

AYSO Program: Referee
Lead Instructor: Section Referee
Administrator or his designee

Recruiting and Retaining Referees Roundtable

Latest Revision Date:
[September 28, 2014]
Length: One hour 15 minutes
Lesson Plan Number: (Number)
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Change History	
[September 28, 2014]	Lesson Plan First Developed

Recruiting and Retaining Referees Roundtable

1. DESCRIPTION

This 1.25 hour roundtable discussion is intended to be held at annual Section Expos. The purpose of the session is to share regional experiences so that best practices and new ideas may be shared amongst the participants.

2. GOALS

- A. **Social:** provide a means for attendees to better get to know each other
- B. **Leadership development:** identify emerging talent pool
- C. **Knowledge:** share best practices and ideas
- D. **Empowerment:** encourage volunteers to bring new ideas back to their regions

3. PREREQUISITES

Space permitting, all Expo attendees should be permitted to attend. All AYSO volunteers, regardless of whether they are referees, should be encouraged to help recruit and retain referee volunteers.

4. STUDENT MATERIALS

AYSO Recruiting and Retaining Referees Manual
National Referee Program Manual
[New Materials Jerry Anderson is preparing]

SPECIAL INSTRUCTOR NOTE: When this lesson plan is presented at a Section EXPO, student handouts may be provided in booklet form to all attendees prior to the workshop. Instructors should review the content of these booklets prior to the class. Explain that all AYSO referee publications, lesson plans and the optional student handouts may be downloaded from aysotraining.org.

5. INSTRUCTOR EQUIPMENT AND MATERIALS

- A. Writing easel and markers
- B. [Other]

6. INSTRUCTOR NOTES

Roundtable discussions should involve very little lecturing and a significant amount of guided participation. Space permitting, chairs should be arranged in a circular manner so that all the participants can see each other. The instructor should monitor group discussions to make sure that the group stays on track and that nobody dominates the discussion.

The instructor should review the AYSO Recruiting and Retaining Referees Manual in advance of this session.

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7. ATTACHMENTS

A. [None]

LESSON PLAN

I. INTRODUCTION

- A. Introduce self and co-instructors
- B. Introduce topic
 - 1. The subject of this roundtable session is called “Recruiting and Retaining Referees”.
 - 2. Can I get a show of hands from everyone whose region has too many referees?
 - 3. How about a show of hands if your region occasionally has difficulty getting referee coverage for all your games?
 - 4. The concept here is that to have enough referees, we need to do two things well:
 - a. First, bring new referee volunteers into the fold
 - b. Second, keep them active and engaged as referee volunteers for as long as we can

II. RECRUITING AND RETAINING REFEREES

- A. Recruiting
 - 1. Ask the class to identify the ingredients you need to get new referees on the field. Write the suggestions down on an easel. They might include:
 - a. Recruit and train recruiters
 - b. Identify your candidate pool
 - i. Fathers
 - ii. Mothers
 - iii. Older siblings
 - iv. Teen players, especially those who need community service credits
 - v. Other
 - c. Communication approaches
 - i. Email
 - ii. Phone
 - iii. At registration
 - iv. At the pitch
 - d. Overcoming objections
 - e. Rules-based approaches
 - i. Minimum of one or two referees per team?
 - ii. Carrots (rewards) vs. sticks (punishment)
 - f. Scheduling the appropriate class
 - i. Find a good date (or two)
 - ii. Get the instructor(s)
 - iii. Get the classroom
 - iv. Advertise the event

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- v. Register it on eAYSO
 - vi. Print and copy the exams
 - vii. Order referee equipment
 - viii. Order food/snacks
 - g. Sign the newly minted referees up for their first games
 - h. Assign the referees to a mentor
 - i. Finish paperwork/accepting course roster
2. Ask class participants what parts of this set of tasks they think their Region does well and what it could improve upon, and why.
- B. Retaining
1. Let's start with asking the class to identify some reasons why AYSO referees keep coming back, and write these reasons down on the easel. Answers might include:
 - a. Exercise
 - b. Fulfills a family's volunteer requirements
 - c. It's the best view of the game
 - d. Keep warm on a cold day
 - e. Interaction with the players
 - f. Appreciation from your child(ren)
 - g. Recognition
 - h. Teamwork with other referees
 - i. Like the challenge of the activity
 - j. Opportunity for continuous improvement
 - k. Make new friends/develop a sense of community
 2. Now let's get the class to identify some reasons why AYSO volunteers stop refereeing, and write these reasons down on the easel. Reasons might include:
 - a. They never sign up for their first game
 - b. Overwhelmed by the initial experience
 - i. Start at a game beyond what they are capable of
 - ii. Not positive not encouraging feedback from touchlines
 - c. Injury
 - d. Child stops playing
 - e. Lack of other volunteers to help out/too much responsibility
 - f. Lack of enjoyment
 - g. Conflicts with other volunteer responsibilities (eg coaching)
 - h. Children with conflicting games/activities (can't be in two places at once)
 - i. Not fit enough for older, faster games on bigger fields
 - j. Better referees graduate to more challenging matches (travel, high school, college)
 3. Ask the class to identify things we can do to improve referee retention, and write these reasons down on the easel.
 - a. Make sure referees are well-trained

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- b. Eliminate (or at least deal firmly with) bad behavior on the part of spectators and coaches
- c. Assign mentors to support them
- d. Establish good communication
- e. Supply referees with uniforms that fit
- f. Work around their schedules
- g. Encourage continuing training
- h. Make sure we have referees at all levels of certification
- i. Make sure we don't push them into game they aren't ready for
- j. Organize a referee club
- k. Reward and thank them
- l. Regional leadership needs to deal immediately and firmly with any incident of referee abuse

III. CONCLUSION

- A. Every Region does some parts of recruiting and retaining really well, and has some parts it could do better.
- B. Hopefully some of the things we have covered in this session will give you some ideas to bring back to your Region.
- C. Please take the opportunity to review the Recruiting and Retaining Referees manual for additional ideas and details.