



BEING AN ASSISTANT REFEREE IN A TOURNAMENT

1. Introduction

This short course focuses on your role as an assistant referee (A/R for short) at an AYSO tournament. We will look only at what you need to be able to do well in order to be an effective A/R.

2. Prerequisites

Our Region 76 Referee Administrator, Avery Krut, may have additional requirements and I am not responsible for these. You can contact Avery at referee@ayso76.org. Only Marc can certify that you are qualified to referee at a tournament.

3. Appearance

You MUST be properly attired. This means that you must wear an official referee uniform, consisting of a jersey, shorts, long socks and appropriate footwear, preferably black cleats or turf shoes (not tennis running shoes). You should have a badge, available from the Referee Administrator, or wear a badge provided by the tournament.

Your appearance matters a lot. Get it right. A slovenly referee or a referee with improper or missing equipment risks losing respect that is essential to the ability to control the game. Some pointers:

- Wear a wristwatch with a digital display and the ability to count up, down or both (real pros wear two such watches). Do not wear them around your neck or keep them in your pocket
- DO NOT WEAR SHORT SOCKS and keep your socks pulled up
- Do not wear sunglasses unless they have optical lenses that you need to wear
- You may wear an appropriate hat
- If it is cold, you can ask the center referee's permission to wear long black sweatpants or rainproof pants. You may wear a black or white undershirt. You may also wear gloves
- Do not carry a whistle or red or yellow cards (keep those in your bag)
- Do not use your cell phone or PDA during the game. Don't have the cell phone or PDA visible, as in a holster. You need to concentrate and to be seen to be concentrating
- Avoid chains or jewelry, unless it is discreet, such as a wedding band, or invisible
- Have a pen or pencil and have a back-up
- Carry a set of flags

4. The Laws of the Game

As a referee, you should be familiar with the Laws of the Game (LOTG), as supplemented by the official Guidelines for Referees that accompany the LOTG (see <http://www.fifa.com/development/education-and-technical/referees/laws-of-the-game.html> and http://www.fifa.com/mm/Document/FootballDevelopment/Refereeing/02/79/92/44/Laws.of.the.Game.2016.2017_Neutral.pdf).

5. Your Responsibilities

All of the Laws of the Game are important, but in particular, you need to be familiar with Law 6:

Two assistant referees may be appointed whose duties, subject to the decision of the referee, are to indicate:

- when the whole of the ball leaves the field of play [including for a goal] (Laws 8, 9 and 10)
- which team is entitled to a corner kick, goal kick or throw-in (Laws 17, 16 and 15)
- when a player may be penalized for being in an offside position (Law 11)
- when a substitution is requested (Law 3)
- when misconduct or any other incident occurs out of the view of the referee
- when offences have been committed whenever an assistant referee has a better view than the referee (this includes, in certain circumstances, offences committed in the penalty area) (Law 12)
- whether, during the taking of a penalty kick, the goalkeeper moves off the goal line before the ball is kicked and whether the ball crosses the line (Law 14)

What we will do is consider each of the laws that bear upon your responsibilities.

6. Ball In and Out of Play and Who Gets the Restart

6.1 Law 8 (The Start and Restart of Play). There are eight restarts (kickoff, throw-in, goal kick, corner, direct free kick, penalty kick, indirect free kick and drop ball). As an A/R, your concerns are the throw-in and the goal kick as well as defensive free kicks taken inside the penalty area).

Throw-In. The ball is in play when any part of the ball has crossed the outside of the touchline in the air or on the ground. If a throw-in is taken and ball is not in play before it lands or is touched by any person, the throw-in is retaken by the attacking team from the original place it left the field. **SIGNAL:** Waggle your flag above your head and when you have the referee's attention point the flag at 30-45 degrees in the direction as the throw is to be retaken.

Goal Kicks and Defensive Free Kicks Taken Inside the Penalty Area. The ball is in play as soon as it has entirely left the penalty area. **POSITIONING AND SIGNAL:** On a goal kick or a free kick inside the goal area, make sure the ball has been placed anywhere on the edge of or inside the goal area, then run to the 18 yard line to be able to judge if the ball has left the area. (Remember, however, that the ball does not have to cross the front boundary of the penalty area, it can be hit sideways or even slightly backwards.) If the ball does not exit the penalty area, waggle your flag and when you have the referee's attention, point it horizontally toward the middle of the penalty area.

6.2 Law 9 – The Ball In and Out of Play. The ball is out of play when:

- it has wholly crossed the goal line or touch line whether on the ground or in the air
- play has been stopped by the referee

The ball is in play at all other times, including when:

- it rebounds off a goalpost, crossbar or corner flagpost and remains in the field of play
- it rebounds off either the referee or an assistant referee when they are on the field of play

You need to judge when the ball is in or out of play. This means judging (and, critically, being in the best possible position to judge) whether the ball has wholly crossed the goal line or touch line. Remember, this can happen on the ground or in the air. A ball that leaves the field in the air is out of play, even if it returns due to wind or bending of the flight of the ball.

You must also judge and indicate which team touched the ball last before the ball left the field of play.

7. Offside

First, it is offside, not offsides. Your job is to help the referee with offside calls. This is second in importance only to judging the ball in and out of play and which team touched it last.

7.1 The elements of the offense

- A player is in an offside position if, at the time the ball was last touched or played by a teammate, the player was closer to the opponent's goal line than **both** the second to last defender and the ball. A player is not offside when a goal kick, throw in or corner kick is taken.
- **It is not an offense to be in an offside position.** A player is not penalized if, while in an offside position, just because his or her teammate dribbles right by him or, except in unusual cases, if he or she runs alongside or on a parallel track with the teammate with the ball.
- The offense is committed by only by an attacker who at the relevant time was in an offside position and thereafter becomes involved in active play.
- There are three forms of active play:
 - Interfering with play – primarily by receiving the ball (although in an obvious situation you don't have to wait for the offside attacker to actually touch the ball)
 - Interfering with an opponent – e.g., by getting in the opponent's way or impeding the goalkeeper's line of sight
 - Gaining an advantage – this is often awarded when a player in an offside position was not immediately involved in the play becomes involved because of the way the play developed. We'll give some examples during the course.

7.2 Positioning. At all times when the ball is in play, remain level with the second to last defender or the ball, whichever is closer to the goal in the half for which you are responsible. Some tips:

- The last defender is usually the goalkeeper, but this is not always the case. Sometimes, the goalkeeper gets ahead of one or more defenders.
- As soon as the ball gets behind the second to last defender, follow the ball. This will help you get in position to judge whether the ball is over the goal line (for a goal, a goal kick or a corner kick). Even if the ball gets over the line before you can get there, keep running. By

the time anyone looks over to see where you are, you will appear to be perfectly placed to make the call.

- **CONCENTRATE!** You have to judge simultaneously the position of the attacker who last played or touched the ball and the position of the attacker who is being judged for offside. This is hard to do. Also, while you must sometimes pay more attention to whether the ball is in or out bounds up the touch line and you may lose track of the second to last defender, it is critical to stay level and so don't spend too much time watching the play up field without checking on your second to last defender.

7.3 Signals. When you have decided to signal for offside, first, stop. Raise your flag straight up. Hold it there. Do not do anything else **AND DO NOT DROP YOUR FLAG** until the referee stops play. Then point across the field – 30 degrees up for an offside on the other side of the field, straight if in the middle of the field, 30 degrees down if on your side of the field.

Sometimes the referee will not see you right away. **DO NOT DROP YOUR FLAG.** Don't give up; just wait until (i) the referee waves you off; (b) the referee restarts the play without acknowledging you (this should happen rarely); (c) the defense gets complete control of the ball and plays it out of danger.

8. Positioning and Signals

8.1 General Positioning and Signaling Responsibilities. In 98% of all games, you will be refereeing according to the diagonal system of control run right to left. This means you will run along one touchline from the goal line to the half way line and no further.

You give signals relating to the goal line in your half and to the touch line on your side. However, the further the ball is into the other half, the more calls concerning the touchline should be left to the referee who should be over on your touch line in the other half. Sometimes, however, you may need to help the referee know that a ball running along the touch line has gone out or has stayed in. **DO NOT GIVE SIGNALS RELATING TO THE OTHER GOAL LINE OR THE OPPOSITE TOUCH LINE.**

Face the field as much as you can. You may have to turn and run, but shuffle as much as the play will allow. When running toward the center of the field, put the flag in your right hand, then switch it back.

DON'T BE A BALL BOY (OR GIRL). Chasing after a ball distracts from watching the field.

8.2 Signaling Basics. We have covered some of the signals above and will cover the rest during the course. Here, however, are some general pointers.

- When nothing is going on, keep your flag at rest on your left hand side (right hand side in the rare cases where the center referee is running a reverse diagonal – left to right)
- **DON'T FIDGET OR PLAY WITH YOUR FLAG** and don't stick it into your pants!
- Sometimes, a little hand gesture with your free hand is appropriate to tell the referee the ball has stayed in play or a player is not offside

- BEFORE YOU GIVE ANY SIGNAL WITH YOUR FLAG, STOP. Don't signal while running or walking
- Face the field when you signal, don't face up or down the line
- When necessary, change the flag from one hand to the other – don't contort yourself!
- Sell your calls. If you are unsure, point vigorously. No one will be the wiser
- Support the center referee – if he or she signals one way, don't point the other and change your signal
- As you get more experienced, learn to mirror the other A/R's signals (not directional or in and out calls, however)

8.3 Signals Relating to the Scoring (or Non-Scoring) of Goals

The guidelines included in the LOTG book say the following about “Goal – no goal” situations:

- When a goal has been scored and there is no doubt about the decision, the referee and assistant referee must make eye contact and the assistant referee must then run quickly 25-30 meters along the touch line towards the halfway line without raising his flag.
- When a goal has been scored but the ball appears still to be in play, the assistant referee must first raise his flag to attract the referee's attention then continue with the normal goal procedure of running quickly 25-30 meters along the touch line towards the halfway line.
- On occasions when the whole of the ball does not cross the goal line and play continues as normal because a goal has not been scored, the referee must make eye contact with the assistant referee and if necessary give a discreet hand signal.

In other words, if it's not clear whether the ball crossed the line, if you think it did, raise your flag and hold it there until you get the referee's attention, then signal the goal by the short sprint. I often use my non-flag hand to point to the penalty area. If you think it did not, give a little gesture by hand to indicate that the ball is still in play and that play should continue.

9. Interactions with the Referee, Players, Coaches and Spectators

Hopefully, the center referee will give you pre-game instructions. Listen to them carefully and ask questions if you need. Especially make sure you know what the center referee wants you to do about doubtful goals (was it over the line or not), where you should stand on an attacking free kick close to the penalty area (in line with second to last defender or on the goal line) and who takes over in the case the referee cannot continue. A good center will also tell you how much latitude you have to signal fouls.

➔ Make regular eye contact with your center referee.

It's OK to talk to coaches and spectators in a friendly way, but don't question or try to explain the center referee's decision – just support it and move on.

You may give oral instructions to players during the game, such as to retreat 10 yards or to indicate where a throw or kick should be taken. You can also say friendly things to players. (I often welcome corner kick takers to “my corner”.)