



Western New York State Referee Association

Report to New York State West Youth Soccer Association - 2014

William A. Campbell, State Youth Referee Administrator

REGISTRATION REPORT:

The referee population remained essentially steady decreasing from 1902 registrations in 2013 to 1895 referees in 2014, a decline of only 7 referees. Our number of state level referees (who focus primarily on the adult and higher level youth matches) remained declined slightly from 68 to 59 and we had two new national referees and our first ever FIFA referee make the grade. We trained 592 new grade 8 referees (which is comparable to previous years) and 103 new Grade 9 recreational youth referees which is the most we have had since the major change in our program 2 years ago.

RECREATIONAL YOUTH REFEREE PROGRAM:

The Grade 9 Recreational Youth Referee (RYR) program continues to be a strong part of our program. Over this last summer, we offered 5 recreational youth referee training classes in the state (Southern Tier 1, Binghamton 1, Buffalo 1, Ithaca 1 and Syracuse 1) creating about 60 new recreational referees for 2015. Even though our total number of Recreational Youth Referees more than doubled, this was mainly due to the extremely large number of referees that were trained last year as we only had 6 of the 47 Grade 9 referees return from 2013. It is our hope that this is not happening because clubs are simply using previously trained referees who have neither recertified nor applied for risk management which is mandatory by USSF and by NYSW policies. This decline is significant and will be monitored in 2015.

Of continuing concern to the State Referee Committee is the number of recreational clubs and leagues that are still attempting to avoid using the USSF model and getting audited by the NYS Department of Labor, or worse yet; using referees whom have neither been properly trained nor have been cleared by the NYSWYSA Risk Management program. Not only does this do a disservice to the recreational level players but these factors can become a major problem for a club and its officers should legal issues arise. Clubs interested in the recreational youth referee program should contact the State Youth Referee Administrator for more information at syra@wnyreferee.org. The cost of registering your officials properly and following the assignment and payment model set forth by USSF are minimal compared to the liability a club could suffer if they are audited or worse yet, sued.

STATUS	2011	2012	2013	2014
New Grade 9	145	185	39	103
Returning Grade 9	88	60	8	3
Total Grade 9 Referees Registered	233	245	47	106
Grade 9's Upgrading to Grade 8	92	73	112	3
Total Grade 9's Returning	180	133	120	6
Retention Percentage	61%	57%	48%	13%

REGIONAL AND NATIONAL COMPETITIONS:

Western New York referees enjoyed a good year at the regional and national level.

REGION 1 PRESIDENT'S CUP: WNYSRA sent five officials and one assessor to the 2014 President's Cup in Slippery Rock, PA. The referees were Michael Boltri of Buffalo, Jeffrey Cook of Ithaca, Christopher Mazgaj of Buffalo, Jessica Mazgaj of Buffalo, Ankur Singh of Buffalo and Nicholas Wodo of Buffalo. The assessor was Sam Akimbami of Buffalo. Also of note, our State Director of Assessment, Arthur Jaspe, was invited by the region 1 referee committee to be the chief of assessors at the tournament. Because of his performance at the tournament, Jeffery Cook was invited to and attended the National President's Cup finals. Nicholas Wodo was also invited to the National Tournament but could not attend due to work commitments.

REGION 1 ODP TOURNAMENT: 9 referees and 2 assessors attended the event held the weekend after state cup in the Lawrenceville/Princeton area of New Jersey. Assessors attending were Dick Reif and John Kramer. Referees in attendance were Mackenzie App, Syracuse; Amanda Forbes, Rochester; Keri Kephart, Rochester; Matthew Deinhart, Buffalo; Charles Loweecey, Buffalo; Rabee Naji, Buffalo; Ian Ronan, Buffalo; Christopher Soufleris, Rochester and Antonio Triana, Ithaca. Based on his very strong performance in Lawrenceville, Rabee Naji was invited to the Regional ODP Finals in Kirkwood and from there to the National ODP Finals this coming March.

REGION 1 DIRECTOR'S PREMIER LEAGUE FINALS: Western New York nominated two referees to attend the finals in Kirkwood Delaware. They were Rabee Naji of Buffalo and Greg Irwin of Rochester. Remarkably, both referees were nominated from this tournament to represent the Premier league at the Region 1 Championships bringing our total number of referees at that tournament from 13 to 15; more than many states much larger than ours.

REGION 1 CHAMPIONSHIPS: 15 referees and 2 assessors attended the Region 1 Championships at the University of Rhode Island this year. For many of the referees, this was their first year at the tournament and I am happy to say that they represented Western New York extremely well. Assessors attending were Art Jaspe and Dick Reif. Referees invited to the tournament were Mackenzie App, Syracuse; Jonathan Bilinski, Southern Tier; Michael Boltri, Buffalo; Jeffrey Cook, Ithaca; Amanda Forbes, Rochester; Gregory Irwin, Rochester; Daniel Kaluzhnyy, Binghamton; Keri Kephart, Rochester; Brianne Lilly, Rochester; Charles Loweecey, Buffalo; Rabee Naji, Buffalo; Kyle Sauln, Rochester; Christopher Soufleris, Rochester; Antonio Triana, Ithaca and Christopher Weatherspoon of Rochester. Unfortunately, Keri Kephart suffered a tournament ending concussion when she was struck by a hard struck ball on the last day of the round robin.

All remaining referees were assigned to semis with centers going to Mackenzie App, Under 12 Girls Small Sided and Brianne Lilly, Under 12 Girls Full Sided.

Seven of our referees received final assignments. Those were Rabee Naji, Under 17 Boys Center; Mackenzie App, Under 12 Girls Small Sided 4th; Jeffrey Cook, Under 18 Girls AR2; Daniel Kaluzhnyy, Under 15 Boys AR2; Christopher Weatherspoon, Under 15 Boys AR1, Kyle Sauln, Under 16 Boys, AR2 and Greg Irwin, Under 19 Boys AR1.

Of note, we had one referee invited to nationals and one nominated as an alternate. They were Rabee Naji and Greg Irwin as the alternate.

2013 Instructional Programs Report

Submitted by Thomas Ross, State Director of Instruction

The 2013-2014 season marked the launch of several new training programs by US Soccer, a part of the transitional process leading to significant changes that will become mandatory in the 2015 registration program.

A revamped Entry Clinic program was used this year. In simple terms, US Soccer has crafted training programs in three classifications:

- Small-sided youth games
- Competitive youth games
- Adult games

Our new entry clinic material combines the small-sided and competitive programs, resulting in certification of new officials as Grade 8 Referees. We continue to work with the new material to develop the best program for our entry level referees. In late 2013 and 2014, we trained 592 new referees who were available to work in the summer of 2014.

Three instructors were selected to attend a State Instructor course in November of 2013, bringing our number of State Instructors to six.

Effective in 2015, US Soccer is eliminating the Associate Instructor (Grade 9) grade. This change required that we provide training to upgrade all of our Associate Instructors to Grade 7. Our State Instructors conducted three upgrade clinics in early 2014, and we now have a well-trained group of Referee Instructors.

Recertification training programs are also in transition, and “grade specific” training will become mandatory in 2015. WNY was ahead of the curve on this, as we started conducting different levels of recertification five years ago. During 2014 we started using some of the new instructional material, and our State Instructors are now at work developing the final programs for 2015 recertification training based on material received from US Soccer.

Our upgrade clinic provided required training to candidates upgrading to Grade 7 Referee. A total of 50 students attended this clinic, including both upgrade candidates and referees who wanted to improve their knowledge of the game.

We continued our Western New York Referee Association Academy development in 2014. Eighteen of our promising Grade 8 and 7 referees were selected for the Academy - unfortunately, one was injured just before the Academy and could not participate. The Academy was held during the Cobras FC Tournament on July 11-13. On Friday evening, participants received training in both the classroom and on the field. They worked a minimum of three games on Saturday and Sunday, and were assessed after each game. Instructors were present to supervise observation and review of ongoing games. On Sunday, the group watched as some of our professional referees officiated the U19 boys championship game. Analysis of the results of the Academy and planning for improvements in 2015 are already underway.

Several years ago, our State Referee Committee declared referee development to be our priority. There are many elements involved in this development, and certainly training is an integral part. I am proud to say that, for the first time ever, four Western New York officials achieved National status or higher.

David Mon was certified as a National Referee for the second consecutive year, and worked NWSL games across the country.

Kathleen (Katy) Nesbitt and Democratis (Jim) Pashalidis earned National Assistant Referee badges. In addition, Katy was accepted into US Soccer's Platinum Program, a program providing high level training and assignments for approximately 20 of the top referees in the country.

Amanda Ross, a former National Assistant Referee, was appointed to the international referee panel in 2014. She was awarded a FIFA Assistant Referee badge, one of only four women in the USA receiving that honor. Amanda is the first Western New York referee to achieve FIFA status.

Unfortunately, the Western New York Flash didn't make it to the NWSL playoffs in 2014. But Western New York was still represented. Three of the four officials on the semi-final game between Kansas City and Portland were WNY referees: Amanda and Katy were the assistant referees, and Dave was the 4th official.

We currently have one referee who is on track to receive a National badge in 2015, and four others plan to declare their national candidacy in the next year or two. Western New York referees are clearly drawing attention at the national level.

We have new challenges in the coming year, with the changes in mandatory training requirements for referees. I am confident that our instructors are up to the task, and we will continue working to develop top-notch referees for our local matches and beyond.