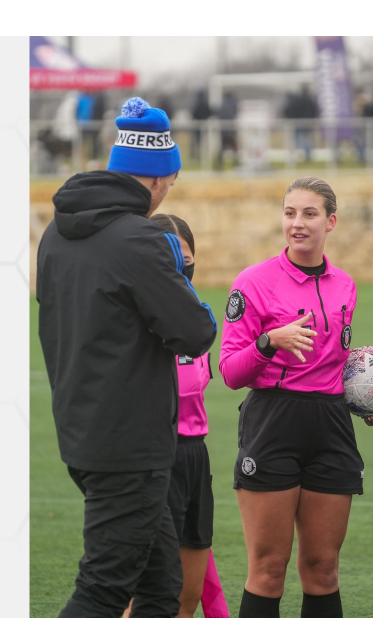


2026 Referee Coach Pathway

Eligibility & General Requirements





REFEREE COACH PATHWAY



NATIONAL REFEREE COACH

REFEREE COACH

MENTOR +

MENTOR



New Coaching Pathway Goals



Coaches and Mentors are the foundation of a strong refereeing program

- Increase the number of mentors/mentor+ in the program
- Improved training for our educators, at all levels
- Provide credible and experienced coaches to develop our referees serving the growing professional leagues
- Retain referees with top experience to continue to give back to the game as coaches



New Referee Coach Pathway is a Progressive Model

Football Understanding

Evaluations

5-Step Process

Practical Training Sessions

Basics

Designing & Leading

Technical Presentations

PEACE Model

Leading Video Analysis

Performance Observation/Insights

Development & Guidance

Observation Skills Leveled Up

Mentor

Mentor+

Referee Coach

National



Coaching Pathway Course Summary

MENTOR

| Course | | Min. Age | Requirements / Previous Certification (see individual course page for details requirements) | Delivery | Online Duration | In-person Duration |
|-----------------------|-------------------|-------------|---|----------------------------|--------------------|-----------------------|
| First-time Referee | | 10 | Two (2) years cumulative on-field experience as a certified referee | Online OR in-person | 3 hours | 3 hours |
| Mentor | (2027) Recert. | 18 | Mentor license within previous two (2) years OR Mentor+ or Referee Coach license within previous two (2) years | Online OR in-person | TBC | TBC |

MENTOR +

| Course | | Min. Age | Requirements / Previous Certification (see individual course page for details requirements) | Delivery | Online Duration | In-person Duration |
|-----------------------|---------------------|-------------|--|----------------------------|--|-----------------------|
| First-time Referee | | me 18 | Mentor license within previous two (2) years OR Referee Coach license within previous (2) years OR a FIFA, PRO, or National Match Official license during their career | Online (2026) | 3.5 hours coursework | N/A |
| | | | | Hybrid (2027) | 60 min homework + 3.5 hours coursework | 4-6 hours |
| Mentor + | In-person (2027) ** | | | 60 min homework | 8 hours | |
| | (2027) Recert. | | Mentor+license within previous two (2) years OR Referee Coach license in previous year | Online OR in-person | TBC | TBC |

[•] All Mentors with licenses in 2024 or 2025 are eligible and encouraged to complete the new Mentor+course for 2026 (abridged online version), with only First-Time Mentors required to complete the new Mentor course. Recertification courses for the new Mentor and Mentor+levels will return for the 2027 registration year

^{**} In-person course materials developed by U.S. Soccer will become progressively available from July 2025, providing SRCs the ability to host courses in-person, online and a combination of both



Coaching Pathway Course Summary

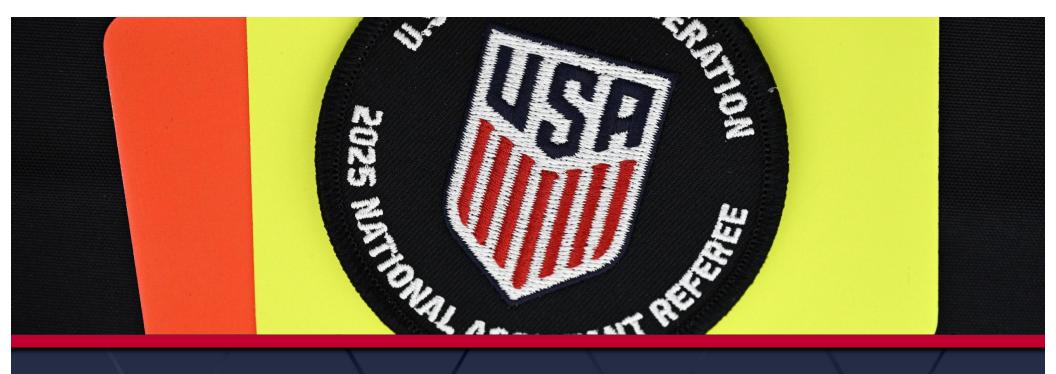
REFEREE COACH

| Course | | Min. Age | Requirements / Previous Certification (see individual course page for details requirements) | Delivery | Online Duration | In-person Duration |
|------------------|------------|-------------|---|----------------------|--------------------|-----------------------|
| Referee Coach | First-time | 21 | Letter of recommendation required from member of home SRC or a National Referee Coach for registration to be valid; AND Mentor+license for previous two (2) years (Mentor in 2024 & 2025) OR FIFA, PRO, or National Match Official license within current or previous two (2) years Note: FIFA, PRO, NMO who elect to start at Mentor+only require one year for eligibility | Online AND Course | 8 hours | Four (4) days |
| | Recert.** | | Referee Coach or National Referee Coach license within the previous two (2) years • Practical Assignments: Five (5) match evaluations | Online | TBC | N/A |

NATIONAL REFEREE COACH

| Course | | Min. Age | Requirements / Previous Certification (see individual course page for details requirements) | Delivery | Online Duration | In-person Duration |
|------------------------------|------------|-------------|---|---------------------------|--------------------|-----------------------|
| National Referee Coach | First-time | 25 | Application process, selected by U.S. Soccer; Referee Coach for previous (3) years, AND three (3) years as a National Match Official; OR Provisional Pathway-FIFA or PRO license within current or previous three (3) years. • Practical Assignments: Seven (7) match evaluations | Online AND Camp | TBC | Four (4) days |
| | Recert. | | Selected by U.S. Soccer; National Referee Coach in previous year • Practical Assignments: Seven (7) match evaluations | Online AND Camp | TBC | Four (4) days |

^{**} Referee Coach recertification course are planned to be made available in Fall 2025



Course Details



U.S. REFEREEING WAY

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First-Time Referee Mentor

| Age | 18 years of age or older | |
|-----------------------------------|---|--|
| Enrollment | Registration | |
| Previous Certification Experience | Must have at least two (2) years of cumulative on-field experience as a certified referee | |
| Safety & Compliance | Background Screening SafeSport training Safe and Healthy Playing Environments | |
| Training | Online Referee Mentor training Online Laws of the Game Update | |
| Practical Assignments | N/A | |

2026 Changes

New course level - for new entrants to the Referee Coaching pathway



Referee Mentor Recertification (2027)

| Age | 18 years of age or older |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| Enrollment | Registration |
| Previous Certification Experience | Must have held at least: One (1) Referee Mentor license within the two (2) previous registration years; OR Mentor+ or Referee Coach license within the two (2) previous registration years |
| Safety & Compliance | Background Screening SafeSport training Safe and Healthy Playing Environments |
| Training | Online or In-person Referee Mentor recertification training Online Laws of the Game Update |
| Practical Assignments | N/A |

Course to become available for 2027 registration year, following introduction of new Mentor course in 2026



First-Time Referee Mentor+

| Age | 18 years of age or older |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| Enrollment | Registration |
| Previous Certification Experience | Must have held at least: Mentor license within previous two (2) years; OR Referee Coach license within previous (2) years; OR a FIFA, PRO, or National Match Official license during their career |
| Safety & Compliance | Background Screening SafeSport training Safe and Healthy Playing Environments |
| Training | Online Referee Mentor+ training (<i>In-person option for 2027</i>) Online Laws of the Game Update |
| Practical Assignments | N/A |

- New course for 2026, for those with an existing Mentor license in 2024 or 2025, replacing previous Mentor certification
- For 2026, existing Mentors will only be required to complete abridged online training to certify



Referee Mentor + Recertification (2027)

| Age | 18 years of age or older | |
|-----------------------------------|---|--|
| Enrollment | Registration | |
| Previous Certification Experience | Must have held at least: One (1) Referee Mentor+ license within the two (2) previous registration years; OR Referee Coach license during the previous registration year | |
| Safety & Compliance | Background Screening SafeSport training Safe and Healthy Playing Environments | |
| Training | Online or In-person Referee Mentor+ recertification training Online Laws of the Game Update | |
| Practical Assignments | N/A | |

New recertification for new course

Course to become available for 2027 registration year, following introduction of new Mentor+ course in 2026



First-Time Referee Coach

| Age | 21 years of age or older |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| Enrollment | Registration Note: Letter of recommendation required from member of home SRC or a National Referee Coach for registration to be valid |
| Previous Certification Experience | Must have held at least: Referee Mentor+ license for each of the previous two (2) registration years (Mentor license in 2024 & 2025); OR One (1) FIFA, PRO, or National Match Official license within the current or previous two (2) registration years (no Mentor or Mentor+ license required) Note: FIFA/PRO/NMOs who start at Mentor+ only require one (1) year for eligibility (Future Implementation: Successful passing of Laws of the Game exam) |
| Safety & Compliance | Background Screening SafeSport training Safe and Healthy Playing Environments |
| Training | Online Referee Coach training Online Laws of the Game Update In-person Referee Coach course - four (4) days |
| Practical Assignments | In-course assessments requiring a passing grade |

- Course completely revised, focused and streamlined
- New requirement to receive letter of recommendation from member of home SRC or a National Referee Coach
- New entry pathway option for current or recently retired FIFA/PRO/National match officials
- Defined in-person course length and requirement for in-course assessments requiring a passing grade



Referee Coach Recertification

| Age | 21 years of age or older |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| Enrollment | Registration |
| Previous Certification Experience | Must have held at least: One (1) Referee Coach license or one (1) National Referee Coach license within the previous two (2) registration years |
| Safety & Compliance | Background Screening SafeSport training Safe and Healthy Playing Environments |
| Training | Online Referee Coach recertification training Online Laws of the Game Update |
| Practical Assignments | Five (5) evaluations of match official performance including post- game reflection with the referee team Must be completed by the end of the registration year |

2026 Changes

• Reduced length of time for previous certification experience from three (3) years to two (2) due to re-write of coaching pathway courses

Note: Course is planned to be made available in Fall 2025



First-Time National Referee Coach

| Age | 25 years of age or older |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| Enrollment | Application required → Selected by U.S. Soccer |
| Previous Certification Experience | Must have held: Referee Coach license for each of the three (3) previous registration years; AND National Match Official license for three (3) cumulative registration years Provisional National Referee Coach Must have held at least one (1) FIFA or PRO license within the current or previous three (3) registration years |
| Safety & Compliance | Background Screening SafeSport training Safe and Healthy Playing Environments |
| Training | Online course Online Laws of the Game Update U.S. Soccer National Referee Coach Camp |
| Practical Assignments | Seven (7) evaluations of match official performance including post-game reflection with the referee team Must be completed by the end of the registration year |

- Increased requirement for number of years as a Referee Coach, previously two (2) years
- Additional requirement to have been a National match official for three (3) years not applicable to existing license holders
- Additional option of Provisional National Referee Coach for current or recently retired FIFA/PRO match officials



National Referee Coach Recertification

| Age | 25 years of age or older |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| Enrollment | Selected by U.S. Soccer |
| Previous Certification Experience | Must have held a National Referee Coach license during the previous registration year |
| Safety & Compliance | Background Screening SafeSport training Safe and Healthy Playing Environments |
| Training | Online course Online Laws of the Game Update U.S. Soccer National Referee Coach Camp * (* National Referee Coaches may not miss two consecutive years of camp attendance) |
| Practical Assignments | Seven (7) evaluations of match official performance including post-game reflection with the referee team Must be completed by the end of the registration year |

- Addition of requirement for camp attendance Removed practical assignments of Leading Video Analysis and Practical Training Exercise