

Mississippi State Referee Program

Operating Policy and Procedures

Approved – April 27, 2024

Referee Training

All referee, assessor, instructor, and assigning training and certification conducted within the state of Mississippi must be sanctioned and approved by the State Referee Committee. Only currently USSF licensed Referee Mentors or Referee Coaches in good standing can conduct any type of referee training and certification. The State Director Instruction (SDI) will assign all instructors. Member organizations of MSA shall always seek training and certification through the State Referee Program.

Initial Referee Certification

Individuals must be at least **13 years of age** at the time they register for the first time to become a **USSF Referee**. They must take the Referee Entry Level Course and must pass all the certification requirements. An official is not USSF certified until all requirements are met, including the satisfactory completion of all Risk Management training and background checks if the official is 18 years of age or older. An official turning 18 years of age during the soccer year is required to meet those requirements when they become of age. All clinic attendees must sign up online through Mississippi Soccer Referee program's online registration system and pay the appropriate fee in advance of any clinic.

We will also offer a **Mississippi Recreational Referee** program. Individuals must be at least **11 years of age** at the time they register for the Entry Level Course and must pass all the certification requirements. **A Mississippi Recreational Referee can only Referee Small Sided Recreational games.** There are **NO EXCEPTIONS.**

Upgrade from Recreational Referee to a USSF Referee

Individuals must be at least **13 years of age** at the time they register to upgrade to a **USSF Referee**. They must take the Entry Level Course and must pass all the certification requirements. They will not be required to attend a field session as they met that requirement when becoming a Mississippi Recreational Referee.

Annual Recertification

Referee Certification covers the time of July 1st to June 30th each soccer year per USSF policy. All officials (Referees, Mentors, and Coaches) must recertify each year and are required to attend the appropriate designated training classes. We strongly encourage all officials to recertify as soon as possible. FIFA and USSF releases their Law Changes and change in Rules Interpretations in July for the upcoming soccer year. Recertification classes will be held each year at regular prices from July 1 through December 31. Any official recertifying after December 31 will be assessed a late fee. Any official not

certified by the designated deadline will not be allowed to serve in their official capacity until recertification requirements are met, appropriate current and late fees are paid, and approval is given by the State Referee Administrator. An official is not certified until all requirements are met including the satisfactory completion of a background check and a Risk Management certification if the official is 18 years of age or older. All clinic attendees must sign up and pay online in advance of any clinic. Member organizations of MSA shall not use any official that is not currently certified.

Maintenance Requirements

Regional Referees

Regional referees are required to attend the USSF required training and it must be at the Summer Advanced Training clinic. Each Regional Referee is required to meet the USSF Regional Referee maintenance assessments (evaluation) requirements as a referee. The assessment must be scheduled through the State Director of Assessment (SDA). Game details must be arranged before contacting the SDA. It is recognized that a referee cannot always give the SDA 14 days' notice of the assigned game but every effort should be made to do so. Fees for the Assessment must be paid to MSRA. MSRA will issue payment to the Assessor. A referee cannot pay an assessor directly. Each Regional referee must also pass the physical and written testing requirements. Failure to meet the annual maintenance requirements will result in a downgrade to a Referee and can only return to the Regional Referee program following USSF Guidelines. Each Regional Referee must support and participate in the Mississippi Soccer Association's State Cup leading to the National Championships. They should also make every effort to support and participate in the Regional Championships in which Mississippi is required to send Referees.

Referee Advancement

USSF Registered referees desiring to upgrade must enter the Referee Upgrade Program by contacting the State Referee Administrator and following the guidelines documented. All upgrade requirements must be met within the last 12 months. Otherwise, the referee must reenter the Referee Upgrade Program in the subsequent year and begin the process again. The criteria for entering and completing the upgrade process will be delivered by the State Referee Administrator. Once all requirements are met by a referee, the State Referee Administrator will present the list of candidates to the State Referee Committee for review.

Referee Assessment

The State Director of Assessment (SDA) will schedule all upgrade and maintenance assessments after the referee submits their request. Developmental assessments will also be scheduled through the SDA, including assessors utilized for the MSA tournaments and

the Assessor-for-the-Day program. Assessors will provide the written feedback as required by USSF to both the SDA and the referee being assessed. Failure to comply with this requirement may result in disciplinary action being taken against the assessor. Game details must be arranged before contacting the SDA. It is recognized that a referee cannot always give the SDA 14 days' notice of the assigned game but every effort should be made to do so. Fees for the Assessment must be paid to MSRA. MSRA will issue payment to the Assessor. A referee cannot pay an assessor directly. Referees are responsible for sending payment to the SRA. MSRA will issue a check to the assessor. Assessments are \$125 for a National Assessment, \$65 for a Regional Upgrade or Regional Maintenance Assessment, and \$20 for an Advanced Referee Assessment or a Development Referee assessment.

Assigning

The State Assignor Coordinator will collaborate with the State Referee Administrator to recommend the assignors for each MSA sponsored event to the State Referee Committee. All MSA member organizations must have an assignor licensed in Mississippi and under the jurisdiction of the State Referee Committee. The State Referee Administrator has the authority to approve an unlicensed assignor in cases of emergency until the next assignor's course is made available.

Assignors using out of state referees must verify that all referees are in good standing with the corresponding SRA of the referee requesting to work. The referee must have passed the appropriate Risk Management review within their state prior to being considered for assignment in any event in Mississippi.

Traveling to Out of State Events

Referees who travel out of state to officiate games must contact the SRA in advance indicating the dates, location, and assignor's contact information. The SRA will contact the assignor of the event to coordinate approval and good standing.