require specific limited resources. From a referee training perspective this can create opportunities for more extensive instruction in using the “tools-of-the-trade” (e.g., whistle, cards, and flags). For example, using small groups to teach restarts to new referees outside can provide opportunities to address signals and mechanics within the context of the restart under discussion.

Can become a mentoring opportunity: Small groups and one-to-one improve the opportunity to structure an on-going mentoring relationship between the instructor and participants or between individual participants.

Classroom Presentations

Effective classroom teaching requires that you set up the classroom properly and that you use a few simple techniques that will enhance any presentation, regardless of the participant teaching method.

Setting the tone. The classroom (or any teaching environment) must provide a suitable environment for learning. Good instructors will set the tone for a positive learning environment from the beginning of the class:

- Introduce yourself and any co-instructors. Sometimes a brief personal story related to the class will serve as an ice-breaker and begin to build a bridge with the students.
- Indicate locations of restrooms, snacks, meals, and other relevant facility information. Tell class about any safety/evacuation procedures.
- Clearly identify the class rules:
 - Be respectful of fellow students
 - Allow fellow students to participate without interrupting or “talking over”
 - Ask questions if you are unclear on the topic under discussion
- Cellphones, while infinitely convenient, provide a ready distraction during instruction. Instructors should instruct all learners to put phones on silent and put them away in a pocket or bag. They should not rest on the desk. Instructors should make clear that if someone needs to use the phone, even to send a text message, they need to wait for a break or step outside.

If you don’t engage them, you can’t teach them. The instructor who personalizes the learning experience has an increased chance of reaching the participants:

- Address the students by their names, don’t just point. Many instructors find having the students wear name tags facilitates the instructor’s learning the names.
- Tasteful use of anecdotes, imagery, and everyday things makes the instructor and the material seem more human and recognizable.
- Shared experiences create a sense of equality and commonality between the instructor and the learners. This also provides a framework that facilitates transfer of knowledge and experiences.
- Remember that your class will contain participants of different cultural backgrounds and gender. Be very careful with the use of humor. Jokes or remarks that highlight these differences, or are perceived as highlighting differences, are never appropriate and can cause the participants to “turn off” and lose respect for the instructor and the training experience.
- Demonstrations and guided participation are very useful for engaging students.

“The mind can absorb only as much as the backside can tolerate.” (Mark Twain and Ken Aston). Learner comfort in the classroom is very important.

- Indirect sensory input affects learning. This is why we take frequent breaks and

ensure the classroom environment is comfortable.

- Remember that adults and kids have different attention spans and needs, so plan breaks and activities accordingly.
- Consider incorporating activities that get learners up and moving.

Techniques that will improve classroom presentations:

- Eye contact – make eye contact with all students
- Control distracting mannerisms
- Be yourself
- Gain and hold the attention of the participants
- Vary the tone and volume of your speech: high versus low and loud versus soft
- Silence can be golden: a good dramatic pause can capture the class
- Use effective visual aids – be creative!
- Respond to participant needs and questions

Setting up the classroom properly

- Provide a focal point for instruction
- Leave room for demonstration and/or guided participation
- Arrange participants so that they are comfortable, can hear, have good sight lines, and no distractions (such as looking out a window)
- Decide on desk / chair orientation
 - The “U” shape is a good classroom arrangement for desks/tables. It provides focus on instructors while also allowing good sight lines with other class members.
 - Consider how to arrange furniture for any planned small group work. For example, a circle of chairs or a cluster of 3-4 desks might be appropriate.
- Be sure equipment works, (e.g. computer projector, speakers or DVD player). Check out equipment in advance and have a backup plan. Don’t base the total success of a presentation on a single piece of equipment. “BE PREPARED.”
- If you plan to use PowerPoint, your backup plan should include having slide copies or notes to refer to if the computer or projector should have a problem. Make sure that no student’s view is blocked by the projector (or associated laptop) or by the instructor position.
- If you are using a school classroom then record the room setup prior to moving furniture or erasing whiteboards (a phone camera is good for this) and then return the room to its original state when finished. Be a good visitor!



Using Scenarios

Scenarios are a frequently used teaching technique in AYSO courses and Section Meeting workshops.

What is a scenario? A scenario is a guided participation technique that uses a real-life situation to create group interaction usually centered on creating solutions to challenging situations.

- Participants may be divided into small groups
- Instructor gives each group a question or situation to address
- Frequently one situation builds on the prior ones, adding complexity or demonstrating key variables as the lesson progresses (e.g., managing a situation at 16U versus a similar situation at 12U)
- Each group confers, arrives at a consensus, and chooses a spokesperson
 - For large classes with many groups, it is recommended that co-instructors be used to help facilitate/monitor the group discussion.
- Instructor reconvenes the class, then for each group, introduces the problem and asks the group spokesperson to present the solution

An appropriate scenario can be very effective in conveying practical knowledge and engaging students. However, a scenario tests the instructor's ability to manage a highly interactive class and requires the instructor to keep students focused on the teaching points. Some of the most popular lessons and classes (as measured by evaluation forms) use this technique.

The benefits of using scenarios include:

- Learning by doing is powerful
- Large groups have limited participation possibilities; subdividing increases participation
- More material can be covered by parallel breakouts than if presented to the whole group by an instructor
- Scenario material is often drawn from practical situations, which provides participants with worked-out real-world examples of the proper solution to problems they actually encounter in their AYSO roles.

Scenario Instructor Tips

In using scenarios, there are some basic rules to ensure the learning experience gives the participants the maximum benefit.



- The Lead Instructor and assigned co-instructors should monitor the group discussions to ensure:
 - The groups stay on track and all learners are engaged
 - Nobody dominates the discussion and group members feel free to express their opinions
 - The groups select a spokesperson to present the group response
 - They have adequate time to discuss the scenario
 - They don't get hung up on arguing a single point such that the entire scenario isn't reviewed and discussed.
 - All opinions within the groups are respected and incorrect answers are politely addressed within the groups.
- Set a clear time limit ahead of group discussions. Inform the participants of time remaining in their group sessions before presenting the results (e.g., "5 minutes left", "2 minutes left" etc.)
- Ensure the participants leave with correct information and do not have misconceptions about the correct answers
 - Validate the importance of the participant responses; however, do provide appropriate correction as necessary
- Make sure there is time for all groups to present their answers to the scenarios used, otherwise the groups who do not present will not feel their contribution to the class was valuable. This will require careful time management of the group presentations.



Teaching Women Participants

Qualified women referee instructors should be used whenever possible. Women instructors serve as positive role models and their participation reinforces with all participants the image of women referees and referee instructors who are qualified and knowledgeable.

Considerations

- In a male-dominated room, women participants may be reluctant to participate. Ensure an equal learning opportunity.
- If possible, organize breakout groups to avoid having just one woman in the group so that each has a peer.
- In what some may perceive as a “man’s domain”, women participants may not ask or answer questions if they feel uncomfortable. As with all participants, ask their opinions and openly invite their participation but be respectful if they decline.
- Early in the course, make it clear to your female students that you welcome their participation and their contributions from a “woman’s perspective” provide a valuable learning tool for all participants.
- Male or female, be careful with any use of humor. Stereotypical or off-color comments or jokes are never appropriate.
- Watch facial expressions and confirm that everyone understands that particular point. Women in this environment may not ask clarifying questions or admit they don’t understand for fear of being judged by male instructors and other participants.



Teaching Youth Participants

It is not uncommon for referee courses to have youth participants. Most often these students are also players but there will occasionally be participants who do not play the game. The motivations for these youth participants are usually quite different than the adult attendees. The adults are typically motivated for a number of reasons, usually related to their child's participation: an honest desire to be a referee, a way to relate to their kids, a need to support the team (e.g. "referee" points needed for team standings), or a desire to volunteer where most needed. The youth participants tend to be motivated by such things as: a need to try an "adult" activity, peer pressure (e.g. "John is a referee so I need to show him I can do it too."), social needs particularly if the Region has a thriving PRO or Youth Referee program, parental pressure, or, sometimes, a desire to improve as a player. Instructors need to understand this and prepare accordingly.

Psychological Considerations

- Younger participants may be intimidated and reluctant to participate. Pay attention to them during the class to ensure an equal learning opportunity.
- Consider seating younger participants together to foster confidence and provide peer support.
- Teens may actually have a longer attention span than adults because they are used to a classroom environment. On the other hand, teens can often become sidetracked in peer discussions and demonstrate unintentionally disruptive classroom behavior. It might be a good idea to try and seat the teens in the class apart from each other. Alternatively, asking them to sit near the front of the class so they can be your demonstrators is another way to get their attention and participation.
- Youth participants might not ask or answer questions because they fear embarrassment particularly if there are also adult participants. Ask their opinions and openly invite their participation but be respectful if they decline.
- Again, be very cautious with the use of humor or jokes. Younger participants may be more sensitive to perceived slights.
- Be aware that a skilled, experienced youth participant may want to "show off" a little and could make it more difficult for new adult volunteers to learn.

Social Considerations

- Most adults participate in learning opportunities in AYSO because they have fun. It is important to try to make sure that youth participants are also having fun.
- Try to have more than one youth participant involved so that each has a peer.
- Sometimes youth participants try to answer every question asked by the instructors. Don't let it happen, even if the adults hang back to facilitate it. Get participation from everyone.



- Don't plan adult activities after the class in which the youth participants cannot engage.

Physical Considerations

- Make sure that the classroom and seating can accommodate participants that may differ significantly in size from the adults.
- Youth participants are often ideal to use in demonstrating soccer skills if they are experienced.

Economic Considerations

- Younger participants may not have the means to purchase materials or supplies.
- Travel to attend workshops or courses is more difficult. Be willing to assist in arranging car pools to help youth participants attend, but do not violate Safe Haven guidelines in doing so.
- If you are planning for "lunch on your own" be aware that the youth participant may not have the money or may not have arranged for a ride to a restaurant (also a Safe Haven concern).

Gender Considerations

- Just as an instructor plans for gender differences in adults, plans need to include gender and age considerations for youth participants.
- Pair up like-skilled and same gender participants where possible.

Safety Considerations

- AYSO's Safe Haven mandates are just as important in the classroom as on the soccer field.
- Maintain an 8 participant to 1 instructor ratio or have other adult supervision available.
- Always plan for gender specific supervision.
- Ensure that there is someone who can be identified by the youth who will pick up the youth participant on time. An adult must remain at the site until all youth participants have departed.



Outdoor Presentations

AYSO Referees perform their volunteer roles outdoors on a soccer pitch. There is great value in the use of outdoor settings for teaching soccer concepts. Importantly, some students learn some soccer concepts only by seeing them in physical space rather than on diagrams or hearing them described in words. Outdoor presentations confront the instructor with many challenges but are a vital component of AYSO courses and workshops, especially in the coach and referee disciplines. It is recommended that co-instructors be used for large classes to more efficiently manage the instruction.

Benefits

- Fresh air
- Space
- Usually free of equipment and breakable items
- Room for demonstrations
- Realistic environment

Challenges

- Natural Distractions
 - Weather
 - Stimulating landscapes
 - Animals, insects, etc.
- Man Made Distractions
 - Busy streets
 - Others using nearby areas
 - Persistent industrial noises
 - Transient noise and visual distractions (airplanes, lawn mowers, etc.)

Prior Planning Prevents Poor Performance (PPPPP)

- Visit your teaching site a day or two before the course at approximately the time you will be teaching to acquaint yourself with the area and specific challenges to overcome.
- Pay attention to weather by watching long range forecasts.
- Make changes to a location if you find it not conducive to instruction.
- Check for safety hazards.
- Have a first aid kit available.
- For large groups, plan on some type of voice amplification, especially if it's windy.
- Always turn your audience away from the sun so they can see clearly.
- Erect a tent or have an area to take the class if sudden inclement weather occurs.
- Inform students prior to class to bring sun protection (sunscreen, hats, etc.) and wear appropriate clothing/footwear.
- Have water (and snacks) available.



- Have a contingency plan for conducting the course if the outdoor area becomes unusable or unavailable (nearby church basement, school, city recreational center, etc.).



Administering Exams

Evaluating participant knowledge and retention through the use of written exams is an important part of the learning process. Exams provide the instructor and participants with feedback that confirms and reinforces that the participant attained a required level of knowledge and can also inform the instructor and participant alike of misunderstood information. In addition the instructor can review the test results to identify areas where the instruction content or delivery worked well or needs to be improved.

The National Referee Council reviews exams annually for compliance with the current Laws of the Game and periodically upgrades the written exams at each level of the program to assess candidates' knowledge of the Laws of the Game. However, it is the responsibility of the Instructor to make sure that any exam used is graded appropriately for current changes in Laws and Rules and Regulations.

The [NRP Manual](#) provides information on administering the written examinations. Please get familiar with the information in that document.

Written Exams

Some of the key tips for administering written exams are:

- Allow sufficient time in the class agenda to take the test. Generally the test will require 60-90 minutes to complete, depending on the course.
- Exams should always be graded by the instructor(s). While self-grading is not ideal, there may be circumstances where instructor-supervised self-grading of exams is appropriate. Students should never grade other students' tests. Allow time in the agenda to correct the test. The amount depends on how many instructors are available to correct exams. Quite often some exams can be corrected as the slower students are finishing.
- If multiple instructors are correcting exams please make sure that all are "on the same page" regarding what constitutes an acceptable answer for any fill-in-the-blank question. Recognize that some students do not write well and some students may have language issues.
- Review the test prior to the class. Make sure there are no errors in the answer key. This also provides an opportunity for the instructor to make sure the presentations adequately cover areas/concepts tested on the exam.
- Provide an environment conducive to exam taking. Minimize noise and distractions.
- Provide clear instructions to the students:
 - Read the instructions, both the ones at the beginning of the exam and the ones that appear in several places within the exam
 - Don't read more into the question than is there



- Feel free to ask an instructor for clarification if a question is unclear
- Answer the exam questions according to the IFAB/AYSO Laws of the Game and the AYSO National Rules and Regulations.
- Be available during the test to respond to questions. Do not give the answer but do provide guidance on the question content.
- Have pencils/erasers available for students to use.
- Budget time to review the test with the students. This can be done one-on-one or in a group. No student should leave without understanding the correct answer to each question.
 - Be respectful – do not embarrass any student.
- Students may NOT keep the exams. All exams must be returned to the instructor. The lead instructor is responsible for recording passing exam scores on the roster and on the individual student Referee Upgrade Application form. The tests are to be destroyed after the scores are recorded.
- Occasionally there will be a student with a disability or a literacy issue (perhaps, someone who does not read/write in English). It is appropriate to offer to conduct the exam orally as long as the offer is made discretely and respectfully. We do not want the exam to be an impediment in certifying referees.

The AYSO National Referee Program provides two versions of each test to allow for rapid retesting. Either version may be used for any class. Certain of the classes also have a Spanish version of the exams. See the [NRP Manual](#) for the current retesting policy as well as the availability of the Spanish versions.

All tests except the National Referee and National Referee Assessor exams can be administered by any Referee Administrator, Director of Assessment, Director of Instruction, or referee instructor of any certification level. The National tests may be administered by any Section Referee Administrator, Section Director of Assessment, Section Director of Instruction, National Referee Instructor, or by someone they designate.

The most current exams are located on AYSOU as part of the approved instructional material associated with the class. Most exams require a password to access; that password may be obtained by contacting your Area or Section Director of Instruction or Referee Administrator. Each exam is identified by the referee level to which it applies. Each exam also has a version identifier, which is the year and month in which it was created, followed by the letter “a” or “b”. The exams are updated, at a minimum, annually to reflect the annual LOTG updates published by IFAB. More frequent updates will occur if the IFAB or US Soccer issue important clarifications or interpretations that conflict with previous guidance.

The questions on the exams are either true/false, multiple-choice, or fill-in. Each true/false and multiple-choice question is worth one point. Each fill-in question, unless explicitly noted otherwise, is worth one point per blank. So, for example, a question that asks the participant to list four DFK fouls is worth four points.



Some complex restart questions on the Advanced and National exams have a more complicated scoring. The instructions preceding these questions in the exam form explain how they are scored. Essentially, one point is given for properly naming the misconduct (if any), one point is given for correctly identifying the discipline and the color of the guilty team(s), and one point is given for correctly specifying the restart and the team color.

The total number of points in the exam and the number required to pass are given on the cover sheet of the exam. The exam package includes the test, the answer key, and a feedback form to report issues with the test.

Physical Testing

One part of the upgrade requirements for Advanced and National Referee certification is testing the candidate's physical condition. The following considerations are important for those who may be involved in administering physical tests:

- Suitable running surface (well-marked, smooth, level, track or mowed grass)
- Weather conditions (temperature extremes, rain, natural or artificial lighting)
- Ample time (warm-up, rest between events and cool-down)
- Enough instructors to act as timers to avoid long waits to be tested (staff at start and finish lines)
- First aid precautions (availability of medical professionals)
- Availability of water (and possibly ice) for hydration, particularly on warm days
- Proper equipment (forms, stop watches, cones, clip boards, first aid supplies)
- Remind the candidates that it is not a race to see who is the fastest but rather simply a test of their ability to meet minimum physical standards. Avoid unnecessary exertion.
- All tests must be administered on the same day. Participants are entitled to a 15 minute interval between events if they want it. Partial credit may not be given for those not completing the testing.
- The specific details of the physical fitness tests are found in the Appendix of the NRP Manual.



Sample Course Timeline and Checklist

Planning a course takes time and organization! It also involves a lot more than preparing the individual lessons. The lead instructor has overall responsibility for the course, but can (and should) enlist the help of others in carrying out tasks before, during, and after the course.

This sample timeline and checklist are intended to help the lead instructor fulfill his/her responsibilities.

At least five weeks before the course:

- Representative of sponsoring entity contacts lead instructor to request that the course be offered. Date(s) and location are established. Possible local co-instructors are identified
- Lead instructor registers course online at aysou.org
- Lead instructor contacts potential co-instructors to determine their availability and instruction experience. In considering faculty for the course, the lead instructor should consider including co-instructors with a variety of teaching styles and experience levels. In particular, including and providing mentoring for inexperienced/new instructors is important for strengthening AYSO's Referee Instructor program.
- Lead instructor develops a tentative schedule for lessons and instructors. Schedule should include:
 - Time budget for each lesson
 - Breaks at least every 1½ to 2 hours
 - Break for lunch or dinner, if appropriate
 - Time to move between indoor and outdoor activity, as appropriate

Four weeks before course:

- Lead instructor contacts representative of sponsoring entity to discuss and resolve the following matters:
 - Target number of participants
 - Necessary publicity
 - Nature of the course site: location of classroom, field, restrooms, etc.
 - Instructional materials to be provided by sponsoring entity at course site, such as computer projector, blackboard, field, assistant referee flags, cones, balls, whistles etc.
 - Food /drinks/snacks to be provided at breaks
 - Acquisition of materials (for example, Law books)
 - Reimbursement of instructor-incurred expenses (such as duplication of handouts, travel costs, etc.)



- Lead instructor contacts co-instructors to confirm availability and to communicate assignments. Matters to discuss:
 - Specific lesson plans to be prepared by each co-instructor (lead instructor should send copies)
 - Overall course schedule (each co-instructor should receive a copy)
 - Whether and when lead instructor will see plans for presentations by co-instructors (highly recommended that lead instructor previews presentations, if possible)
 - Creation of handouts and responsibility for their duplication
 - Reimbursement of expenses

One-to-two weeks before course:

- Lead instructor confirms with representative of sponsoring entity that responsibilities taken on (per items 1 and 2 above) have been carried out
- Lead instructor contacts co-instructors to monitor progress and address any issues which have developed during lesson preparation

One week before course:

- Lead instructor contacts co-instructors to cover logistical arrangements for meeting at course site, etc.
- (If possible) Lead instructor meets with co-instructors to preview presentations and to suggest adjustments that will improve coherency of the course

Day of the course:

- Lead instructor arrives at site at least one hour before projected starting time and meets representative of sponsoring entity. Together, they verify that necessary materials are present and that site is usable (for example, restrooms open, and field available) and to prepare instructional setting.
 - Co-instructors should also arrive early as well to help set up classroom environment, arrange materials, test equipment, etc.
 - Provides last chance for instructor team to confirm preparation
 - Lead instructor should record state of classroom via phone camera to capture layout prior to adjusting furniture locations
- Lead instructor should provide written roster of participants used to verify attendance
- As participants arrive, lead instructor ensures they sign the roster
- Lead instructor should ensure that all students receive a course evaluation form which will be used for feedback at the end of the course

At the conclusion of the course:

- Lead instructor signs participants' referee upgrade forms to indicate completion of course and (if appropriate) successful completion of Law exam and physical fitness test
- Lead instructor collects course evaluation forms
- Lead instructor should hold brief "post-mortem" meeting with co-instructors
 - Quick review of any notable successes and issues



- Notes for things to improve
- Any specific feedback for individual instructors
- Thank instructor team
- Return classroom to original state

Shortly after completion of the course:

- Lead instructor inputs course roster completion status in AYSOU roster
- Lead instructor arranges for reimbursement by the sponsoring entity for expenses incurred by self and co-instructors
- Lead instructor shares course evaluation information with co-instructors
- Lead instructor shares summary of “post-mortem” meeting with instructor staff



Teaching Tips

As instructors our purpose is to provide the necessary information to a referee candidate in a manner to allow him/her to be successful on the field. We need to be creative and find ways that effectively convey and confirm that knowledge. One of the keys for knowledge transfer and retention is to use techniques and approaches that engage students and make learning fun. This requires a lot of creativity on the part of the instructor because students learn in different ways. Part of the preparation for a class should include consideration of the following:

- Is this material best taught in a classroom or outside on a field?
 - If outside, what is my backup plan if I have to do it inside?
- Do I need a co-instructor to effectively teach this information?
- How do I engage the students?
 - What combination of lecture, demonstration, guided participation?
 - What teaching aids would be useful to stimulate learning?
 - Do I need flip charts, a white board, or a computer or some combination?
 - Would scenarios help make any points?
 - Would a picture be effective in making a point?
 - Would videos help make any points?
- What are the time constraints?
- What time during the agenda is this material presented?
 - Is it right after lunch?
 - Is it the last lesson of the day?
 - Is it right before (or after) the written exam?
- What facility constraints exist that might potentially impact learning?
- How large is the class expected to be?
- What is the mix of youth and adult participants (if known)?

Using the Lesson Plans

Lesson plans for all referee training courses may be found at aysou.org. These lesson plans contain information about the required course content as well as recommended time budgets. Please note that the time budgets do not include time for meals, written exams, fitness tests, or any breaks. These lesson plans are reviewed annually to ensure compliance with the current Laws of the Game and the AYSO National Rules & Regulations.

For all courses from the Regional Referee Course and below the lesson plan describes the order for the individual lessons to be presented. In these courses the lesson plan presents a logical progression for learning the duties of a referee and should be presented in the order described. The lessons in the Intermediate Referee Course,



Advanced Referee Course, and National Referee Course may be presented in any order.

A Word about PowerPoint

Currently all courses from the Intermediate Referee Course down through the 8U Official Course have a PowerPoint package as part of the materials. These presentations have been developed, following the lesson plans, and cover the entire course content. **There is no requirement to use these presentations.** It is strongly recommended that Instructors teach no more than 90 minutes consecutively using PowerPoint and that, in every course, some modules be presented using other techniques. A course completely composed of PowerPoint teaching becomes boring and generally has poor student engagement.

The real purpose of these PowerPoint presentations is to provide a tool for the instructors if they choose to use it. We do not want these packages to serve as a “handy crutch” for instructors so that they can minimize preparation time. This can stifle instructor creativity and hamper the learning experience for the participants. Rather, these presentations should serve as a resource for the instructor team to select meaningful pieces to use or provide inspiration within their individual lessons. A good instructor will tailor any charts to best reflect their teaching style and accommodate the needs of their students.

If you choose to use a piece or pieces of the provided PowerPoint presentation (or any PowerPoint provided by another instructor):

- Review the content thoroughly for factual errors and update as necessary
 - Feedback on any errors should be sent to the AYSO Office to referee@ayso.org
- Practice the presentation to fully understand the content and flow and timing
- Practice using any animated slides to learn the “click” sequence to avoid issues in the classroom and understand timing
- Do **NOT** read the slides to the students. Talk conversationally to the students about the material and let the words on the screen emphasize your points.
 - **Face the students, not the screen.** This can usually be done most easily by positioning yourself so you can see your computer screen with the students looking at the projected material.
 - Be aware of where you stand so you do not inadvertently block any student’s view of the screen.
- Use the screen blanking function in PowerPoint (tap B on the keyboard to toggle) to return class attention back to the instructor as appropriate.
 - This can be effective in re-focusing discussion as well as removing a distraction
 - It can also allow the instructor to more freely move without risk of blocking student view of the projected information



Teaching the Referee Courses

During the Referee Instructor Course and the Advanced Referee Instructor Course some suggested approaches for teaching the various lessons in several courses were discussed and summarized in a handout. Those handouts may be found on aysou.org.

- **From the Referee Instructor Course (Resources → Instructor Program Materials → Referee Instructor):**
 - “Suggestions for Teaching the Regional Referee Course”
 - “Suggestions for Teaching the Online Companion Course”
 - “Suggestions for Teaching the Intermediate Referee Course”

- **From the Advanced Referee Instructor Course (Resources → Instructor Program Materials → Advanced Referee Instructor):**
 - “Suggestions for Teaching the Advanced Referee Course”

Suggestions for a Teaching Kit

Good instructors will be prepared to handle a variety of teaching and administrative tasks. One useful tool is a well-stocked teaching kit. This kit might include such items as:

- Course lesson plan and notes
- Paper copy of any PowerPoint presentation(s) and notes you will use
- Electronic copy of your presentation(s) on a flash drive as backup
- Stapler, staples
- Scissors
- Scotch tape
- Pens, pencils, erasers
- White board markers, eraser
- Duct tape (be careful where you use it!)
- Painter’s tape (low adhesive residue tape)
- Blank paper for notes
- Extension cord, power strip
- 3x5 file cards (colored ones can substitute for red/yellow cards if needed)
- Whistle, Red/Yellow cards, referee game reports and wallet, coin, AR flags, ball
- Hard copy of LOTG, National Rules & Regulations
- PowerPoint presenter with spare batteries
- Blank flip charts w/stand



AYSOU Rosters and Referee Upgrade Application Forms

Rosters for all AYSO referee certification courses are managed through AYSOU. These rosters are a formal record for course participation for our referee volunteers and are used to formally credit our volunteers for their attendance. They are used in conjunction with the hardcopy AYSO Referee Upgrade Application forms to track completion of all certification requirements. Currently the AYSOU roster is used to status the course completion and the written exam. The hardcopy Upgrade Application form actually provides a status of all certification requirements (course completion, written exam, fitness test, and assessments/observations as required). One of the main purposes of the AYSOU roster is to provide a backup to the hardcopy form in case it is lost or destroyed.

Managing the AYSOU roster entails three steps:

- Register the class on AYSOU
 - Provide a descriptive class title so that prospective registrants can easily find the roster
 - Tell prospective registrants to register for the class (“advertise”)
- At the start of class use a hardcopy of the roster to verify attendance
 - Note any registrants that fail to complete the entire course
 - Add any registrants that show up without initially registering
- At the end of class
 - Set the “Status” category of all students who completed the whole class to “COMPLETED”
 - Set the “Success” category of all students who passed the written exam to “PASSED”
 - Then “UPDATE” and Return
 - Do not wait for all students to pass the exam before you update the roster. Test status can added as appropriate when they finally do pass the exam.

The Lead Instructor should also provide each attendee with a hardcopy AYSO Referee Upgrade Application with course completion signed off. Successful written exam completion will also be acknowledged on the form as appropriate. The students will retain these forms as their record. These forms will be used by the student to record completion of the remaining certification requirements.

More information regarding managing AYSOU rosters may be found on aysou.org at:

- Resources → How-Tos for Instructors
- Resources → AYSO-U FAQs