

2026/2027

Visalia Youth Soccer Association
Recreational Referee
Training and Incentive Program



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VYSA Recreational Referee Soccer Training and Incentive Program

Fair Safe Fun Instructional - Love of the Beautiful Game

Introduction

Soccer referees are the backbone of safe, fair, and enjoyable matches. Ensuring they are well-trained, motivated, and rewarded for their efforts is crucial for the growth of the league. This program is designed to incentivize referees, enhance their skills through structured training, mentor observation, and recognizing them with rewards based on the number of matches officiated.

Program Objectives

- Attract, retain, train, and reward qualified and loyal referees.
- Certify recreational referees for the level of matches they will be refereeing.
- Enhance the skill set and confidence of referees through targeted training.
- Recognize and reward referees for their contributions to our club and league.
- Create a mentor program to ease Referees in Training onto the pitch.

Uniform

Clothing	Equipment
Shoes - Athletic Shoes for Running	Pen
Shorts - Black (To Mid-Thigh or Longer)	Watch/Time Keeping Device
Socks - Black (covering Shin)	Rec Wallet and Cards Provided by VYSA (\$5 Replacement Fee)
Shirt - VYSA Rec Referee Shirt Provided by VYSA (\$15 Replacement Fee)	Whistle Provided by VYSA (\$2 Replacement Fee)
Hat (Optional) - Black Referee Cap \$25	Coin
Uniform Etiquette and Presentation	
Uniform clean and in good condition, free of stains or tears.	
Visible jewelry is prohibited (wristwatch or medical alert items).	
Shirts should be always tucked in during the match.	
No Crocs, Sandals, Cowboy Boots, High Heels or Skate Type Shoes.	

Referee Pay Program Details Spring and Fall 2026

Pay

- VYSA Certified 11v11 Center - \$30 / Match
- VYSA Certified 7v7 and 9v9 Center - \$25 / Match
- 11v11 Assistant Referee - \$20 / Match
- Referee in Training (3 Match Minimum) - \$20 / Match
- VYSA Certified Mentor - \$25 / Observation Assignment
- Assignor - \$5 / Match

Fines

All fines are collected as pay reductions and only collected from pay not to be given to referee director physically. These amounts are added into a pot for an end of year drawing. See Attendance Policy for details.

- Late - \$5
- No Show (Absent or Same Day Call Off Without Valid Excuse) - \$15
- Out of Uniform - \$2

Training Program Details

Recreational Soccer Training Program

1. All Referees

- Zero Tolerance Policy
- When and how much to communicate with the coach.
- Referee time and attendance policy.
- Mercy Rule
- VYSA Team Requirements – Home Team Seating is North or East Side of the field. No supporter seating in technical area or behind goal. Uniform requirements. Number of players and coach requirement.
- Overview - Laws of the Game
- Game times, including the length of halves and half time.
- Number of players and the minimum to play a match.
- Throw-ins and when to call violations versus allowing a redo, goal kicks, and corner kicks

- **Offside rule and BUILD-OUT LINE.**
- Fouls, misconduct, and disciplinary actions. Should we give red cards to U10 and younger players?
- Working with mentors.
- When to stop the match and get help from the Rec Referee Director.

2. 7 v 7

- Zero Tolerance Policy
- 7v7 Laws of the Game different from 9 v 9 and 11 v 11.
- Minimum number of players to certify a match.
- Offside rule and **BUILD-OUT LINE.**
- Fouls, misconduct, and disciplinary actions. Should we give red cards to U10 and younger players?
- Understanding the sideline when refereeing a U10 or U8 match.
- Quiz sessions to reinforce understanding!!!!

3. 9 v 9

- Zero Tolerance Policy
- Overview of 9v9 Laws of the Game different from 7v7 and 11v11.
- Minimum number of players to certify a match.
- Allowing goal keepers to punt the ball and allowing players to use their heads. Competitive soccer with Central Valley Premier FC vs Recreational Soccer with Visalia Youth Soccer Association.
- Offside rule.
- Quiz sessions to reinforce understanding!!!!

4. 11 v 11 Youngers and Olders – Center

- Zero Tolerance Policy
- Overview of 11 v 11 Laws of the Game different from 7 v 7 and 9 v 9.
- Minimum number of players to certify a match.
- Throw-ins and when to call violations versus allowing a redo, goal kicks, and corner kicks
- Offside rule.
- Fouls, misconduct, and disciplinary actions. How to control the match using cards if needed.

- How to work with your Assistant Referee (A/R's), the pre-match meeting, and what to communicate.
- The difference between 11 v 11 youngers and 11 v 11 olders and how to control the match.
- Quiz sessions to reinforce understanding!!!!

5. 11 v 11 Assistant Referee

- Zero Tolerance Policy
- Understanding the sideline and how to help the center referee control the sideline.
- Flag technique: Signaling for offsides, throw-ins, fouls, and substitutions.
- Positioning drills: Maintaining proper alignment with the second-to-last defender and the ball.
- Movement: Sprinting, side-stepping, and maintaining focus during play transitions.
- Communication Skills - How to work with your center referee, the pre-match meeting, and what to communicate. Verbal and non-verbal cues between assistant referees and the center referee.
- Understanding the sideline and how to help the center referee control the sideline.
- Quiz sessions to reinforce understanding!!!!

6. Mentor

- Targeted to referees who have officiated 100 certified matches or more.
- Goal is a 3-step process to 1.Show / 2.Monitor / 3.Communicate how to be a youth referee in real time with a Referee in Training.
- Report to Director of Referee the results of working with the Referee in Training.
- Working together as a team with the other referees in a crew or organization.
- Advanced rule interpretation, fitness improvement, making decisions consistently, and ability to handle high-pressure scenarios.
- Includes a one-day seminar and on-field assessments.
- Provides specialized training on officiating competitive or high stakes matches.
- Involves mentorship with senior referees and participation in higher level referee clinics.
- Recommend mentors for statewide and high-level local tournaments.

Incentive Program Details

All rewards and awards will be given at the end of season volunteer and referee appreciation lunch. During our rec championship Saturday VYSA will provide lunch and treats. The league will also hold our raffle for fine \$\$, annual giveaways, and end of season gifts. Must be present to win anything from the drawing or rewards earned during the season.

Rewards Based on Matches Officiated – Annually Fall and Spring Season

1. 1-3 Matches – Given before 1st match

- Whistle
- Cards / Wallet
- Shirt

2. 10 Matches

- Fox 40 Whistle

3. 25 Matches

- Set of Flags

4. 40 Matches

- Ref Hat

5. 50+ Matches

- Watch

Weekly Participation Recognition

1. Each week referees that do matches will get at least one raffle ticket to be added into the pot for an end of year drawing.

- **1 TICKET** per match refereed between 8am and 245pm match start times.
- **3 TICKETS per match refereed at 3pm or later.**

2. Any referee/mentor that does two or more matches will get a meal from our concession stand. Referees will be aware of what that meal consists of each week.

3. Waters and Gatorades will be provided for the referees at the centralized referee area.

Special Annual Recognition

- The Ozzie (VYSA Most Valuable Referee Award) – Given to the recreational soccer referee that has demonstrated the knowledge of the Laws of the Game, the VYSA Zero Tolerance Policy, has done more than 15 recreational soccer matches per season Fall and Spring, and consistently sets the example of what VYSA wants in a referee. Certified class paid for by club and 3 color set of certified referee jerseys.
- Milestone Awards: Given to referees who reach 100, 250, or 500 matches officiated, with bonus, gifts, certificate.

Implementation Plan

Step 1: Recruiting Referees

- Partner with competitive clubs to find soccer players interested in becoming youth referees.
- Reach out to local high schools and College of the Sequoias to organize recruitment drives.
- Tap into our local adult soccer community to find individuals interested in giving back.

Step 2: Recreational Soccer Referee in Training Course and Returning Referee Course

- To be considered for a rec soccer position anyone interested must fill out an application/interest form and attend the new referee in person training. Returning referees may be invited to attend this training. Approximately 2 hours on a Saturday before the season starts.
- To be considered for a rec soccer position any returning referee must fill out an application/interest form and attend the returning referee training. Approximately 1.5 hours on a Saturday or Sunday before the season starts. Separate from the new referee training.

Step 3: VYSA Jamboree

- Each Referee in Training to ref 3 matches minimum.
- Mentor to have 3 Levels of Participation with a Referee in Training.
 - Match 1 – Referee with a Referee in Training in the field of play. Mentor is the referee the mentee will shadow the mentor.
 - Match 2 – Mentor will watch the second match of the Referee in Training and give detailed feedback after the first and second half.

- Match 3 – Mentor will position themselves between two matches and observe the 2 Referee in Trainings refereeing the matches. Mentor will take notes and give feedback at the conclusion of each match.
- Mentor will provide a report for each Referee in Training observed and give to Director of Referees.

This will be repeated for each Referee in Training before they are allowed to do matches on their own (3 Match Minimum). The mentors will let the Director of Referees know the competence level of each Referee in Training after the 3 matches observed in the form of a mentor report online or handwritten.

Step 4: Referee Certification

- Each referee will earn a designation based on their knowledge of the different levels of our league. More than one designation can be obtained and a referee can lose a designation as well. Each referee must demonstrate the knowledge for the Laws of the Game for the given level of play.
 - **7 v 7 Center** designation is earned when they have displayed mastery of the 7 v 7 game. Main component is the offside rule including the build out line, redo's (when is it time to not instruct players), and knowledge of VYSA Zero Tolerance Policy.
 - **9 v 9 Center** designation is earned when they have displayed mastery of the 9 v 9 game. Main component is the offside rule difference from 7v7 to 9v9, redo's (when is it time to not instruct players), and knowledge of VYSA Zero Tolerance Policy.
 - **11 v 11 Center Younger** designation is earned when they have displayed mastery of the 11 v 11 game.
 - **11 v 11 Center Older** designation is earned when they have displayed mastery of the 11 v 11 game, and the referee can control the older players in the match.
 - **Referee in Training** designation is earned for new referees that have yet to exhibit the ability to control a match on their own. They show the willingness to learn and demonstrate coachability but have yet to be given the reigns for their own match.
 - **Advanced** designation is earned when an experienced referee demonstrates the ability to be a center referee for all levels of matches.

Attendance Policy

Arrive On Time

- Arrive at the pitch no later than 15 minutes before kickoff. This time is essential to complete pregame responsibilities and ensure the match starts smoothly and on time.
- Please note: There is no such thing as a 5–10-minute grace period. That is a myth. Do not use it as an excuse. Arriving late, even by a few minutes can delay a match and undermine your professionalism.
 - If you are early, you are on time.
 - If you are on time, you are late.
 - If you are late, we will need a fill-in for your match.
- Also, keep in mind that you are not getting paid by the hour. For example, U8 or U10 match pays a specific dollar amount. These games are 2x20 minute halves, but the fee also includes your 15 minutes early arrival, pre-game duties, and 5 minutes of halftime break. That is part of the responsibility, not optional.

What To Do If You Are Running Late

- Contact Recreational Referee Director as soon as you are aware of the possibility of being tardy.
 - Contact Director of Referees as soon as you are aware of the possibility of being tardy.
- If you are tardy to a match without a call. First Offense of Failure to Notify (Tardiness)
 - First Offense is \$5 deduction from your match pay and last to choose matches for the following week.
 - Second Offense will result in a 1-week suspension from all matches, a \$10 deduction from your next match pay, and last to choose matches for the following week.
 - Third Offense will result in a ban from VYSA matches.
- If you do not show up and no call.
 - First Offense is \$15 deduction from your match pay and last to choose matches for the following week.
 - Second Offense suspended for 2 weeks from VYSA matches \$20 deduction from your match pay, and last to choose matches for the following week.
 - Third offense will result in a ban from VYSA matches.

Conclusion

This Visalia Youth Soccer Association Recreational Referee Training and Incentive Program aims to elevate the standards of officiating in our league, at our club, and for our soccer community while fostering a sense of pride and accomplishment among referees. By combining structured training with meaningful rewards, we ensure a sustainable pipeline of skilled and motivated referees, essential for the continued success of the sport. For the Love of the Beautiful Game.