

United States Soccer Federation Referee Grades

To provide uniform standards for soccer referees in the United States, the National Referee committee has adopted ten referee grades. These grades supersede all grades that may have been adopted by state associations and leagues so that uniform and comparative grading exists throughout the United States.

12 - United States Soccer Federation Assistant Referee

- A. Minimum Age: 18
- B. Badge: USSF Assistant Referee, with current year
- C. Authorized Assignment Level: Assistant Referee on all adult and youth games

9 - United States Soccer Federation Recreational Referee

- A. Minimum Age: None
- B. Badge: USSF Recreational Referee, with current year
- C. Authorized Assignment Level: Referee on recreational youth games under-14 and younger only. Assistant Referee all youth matches U-14 or younger.

8 - United States Soccer Federation Referee

- A. Minimum Age: None
- B. Badge: USSF Referee, with current year
- C. Recommended Assignment Level: All youth games, assistant referee in comparable games

7 - United States Soccer Federation Referee

- A. Minimum Age: 17
- B. Badge: USSF Referee, with current year
- C. Recommended Assignment Level: All youth games and mixed leagues, assistant referee in all amateur games below the top division.

6 - United States Soccer Federation State Referee

- A. Minimum Age: 18
- B. Badge: USSF State Referee, with current year
- C. Recommended Assignment Level: All youth games and amateur games through second division and assistant referee in the top amateur division and Amateur Cup games.

5 - United States Soccer Federation State Referee

- A. Minimum Age: 19
- B. Badge: USSF State Referee, with current year
- C. Recommended Assignment Level: All youth games and amateur games including first division and assistant referee in professional league and international cup games.

4 - United States Soccer Federation National Referee

- A. Minimum Age: 23
- B. Badge: USSF National Referee, with current year
- C. Recommended Assignment Level: All games through third division professional leagues; assistant referee for all games through second division professional.
- D. U. S. Citizen or Permanent Resident

3 - United States Soccer Federation National Referee

- A. Minimum Age: 23
- B. Badges: USSF National Referee, with current year
- C. Recommended Assignment Level: All games except formal FIFA international matches.
- D. U. S. Citizen or Permanent Resident

2 - United States Soccer Federation International Assistant Referee

- A. Minimum Age: 25
- B. Badge: FIFA Assistant Referee, with current year, on international matches*
- C. Recommended Assignment Level: All games
- D. U. S. Citizen

1 - United States Soccer Federation International Referee

- A. Minimum Age: 25
- B. Badge: FIFA, with current year
- C. Recommended Assignment Level: All games
- D. U.S. Citizen

The United States Soccer Federation grade and title of an official will be determined solely by the standards and examinations issued by the National Referee Committee and the United States Soccer Federation Board of Directors. Annual re-examination is required. Referees who do not meet all published criteria for their grade level will not be eligible for game assignments made through the U.S Soccer National Program for Referee Development.

A referee must officiate at the next - higher level to accumulate experience to be certified competent at that level. Assignors must exercise care to increase the difficulty level of the game assignments in a gradual and orderly manner for the good of the official and of the players.

*International Assistant Referees must wear the USSF National Referee badge when assigned as referee in all matches.

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**Criteria for Certifying and Upgrading
National Referee**

Criteria	National Referee Grade 4	National Referee Grade 3 (See Note 1)
1. Minimum age	23	23
2. Experience (minimum cumulative career outdoor games at designated level) (See Note F)	Referee: 150 (50 must be Div. 1 adult or higher; 5 must be professional games) Assistant Referee: 100 (5 must be professional games).	Same as for Grade 4 (See Note 1)
a. Game level to be counted for advancement	Adult League or higher	Professional League Division 2 or higher
b. Time in present grade (See Note H)	2 consecutive years as State Class 1 immediately prior to application date; must have been a USSF referee for a minimum of 1 year (foreign trained referee).	Same as for Grade 4 (See Note 1) (Must meet FIFA requirements for selection to international panel.)
3. Training course requirements	Attend and successfully complete the National Referee Certification Session.	Same as for grade 4.
4. Written Examination	Must pass a special National Referee Examination.	Same as for grade 4.
5. Field Evaluation (See Notes D, E, F, G,I)	Pass 3 field assessments as referee and 2 as assistant referee. 2 of the assessments as referee and 1 as assistant referee must be on a professional game ¹	As required for renewal; see below.
6. Physical Fitness Test	Physical Fitness Test required (See page 25)	Physical Fitness Test required (See page 25)
7. Citizenship	U.S. Citizen or Permanent Resident	Same as for grade 4.

¹ FIFA Referees, FIFA Assistant Referees and National Referees working a minimum of 5 Division I Professional League games should see note I.

**Criteria for Certifying and Upgrading
National Referee (Cont.)**

Annual Renewal Requirements		
Criteria	National Referee Grade 4	National Referee Grade 3 (See Note 1)
Training	Attend and successfully complete the appropriate National Referee Certification Session.	
Written Exam	Pass National Referee Exam	
Physical Fitness Test	FIFA/Cooper Physical Fitness Test required	
Field Assessment (See Notes E, F, G)	Pass two (2) field assessments as referee (one on professional game) and one (1) as assistant referee on professional game.	

Notes and Comments

Note 1. Grade 3 referees must meet all published criteria and be recommended for grade level by the U. S. Soccer Referee Technical Committee. Grade 3 designation will be based on game assignment level (Division 1 and Division 2 Pro centers) and field evaluations at that level. Certification and re-certification for Grade 3 can only come through the referee technical committee.

Note A, Registration and Upgrading: Registration, annual renewal and requests for upgrading must be made through the appropriate State Referee Administrator. Referees who have registered as grade 8 or higher may not re-register as grade 9.

Note B, Retaking Exams (grades 9, 8, 7): If a person does not pass the written examination, the entire examination must be retaken after a minimum waiting period of one month.

Note C, Retaking Exams (grades 6, 5): If a person does not pass the written examination, the entire examination must be retaken after a minimum waiting period of three months.

Note D, Assessments: Each failed assessment requires one additional passing assessment as an offset.

Note E, Assessments for National Referee must be by a currently registered USSF National Assessor or an assessor approved by the Director of Assessment and the national office. They must be on games approved by the Referee Committee and played within the dates specified (Dec 1-November 30). The minimum acceptable score is 80. (See note J for additional information.)

Note F, Declaration: State Referees who wish to be assigned to professional games to receive assessments for upgrade to National Referee must complete the appropriate “New Candidate Declaration” form and submit it to the SRA. The SRA will forward the application to the

National Office. Forms are accepted between December 1 and December 31 of the year prior to the year the referee will be a candidate.

Note G, Professional Games: The Referee Committee may approve other games to count toward the requirement for professional games. Approved games are listed on the web: www.ussoccer.com

Note H, Fast Track: Candidates for upgrading to National Referee must be acceptable to the National Referee Committee. Requirements other than age, game level, professional game counts and assessments may be waived at the discretion of the National Referee Committee.

Note I, Assessment requirements for FIFA Referees: Three (3) Professional League Division 1 matches as a referee.

Note J, National Referees who do not re-certify for personal reasons may apply to re-certify as a returning national referee the following year without penalty, provided they submit their name to the list of declared National Candidates. If two or more years are missed, the referee must apply as a New Candidate.

Assessment requirements for FIFA Assistant Referees: Three (3) Professional League Division 1 matches as an Assistant Referee.

Assessment requirements For National Referees working a minimum of five (5) Division 1 Professional League matches as a Referee: Two (2) assessments as a Referee on professional league matches and one (1) assessment as an Assistant Referee on an amateur division 1 (or higher) game.

Assessment requirements For National Referees working a minimum of five (5) Division 1 Professional League matches as an Assistant Referee: Two (2) assessments as an Assistant Referee on professional league matches and one (1) assessment as a Referee on an amateur division 1 (or higher) game.

All other grade 3 and 4 referees: See chart on page 23.