

Alabama Referee Spring Newsletter



Events with Opportunities

Alabama Soccer Referees have had several opportunities to improve their skills in the last few months by participating in excellent training and development. First, we hosted the 2014 Open Cup Referee Academy. Next we participated in the Alabama Youth Spring State Cup. In June, we will all be able to work and learn in the 2014 USYSA Regional President's Cup. What do all these events have in common? Anyone who participates in these events not only works some of the premier soccer games offered by our state but they also receive exceptional education and mentorship!

The 2014 Open Cup referee training was led by Lead Instructor, Kim Oberle, former FIFA Assistant Referee from North Carolina. Mentorship for the Academy referees was provided by Andy Moss, Jeremy Knudsen (Emeritus) and Leland Grant, National Referees from Tennessee and assessment by National Assessors David Lakin (Tennessee) and Klaus Staefe (Alabama). Kim provided numerous training sessions as well as on-field mentoring by imparting such wisdom as, "always know what your next decision may be....you have first-line responsibilities but always know where your next focus should be".

Our State Cup brought National Referee, USYSA Region III Championship mentor, Boys ODP Referee Camp Director, Brandon Marion from North Carolina. Brandon was available throughout the weekend at both sites to teach and mentor.....stating, "take all these tools and decide which ones work for you.....don't hesitate to try something new and decide whether you can use it."

During President's Cup, we will again host one of our favorites, Chris Penso, FIFA Referee, to provide training and mentorship for all participants. We are also expecting a visit from Ryan Cigich, Region III Referee Coordinator, to work with Chris at this Regional Championship. These events can only get better if you join in! Contact Bill Walker TODAY if you want to participate in President's Cup, June 12-15!

Volume 3

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The Village Parent

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Youth soccer teams are a great way to bring people of differing backgrounds together in a spirit of sportsmanship and competition. Relationships forged on the practice fields and in the games by the players and on the touchline by the parents can often be life lasting. I am fortunate to be a part of many of these relationships and have witnessed this over and over with others throughout my 36 years around this beautiful game!

I have often thought of each soccer team as a form of community, or village. So much time and effort is involved to make certain that the village soccer team has every opportunity to be successful. Everyone comes together to support the goals of the team. There are so many positives gained through the development of the village children and the relationships that are formed by all members of the village.

Game days in the villages are greeted with excitement and anticipation. The teams don their colorful costumes and prepare to compete on the athletic fields. The local village people welcome the traveling villagers and all festively gather to support their village children.

It is so grand to hear villagers cheer for their teams! Hark, what is this? Above the gleeful voices of the festive masses rises the thunderous voice of the Village 'Parent'! It was only a matter of time. Every village has at least one. You know who I am talking about. That 'Parent' that usually sits alone because no one wants to be near them when they choose to earn the Village 'Parent' label.

Recently, the Village 'Parent' screamed at me from the touchline, "Have you lost your mind!!!" I thought to myself – "Wow! The Village 'Parent' just had a lucid moment. Am I really in my right mind being out here in the middle of a soccer field tending to 22 thirteen year old village children?!?! It's a gorgeous 70 degree sunny day." During a stoppage in play, my mind, the part that I could find, briefly

drifted to some fun activities I could be doing other than the one that allowed the Village 'Parent's' kid to be playing this game!

Note: The village is small, so we have to consider that the referee pool for the village is very small. Without the service of the village referee that day, the game would have been canceled and the anticipated excitement for both villages would have been brought to a screeching halt.

The previous note is the crux of this story. The Village 'Parent' doesn't discriminate between the experienced and mature adult referee and the teenage rookie referee that is trying to earn some spending money in addition to serving the game. The Village 'Parent' rants and raves, but my feelings will be just fine. However, young referees shouldn't have to suffer fools such as the Village 'Parent'.

Fast forward to 2014. The game has grown tremendously, but the referee pool continues to have a high percentage of turnover every year. This is a worldwide problem for game officials, not one isolated to our local games. There are many reasons why people become referees and then choose to stop. That's another article worth of material.

What I can say is that the main reason younger referees stop being referees is because of the Village 'Parent'. That's right. The verbal abuse and sarcastic and inane comments made to a child by adults is the number one reason young referees walk away from the game.

So parents – for the good of the game! The next time your village gathers take a stand against the Village 'Parent'. Then go cheer loud and long for your team!

Future Events

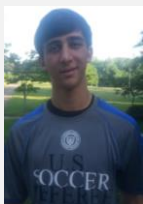
June 12-15	President's Cup, Decatur
June 19-26	USYSA Region III Championships, Baton Rouge
July 19	Instructor Recertification
July 20	Assessor/Assignor Recertification
July 26-27	Recertification Roadshow (George Gansner - FIFA AR) Huntsville, Gadsden and Birmingham
August	Entry Level Classes Begin

I can't tell you how grateful I am for the opportunities presented to me this past weekend, and the wonderful and helpful feedback I got from Leland, Scott Haynes, and Kim." Walt Hall, Apr 15, 2014

Congratulations to the Alabama Youth Referees of the Year

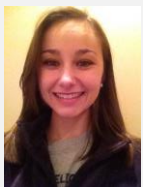
The State Referee Committee is proud to announce the selection of Alabama's Male and Female Youth Referees of the Year! Their individual selections were based on observations and input from others that have witnessed their refereeing skills this year. They were also judged on their willingness to attend different development events and serve the state soccer community with the highest of integrity. They were invited and accepted an appointment to the 2014 USYSA Region III Youth Championships in Baton Rouge, LA.

Male Youth Referee of the Year



Austin Holt is from Arab, Alabama, and has been a Referee since August of 2011. Austin participated in the Fall State Cup, the Spring State Cup, the Open Cup, and is an integral part of the Huntsville community's refereeing group.

Female Youth Referee of the Year



Rachel Barron is from Owens Cross Roads, Alabama, and has also been a Referee since August of 2011. Rachel participated in the Fall State Cup, the Spring State Cup, the Open Cup, and has refereed the adult leagues as well as many of the youth leagues in the Huntsville area.

Watch for articles in the late summer newsletter about their Regional experience.

Planning!!!

Alabama Soccer Referees

State Referee Committee:

Bill Walker, State Referee Administrator
 Pat Miller, State Youth Referee Administrator
 Ohannes Younanian, State Assignor Coordinator
 Klaus Staefe, State Director of Assessment
 Kris Bailey, State Director of Instruction



Changes to the Referee Grade 7:

The State Referee Committee is in the process of finalizing the introduction of the “new” Grade 7 program. We will be offering the Grade 7 course semi-annually for those who wish to enter the referee program as a Grade 7. However, to continue to work State Events as a Grade 7 and receive the incentives of that grade, there will be additional administrative requirements such as game count, assessments, and fitness. The details of the Alabama program will be provided at the beginning of the next instructional season in August.

The State Referee Committee recently held a strategic planning event! The group is attempting to build the referee community of the future to continue to develop and improve all referees within the state. The following are some of the draft proposals discussed during this meeting:

- ✓ Register more referees to cover our games
- ✓ Improve overall communications throughout the refereeing community
- ✓ Improve individual referee accountability and responsibility
- ✓ Ensure overall assignor accountability
- ✓ Provide more opportunities
- ✓ Increase a diversified assessor cadre to ensure overall state coverage
- ✓ Continue to provide advancement/mentorship opportunities making state cups a priority with all Alabama referees
- ✓ Ensure education and training at all state-sponsored events
- ✓ Continue to improve referee academies state-wide
- ✓ Continue to upgrade our state systems to include course registration, assignments, etc.
- ✓ Monitor social media for appropriate uses to assist our referee community