

**United States Soccer Federation
Referee Committee Meeting
April 20, 2002
Chicago O'Hare Hilton
DRAFT COPY**

Members present: Alvarez, Baldeosingh, Bouda, Christy, Lyslo, Machnik, Mason, McCormick, McKee, Tamberino

Regrets: Balboa, Pearce

In Attendance: Baharmast, Ilacqua, Kleinaitis, McGuire, Silva

Guests: Dan Flynn, Jay Berhalter, David Messersmith, Larry Harmon, and Jim Cosgrove

Call to Order: The Chairman called the meeting to order at 8:14 a.m. CDT

Agenda: The Chairman announced that when the guests from US Youth Soccer arrive we would move to agenda item VII, New Business, letter g, policy change proposal for 531-1, Section 2.

Approval of minutes: The minutes of the September 22, 2001 meeting were presented for approval. Moved and seconded to approve the motion. Discussion. On a voice vote the motion was affirmed.

Member reports: **Professional**; Machnik submitted a written report on activities of both the MLS and WUSA. Due to e-mail problems he had not received input from the other leagues. He indicated that after 16 games, the pilot program for referee assessment has paid dividends. The concept is receiving praise from those individuals that have been exposed to the new system. Paul Tamberino has been hired as a consultant and is assigned as a member of the MLS Disciplinary Committee and is working with both the established and younger officials being assigned to league matches. New referees this year includes: Jason Anno, Elias Bazakos, Jesse Johnson and Jair Marrufo. WUSA has asked referees to follow the same general guidelines that were mentioned at national camp. Discussion of the report centered on the pilot assessment program. Details of referee guidelines and discussions can be found at www.ussoccer-data.com. **Amateur**; Baldeosingh reported that the Donnelly Cup is back on the schedule. Dates and site TBD. Other items from the Amateurs will be discussed later in the agenda. During discussion it was emphasized that the Referee Department needs dates and locations of all events, both amateur and youth, in a timely manner so that instructors and assessors can be notified and their schedules prepared. **Youth**: Lyslo reported on the success of the Youth Workshop. Sessions were well attended and the Youth appreciate the support of Federation personnel in being presenters. Advertising for next year will emphasize the assignor's course. Twelve referees were assigned to the ODP National Championships. Reports on these referees have been forwarded to the referee office. Assessors and Instructors have been assigned to the four regional tournaments as well as the national championships. This support staff for these events includes members of the International Panel as well as high-level national referees that will help in the identification of new up-and-coming referees. Assignments have also been completed for the regional ODP training camps. US Youth appreciates the support the Federation provides for these very important programs. During discussion it was mentioned that next year Region 4 will hold their tournament in Hawaii. This will result in increased costs for travel. **Board of Directors**; Bouda reported on board activities and indicated the need for some clarification on the "chain-of-command" regarding approval of policy and/or procedural items affecting the referee department. During discussion it was agreed that Policy 531 spells out the details on items that the BOD may approve and those that must go forward to the National Council. The committee reviewed the policy governing the Referee Committee and discussed the flow of changes or modifications. John indicated there is sentiment that more emphasis needs to be placed on the referee activities for both youth and amateurs. Distribution of books and badges has also been a concern. Ilacqua indicated that the steps implemented to correct the distribution system have been very effective in reducing the number of complaints and that past issues have been resolved. **AYSO**; Mason submitted a written report covering the activities of the AYSO National Referee Commission. He indicated that a plaque will be placed near the street intersection where Ken

Aston invented the idea for red and yellow cards that would be used to indicate when a player was being "booked." The Referee Department will be invited to next year's AYSO referee commission meeting

Business and Financial Report: Ilacqua discussed the 13 page financial summary ending March 31. Questions and answers followed. A question was asked about creating a graph that divides expenditures between youth, amateur and pros. It was pointed out that although a particular expense may be allocated to a single line item for a particular group there is a trickle down effect that gives benefit across the board. For example, while the expense of developing a training video may be charged to a particular account, once the video is released all referees benefit regardless of whether they see the video at national camp or in an entry-level clinic.

Administrative: Ilacqua discussed the registration process for 2003. A sample of the new registration form was in the committee packets. Beta testing of the form (using scan technology) will be accomplished soon. When the form is released it will be posted on the Web page. The new form will be user-friendly, with details on where to return the form at the top of the page in a clearly marked box. Type size has been changed to make it more readable and the section D, risk management, is clearly identified. Extensive Q & A followed regarding the process and procedures for processing the form. Updated materials and brochures are being prepared for inclusion in the packet that is sent to referees upon completion of their registration.

National Referee Camp: Kleinaitis and Silva reviewed the results from the testing program in January. There were 256 referees invited. Twelve referees either did not attend or did not take the examination. Six referees did not pass the National 2 standard and are being afforded the opportunity to do a re-take at one of the Regional Pro Clinics (the last clinic is being held today). There were four referees excused from testing due to medical reasons or international referee assignments that did not permit them to attend the camp.

Referee Program Manual: Ilacqua indicated that the first portions of the revised manual were given to members at the last meeting and that they should forward their comments to the referee office. Thus far, only one committee member has responded.

Old Business: Ilacqua discussed the AYSO Cross Certification agreement changes to the agreement originally approved in July 1994. Changes to the agreement will be posted on the web. During discussion it was pointed out that Policy 531-8 specifically indicates that there will be no separate referee programs. It was the consensus of the committee that this is an issue for the BOD to resolve.

Revision to the Agenda: The Chairman indicated the committee would move to new business and discuss the Policy change proposal received from US Youth Soccer. Lyslo introduced Jim Cosgrove, Executive Director who in turn introduced David Messersmith, President of US Youth Soccer and Larry Harmon, US Youth Soccer Board member. Mr. Cosgrove opened the discussion by stating that US Youth was proposing this policy change as a means to increase the registration base of referees registered as grades 9, 10 and 11. US Youth registers over 2 million recreational players that usually play a small-sided game not requiring three referees. The Federation has recognized this need for recreational referees by developing instructional materials for these grades. Of the 113,407 registered referees only 10,418 are registered in grades 9, 10 and 11. US Youth recognizes that local administrators do not have the resources to teach recreational classes and still meet the needs of the grade 8 program and the requirements for up-grades and re-certification clinics. The proposed policy change would allow state youth associations, at their option, to designate their SYRA or designee to receive training from the Federation's Referee Department on becoming trainers of instructors for the grade 9, 10 and 11 recreational referee. US Youth feels that it would not be unreasonable to expect that each state that implements this program would register, on average, 600 new referees in the first year. Further, referees that are currently registered, as a grade 8 would not be permitted to "down-grade" to a grade 9. The primary targets to be considered as candidates for this program would be youth that are too young to referee competitive matches and parents of the young players participating in recreational soccer. Extensive discussion followed. There was general agreement on the need for more referees

but questions were asked on implementation, assignment, and prevention of erosion in existing grade 8 registrations. Answers to these and other questions were provided.

Moved and seconded to approve the proposed changes to Policy 531-1 Section 2. Further discussion. A show of hands was requested. There were 9 yes votes, 0 no votes and 0 abstentions. The motion is affirmed. Discussion followed on the second part of the policy proposal regarding registration fees. **Moved and seconded that revisions to Policy 531-2 Section 2. Fee Payments retained and Used by State Association be forwarded to the Board of Directors with no opinion on the proposed change.** Discussion followed on approving the changes, denying the changes or leaving this matter to the BOD since it is part of an administrative policy that is not the responsibility of the Referee Committee. With a show of hands 9 yes votes, 0 no votes and 0 abstentions. The motion to send the requested policy change to the BOD without an opinion was affirmed. (Note: This proposal was not sent to the BOD)

Mr. Messersmith thanked the committee for their attention to this important matter. He also asked that consideration be given to implementing a "bridge course" that would make it easier for grade 9, 10 and 11 referees to become grade 8 referees without "starting the process all over," e.g., being required to attend a 16 hour class with no credit being given for already being a registered recreational referee. It was stated that those concerns are being addressed.

New instructional materials: Kleinaitis brought the committee up-to-date on new materials. A video titled Gray Areas will be introduced at the up-coming SDI Workshop. It will be a 24-minute follow-on to the Myths of The Game and Making the Offside Call. Subject matter will focus on areas that are not specified in the Laws of the Game...such as what color should the ball be? A new manual called the Simplified Laws of the Game will be out this summer. The idea of the bridge course will also be discussed at the SDI Workshop. A CD presentation on Persistent Infringement is also being readied for distribution.

Chairman's Award: McKee discussed his draft proposal to reward individuals who have made an exceptional and sustained contribution to USSF in the field of assessing, instructing and refereeing. Discussions centered on qualifications, nominations and selection process. **Moved and seconded to approve the establishment of a Chairman's Award.** Further discussion. A resume supporting verification of 30 years service is required. Any SRA can nominate one candidate per year from their state. Individuals can self-nominate to their SRA. The Chairman of the NRC will appoint a three person evaluation committee to review nominations received and select one recipient per year. The NRC will confirm the name of the recipient. The award will be a congratulatory letter and a crystal bowl or vase. The award will be presented by the SRA at the state AGM. On a voice vote the motion was affirmed. Staff will distribute details of this program to the SRA's.

Pilot assessment program: Silva built on the points that Machnik presented in his report. The pilot program will feature a two-tiered approach to assessments. There will be an observer in the stadium and a coach/mentor who will receive a video of the game. The program will feature delayed feedback to the officials. The goal is to provide a much more developmental environment for the referee through coaching and mentoring. If on going problems are recognized in a particular referee, the coach/mentor who has reviewed past assessment will suggest to the Manager of Professional Assignment and Assessment that a coach/mentor be sent to a particular match for additional support and instruction for that referee. Thirteen individuals have been appointed to the coach/mentor list and 24 individuals are on the stadium observer list.

Request to approve two regional amateur league's games for assessment maintenance purposes: Letters have been received from California Soccer Association North and the New Jersey Champions league requesting inclusion of their games in the list of games acceptable for grade maintenance assessments for national referees. The committee discussed the impact of these requests on existing national referees. Also discussed was the reduction in available games due to contraction of MLS and the A League. With fewer games and more national referees this becomes a difficult puzzle to solve. Also, is the level of play as good as indicated? **Moved and seconded that staff establish the criteria necessary to initiate a one year pilot program in California North and New Jersey that will allow regional amateur league games to count for maintenance assessments of national referees.** On a voice vote the motion was affirmed.

National Camp Requirements: Kleinaitis, Silva and Ilacqua listed the existing requirements and problems that are associated with meeting the 2 + 1 assessment requirements. Discussion. **Moved and seconded. Recertification Requirements for re-certifying National Referees: FIFA referees must have three assessments as a referee on professional matches. National Referees working five or more Division 1 games as a referee: Two assessments as a referee on a professional game and one assessment as an AR on an amateur division one or higher game. FIFA assistant referees: Must have three assessments as an AR on professional league matches. National Referees working five or more Division 1 games as an AR: Two assessments as an AR on professional games and one assessment as a referee on an amateur division one or higher game.** Further discussion. On a voice vote the motion was affirmed.

Moved and seconded that at the time of declaring as a National Referee Candidate the applicant must be a US citizen or hold a permanent resident permit. This requirement is effective for 2003 and applies retroactively to all applicants currently on the list of national candidates. Discussion regarding the impact on potential candidates. On a voice vote the motion was affirmed.

Moved and seconded that yearly assessments for national candidates, current applicants and maintenance of grade will count from December 1 through November 30. Discussion. On a voice vote the motion was affirmed.

Moved and seconded that applicants for national referee must declare their intentions 1 year in advance of national camp. For example; 2004 national candidates must declare their intentions during the month of December 2002. Physical test results will be accepted until April 30, 2003. Discussion. On a voice vote the motion was affirmed.

College games for assessment: Tennessee State Soccer Association is requesting consideration to approve limited college games for maintenance assessments. Discussion on this request and past actions of the committee. **Moved and seconded that a waiver be granted to allow college games played only in the Eastern 1/3 of the state of Tennessee to be used for maintenance of referee grades 5, 6 and 7. USSF assessors must complete assessments and the referees must use the diagonal system of control.** On a voice vote the motion was affirmed.

Official referee uniform: Baldeosingh proposed adoption of a "blue" shirt as the primary shirt for indoor soccer and that this color be added as one of the alternate shirts for use in outdoor games. Discussion on the impact of adding a new color. **Moved and seconded to allow the wearing of a blue shirt (conforming to existing shirt pattern) as an optional color.** On a show of hands there were 6 yes, 1 no and 2 abstentions. The motion was affirmed. Kleinaitis discussed the evolution of the existing referee sock design from solid black, to black with a white top, to a white top with two black bars. He offered the thought that the Federation could specify a special design for referee socks. Several ideas were discussed. It is the consensus of the committee that our official supplier be contacted to look into further designs ideas.

Waiver from 2002 National Referee Requirements: A written request has been received from a referee asking to be excused from meeting national camp requirements due to a job assignment not related to active military, international assignment or national emergency. The same referee also submitted a doctor's note for consideration. Discussion. **Moved and seconded to deny the request.** On a show of hands there were 8 yes, 0 no and 1 abstention. The motion was affirmed.

Proposal to move the tasks of the Overseas Referee Branch to staff: Florida Amateurs and Youth jointly propose a change in Policy 531-1 section 3 Overseas Referee Administrator. The effect of the change would transfer responsibility of this function covering approximately 200 referees to staff of the referee department beginning September 1, 2003. Discussion. **Moved and seconded to recommend approval of the policy recommendation as outlined in a document received from the Florida Soccer Associations.** Further discussion. On a voice vote the motion was affirmed.

Request from USASA for a Referee Academy: A letter requesting that USASA be allowed to run an Academy from July 28 – August 3 was discussed. The referee department uses the term academy to indicate special training sessions for referees that are selected by staff. Training includes both classroom and field experience during actual games held in conjunction with the tournament or cup competitions at various venues selected for the academies. No action was taken on the request. It is recommended that the word “academy” not be used and that it should be replaced by a descriptive term such as “seminar, symposium or clinic” since the proposal does not meet the criteria established by the referee department for an academy. The Chairman will send a letter to the Chairman of the Amateurs explaining the position of the Referee Committee.

Appointment of task force to review the educational program of US Soccer: Kleinaitis gave an overview of the in-depth review this task force will be asked to undertake. Proposed members are; Baharmast, Bouda, Harmon, Hunt, Lyslo, Motta, Payne, Tamberino, Yant, MLS rep., WUSA rep., USL rep. Kleinaitis will be staff liaison and Ilacqua will be facilitator. Discussion. **Moved and seconded to approve the committee as proposed.** On a voice vote the motion was affirmed.

Addition to Mission Statement: It is proposed that the following sentence be added to the Mission Statement (531-11 Part II) following the last sentence in Part II. The program shall work in the interests of all its members and to service the game at every level of competition. Discussion. **Moved and seconded to approve the proposal and forward to the Rules Committee and the Board of Directors.** On a voice vote the motion was affirmed

Indoor task force: A proposal to form a task force to review existing training materials and rules for Indoor Soccer was discussed. **Moved and seconded to appoint the following to the task force; Mock, Kollmeyer, Geyer, and Machnik. Silva will be Chairman.** On a voice vote the motion was affirmed.

Lifetime Membership: A proposal was received to change to add a minimum age of eligibility. After discussion, an amendment to the proposal was made to change the minimum age from 55 to 60. Further discussion. **Moved and seconded to insert in Criteria the following; Referees who after having reached the age of 60 and who meet... Change the age listed in section A. from 55 to 60.** On a voice vote the motion was affirmed.

Proposal to change fitness requirements for national referees: Concern was raised that it appears that some national referees are training to pass the fitness test only and not continuing fitness training throughout the year. Is it possible to arrive at an equitable solution that would encourage training without incurring excessive administrative costs? Random testing throughout the year is one solution. This item will be brought back to the committee at a later date. Concern was also expressed that FIFA candidates are required to have passed the physical fitness test within four months of being proposed for nomination.

Patrick Smith Award Program: Region II administrators will give an annual award to a person from the region that has done great service to the game. The first award will be presented June 20 in Milwaukee.

Adjournment: There being no further business before the committee it was moved to adjourn. The next meeting of the committee will be September 28, 2002. The meeting was adjourned at 4:15 p.m.

Submitted by: Wally Lyslo, recording secretary