U.S. Soccer Federation Referee Grades

To provide uniform standards for soccer officials, the following grades have been established and supersede any and all other levels so that uniform and comparative grading exists throughout the U.S. Soccer Federation Referee Program.

Grade 12: Assistant Referee

Authorized Assignment Level: Assistant Referee on all youth and adult games
Note to Assignors: Minimum age of 17 suggested for assignment to adult level games

Grade 9: Recreational Referee

Authorized Assignment Level: Referee on recreational youth games U-14 and younger only and assistant referee on any game U-14 or below

Grade 8: Referee

Recommended Assignment Level: All youth games, assistant referee in comparable games

Grade 7: Referee

Recommended Assignment Level: All youth games and mixed leagues, assistant referee in all adult games below the top division

Grade 6: State Referee

Recommended Assignment Level: All youth games and adult amateur games through second division and assistant referee in the top adult division and Amateur Cup game

Grade 5: State Referee

Recommended Assignment Level: All youth games and adult games including first division and assistant referee in professional league and international cup games

Grade 4: National Referee and National Assistant Referee

Recommended Assignment Level: All games except formal FIFA international matches; assistant referee for international matches

Grade 3: Professional Referee and Professional Assistant Referee

Recommended Assignment Level: All games except formal FIFA international matches
By invitation of U.S. Soccer

Grade 2: International Assistant Referee

Recommended Assignment Level: All games
U. S. Citizen
By nomination of U.S. Soccer Board of Directors, and approved by FIFA

Grade 1: International Referee

Recommended Assignment Level: All games
U.S. Citizen
By nomination of U.S. Soccer Board of Directors, and approved by FIFA

Criteria for Certifying
Assistant Referee and Recreational Referee

Criteria	Assistant Referee Grade 12	Recreational Referee Grade 9
Minimum age	None – state associations may set minimum age	None
Experience (minimum cumulative career outdoor games at designated level)	Must have played at least three years of adult, college or competitive youth soccer, or officiated at least three years as U.S. Soccer grade 9.	Not applicable
Game level to be counted for advancement	Not applicable	Not applicable
Time in present grade	Not applicable	Not applicable
Training course requirements	Successfully complete the 7.5 hour U.S. Soccer Assistant Referee Training Course	Successfully complete 8 hour U.S. Soccer Recreational Referee Training Course
Written Examination	75% minimum score on U.S. Soccer Assistant Referee Exam	75% minimum score on U.S. Soccer Recreational Referee Exam
Field Evaluation by currently registered U.S. Soccer Assessor	Not required. It is recommended that new referees be observed in one of their first 10 games.	Not required. It is recommended that new referees be observed in one of their first 10 games.
Physical Fitness Test	Not required	Not required
Annual Renewal Requirements		
In-Service Training	Five hours during the preceding 12 months	Four hours during the preceding 12 months
Refresher Exam	Passing score of 75% required	Passing score of 75% required.
Physical Fitness Test	Not required	Not required

Criteria for Certifying and Upgrading
Referee

Criteria	Referee Grade 8	Referee Grade 7
Minimum age	None – state associations may set minimum age	17
Experience (minimum cumulative career affiliated outdoor games at designated level)	Not applicable	Referee: 75 Assistant Referee: 25
Game level to be counted for advancement	Not applicable	U.S. Soccer Federation Games
Time in present grade	Not applicable	12 months as Referee Grade 8
Training course requirements	Successfully complete U.S. Soccer Referee Training Course (or the Referee Bridge Course to upgrade from 9 to 8)	5 hours of U.S. Soccer Intermediate Level Training above normal recertification clinics, i.e. intermediate, advanced, regional/ pro clinics.
Written Examination	75% minimum score on U.S. Soccer Referee Exam	85% minimum score on U.S. Soccer Referee Exam
Field Evaluation by currently registered U.S. Soccer Assessor	Not required. It is recommended that new referees be observed in one of their first 10 games.	Pass one evaluation as referee in an affiliated Under-17 or higher level game employing the DSC
Physical Fitness Test	Not required	Required (with passing score)
Annual Renewal Requirements		
In-Service Training	Five hours during the preceding 12 months	Five hours during the preceding 12 months
Refresher Exam	Passing Score of 75% Required	Passing Score of 85% Required
Field Evaluation	Not required	1 developmental assessment, at any level designated by the state (U-17 or higher recommended), ***if adopted by state***
Physical Fitness Test	Not required	Required (with passing score)

Criteria for Certifying and Upgrading
State Referee

Criteria	State Referee Grade 6	State Referee Grade 5
Minimum age	18	19
Experience - minimum cumulative career affiliated outdoor games at designated level	Referee: 100 (U-18 Affiliated Competitive Leagues, or higher*) Assistant Referee: 25	Referee: 150 Assistant Referee: 50
Game level to be counted for advancement	Under-18 Affiliated Competitive leagues or higher*.	Of the 150 games a minimum of 50 must be on adult Division 1 league games or higher*.
Time in present grade	12 months as Referee Grade 7 prior to application	12 months as State Grade 6 prior to application
Training course requirements	19 hour State Referee Training Course	7 hours of In-Service State Referee Training
Written Examination	75% minimum score on U.S. Soccer State Referee Exam	85% minimum score on U.S. Soccer State Referee Exam
Field Evaluation by currently registered U.S. Soccer Assessor (see notes, below)	Pass two field assessments as referee* (one must be on Div. 2 adult or higher*) and one as assistant referee in Under-17 competitive league or higher.*	Pass two field assessments as referee and one as assistant referee in affiliated top adult Division 1 leagues or higher.*
Physical Fitness Test	Required (with passing score- see page 26)	Required (with passing score-see page 26)
Annual Renewal Requirements		
In-Service Training	Five hours during the preceding 12 months	Five hours during the preceding 12 months
Refresher Exam	Passing grade of 75% required	Passing grade of 85% required
Field Assessment (see notes, below)	One assessment as a referee at Div. 2 adult match or higher*.	One assessment as referee on a Div. 1 or higher* game required.
Physical Fitness Test	Required (with passing score)	Required (with passing score)

Notes: For upgrading Grade 5/6 referees, the assessments should be completed within a 12-month period. No more than 2 failing assessments can occur within that time period. If a candidate fails a third assessment in a 12-month period, the referee must start the upgrade procedure over for the next registration cycle, starting with zero assessments. For all upgrading referees, a failing assessment must be made up by two passing assessments in addition to the original required number of assessments. No assessments will count if the game is not deemed a sufficient test.

*All games listed on the following Referee Game Category Matrix qualify in this category, provided the game meets the sufficient test criteria.

Criteria for Certifying and Upgrading
National / Professional Referee

Criteria	National Referee Grade 4	Professional Referee Grade 3
Minimum age	23	23
Experience (minimum cumulative career outdoor games at designated level)	Referee: 175* (75* must be affiliated Div. 1 adult or higher; 5 must be professional games*) Assistant Referee: 100 (5 must be professional games*) (*Professional Games: WPS, MLS, NASL, USL Pro, PDL,)	Same as for Grade 4
Game level to be counted for advancement	Affiliated Adult League or higher	Same as for Grade 4
Time in present grade	2 years as Grade 5 prior to application date. Foreign-trained referees must have been a U.S. Soccer Referee for a minimum of one year.	Same as for Grade 4
Training course requirements	Attend and successfully complete a National Referee Certification Session.	Same as for Grade 4
Written Examination	Must pass a special National Referee Examination.	Same as for Grade 4
Field Evaluation	As required for renewal; (See Game Category Matrix)	As required for renewal; (See Game Category Matrix)
Physical Fitness Test	U.S. Soccer Physical Fitness Test successfully completed as per grade standards (See page 26)	Interval Fitness Test successfully completed as per grade standards (See page 27)
Citizenship	U.S. Citizen or Permanent Resident	U.S. Citizen or Permanent Resident

Referee Game Category Matrix

Category 1	1.1 Division 1 professional league matches: MLS and WPS 1.2 Open Cup matches involving only professional teams (MLS, USL-1, USL-2) 1.3 Professional foreign club matches at senior level 1.3.1 Against MLS teams 1.3.2 Includes foreign club vs. foreign club 1.4 Senior National Team matches - Men and Women 1.4.1 Against each other 1.4.2 Against Division 1 professional league teams
Category 2	2.1 Division 2 and 3 professional league matches: like USL-1 and USL-2 2.1.1 Includes matches involving MLS teams (<u>excludes</u> pre-season matches) 2.1.2 Includes matches involving foreign professional club teams or Senior National Teams 2.1.3 Includes official tournaments/competitions (admission charged) 2.2 National Team matches U-17 and older (not including Senior National Team) - Men and Women 2.2.1 International matches (does not include intrasquad games) 2.3 Open Cup matches (U.S. Soccer national competition) 2.3.1 Involving professional team versus amateur team (PDL or otherwise) 2.4 USASA National Cup Finals matches (at National Finals Weekend) - Men 2.4.1 Open: semi-final and final 2.4.2 Amateur semi-final and final 2.4.3 Over 30: semi-final and final 2.4.4 U-23: semi-final and final 2.5 USL PDL matches (regular season and playoffs) 2.6 U.S. Soccer Development Academy matches (U-18) 2.6.1 Playoffs and finals
Category 3	3.1 United States Amateur Adult Soccer (USASA) matches 3.1.1 State Cup championship match - Men 3.1.2 Open Cup matches - Men 3.1.2.1 Interstate matches 3.1.2.2 State final 3.1.3 State Cup championship match - Men 3.1.3.1 Open and amateur 3.1.4 Regional Cup Finals Week matches - Men 3.1.4.1 Open, amateur, Over 30, U-20, U-23 3.1.5 Interstate matches - Men 3.1.6 National Cup Finals matches (at National Finals Weekend) - Women 3.1.6.1 Open: final 3.1.6.2 Amateur: final 3.1.6.3 U-23: final 3.2 U.S. Soccer Development Academy matches (U-18) 3.2.1 Non-playoffs and finals 3.3 US Youth Soccer National Finals and regional matches 3.3.1 U-19 National Championship Finals tournament matches (Finals Week matches only) - Men 3.3.2 U-19 Regional Championship match - Men 3.3.3 U-18 National Championship match - Men

Physical Fitness Test

A physical fitness test is required for registration, annual renewal and upgrading for the referee classes shown. The test can be administered by designated U.S. Soccer Federation Instructors. A document signed by the individual conducting the test is required. Fitness tests must be taken within a six-month period preceding the start of a new season or the date of registration.

The referee must pass all of the events that are part of the test at the same testing session. A reasonable rest period should be allowed between events. The procedure is to run the Endurance Test first.

Physical Fitness Test Requirements

Segment	Age	Referee Grade 7	State Referee Grades 5 & 6
Endurance (12 minute run-meters)	Under 38 38 – 45 Over 45	2200 meters 2000 meters 1800 meters	2400 meters 2200 meters 2000 meters
Speed Test 50 meter dash (run – once)	Under 46 Over 45	9.0 seconds 9.5 seconds	9.0 seconds 9.0 seconds
200 meter dash (run – once)	All Ages	40.0 seconds	40.0 seconds

National Referee Physical Fitness Test Requirements

Includes referees eligible for: Division 1 Women, Division 2 Men, Division 3 Men.

Interval Testing Time to run 150 m. 10 -14 laps*	Interval Testing Time to walk 50 m. 10-14 laps*	Sprint Test 40 m. – 6 times
35 sec.	40 sec.	6.6 sec.

* The minimum number of laps will be prescribed annually by the national office. National Referee Candidates must also pass the National Referee Physical Fitness Test requirements.

The National Referee Physical Fitness Test is a pass or fail test. A referee may fail one (1) of the six (6) sprints and still pass. Two (2) or more over the standard time results in failure. The interval testing requires that a referee be at the next segment before time is expired or the referee fails the fitness test.

The above requirements are subject to revision. Any changes will be posted at ussoccer.com.

Professional and FIFA Referees and Assistant Referees Physical Fitness

	Interval Testing Time to run 150 m. 10 – 14 laps*	**Interval Testing Time to walk 50 m 10 - 14 laps***	**Sprint Test 40 m. – 6 times**
FIFA Referee	30 sec.	35 sec.	6.2 sec.
FIFA AR	30 sec.	40 sec.	6.0 sec.
Professional Referee (Division 1 Men)	30 sec.	35 sec.	6.2 sec
FIFA Referee Women	35 sec.	40 sec.	6.6 sec.
FIFA AR – Women	35 sec.	45 sec.	6.4 sec.
Professional Referee – Women	35 sec.	40 sec.	6.6 sec.
Note: Referees wishing to be considered for MLS centers must pass the Professional Referee Fitness Test at the men's standards. The Professional Fitness test is a pass or fail test. A referee may fail one (1) of the six (6) sprints and still pass, two (2) or more over the standard time results in failure. The interval testing requires that a referee be at the next segment before time is expired or the referee fails the fitness test.			

* The minimum number of laps will be prescribed annually by the national office.

The above requirements are subject to revision. Any changes will be posted at ussoccer.com.

Referee Emeritus

The purpose of the emeritus grade is to retire from the highest level the referee has attained. It may not be used to circumvent the testing and registration procedures of U.S. Soccer.

The emeritus grade allows a National or State Referee the option of retiring from those levels of officiating while retaining that grade and continuing to referee at a lower level.

To become an Emeritus Referee, the official must submit a personal letter of intent to the State Referee Administrator who will initiate the appropriate paperwork. The referee must have held the grade for a minimum of three years prior to the request. (The three years do not have to be consecutive or immediately preceding the request for emeritus status – but at any time in the referee's career.)

Active Emeritus Referees must qualify each year for the level that they will be officiating and pay the published fees for that level. Emeritus Referees will receive an Emeritus Referee Badge, a card, law book and all general mailings.

An Emeritus Referee may reinstate as an active referee at the level the official retired from once all the criteria for the grade has been met.

Referee Grade	Emeritus Referee Grade
6	16
5	15
4	14
3	13