



Tennessee Soccer Referee Newsletter

Fall 2025

Volume 3

INTRODUCTION

Welcome back to the third edition of our Tennessee Soccer Referee newsletter! Another season has come and gone, and we are ready to kick off this fall. We have included a lot of helpful information, so be sure to check it out!

Our mission is to lead, serve, and inspire referees for the good of the game. Our vision is to be the premier soccer referee program in the country known for protecting our referees, partnerships, and producing referees who reach their full potential. Whether you are just starting out as a Grassroots referee, upgrading to a Regional referee, or on your way to PRO and beyond, we are here for you.

If you have any questions, comments, or concerns, please reach out to a member of the SRC (State Referee Committee) or ask a referee/assignor you are familiar with. We are a team and will do our best to help you and other referees who might be in the same boat as you are. As always, if you have any ideas, suggestions, or content for the newsletter, please don't hesitate to contact us. We believe in open communication with our referees and do our best to listen. Our referee page can be found [here](#)!



WHERE CAN I REFEREE?

Check out our list of upcoming tournaments across the state! Contact the Referee Assignor if you have any questions. Some tournaments pay travel and hotel, so don't let the distance stop you from signing up. Click the link below for a complete list and plan your spring season today!

[Information Here](#)



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PREPARING FOR THE SEASON

Just like the players and coaches, referees must prepare for the upcoming season, both mentally and physically. A few considerations from a prepared, cognizant referee might include:

- Have I taken the appropriate tests, refresher courses, fitness tests, etc.?
- Have I contacted the league assignor(s) and communicated that I would like to work with them?
- Have I registered for the association(s) I would like to referee for?
- Do I need any new equipment? Jerseys? Shoes? Etc? Order now to be ready!
- Have I updated my availability across all assigning platforms and made sure that I have blocked/adjusted dates that are already assigned?
- Have I been maintaining and building my fitness over the break or am I going to be behind the curve?
- Do I recognize that poor fitness affects my performance/health, and in turn affects my ability to safely referee?
- Am I acclimating myself to the heat now, especially as the temperatures get hotter and hotter each year?
- Have I retained the knowledge in the Recognize to Recover training module to effectively respond if someone was hurt in one of my games?



QUICK TIPS TO LEVEL UP FITNESS

Austin Ardrey with Runnin' Ref has a few tips to help you level up your fitness:

- Create a routine that you can commit to (2-3) days per week!
- Interval training is the most specific to officiating! Ditch the long mile runs and do interval sprints instead.
- Include movements such as backpedals, shuffles, and change of direction drills to get ready for those movements in the game as well.
- Train outdoors and get ready for the heat. It's summertime and it's HOT! Train yourself during the warmer times of day so that on gameday, you're ready for it.



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GRASSROOTS REFEREES RECERTIFICATION

Are you a Grassroots referee and not sure what to do to recertify? Check out our FAQ page [here](#)! Starting July 1, 2025, you can recertify for the 2026 year in a few simple steps. First, you must register online through the tn.omgtsys.com system (detailed steps found on the FAQ page). Next, you must complete the online training and quiz about the Laws of the Game and pay the registration fees through this system. Then, you need to take the SafeSport Course through the U.S. Soccer Learning System. Finally, you must submit a background check through the U.S. Soccer Learning System (there is a separate fee for this). No fitness test or assessments are required as a Grassroots referee. Once these steps are complete, U.S. Soccer will process your recertification and you will receive a badge in the mail. Please reach out to referee@tnsoccer.org for help with this process.



SRC MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

This newsletter shines the spotlight on Susan Williamson, our State Director of Assessments (SDA)! Susan began her referee career in 1980 and moved up as one of the first upper-level female referees in the country. Susan has refereed high-school, college, semi-professional, and international games. She became an Emeritus in 2002 but kept giving back to the game as an assessor and then joined the TN SRC in 2019. She is now the SDA and added Referee Coach to her resume in 2024. In her free time, she visits her five grandchildren, rides her horse, Copper, and loves her dog, Maggie. You can easily reach out to her at scwill50@aol.com!



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WOMEN'S INITIATIVE

(continued...)

Did you know that the Tennessee soccer referee program has a committee of female referees from across the state that are available to support, connect, and mentor? Since 2019, the Tennessee referee program has paved the way for other states to create an outreach/support network for women across the state. The program is designed to provide an additional resource for female referees at all levels to connect with a mentor or assessor and find support in whatever stage of their referee career they are in. Whether you are a brand new referee, a seasoned pro, an assignor, Emeritus, or anything in between, we have resources to help or help connect you with whatever it is you need.

The committee members include:

Rhiannon Daus (SDWO)
Susan Williamson (SDA)
BJ Brillard
Melinda Homa
Kiah Haslett
Lila Remache
Nicole Steiner

Please don't hesitate to connect with any one of us!

In May 2025, the committee hosted its first Women's Initiative Zoom call, which built upon the U.S. Soccer Women's Initiative idea for connection, collaboration, and constructive learning. The topic was on Making Your Presence Stronger in a Men's Match and discussed ways that women referees can build upon their strengths and communication styles to learn about themselves and grow as referees. Women from across the state were able to share their referee experiences and hear advice from mentors, assessors, National referees, and fellow Regional/Grassroots referees.

The Zoom call was a great success and is building a foundation to connect people across the entire state. Our next meeting will be November 3rd, 2025, and will cover balancing referee, family, and work life. The registration link will be sent out a few weeks prior, and you must sign up to ensure a spot. We will host these Zoom calls once a quarter, so if there is a specific topic you would like to discuss, feel free to email Rhiannon Daus at sdwo@tnsoccer.org.

We hope you will join us each quarter and help build our support network!



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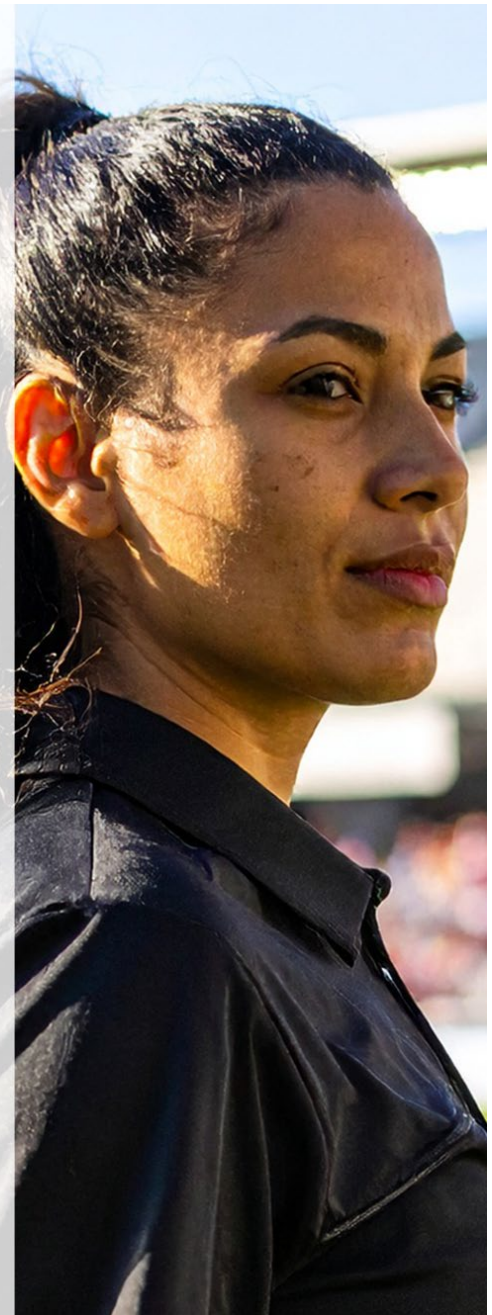


WOMEN'S INITIATIVE

ZOOM CALL

Monday, Nov 3
7PM Central

Balancing Ref,
Family, and
Work Life





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REFEREE ABUSE PREVENTION (RAP) POLICY

U.S. Soccer's updated Referee Abuse Prevention Policy took effect March 2025, and is designed to make youth and amateur matches safer, more fun, and more empowering for everyone involved. This policy update includes clearer definitions for physical and non-physical abuse as well as stronger suspensions for reported referee abuse.

With referee abuse on the rise, it is time to take a stand! Referees are essential to soccer, but far too often risk their emotional and physical well-being in service to the game. Win, lose, or draw, we are in this together! Referee abuse is damaging for everyone involved, and for the future of soccer.

We need your help getting the word out to the community that referee abuse will not be tolerated anymore! Be sure to share this new RAP Policy with the referee community and let them know that they do not have to take referee abuse. If you are not sure if your experience qualifies as abuse, reach out to your assignor, mentor, referee coach, or a member of the SRC for guidance. While there are some interactions that can be managed with your personality or referee tools such as yellow and red cards, other interactions are not acceptable and can only be handled appropriately if they are reported. Submit a report [here](#) and visit the TN Referee page for help with writing reports.

The following links provide more information on U.S. Soccer's new RAP policy:

- 1.) [Video](#): The video explains the need for the RAP policy and what to expect.
- 2.) [Summary](#): This summary explains the different types of abuse and provides examples of what U.S. Soccer is trying to prevent in the game.
- 3.) [Policy](#): This details the new RAP policy and outlines the procedures for reporting, penalties, punishments, hearings, appeals, and key factors.
- 4.) [Penalties](#): This is a brief summary of the penalties for the different types of abuse.



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GET AHEAD OF THE GAME

2026 Referee Recertification is now available at discounted rates. This year's recertification covers important law changes that went into effect on July 1, so staying current is essential.

Save with Early Registration:

Recertify by September 15: Save \$20 with discount code 26RECERT

Recertify in October: Save \$10 with discount code 26RECERT

How to Recertify:

Visit <https://www.tnsoccer.org/recertification-faqs/> for complete instructions and use discount code 26RECERT during checkout.

Don't wait! These discounts make recertification more affordable while ensuring you're prepared for the upcoming season.

If you have questions about the recertification process, please reach out to referee@tnsoccer.org.

REFEREE RECOGNITION

Representing Tennessee @
Southern Regionals
Dallas | June 27 - July 2



Tristan Crawford
Alex Linville
Adam Desai
Alex Cooper
Jessica Hoeft
Alend Mohammad
Briley Hitt
Rachel Dollar
David Kee
Thomas Dollar
Tyler Phillips
Connor Pachciarz
Wayne Davis
Ava Flores
Kristen Sickle
Tyler Samburgh
Adam Fargo
Devin Bargatze
Jacob Dodd
Derys Coreas
Tate Whillock

Coaches

Manny Ortiz
Chris Strickland
Susan Williamson
Jay Culver
Don Eubank

Mentor

Becca Luther
Head of Delegation
Mark Herrington



Representing Tennessee @
Southern President's Cup
Plano Texas | June 13-17

Referees

Trey Bridger · Zeph Key · Jordyn Tucker
Ava Flores · Tony Moran · Matthew Thomeae
Ethan Simpson · Vallerie Hamel · Anna Dunn
Gavin Crawford · Walker Smith · Garrett Doss
Josh Kilgore · Alyssa Kuipers · Thomas Dollar

Head of Delegation - Mark Herrington

Coaches

Chris Strickland · Manny Ortiz

Mentors

Mandi Burley · Bill Nelson





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2025 PRESIDENT'S CUP

Ava Flores, Braden Nye, and Tyler Phillips will be attending the 2025 USYS President's Cup Nationals based on their selection in 2024.

Ava Flores, Jordyn Tucker, Anthony Moran, and Zeph Key were selected to attend the 2026 President's Cup Nationals in Wichita, KS.





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2025 SOUTHERN REGIONALS

Bob Wertz Award Winner

Devin Bargatze

Ryan Cigich Award Winner

Gina Foster

Top Assistant Referees

Ava Flores

Alex Cooper

Top Referees

Rachel Bourhenne

Adam Desai

Selected for Nationals in Orlando

Jessica Hoeft

Adam Desai

Ava Flores

Rachel Bourhenne





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U.S.S.F. GREEN BADGE PROGRAM

The United States Soccer Federation's Green Badge program is designed to identify and support referees under the age of 18 who are stepping up to officiate matches in our soccer community. These green badges provide a clear visual indicator that helps players, coaches, and spectators recognize when a young referee is on the field, encouraging everyone to show respect and positive support.

The Tennessee Soccer Referee Program is committed to supporting our developing referees by fostering an environment where these youth officials can build their confidence and skills while contributing meaningfully to the game we all love.

When you see a referee wearing a Green Badge, remember that this young official is balancing their passion for soccer with the demanding responsibility of match officiating. These youth referees are essential to keeping our games running and deserve our appreciation for their dedication and service to the soccer community. By creating a supportive atmosphere, we help ensure that these young officials continue to grow in their roles and remain committed to officiating, ultimately strengthening the foundation of soccer officiating for years to come.





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SOCIAL MEDIA PAGES

Follow our Facebook page to stay up-to-date on Tennessee soccer news, connect with other referees across the state, and get motivated about the Tennessee Soccer Referee Program. Check out our [Facebook](#) page and a [Facebook](#) group for Female Referees in Tennessee.



RUNNIN REF

Ready to take your training to the next level? [Runnin Ref](#) focuses on YOU and will help you find a roadmap for your fitness goals and training. Learn more about it [here](#) to see how we have helped other referees as well! Discount codes for a month (Tennessee_MO), 6 months (Tennessee_6MO), & 1-year (Tennessee_12MO) are available, so sign up today!



CAPELLI SPORT

Tennessee Soccer has a special deal with Capelli Sports for referee uniforms. You can find everything you need to be ready for your games right [here](#). Contact Mark Herrington (SYRA) with any questions!