

United States Soccer Federation
Referee Committee Meeting
CONFIRMED
March 29, 2003

Members present: Alvarez, Baldeosingh, Bouda, Hunt, Lyslo, Machnik, Mason, McCormick, McKee and Motta

Regrets: Balboa, Harkes

In Attendance: Baharmast, Garibay, Ilacqua, McGuire

Call to order: The Chairman called the meeting to order at 8:03 a.m. CST.

Agenda: The agenda is found in the committee member's packet.

Approval of Minutes: The minutes of the September 28, 2002 meeting are in the packet and also posted on the USSF web site. **Moved and seconded to approve the minutes of September 28.** Discussion. On a voice vote the motion was affirmed

Member reports: Written reports from MLS, WUSA and MISL are in the packets. Machnik commented on these reports and also indicated that a report was requested from USL. Members asked questions regarding the reports. Comments were made regarding jewelry and the recently issued position paper from Alfred Kleinaitis. Game day procedures have been modified to include the referees visiting the locker rooms prior to the teams taking the field. Extensive discussion was held regarding results of the recent physical fitness testing at National Camp. Several officials were ineligible to participate in MLS pre-season games. MLS is re-establishing a Dissent Initiative for 2003. A key feature will be the direction to officials to "get it done on the field" rather than relying on administrative cautions to deal with players. Other steps include league-wide, all-team, all-player meetings to discuss dissent, mass confrontation and abusive language/gestures. MLS welcomed US Soccer's embracement of FIFA's position regarding "Fingerspitzengefühl." This concept was stressed at National Camp and means developing a feel for the game and incorporating this feeling into decision-making and game management.

Adult Association: Motta mentioned that all recipients of the Eddie Pearson award were invited to attend the Donnelly Cup in FL. At the USASA's mid-year meeting Alfred Kleinaitis was a presenter. They also held an Assignors course during the mid-year meeting. A forum was held with attendees and members of the Adult Referee Committee. Many important issues were discussed.

AYSO: Mason reported that their spring workshop is just around the corner. Ilacqua will attend from USSF. Mason discussed events since the last committee meeting and noted that their Advantage Program will be held in June.

USYSA: Lyslo reported that referee presentations were well received at the Youth Workshop. Classes were held for both Recreational Referees and Recreational Referee Instructors. US Soccer presenters were Ilacqua, Kleinaitis, Reginato and Baharmast. Next year's Workshop will be held in Boston MA. Sixteen referees were assigned to the ODP National Championships. Kevin Terry was the instructor/mentor. North Texas assigned 11 assessors for the tournament. The Referee Department is in the process of assigning instructors and assessors to our ODP training camps, Snicker's Regional's and the National Championships. A new tournament is being added this year named the Director's Cup. This tournament will be held August 8 – 10 in Indianapolis IN. The lack of female referees being nominated or assigned to the various events was noted. It was suggested that a feature article in Fair Play could address this situation.

Board Representative: Bouda addressed items brought up at the last BOD meeting. The board approved the use of the black Recreational Referee Jersey in addition to the previously approved gold jersey. He mentioned the conceivable division of goals between the youth, adults and pros that puts the referees in the middle of the competition for resources. He stressed the need for all state associations to put together a State Referee Committee (SRC) as one method of working on ways to resolve this division of goals. He pointed out that referees are to provide a safe, fair and fun environment for the game, not to get involved in the disputes between the members of US Soccer.

Chairman's Presentation: McKee discussed the role and work that will be assigned to the Sub-Committee on Technical matters. One of their most important functions will be the review and submission of recommendations for the Grade 3 positions for referees and assessors.

Simplified Laws of The Game: Ilacqua filling in for Kleinaitis gave a brief overview of this new training tool. The intent is to take the Laws and put them in an easily understood format that will appeal to young players, referees (Grade 9) and their parents. The booklet will use cartoons to introduce, in a fun way, the Laws and their implementation. This is a work in progress with an expected issue date with the 2004 registration materials.

Business and Financial report: Ilacqua reviewed the 6-month summary of finances through February 28. Results indicate the Department is on target for the year.

Registration Update: Adrian Garibay of the Referee Department reviewed the flow chart showing the details involved in the processing of registration forms. He noted the volume of forms and the problems associated with getting them through the system. The 2004 process has already started and information sheets have been forwarded to appropriate administrators. He also reviewed complimentary/advance shipments and how these numbers relate to the current referee demographic charts. It was mentioned that SRAs could customize wording on the registration instruction form to include a statement regarding charges that would be assessed for "lost" pre-printed forms.

Minimum age requirement for registration: It was proposed to limit the age of registered referees to be at least 10 years of age. Discussion. Lyslo mentioned that Minnesota is proposing legislation that will allow officials under the age of 14 (at least 11 years of age) to work as referees and assistant referees. **Moved and seconded to table.** On a voice vote the motion was affirmed.

Emeritus Referee Grades: Proposed to simplify wording indicating a referee is either a State Emeritus or a National Emeritus. The emeritus grades will be 15 and 13 respectively. Grades 14 and 16 will be eliminated. Discussion. **Moved and seconded to approve the proposal.** Further discussion. On a voice vote the motion was affirmed. **Moved and seconded to amend paragraph 5** to read "An Emeritus Referee may reinstate as an active referee at the level the official retired from by meeting the requirements for that grade. Further discussion. On a voice vote the motion was affirmed

Badges – Instructor and Assessor: The Referee Department is asking the committee to consider eliminating these badges entirely. Discussion. It is the consensus of the committee to keep these badges in place. This is an item to be included in the SRA Workshop, location TBD, depending on availability of the National Training Center.

Bylaw 412 Section 2: (Election of Referee Director to the Board of Directors) It is proposed to increase the number of persons eligible to vote for this position. The proposal would allow referees at Grade 5 or a superior grade, or holds the position of SRA and/or SYRA to be eligible to receive a ballot. Each individual qualified to vote may cast no more than one ballot. Extensive discussion. **Moved and seconded to revise the wording** "Grade 5 or superior grade" to read as follows: ...Grades 5, 4, 3, 2, and 1... Further discussion. On a voice vote the motion was affirmed. **Moved and seconded to accept the proposal as revised.** On a voice vote the motion was affirmed. Bouda abstains. The recommended Bylaw change will be sent to the Rules Committee for review.

Policy 531-9: (Misconduct against referees) The proposal insures that organizational members must discipline their own members. Current wording places responsibility of enforcing the policy upon State Associations. The revised wording shares responsibility with affected Organizational Members. Discussion. **Moved and seconded to approve.** On a voice vote the motion was affirmed. The recommended Bylaw change will be sent to the Rules Committee for review.

Position Papers: All recent papers were reviewed for content. These papers may be found at us-soccer.com and clicking on the Referee menu.

Clarification of "prior" in upgrade criteria to National Referee: Discussion. **Moved and seconded to change the wording** to read "2 consecutive years as State Grade 5 immediately prior to application dates".... Further discussion. On a voice vote the motion was affirmed

Policy 531-10: (Misconduct of Game Officials) No action is required on this section.

Old Business: Indoor Soccer Referee Physical Fitness Standards. At this time there are no minimum standards. Discussion. **Moved and seconded that all referees must meet all criteria of their current grade** in order to receive assignments from US Soccer. Discussion. On a voice vote the motion was affirmed

Update on MLS Pilot Assessment Program. McKee presented details of the 2003 program. This was for committee information and no action is required. There were 150 National Assessors at two separate camps this spring. Response from participants was very positive and good feedback was received.

Sustaining member proposal: Motta had been tasked to review existing policy. He presented a written report detailing the history, current policy and a proposed policy for becoming a "Sustaining Member." Any individual could become a Sustaining Member of the National Program for Referee Development by simply paying a fee. This fee would entitle the individual to a pin, membership card and a Law Book. Members would not be authorized to officiate soccer matches. Different levels of membership or support were also discussed but it was determined to have one level of membership with a \$25 fee that would come to the Federation. This membership category would replace Grade 17, honorary referee. By consensus the committee directed Ilacqua to discuss this proposal with administration.

New Business: Request for waiver of National Camp requirements. A request was received from a National Referee, who did not attend camp, to be excused from that requirement and be allowed to retain the current grade. Discussion. **Moved and seconded to deny the request.** On a voice vote the motion was affirmed. Two abstentions.

The committee deliberated for some time reasons why National Referees accept assignments when they know they are not up to the task being assigned, regardless of the reason. It was speculated that many, if not all, National Referees feel that if they say "no" to an assignment they may find themselves in the "dog house."

The Referee Committee understands that individual referees sometimes think that by saying "no" to an assignment or declining an assignment they will be unjustly penalized. This Committee wants all referees to know that this perception is wrong. If there is something in your personal life that will or could affect your ability to perform as a referee you should immediately contact the Referee Department or the Manager of Professional Assignment and Assessment explaining your situation.

A request was received to clarify the minimum age requirement for RYRI Instructors. This request will be forwarded to Kleinaitis for resolution.

Petition for permission to count college games for assessment purposes. Request from Colorado. Discussion. **Petition is denied** since state association presidents did not sign it.

Request from North Carolina. Both state association presidents signed petition. Discussion. **Moved and seconded to modify the petition** by eliminating all references to National Referee and National Referee Candidates. Further discussion. On a voice vote the motion was denied. Three abstentions. **Moved and seconded to deny the petition** from North Carolina. On a voice vote the motion was affirmed. Three abstentions.

Professional game requirements. A request was received to consider "changing pro matches from automatically counting as challenging." Extensive discussion on the merits of counting all pro games as a test for the referee. Are games "easy" or are the referees "good" and thus make the games look "easy?" **Moved and seconded to establish a one-year pilot program** to review the elimination of sufficient test on Pro Select matches from automatically being considered a sufficient test for the referee for D3 only. This program will be reviewed in the spring of 2004. Further discussion. On a voice vote the motion was affirmed. One abstention.

Petition to approve Div. 1 Adult League for assessments for National grade and/or upgrade to National grade. Request from CPLSA, Ric Olivas. Discussion. **Moved and seconded to approve the CPLSA request** to continue their pilot assessment experiment for one year for maintaining national grade only. After this period they may submit a request to include national referee candidates. On a voice vote the motion was affirmed

Petition from Cal South to approve two tournaments as playing qualifying matches. Discussion. **Moved and seconded to table the petition** and request more details and/or request that Cal South submit a specific league and not tournaments. On a voice vote the motion was affirmed

Request to shorten entry level (grade 8) instruction course. Discussion. The new grade 9 entry-level course already offers a shortened instruction time. **Moved and seconded to deny the request.** On a voice vote the motion was affirmed.

For the good of soccer: Mason pointed out an apparent conflict between the Advice to Referees and the Laws of the Game. This question is to be forwarded to Kleinaitis for clarification.

Adjournment: There being no further business before the committee it was moved to adjourn. The meeting was adjourned at 4:20 p.m.

Submitted by: Wally Lyslo, recording secretary