

GRASSROOTS REFEREE PROGRAM

January 2018





What is the Grassroots Referee Program?

- The “GRP” is a collaborative effort of Massachusetts Youth Soccer and the Massachusetts State Referee Committee (MSRC) to support our town and club organizations in the recruiting, development and retention of youth referees in parallel with your Player Development and Coach Education programs.
- *START* your Referee Program
 - *ENHANCE* your Referee Program
 - *ACCREDIT* your Referee Program



Why is the Grassroots Referee Program needed?

- Provide a SAFE- FAIR- FUN environment for our young referees to grow and gain experience
- Provide a means for all youth soccer stakeholders to engage in the process of recruiting, developing, and advancing young referees
- Bring consistency through approved facilitators, trained mentors and professional training materials AND sharing of best practices
- Provide a clear pathway for towns/clubs and young people to embark on a referee career and advance



What are the **Goals** of the GRP?

- Provide a safe learning environment for our children- put them in a position to SUCCEED
- Make Referee development part of your organizations' culture
- Provide a template and support to our organizations to implement new programs or grow existing ones using authorized training curriculum and proven methods
- Establish minimum standards and consistency across organizations
- Provide a forum to share BEST PRACTICES and a resource to address and remove obstacles
- Expand our base of referees, mentors, facilitators and administrators
- Create a clear pathway for advancement
- Educate and inform coaches and parents



Who is the GRP for?

- Any town/club with intown/intramural games
- Any town/club that can help develop referees
- Designed for young people aged 12-14 (6th through 8th grade) as the primary, but not exclusive, target
- Current referees of any age interested in becoming mentors
- Current referees and administrators interested in becoming facilitators
- Any town/club that wants to start, improve, or accredit their referee program
- Any town that recognizes the need for more, and better quality referees!



Who are we?

- Elie Nassif- MSRC Referee Development and Mentoring Director
- Janet Gargan- MSRC Referee Development Advisor, 2017 MSRC Mentor of the Year
- Jeff Chambers- Mass Youth Board Liaison, 2016 MSRC Mentor of the Year



Who are YOU?

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Where are we now?

- Great people doing GREAT things “under the radar” that no one outside the organization or league knows about
- Towns/Clubs with programs whose sole purpose is to “cover” their intown games
- Towns/Clubs who think it is someone else's problem
- Towns/Clubs that want to do something but don't know where to turn
- No one talks to each other
- Finger pointing at the State, League and Local level
- Extraordinarily HIGH TURNOVER (90%+ 1st year, under age 16)



The 3 Legged Stool

- Many organizations have amazing Player Development programs (some at great expense)
- Many organizations have phenomenal Coaches Education programs (some at great expense)
- How many have Referee Development programs?
- Who is going to officiate games for these players and coaches next season? In 3 years? In 5 years? In 10?
- Is the 3rd leg of our soccer development “stool” there? Is it strong enough? Do we put the same emphasis on developing referees that do we do for players and coaches?



The Drivers Ed Analogy

- Would we send a new driver onto 495 or 128 after only passing the written permit test?
- New drivers need controlled environments and support to get the experience needed to succeed
- New referees need controlled environments and support to get the experience needed to succeed
- Onfield mentoring and adult supervision are our “Road Lessons”



Who developed the GRP?

MANY PEOPLE!

- **MSRC Leadership**- State Referee Administrator- State Director of Instruction- State Youth Referee Administrator- State Director of Mentoring- Area Referee Administrators- State Instructors and Assessors- Referee Development Advisors
- **Mass Youth Leadership**- President- Executive Director- Board Members
- **League and Local Leadership**- League Presidents, Town Presidents, Assignors
- **MOST IMPORTANTLY**- Local town/club based individuals who have been doing this at the local level and were willing to share their experiences and knowledge for all to benefit! Special thanks to Danvers, Dover Sherborn, North Reading, North Andover, Andover, Quincy, Southboro, Arlington, Pioneer Valley and Nashoba Valley for their contributions!
- MSRC approved pilot programs implemented by the Dover Sherborn Soccer Club and Danvers Youth Soccer



What did we find out?

- Current programs that show success have many common factors:
 - Organization support
 - Prework/classroom/onfield training
 - Ongoing mentoring and support AT THE FIELD
 - Opportunity for experience at the youngest/lowest level of competition
 - Opportunity for advancement to certification, league games and higher WITH CONTINUED SUPPORT
- The Program **MUST** be flexible and adaptable to the individual town/club needs, resources and culture



The CONCEPT

- Give the children the OPPORTUNITY to learn to be a referee
- Give them the basic KNOWLEDGE and TOOLS to referee through on-field training augmented by classroom instruction
- Support them on and off the field- Make them feel IMPORTANT and VALUED by your organization
- Provide them with mentors to teach, advise and PROTECT them
- Teach your coaches and parents to SUPPORT them just as they would developing players
- REWARD them with more challenging assignments and a streamlined process for advancement
- SHARE successes and seek help with obstacles- WE NEED TO TALK



The OVERVIEW

- Town/Club identifies and works with Local Facilitators and Program Director(s) to customize Program and promote to their membership
- Participants are given material for pre-work
- Participants attend up to 4 hours of training (classroom, onfield or combined) emphasizing practical advice to become a referee- appearance, professionalism, punctuality, positioning, whistle use (and non-use!), signals, watch use, rules knowledge, injury awareness and action, incident reporting with particular emphasis on SAFETY
- Trainees are assigned to lowest level intown games under supervision of a Mentor
- Mentor provides and documents simplified feedback and advice, reinforcing positives and giving one or two items to improve on.
- Trainees “move up” to older/higher level intown games as experience grows
- Successful trainees are offered alternate, streamlined path for advancement



Measuring Results/Setting Expectations

- Pilot programs moved from 90% turnover in 1st year to as high as 90% retention.
- Over 80% of participants went on to become certified Grade 8 referees working league games. Dover Sherborn showed a 300% increase in number of certified referees in 2 years.
- Multiple past participants became Peer Mentors.
- Past participants demonstrate greater confidence and competence in 1st year of league games than peers who start at league level.
- Incidents of coach/spectator referee abuse declined dramatically.
- It is realistic to expect to see meaningful results in 2-3 years, not sooner.
- Ongoing sharing of best practices will result in continued evolution over time.
- This is not a magic cure for referee shortages; it is one of multiple initiatives to be undertaken at all ages and all levels moving forward.



The Nuts and Bolts

- Towns/Clubs (TC) reach out to enroll in the GRP.
- Existing programs are reviewed for enhancements or accreditation.
- We work with you to DEVELOP a program if you don't already have one
- TC contracts with an approved Local Facilitator (LF), or works with us to identify and approve one.
- Towns responsible for self assigning league games must have a USSF certified assignor.
- LF works with TC to document Local Rules of Competition, and modifies GRP Syllabus and USSF Grade 9 curriculum to submit to State Program Director (SPD) for approval, establish equipment needs and sources.
- TC promotes registration and arranges classroom space and schedule
- Prework distributed to registrants
- LF conducts classroom and/or classroom-onfield training sessions based on approved curriculum with emphasis on BEING A REFEREE as opposed to knowing the Laws of the Game in detail. Whistle and watch are required for class!



The Nuts and Bolts Part II

- TC works with LF and SPD to identify and train/orient mentors
- TC educates coaches about the program and set expectations for referee performance and coach/parent behavior.
- TC sets schedules and assignments for new referees starting at lowest, youngest age/grade group possible.
- The preferred and recommended format is to schedule 2 “trainees” per match for 2-4 weeks (Peer Referees) overseen by a qualified Peer Mentor using the approved checklist. One adult (board, coach, LF, etc) per site is highly recommended.
- After 2-4 weeks, trainees are assigned individually to games with a mentor; as needed, mentors may eventually be reduced to one per site.
- Mentors give high level feedback to TC and LF on an ongoing basis.
- Trainees ready to move on to higher levels are identified and assigned appropriately.
- Trainees needing extra help/support at current level are identified and provided such.



The Nuts and Bolts Part III

- Trainees attaining minimum Grade 8 age and completing one or more seasons in the GRP may be granted a classroom waiver to USSF Grade 8 certification contingent upon completion of the USSF online module and recommendation resulting from 2 on-field evaluations by SDI or designate.
- Trainees not yet of minimum age may be considered for waiver based on mentor/TC/Facilitator recommendation and positive onfield evaluations per above.
- Trainees who become certified may be considered as future Peer Mentors.
- Current Peer Mentors may be considered as candidates for certification as MSRC Referee Development Advisors
- TC determines uniform/equipment requirements and responsibilities. MINIMUM requirement is whistle, wristwatch and distinct jersey.
- All manner of program fees, compensation for trainees and mentors are at the discretion of the individual town/club. Local Facilitator rates are contracted independently by each LF/TC.



Mentor Requirements

- It is preferred that mentors are certified Grade 8 or higher referees with game experience regardless of age.
- Mentors **MAY** be experienced coaches/administrators from the town/club if certified referees are not available.
- Mentors must complete a brief orientation/training session
- Mentors **MUST** be able to communicate with and relate to the target age group, and must understand that their role is to develop and encourage, not criticize and nit-pick!
- Town/club input and recommendations in mentor selection is needed.
- Training and oversight will be provided by the State Development and Mentor Director or designate.



Facilitator Requirements

- May be new candidate or an existing one referred by Mass Youth/MSRC
- May be a referee, assignor, instructor, advisor but not required
- Need to be able to advise the TC and modify curriculum to meet TC needs and resources
- Have to be knowledgeable in course material and able to present it to 12-14 year olds
- Town/club input and recommendations in Facilitator selection is needed.
- Training and oversight will be provided by the SDI and State Development and Mentor Director or their designate



MSRC Commitment and Support

Massachusetts State
Referee Committee



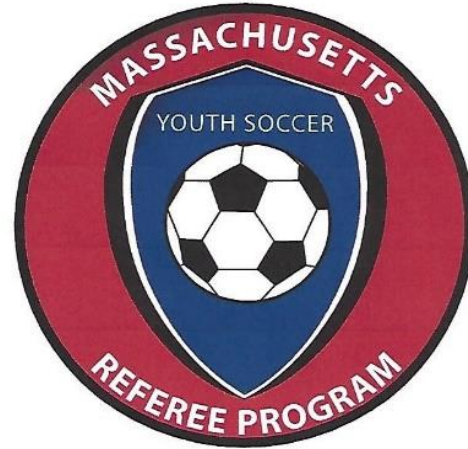
- Fully supported and endorsed by MSRC leadership
- Access to official USSF course materials and MSRC experience
- State Development and Mentor Director (SDMD) assists in developing and approves town/club specific curriculum modifications.
- SDMD supports Mentor and Facilitator selection and training.
- SDMD/SPD available to develop and present Coach/Parent education sessions
- SDMD provides ongoing consultation for duration of program.
- State Director of Instruction offers streamlined, simplified Grade 8 certification to successful participants.



Mass Youth Commitment and Support



- Fully supported and endorsed by the Mass Youth Board of Directors.
- Mass Youth is providing a statewide, program specific registration platform at no charge to participating organizations. The platform will be managed by Mass Youth and MSRC directors, with each local town/club having full access to their data.
- Registered and affiliated organizations and individuals receive full insurance (liability/excess medical) benefits under existing Mass Youth policies.
- Registered and affiliated organizations and individuals are eligible for group/bulk pricing on uniforms and equipment through Mass Youth sponsor SCORE Sports.
- Mass Youth Board Liaison supports MSRC SDMD in Mentor and Facilitator selection and training, curriculum adaptation, and ongoing support and consulting.



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Q & A





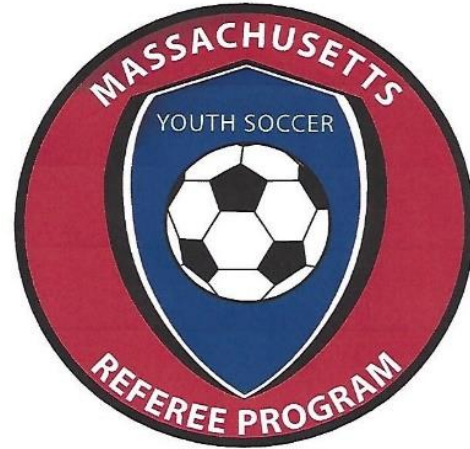
GRP Contacts and References

- Contacts

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- References

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THANK YOU!!!

