



## Soccer Refereeing in South Alabama

Below is an overview of opportunities along with basic "how-to-get-started" and "where-does-it-go-from-here" as it relates to refereeing soccer.

### What are the local referee organizations?

Gulf Coast Soccer Officials Association (GCSOA)

GCSOA oversees soccer refs in the following leagues: Mobile County High School, United States Soccer Federation (USSF), Catholic Youth Organization, City Rec, and sometimes YMCA soccer.

Baldwin County Officials Association (BCOA)

BCOA oversees high school soccer refs in Baldwin County.

National Intercollegiate Soccer Officials Association (NISOA)

NISOA oversees local college referees.

### What games are available for refereeing?

1.CYO – This is the usual starting points for new referees.The Catholic Youth Organization involves the 2nd through 8th grades in the catholic school.The games are played at various school fields in Mobile.There are two referees per game and the games are 10, 12, or 15 minute quarters depending on grade.The pay is currently set at \$15 per game per referee.Required Training is provided by the GCSOA and usually consists of one or two training sessions. The referee assignor tries to put an experienced ref with new referees whenever possible.

2.City Rec – The cities of Mobile, Daphne, and Fairhope have rec programs with players from age 4 through high school age. Some are more organized than others.Younger ages may only use one referee.The older leagues use two referees.The assigning for Mobile is through a GCSOA assignor. Daphne and Fairhope hire their own assignor. Pay will range from \$15 per game to \$25 for older age groups in Daphne / Fairhope.

3.USSF games:

A.Semmes Soccer League -This is a USSF sanctioned league also associated with the Mobile Soccer Club.To referee these games, you must be a USSF referee.These games are played on fields next to Mary G. Montgomery HS.The games will use 1 or 3 referees, depending on age.

B.Club Soccer.There are two clubs in south Alabama, Mobile Soccer Club and the Blast Soccer Club.Players and Referees must be signed up though USSF.The clubs will often have "friendly" games with other clubs and will need referees.Each club will have at least one tournament per year.For two days, you will have an opportunity to referee in as many as seven games each day.The older age groups will also have league play for what are called Division I and Division II teams.Teams from all over the state will occasionally come down here to play a scheduled game during the fall.Pay for these USSF games is based on age, whether you are the center referee



or an assistant referee, whether it is a friendly, tournament, DI, or DII game. (examples: Under 12 friendlies will normally pay \$20 to the center and \$15 to each AR. Under 18 DI games may pay up to 50/30/30.) As you move up in rank and experience, you may be asked to referee in State League playoff games and Regional games.

C. Tournaments: USSF referees are often invited to referee tournaments in Mississippi, Montgomery, B'ham, Atlanta, P'cola, and other locations (basically, you hear about the tournament, email the assignor, he'll check with your local assignor, and then he'll set you up games at your appropriate level). The tournaments will put you in a hotel if you have to travel, they'll feed you at least one meal (pizza) during the day, and normally pay you cash on the field. Groups of referees from Mobile will often travel together to cut down on expenses.

D. Adult leagues: South Alabama Soccer Association (SASA) and the Fairhope soccer league will put on various adult league games. Full sided (11) games are played at Sage Park in Mobile (center get around \$40 and ARs get \$30). 7 v. 7 games are played in both Mobile and Fairhope (one ref at \$25).

4. High School Soccer. To referee HS soccer, you must be registered through the Alabama High School Athletic Association (AHSAA). Training is done from December until the season begins in mid-February. Assigning is done through the GCSOA in Mobile and through the Baldwin County Association for the BC schools. Varsity games are 3-man, paying \$45/35/35. JV games are 2-man (or dual) and the pay is \$40 each. There are also middle school games that pay \$35 for very short halves. You can expect to ref almost two nights a week on average during the season and have two or three games each night. The season ends in late April or early May. As you move up in rank and experience, you may be asked to referee local playoff games and possibly final four games.

5. College games: If you have moved up the ladder in USSF soccer, you may want to look at refereeing college games. You will need to talk with other college refs and find out when training will begin and go through its qualifying processes.

The goal of soccer refereeing organizations in south Alabama is to provide quality referees to the various leagues in our area. In order to do that, we have to properly train those referees. We want to help you move up the ladder as far and as quickly as your desires and your abilities will allow. Why would you want to be a referee?

I love the game and want to be more involved in its growth

My son / daughter play and I want to get involved in the game

I have yelled at referees for so long that I think I can do a better job

I need more money (if you travel, you can write the mileage as well as uniform costs on your taxes – if you declare the income)

I see that there are not enough soccer referees to cover the games and I want to help



### **What does it cost to start?**

CYO and some rec leagues will only require you to buy black shorts, black socks with 3 white stripes, a whistle, watch, yellow/red cards and case, and black shoes. GCSOA will provide its CYO refs with a jersey. The cost of joining GCSOA is \$30 per year. A percentage (either 5% or 10% will be deducted to pay the assignor and other association costs like jerseys).

USSF has four jersey colors – yellow, blue, black, and red. Jerseys can be purchased from around \$20 each to \$40 each depending on quality. Jersey will last for several years. A fee to USSF must be paid so they can run a background check and for administrative fees. That fee is around \$40 per year and is dependent on what grade under which you are registering.

High School – Jersey is currently the zebra stripe. We are hoping a new color will be allowed this year. A fee to AHSAA must be paid each year to pay for background check and administrative costs.

College – different jerseys and higher pay. They will have their own administrative fees.

We suggest you go at your own pace. If you are young, athletic, and develop a passion for refereeing, the potential to earn considerable amounts of money and move up quickly to high level soccer is there for you. You can set it up where you are going to a tournament every weekend from September through May, be doing high school games in Mississippi during the fall and winter weekdays and in Alabama during the spring.

You will not meet the referee who knows it all. You may meet the referee who thinks he or she knows it all. Every time you carefully read the rules, you will discover new twists. Soccer refereeing is a process. By building your skills, you will be improving the game of soccer.

We are looking people who want to help themselves, the local and state organizations, possibly the national organizations, and the sport of soccer grow. If you are interested, please contact me or another local soccer official and we'll get you started. USSF training will be starting in July and August.