

2026



Referee Procedure Manual



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Introduction

Congratulations on being chosen to officiate in the Women's Premier Soccer League (WPSL) for the 2026 season. You were chosen as a result of your hard work, professionalism, ability, dedication, and commitment to the game.

The WPSL is a National Amateur Adult Soccer League designed to continue the development of elite-level women soccer players beyond youth soccer and outside of the collegiate game, as well as a vehicle to promote women's soccer at the highest amateur level. The WPSL is sanctioned by the United States Adult Soccer Association (USASA) as an affiliate of the United States Soccer Federation (USSF) and the Federation Internationale de Football Association (FIFA).

Our goals for the 2026 season are to support officials and provide opportunities for growth and development. We have put numerous resources in place for the 2026 season, including [WPSLReferees.com](https://wpslreferees.com), which has weekly performance training tips, as well as a platform for discussion amongst your peers. We believe these additional resources will allow you to continue to progress in your field and achieve sustained success in your role as an elite level soccer official.

We have also continued our partnership with our recommended uniform supplier Capelli Soccer, who continues to support our officials by offering discounts on uniforms, accessories and WPSL gear. A portion of the proceeds from your purchases go back into the WPSL officiating program. Referees can use this link to purchase their gear:

<https://teams.us.capellisport.com/refwpsl/man300/mandatorykit>.

The content included in this manual will provide you with the information necessary for you to continue to provide outstanding service to the WPSL and its member clubs.

I am looking forward to working with each and every one of you in 2026!

Karen H. Swanner
WPSL National Director
of Match Officials



PRE-MATCH PROTOCOLS

1. All officials must create an account with Assignr.com, the league's assigning software for the 2026 season. This includes setting up contact information (email and phone number) and direct deposit information.
2. Officials **MUST** check in with the home team at least 48 hours prior to the match. The check-in should include confirmation of match time, field location, parking and locker room availability. The Referee should also check in with his crew no later than 48 hours prior to the match.
3. Once officials receive an assignment, they will have three (3) days to accept the match. Failure to do so may result in removal from the match.
4. All four officials are expected to arrive at least 90 minutes prior to the scheduled match. The match liaison from the home team should greet the referee team when they arrive.
5. Officials are expected to be properly dressed in a polo shirt and slacks. If locker rooms are not available, referee shorts/sweats and a polo are permissible.
6. Proper equipment for a match includes USSF style Capelli gear. See website for link for discounted uniforms. The WPSL strongly **RECOMMENDS** the use of communication devices to assist with match control.



PRE-KICK OFF

1. FIELD INSPECTION

Upon arrival, officials should inspect the playing field for minimum standards requirements including, playing surface, goals, netting, match balls, corner flags and markings. In the event problems are identified, the Referee shall notify the Home Team Field Manager, who shall be responsible for correcting any problems prior to the beginning of the match. The Referee has the authority to postpone the match, if in his or her opinion, the field is unsafe. Documentation **MUST** be sent to their respective local sub-assignor, Karen Swanner, WPSL Director of Officials, and must also be included in the Game Report.

2. ROSTER & CHECK-IN

The fourth official will check players in no-later than 45 minutes prior to the start of the match. The official check-in will be done through the Squadi app on the coach's phone. Teams are expected (required) to have final rosters in one hour prior to the start of the match. No additions can be made after check-in is completed. Rosters **MUST** include starters, substitutes, jersey numbers, first and last names, and position for all players. The first and last names of all coaches and other bench personnel must also be listed on the roster.

3. NUMBER OF PLAYERS

A maximum 20 players may dress for games (including during the warm-ups). A team must have a minimum of 14 players for each game. Failure to have 14 players must be added in the match report and Karen Swanner, WPSL National Director of Officials must be contacted via email.

4. TECHNICAL AREA

A technical area should be marked at each home field. The following individuals **ONLY**, are allowed in the technical area. This **MUST** be strictly enforced.

- a. Players dressed for the match: Maximum of 20
 - b. Technical Staff: Five (5) **TOTAL**: including Head Coach, Assistant Coach, Game Manager, Photographer (Or any combination but **ONLY** five (5) max)
 - c. Trainer: One (1) trainer – a certified athletic trainer **MUST** be provided by the home team and on-site or the match may not be started
- **Note** – Only those listed above may be in the technical area. Team owners, front office management staff, players not dressed, spouses, children and parents are not allowed in the technical area during warm-ups or match play.



5. UNIFORMS

- Must have numbers on the back of the jersey at least eight inches (8”) high
- Numbers can be 00 to 99
- Home team chooses uniform colors if a uniform conflict is presented
- Each uniform must display the official WPSL logo on the jersey’s left sleeve
- Sponsored advertising is allowed if it does not block any of the above

6. WARM-UPS

Teams will be allowed to begin on-field warm-ups 60 minutes prior to kick-off

7. GAME BALLS

The home team shall provide six (6) match balls to the officials to be inspected prior to kick off. A minimum of six (6) ball people shall be provided by the home team. Alternatively, a minimum of six ball stands (cones) should be positioned around the field.



MATCH RULES & PROTOCOLS

1. MATCH TIMING

- Games will be played with two (2) 45-min halves with stoppage time added at the end of each half at the referee's discretion
- Halftime is 15 minutes from whistle to whistle
- NO extra time (overtime) during regular-season play

2. WEATHER, CANCELLATIONS, and POSTPONEMENTS

- Once in progress, a game may be delayed or postponed due to unfavorable weather and/or adverse conditions beyond the control of the participating teams, which would make the playing of the match impractical or dangerous. ONLY THE REFEREE has the authority to delay or postpone the game. A licensed trainer with a certified weather-monitoring device should relay relative information to the officials.
 - If a lightning strike is within eight (8) miles of the stadium, it is an immediate suspension of play
 - A total of 30 minutes must pass without a lightning strike for play to resume
 - If there was a delay between 30-60 minutes a five-minute (5) warm-up period will be allotted
 - If there is over a 60-minute delay a maximum of a 20-minute warm-up may be given
 - The match must be restarted with the same time on the clock as when the delay started
 - The team in possession at the time of the play will restart with the ball, unless it was within open play then it will be a dropped ball
 - If the match cannot be resumed within a reasonable period of time, it may be terminated by the Referee
 - If the match is terminated and the first half is completed, the match will count as a complete and official game
 - If the match is terminated prior to the completion of the first half, teams must contact the WPSL league office within 24 hours to discuss rescheduling
 - If the home facility closes due to local mandates on weather, the referee will adhere to the facility's guidelines

3. MEDICAL SERVICES

- The Home team MUST provide a Certified Trainer for both the Home and Visiting teams.



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- The Referee **MUST** confirm the presence of a Certified Trainer or Physician 60 minutes before kickoff. The Referee will not start the game prior to confirmation the presence of a Certified Trainer or Physician designated for the match.

- The Referee **MUST** delay the start of the match for a maximum of one hour to allow for the arrival of a Certified Trainer or Physician. If one does not arrive, the Referee **MUST** abandon the match and report it during the match reporting process in Assignr.

a. CONCUSSION PROTOCOL

- Referees should follow the current USSF concussion protocols
- Any players that suffer a possible head injury must leave the field immediately and be checked out by the Certified Trainer or Physician
- Player can re-enter the match after being cleared by the Certified Trainer or Physician
- The Home Team's designated Certified Trainer or Physician are the only ones who can identify concussive signs, symptoms and behavior and may authorize the player to return to play. If the away team brings a trainer, it is the Home Team trainer's responsibility to be the decision maker with respect to concussion protocols

b. BLEEDING

- A bleeding player must leave the pitch until the bleeding is stopped and blood is cleaned from the player and jersey. US Soccer bleeding protocols should be followed. Players who have been sent off for blood, may return at a substitution opportunity after being checked by the trainer/fourth official.

c. HYDRATION BREAKS

- The Certified Trainer is tasked to advise the officiating crew if hydration breaks are necessary (wet bulb temperature of 86 degrees or higher)
- The Referee has the final decision to determine if hydration breaks are appropriate
- Breaks will take place at around the 25th and 70th minute of play when ball is out of play.
- Breaks will last three minutes (3) and be added to stoppage time



SUBSTITUTIONS, GAME PLAY & MATCH REPORTING

1. SUBSTITUTIONS

- Substitutions can be made at any dead ball situation throughout the game based on the discretion of the Referee in accordance with the Laws of the Game
- Unlimited substitutions are allowed
- Substitutions must enter the field from midfield once beckoned on by the Referee and after the player subbed has left the field of play at midfield
- If the Referee feels that the substitution is being made for tactical reasons, the Referee has the discretion to deny or delay the substitution until there is no longer a tactical advantage

2. MATCH REPORTING IN SQUADI

The WPSL is using Squadi as its team platform in 2026. Therefore, it is the referee crew's responsibility to upload scores at halftime and after the match using the following generic sign in:

Login: wpslref@ref.com

Password: ref2026!

3. MATCH REPORTING IN ASSIGNR

- Assignr is the Referee assigning platform for all WPSL officials
- All match reports with full details including goal scorers (time, number and name), cautions, ejections and venue/team standards **MUST** be filled out completely in Assignr
- All match reports **MUST** be filled out within 24 hours of the match. Payment will be withheld until match report is filled out completely
 - Any of the officials on the crew can file the match report
 - Should you have an ejection, please notify your sub-assignor and Karen Swanner at kswanner@wpslsoccer.com immediately



GAME FEES & GAME CHANGES

1. GAME FEES

- All WPSL Matches will use four (4) officials
- All WPSL Division II Matches will use three (3) officials
- Match fees have increased for 2026 and are as follows

REFEREE - \$120

ARs - \$85

Fourth Official - \$60

- All officials will be paid through Assignr. Referees should make sure bank information is correct
- Payments will be approved after match reports are turned in

2. TRAVEL

- Travel is allowed for over 50 miles one-way and must be approved by Karen Swanner, WPSL National Director of Officials
- Travel reimbursement requests must be submitted by local sub-assignors, not officials, prior to match to be added to officials pay.

3. GAME CHANGES

- Accepting Matches
 - All officials have three (3) days to accept a match. Failure to do so in a timely manner may result in another official being assigned
- Referee
 - If the Referee is unable to continue during play, AR₁ becomes the referee; AR₂ becomes AR₁, and the Fourth Official becomes AR₂. If either AR is unable to continue, they will be replaced by the fourth official.
 - If a game is cancelled within 48 hours of the kick-off, officials will be compensated 50% of the match fee
 - Any matches that are rescheduled within a radius of over 30 miles difference in a 48-hour period may result in additional travel compensation for the officials
 - If the referees arrive at the field and the game is not played for reasons like weather, field unplayable, the officials will receive 50%
 - If the referees arrive at the field to find the game cancelled by the home team but still scheduled in Assignr, the refereeing team will receive full pay.