



**Welcome To The
Match Officials Family**

**New Entry Level Match
Officials**



**ONTARIO
SOCCER**

EST. 1901

Welcome to the Match Officials Family!



Here are some helpful tips and advice for you as a new Match Official. They have been gathered from experienced referees – who all started their careers just like you.

We hope the advice here will get you off to a great start, most importantly you must remember to have FUN!



Terminology

- When a 'team' or 'group' of referees and assistant referees are referred to, they are referred to as **Match Officials** as per FIFA guidelines
- When they are being referred to in their individual roles, we refer to them by that role:
 - **Referee**,
 - **Assistant Referee**,
 - **Fourth Official**



Match Officials



Referee



Asst. Referee



Fourth Official



Practical Training

A key to your success as a Match Official is the opportunity to practice your skills and techniques on the field.

Due to the restrictions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, on-field practical training sessions may not be possible.

Please review the video examples of the signals you will use as a Match Official.

[Practical Training Videos](#)

What you need



An approved referee uniform.

The black shirt is the primary jersey color for referees so it should be the one jersey you purchase right away. If you can only purchase 1 jersey, we recommend that you purchase the short sleeve one for the summer months.

An undershirt can be worn on colder days as long as it matches the same colour as your referee shirt. You can add the long sleeve jersey later if you wish.

As an Official, you will need to add the alternate colors over the next few years. These are typically yellow, red and/or blue.

What you need

When you purchase your black shorts, look for shorts with pockets. You may want pockets in the shorts for cards, pencil, extra whistle etc.

Your socks should always be pulled up to your knees and not bunched down around your ankles.

As per Canada Soccer rules, your Badge must be on the left chest/pocket.

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Your Referee Bag

A good quality referee bag will make your life easier. Side pockets, water resistant, and lots of room for your kit. Also large enough to hold your personal items while you are officiating.

When you are officiating, and especially as you advance, two watches are preferred. One for starting and stopping and one for keeping a running time. This also is good in case you forget to start the first one.

Should contain the following:

- A watch with stopwatch functions
- Pens/pencils
- Notebook
- Red and yellow cards
- Tossing coins
- Whistles – always have an extra in your bag
- Flags for the Assistant Referees (if required)
- Cold weather gear when the time of year makes it necessary



Your Referee Bag

Weather is unpredictable and you need to be prepared to officiate in sun, rain, wind and sometimes snow!

Games can be delayed due to weather, or the previous game running late.

Make sure you are warm, dry, have sunscreen and have snacks and hydration for those longer games.

Street shoes and dry socks

A large plastic trash bag (to put your ref bag inside in case of rain)

Sunscreen

Snacks (energy bars are great!) if you are going to be doing more than one game.

Rubber bands or baggies to hold and separate player/coach cards for each team.

Water – don't forget to bring water.

How do I get game assignments?

Initial assignments will likely come from a club assignor and will be in the lower level games. Contact your Club/Club Head Referee to find out who the assignor is. Make sure you get their email address and phone number. Keep this information in your referee bag as well as on your phone/computer.

Ensure you are aware of any of the club assignment systems and to familiarize yourself with the process for receiving and accepting games. Reach out to your Club Head Referee for this information.

- When accepting more than one assignment in a day, make sure you allow enough time to travel to the next game and arrive 15 to 30 minutes before each game.



How do I get game assignments?

Many of you are also players. Make sure you let your assignor know what your game schedule looks like. Also, you should not officiate in the same league age group in which you play. Make sure your assignors is aware of who you play for to reduce any chance of conflict.

- If you are interested in working as a referee at tournaments at your Club, watch for a listing on your Club website.
- You will be able to find out what the tournament game fees are and how you get paid from your assignor and/or your Club Head Referee.

Professionalism

You may have heard your parents or teacher says that first impressions are extremely important.

- Approach the game in a way that shows you are looking forward to being there and being a part of the game.
- Dress for success - wear the proper uniform with your referee jersey tucked in and your socks pulled up.

If you expect to receive respect (one element of game control) on the field, then you must look and act like a professional.



Making a Good First Impression



Know the Laws: Success begins by being prepared

- Read and know the Laws of the Game. If you have questions about Law, reach out to your Club Head Referee or an other official. YouTube has some great videos you can review.
- IFAB has created a simple app for the Laws. Make sure you have this downloaded onto your phone. It may come in useful.
- Please remember, as an inexperienced referee, you will not make all the right decisions the first time. You will learn from experience and from working with more experienced referees.



Making a Good First Impression

Make sure you know the local Rules of Competition. If you are unsure, reach out to your Club Head Referee

- Length of halves
- Size of ball
- Number of players
- Substitutions
- Tie breakers
- What you do with the game report
- Uniform requirements
- Change room location
- Where to park



“Take Charge”



Taking charge does not mean yelling and acting like a dictator (which is abuse of power).

- Greet each coach. Use a firm handshake, a smile and look them in the eyes which shows confidence and professionalism. **If social distancing practices are in place, do NOT shake hands – simply greet them politely with good eye contact.**
- Issue firm, but simple instructions to the players. Never talk down to players, show them the same respect you would like to be shown.
- And always start the game on time. Sometimes you will have situations out of your control, but for the most part all games should start on time.

Communicating with Players

Make your presence known from the moment you walk on the field - that way players know you are confident and ready for the game.

- **Communication with players is just as important as it is with coaches.**
- Stand tall, look people in the eye and smile confidently.
- Have your pre-game questions down - introduce yourself, solicit copies of the rosters, get the game ball from the home team and check it out, check in players.
- Doing these game management things confidently will carry over into the game.



Pre-Game Responsibilities

An important component of success for everyone is a thorough field inspection. You need to look for any situations that could cause injuries, or disrupt the flow of the game. Safety is of the utmost importance. Be sure the field is safe to play the game on.

Inspect the Field

Look for holes or depressions that could cause twisted or broken ankles and see if holes can be filled. All rocks, twigs, debris on the field should be removed.

- Nets should be securely fastened to the goal posts and netting pulled back so as not to interfere with the goalkeeper.
- Goal posts must be securely anchored to the ground. Sandbags on the frame towards the rear are acceptable. Posts don't have to be in the ground, but they must be anchored.
- Corner flags are in place and are not dangerous to players (at least 5 ft high).
- Entire field is properly lined.



Pre-Game Responsibilities

Many team play games on municipal fields. If anything is needed, the home team is responsible.

- Any issues with the field should be noted on the game report.
- There may be the occasion where the issue just cannot be fixed. In this case you have the right to cancel the game. You must be clear and concise in your game reports as to why you cancelled, and what steps you took prior to cancelling.



Check the players

- Home team players/coaches should be checked first but it's not a requirement. You should start with the team that appears to be most ready for inspection.
- Make sure that all jewelry, earrings, watches, etc. are removed.
 - Medic Alert ID must be taped to the player's chest or taped to the wrist with the info showing.
 - **Earrings must be removed. Covering them with tape does not make them legal.**
- All players must wear shin guards and socks must be pulled over shin guards.

Jewelry Rules

One of the areas that we find the most questions around is Jewelry.

In Youth Games we often come across parents/coaches claiming that the player “Just had their ears pierced and cannot remove them.” Unfortunately **they CANNOT play** unless they are removed. This is a safety issue.

If this conversation gets a little heated, include it in a Special Incident Report to your Club Head Referee/League.

Religious jewelry also comes up on a regular basis. The same rules apply.



Dealing with Coaches

Make sure that the coaches know that you are there to keep the players safe and let them enjoy the game.

Be confident, stand tall, make eye contact. This will go a long way in projecting that you are in control of the game.

- Set the ground rules – be proactive
 - Show them where the team and the coaches will be seated. Make sure they understand that they must stay in that area.
 - If there is more than one coach, ask which coach will be giving instruction to the players and who will be asking for subs.
- Don't let the coaches intimidate you.



Dealing with Coaches

- Remain calm.
- Do not take someone yelling at you personally.
- If someone is shouting at you, don't yell back at them. Speak respectfully and quietly, so the coach must quiet down to hear you.
- It happens to all referees, even the most experienced.



Coach Behaviour

We understand that soccer is a game of passion. Sometimes that passion can run a little out of control. The majority of Coaches are respectful, but occasionally you may experience excited coaches.

If a coach is becoming abusive, you should approach the coach at the next stoppage in play.

- Slowly and calmly walk over to the coach. In a polite and respectful way, inform the coach that this type of conduct is unsporting and continuing will result in his or her removal from the game.
- You may show the coach a Yellow Card at this point if you deem necessary.

Dealing with Coaches

If a coach steps over the boundaries of the game and begins to make his comments personal or abusive, you must deal with it.

1. Slowly and calmly walk over to the coach. If the behavior continues – you may dismiss the coach by showing a Red Card.
2. If the coach refuses to leave, give the coach a warning that if he or she does not leave, you will end the game.

It is imperative that you fill out a detailed report. This report must state what was said, at what point you cautioned and dismissed the coach. Be sure to write down all the comments that the coach made. This will assist in the potential discipline hearing

Talking to Players



- Remain calm when talking to players, but be firm in your voice and your decisions.
- Do not yell at players and never use foul or abusive language no matter what they are saying to you.
- Speak softly so the players must quiet down to hear you.

Communicating with Players

- Listen to what players are saying. Allow them to talk for a few seconds before calling it dissent. You might find out about fouls you are missing, or there may be something else going on that can be easily corrected.
- This tactic also lets the players know you are willing to listen up to a certain point. This type of exchange should not go on often in a game and should not last for more than a few seconds. If it goes on longer, you must deal with it.
- The more experience you have as a referee, the easier it is to set boundaries and to know when and where to set them.

Dealing with Players

If you have a difficult player dissenting or doing something else to disrupt the game, at a stoppage of play, issue a caution to them and let the player know that kind of behavior is unacceptable.

It is often helpful to let the coach know about this particular player. Give the coach a short period of time (approximately 30 – 60 seconds) to correct the situation.



If the player still insists on being difficult, use a well delivered warning to let them know that you have just about reached the limit of what you are going to take.

If the bad behavior continues, issue a second caution and then a send off (red card). Remember that the proper procedure for this is to display the second yellow card and then the red.

Dealing with Parents

The passion for the game carries over to the spectators. Rarely is there a game with no comments, cheering or yelling from the touchlines. The important thing to remember is that they are not yelling at you, they are yelling at the call or the situation.

Most parents will yell a word or two then continue to watch the game. We all know what this is like. We watch hockey or soccer on TV and often yell at the screen.



Dealing with Parents

One common problem with parents at grassroots games is that they set up their chairs too close to the touchline when there is no designated seating area. This can pose a safety risk for the players. You can establish a good rapport with the parents by politely asking them before the game to set up their chairs a safe distance from the touch line and reminding them that it's for the safety of their children.



Dealing with Parents

However there are lines that should not be crossed. These include personal attacks.

- Remain calm.
- Do not get into discussions or arguments with the sidelines.
- If you have asked the coach to deal with problem parents and the situation continues, ask the coach to have the spectator leave the area.
- If the spectator refuses, tell the coach that if the spectator is not removed, the game will end.
 - Give the coach a reasonable amount of time (approximately 30 – 60 seconds) to deal with the situation.
- If the parent does not leave, you should feel free to end the game.
 - Be sure you file a complete written report with the league so that there is a clear understanding of why the game was terminated.
 - The league must have a written report in order to take any follow-up disciplinary action.

How Do Referees Improve?

To be a good referee, you must continue to learn and improve with every game.

- Experience is the best teacher and confidence builder.
- The more games you do the more comfortable and confident you'll be.
- If something occurs in a game and you aren't sure if you made the correct decision, go back to the Laws of the Game after the game and double check.
- Talk to more experienced referees about the decision you made and whether or not you should have done something differently, or email an experienced referee or your Club Head Referee with the question.
- Watch experienced referees and notice how they deal with specific situations that cause you trouble in a game.

How Do Referees Improve?

- Have experienced referees watch and critique you and then remember to try the suggestions they give you.
- Seek out experienced referees to work with.
- Go slow in advancing to more difficult matches.
- Attend seminars, workshops and clinics.
- Watch games of every level whenever possible.

Learning is constant, and mistakes are an opportunity to learn. No official ever has the perfect game, but all should work toward consistent improvement.

Annual Recertification

- Referees must register each year with Ontario Soccer through RefCentre
- Referee registration for the calendar year ends on March 31st of each year.
- If you wish to be considered for an upgrade, let your Club Head Referee know that in advance of registration.
- You can find the criteria for upgrading from grade to grade on the Ontario Soccer website www.ontariosoccer.net/officials



Good Luck and Have Fun

www.ontariosoccer.net/match-officials



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