

The information in these guidelines should not be construed as a replacement for rules issued by FIFA, USSF, or the various soccer organizations under which WASA operates.

The information is intended as a procedural reference for WASA’s two-referee system.

## Table of Contents

Rules for WASA Referees.....	2
Player, Coach, and Spectator Rules That You Need to Know .....	3
WASA Jewelry & Earring Policy.....	4
Player Equipment Requirements .....	4
What to Do If You Need a Replacement.....	5
What to Do If the Other Referee Is Not There by 10 Min. Before the Game .....	5
Weather Procedures.....	6
Referee Positioning .....	7
Referee Positions When Restarting Play .....	8
Game Day Responsibilities .....	9
How to Deal with Sideline Abuse .....	10

# Rules for WASA Referees

## 1. Required Referee Uniform

- Gold referee shirt  
(or alternate color - black, red, blue, or green)
- Black shorts
- Black stockings with white stripes at the top
- Black shoes

## Required Referee Equipment

- Whistle
- Wrist watch with countdown timer or a stop watch - **No Phones**  
(time keeping device must show seconds)
- Coin
- Yellow & red cards (not used in U6 & U7)
- Game Record to record events during the game  
(Available on the WASA website)
- Pen or pencil

## 2. Cell Phones are not permitted during games. (This includes ALL communication and/or entertainment devices.)

**Time-keeping should be done with a wrist watch or a stop watch, NOT with your cell phone.**

Your job is to referee. Anything that distracts you from that responsibility cheats both the players and the people who pay you. Use of these devices during a game may result in you being sent home.

Texting, talking, message checking, browsing, listening to music, etc. while you referee a soccer game is **not permitted**.

If someone calls you during a game, ignore the call. If you do not have the ability to ignore your communications device, turn it off or leave it on the sideline.

## 3. Be at the field at least 15 minutes before the scheduled game time. Start the game on time.

## 4. Required for every game you referee...

Use a Game Record to document the game as it is played.

Obtain coaches' signatures at the end of each game.

When you get home, enter the game(s) on your Referee Work Record (RWR).

## 5. Know the Laws of the Game (LOTG)

You need to know the LOTG and correctly apply them to what you see on the field. If there is something you are not sure about, don't just let it go. Have the professional integrity to learn the correct call. Do some research online or ask someone who knows.

## 6. Cooperate with coaches to help players learn the game.

WASA is an instructional league. Calling fouls is part of the instruction process. Briefly and loudly tell players what foul you have called and what you want them to do. Explain as much as necessary to help the player understand what they did wrong and how to do it correctly.

If there is an arm signal associated with your call, **USE IT**. This helps the coaches know what will happen next.

Very young players often do not understand soccer terminology. For example, they may not understand what they are supposed to do when you say, "It's a goal kick (or free kick, corner kick, throw-in/kick-in, etc.)." If they don't respond correctly to your first verbal direction, take your direction up a notch by pointing to the exact spot where you want them to place the ball and telling them exactly what to do next.

## 7. WASA Referees do not have the authority to issue or even mention a forfeit.

If a team does not show up for a game, if a coach pulls his team from the field due to player safety concerns or if some other unusual event occurs, the referee **Does Not** have the authority to declare a forfeit. Please do not even mention the possibility of a forfeit to players, coaches or parents.

The referee can only report to the referee coordinator that the game was not played or not completed and give the reason(s) why. **The division coordinator will determine the status of the game.**

# Player, Coach, and Spectator Rules That You Need to Know

1. **Coaches in all divisions except U5 must stay off the field.**

2. **Players and Coaches on the team sideline should not interfere with play.**

The bench should be at least 5 feet from the touch-line. This gives players room to make throw-ins and the referee room to move up and down the sideline.

Coaches should be no closer to the goal line than the penalty area line that is parallel to the goal line.

Players waiting to go in as a sub should be ready and standing at the mid-field flag/line.

Players not waiting to sub in should stay more than 5 yards away from the mid-field flag/line.

3. **Spectators should be on the opposite side of the field from the teams.**

Spectators should stay at least 5 feet from the touch-line so players have room to make throw-ins and the referee has room to move up and down the sideline.

4. **Coaches and spectators are not permitted to provide instruction to players from behind the goals.**

Do not enforce this in U6 and U7 games. Sometimes the goal line for one mini-field is near the sideline of another field.

Photographers and other spectators are permitted behind the goals as long as they do not distract the players or interfere with the game. Providing direction to players is considered to be a distraction.

5. Coaches are not authorized to cancel games. That decision belongs to WASA staff and the referees.

If the referee decides to play, and a coach feels that weather or field conditions threaten the safety of the team's players, the coach should inform the referee of the concern and pull his/her team from the field.

**If a referee(s) terminates a game and the coaches ignore the referee's decision, the referees should immediately leave the field and report the incident to the referee coordinator.**



**Westerville Amateur Soccer Association**  
P.O. Box 614, Westerville, Ohio 43082

## Earrings & Jewelry

As stated in FIFA's Laws of the Game, earrings and other jewelry are not permitted. FIFA is soccer's world-wide governing body. Except as noted below, earrings and other jewelry are not permitted. Players choosing to not remove earrings or other prohibited jewelry cannot participate in play.

US Youth Soccer, the national governing body of youth soccer, joins FIFA in explicitly prohibiting jewelry in its laws of the game. This includes bracelets, earrings, hair barrettes/beads/pins, necklaces, rings, watches, etc. Recognizing that WASA is a youth recreational league and to enhance access to the league, these laws are modified to allow soft elastic hair ties (i.e., scrunchies), and hair beads or religious or medical-alert items that are covered and/or contained with a soft material, and appropriately secured.

**The referees have the final determination on whether the covered/secured item is determined safe for play.**

There is no exception for recently pierced ears. FIFA as well as US Soccer and the Ohio Soccer Association have issued a directive to referees that tape and/or band-aids over earrings or pierced-ear starter plugs are not permitted under any circumstances. Parental consent is irrelevant. Referees will not allow a player to play with earrings or other prohibited jewelry. Any player who is considering having their ears pierced is advised to wait until the season is over.

Updated: 11/8/2023

### All players must have safe equipment

1. Shin guards are required for all practices and games.
2. Cleats must be approved for soccer. Baseball and football cleats are NOT permitted.
3. Hair restraints must be soft fabric or elastic. Hair restraints containing metal or hard plastic are not permitted.
4. **Jewelry is not permitted**... no rings, bracelets, watches, necklaces, earrings, or any type of piercing. FIFA rules do not permit soccer players to wear earrings. Contact with the ear could cause the back of the earring to puncture the skin behind the ear. A shirt or finger might catch the earring and pull it out. Covering earrings with tape or band-aids is NOT PERMITTED as an alternative.

# What to Do If You Need a Replacement

**Make an effort to find your own replacement.** (*WASA provides a list of active referees at the beginning of each season*)

It is your responsibility to find a replacement when you are unable to referee an assigned game. If you know someone who is available to take your place, make arrangements directly with him or her. Make certain that your replacement knows which games they are covering for you.

**If you cannot find a substitute on your own, contact the [Replacement Referee System](#).**

Email: DTisdale8@gmail.com or Phone Diana at: 419-889-1909

## What to Do If the Other Referee Is Not There by 10 Minutes Before the Game

**Presume that your partner is not going to show up.**

**Do not wait.** Immediately tell the coaches that there will be only one referee.  
Ask each of them to supply a club linesman.

*(Club linesmen are not necessary for U6 and U7 games.)*

**Do not start the game until you have two linesmen.**

**Do the pre-game duties as quickly as possible.**

1. Inspect the players' equipment
2. Flip the coin
3. Instruct the club linesmen about what you want them to do. (*See the notes about club linesmen below*)
4. Get the game ball from the home team
5. Start the game on time

**Notes about club linesmen:**

1. Usually, a club linesman is a parent, brother, sister or friend of someone on one of the two teams. They are usually not trained as referees. **Do not assume that they will be impartial.**
2. Show them where they should be positioned on the sideline and how far up and down the sideline they should go.
3. Ask them to indicate when the ball completely crosses the sideline and which direction the throw-in will go. If you do not have referee flags, have them raise their arm.
4. Tell them that you reserve the right to change their calls about which team gets the ball.
5. If you do not have a clear view, a club linesman may also be able to help you determine who last touched the ball before it went over the goal line.
6. Make offside calls yourself. **Do not let club linesmen make or help with offside calls.**
7. At the end of the game thank your club linesmen for their help.

# Weather Procedures

## Go to the field.

Go to the field unless you have been notified by the Rec Referee Coordinator that your specific games are cancelled.

Game and field status information can also be found on the WASA home page: [www.WASAsoccer.org](http://www.WASAsoccer.org).

## Determine if weather conditions are acceptable to play.

### Rain:

Heavy showers are NOT sufficient reason to cancel a WASA game. Referees may delay the start of a game, or take a rain delay during a game, for up to 15 minutes. If after 15 minutes the heavy showers still persist, cancel or terminate the game.

If there is a rain delay, adjust the game length so the game ends at the original ending time.

Canceling one game does not automatically cancel games that follow. Referees should remain at the field and make a separate decision at the scheduled time for the next game. Referees get paid for both games even if they are not played.

### Thunder and Lightning:

If there is no thunder or lightning, every effort should be made to play the game.

If there is thunder or lightning – **Immediately Cancel or terminate the game.**

## WASA Policy regarding Thunder and Lightning

If **anyone** hears thunder or spots lightning during a game... **Do not continue play!**

### Take immediate action.

- In WASA Rec. matches for ages U12 and below...  
Terminate the match. Advise everyone to seek shelter.  
Seek shelter for yourself. **If safe shelter is not available, GO HOME.**
- In Middle School age matches or above...  
There must be a full 30 minute delay. Advise everyone to seek shelter.  
Each subsequent occurrence of thunder or lightening restarts the 30 minute clock.  
If after 30 minutes it is apparent that conditions are not improving, terminate the match.

## Determine if field conditions are acceptable to play.

The safety of the players is the most important consideration.

A second consideration is the preservation of the fields for future games.

### Guidelines for Judging a Field to Be Playable

- 80 percent of the field, and both goal areas, must be free of standing water and heavy mud.
- The turf should not be soggy.

## WASA U6 & U7

U6 and U7 play small sided games on mini-fields with no goal posts.

If a mini-field is unplayable, attempt to set up a suitable temporary field with cones in a near-by location. If this is not possible, **consult with the other referee and the coaches** and then cancel the games **on that field**.

# Referee Positioning

## WASA uses a two-referee system.

Both referees are considered Head Referees with equal authority to enforce the Laws of the Game.

The referee that is closest to the goal being attacked is called the **Lead Referee**.

The referee that is furthest from the goal being attacked is called the **Trail Referee**.

During normal play the two referees should be positioned where the two Assistant Referees would be in the FIFA three-man diagonal system of control. This positioning provides the best opportunity to see fouls, determine offside position, see when the ball leaves the field and judge if a goal is scored.

### Lead referee:

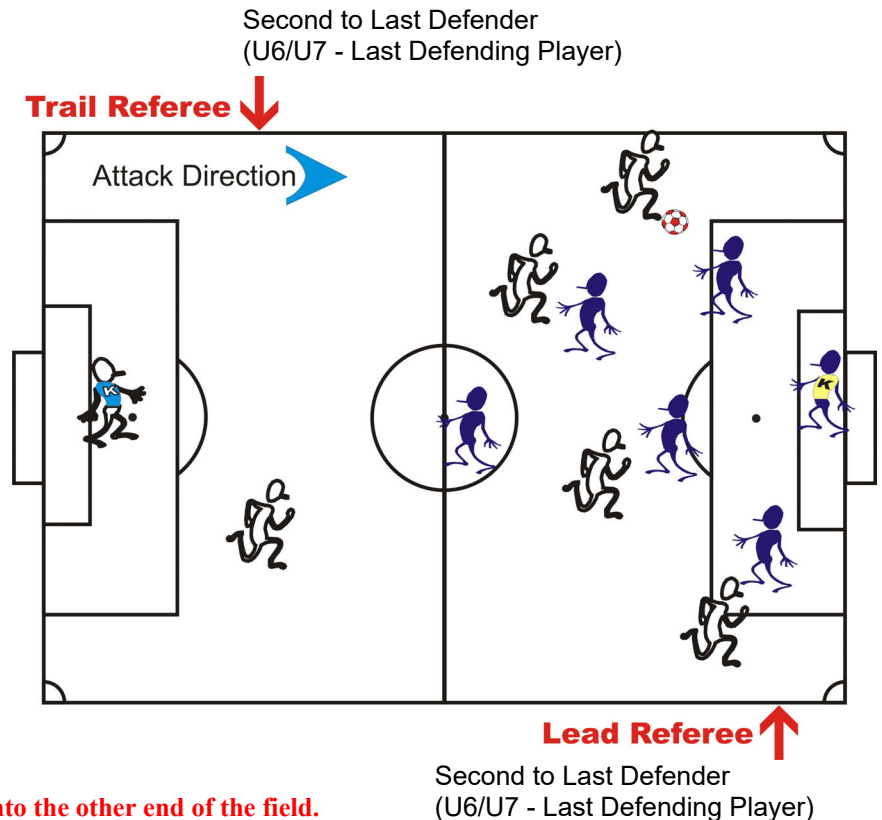
Positioned even with the second to last defender in the end of the field being attacked, or even with the ball, if the ball is closer to the goal line.

### Trail referee:

Positioned even with the second to last defender in the end of the field farthest from the goal being attacked.

For games in U10 and under, if play goes deep into the attacking end, the Trail referee may move up to the mid-line... but no further.

If the direction of play changes, the Trail referee becomes the Lead referee and must quickly get into position even with the second to last defender, or the ball, as described above for the lead referee.



**Referees should not go past the mid-field line into the other end of the field.**

Penalty kicks and dropped balls are exceptions to this limitation.

## U6 & U7 games

There are no goal keepers in U6 & U7.

- The Lead referee is positioned even with the last defending field player in the end being attacked, or even with the ball if the ball is closer to the goal line than the last defending player.
- The Trail referee is positioned even with the last defending field player in the end of the field not being attacked.

These are the same positions where they would be if there were goal keepers.

## Referee Positions when Restarting Play

### Kick Off

1. Trail referee... on the center-line. Controls the kick off. Blows whistle to signal the ball is ready for play.
2. Lead referee... in the end of the field being attacked, even with the 2<sup>nd</sup> to last defender (the last field player).

### Corner Kick

1. If the kick is from the far corner, the Lead referee stands on the goal line at the corner where the goal line intersects the touch line.  
If the kick is from the near corner, the Lead referee is even with goal line and behind kicker.
2. After the kick is taken, the Lead referee watches to see if the kick curves out of bounds in the air before it lands in bounds.
3. The Trail referee is even with the attacking team's second to last defender, but no closer to the kick than the mid-field line.

### Goal Kick

1. The Trail referee sees that the ball is placed properly and then moves to a point on the sideline even with the front of the penalty area. The Trail referee ensures that opponents are outside the penalty area until the ball is kicked and clearly moves.  
For U6 & U7 games, the Trail referee is on the sideline even with the goal area.
2. The Lead referee is even with the opponent's second to last defender, but no closer to the kick than the mid-field line.  
For U6 & U7 games, the Lead referee is on the sideline even with the mid-field line.

### Drop Ball

1. The Referee on the side nearest to the drop location drops the ball. The spot should be at least five yards in from the sideline. The referee faces the field (not the sideline) while dropping the ball.  
This may require a referee to temporarily go deep into the other end of the field. After dropping the ball, this referee must quickly return to his (her) own end of the field and take up position even with the second to last defender. This referee should continue to watch play while returning to position.
2. The other referee is in a normal position on the opposite sideline ready to move up-field or down-field with the second to last defender.

### Throw-in

1. Both referees should be even with the second to last defenders in their respective ends of the field.
2. Additionally, the referee on the side of field where throw is being taken should stand far enough away from the thrower to observe both the thrower's hands and feet.

### Penalty Kick

For penalty kicks, the Trail referee serves as the Center Referee would in a three-man system.

1. The Trail referee position is just inside the penalty area slightly closer to the goal line than the line that is parallel to the goal line.
2. The Lead referee position is on the goal line outside the penalty area.



# Game Day Responsibilities

## Arrive at the Field - 15 Minutes before kickoff

1. Meet your partner and write his or her name on your score sheet.
2. Inspect the nets, field condition and markings.
3. Inspect the flags (if present) - in correct place, upright, and stable so that they will not fall over during the game. Make sure the mid-field flags are at least one yard off the field.
4. Write team colors and coach names on your Game Record.

## Meet with the Teams - 8 minutes before kickoff

1. Inspect Equipment:
  - Cleats and shin guards
  - Casts or braces properly padded
  - No metal or hard plastic in hair
  - Hair Beads and Medic ID/Religious jewelry effectively controlled.
  - No Jewelry of any kind: no rings, bracelets, watches, earrings, necklaces, piercings... **NO EXCEPTIONS!**

## Coin Toss - 5 Minutes before kickoff

1. Meet with the captains.
2. Ask who will call the coin toss for the visiting team.
3. Ask the team that wins the coin toss which end of the field they want to defend or if they want to take the kick-off.
4. If they choose to take the kick-off, the other team chooses an end of the field.
5. Record which team will kick and the direction on your Game Record.
6. Decide which side of the field each referee will take and who will keep the official time.
7. Get a game ball from the home team and inspect it for proper size, inflation, and condition.

## Take Position - 1 Minute before kickoff

1. Both referees check that their watches are set correctly and ready to operate.
2. Team-side referee... blow your whistle and get the teams on the field.
3. Both referees take position.
  - Trail referee... on the center-line.
  - Lead referee... in the end of the field being attacked, even with the 2<sup>nd</sup> to last defender (the last field player).
4. Both referees count the players.
5. Start the game - **on Time**

## The Trail Referee controls all kickoffs

1. Make sure the ball is stationary on the center spot.
2. Make sure the Lead referee is in position and ready for the kickoff.
3. **Blow the whistle** to signify that the game may start.
4. Start your clock when the ball is kicked and clearly moves.

## Time Keeping, Quarter Breaks, Halftime and End of Game

1. The referee blows the whistle when time has expired.
2. If a penalty kick needs to be taken, time is extended until the PK is complete.
3. Halftime for WASA games is five minutes.
4. Teams are **required** to switch ends for the second half.
5. In U6 and U7 games:
  - Teams alternate kickoffs. One team has the kick in the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> quarters. The other team in the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup>.
  - Breaks after the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> quarters are two minutes.
  - Teams are **required** to switch ends for the second half. Teams **do not** switch ends after the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> quarters.
6. One minute before halftime is over, blow your whistle to get the teams back on the field.
7. After the game, have each coach sign your Game Record.

# How to Deal with Sideline Abuse

## Coach Misbehavior:

Referees are encouraged to use the "Ask-Tell-Remove" approach used in MLS.

1. First, 'ask' the coach to please stop the behavior.

2. Next 'tell' the coach his (her) behavior is no longer going to be tolerated.

Say, "Coach, your behavior is not acceptable. If you don't stop (*fill in the blank*), I'm going to be forced to take further action. The decision is yours."

Always tell them, "The decision is yours." This puts the sole responsibility on the coach to manage his/her behavior.

3. The final step is an ejection.

Say, "Coach, your behavior leaves me no choice. You need to leave. The game will restart after you have left the field." If the coach refuses to leave, terminate the game.

If the coach tells you that when he leaves there will be no coach, say, "I'm sure one of the parents will volunteer. If none of them volunteer, we will have to terminate the game."

## Parent/Spectator Misbehavior:

Dealing with abuse from parents is tough because technically you can't dismiss parents. **Work through the coach.**

Go to the coach and say, "Coach, you have responsibility for the conduct of your parents. We are at the point where I feel they are negatively impacting our ability to referee this game and they are affecting the players on the field. If no one deals with it, we will have to terminate the game."

Stop the game until the coach deals with the parents. Tell the coach, "I'll give you a couple minutes to go over and tell the parents to stop... (*abusing the referee, berating opponents, etc.*)."

The coach is forced to take action because he knows that if he doesn't deal with his team's parents, the game can be terminated. While the game is stopped for the coach to walk across the field, the focus is off the referee and on the coach and parents.

If the coach refuses to address the parents (or if the coach talks with the parents, but the abuse continues) you have the authority to terminate the game.

### **Important Note - WASA U6 through U12 Rec Games**

**If you eject a coach or terminate a game, phone Henry Bell (614-890-0696) within 24 hours to report the specifics of the incident.**