



2015 REFEREE HANDBOOK

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SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

The National Premier Soccer League (NPSL) is the successor to the Men's Premier Soccer League which was formed in 2002. The NPSL is sanctioned by the United States Adult Soccer Association (USASA) as an affiliate of the United States Soccer Federation (US Soccer). Competition is organized in four distinct Regions: Northeast, South, Midwest and West.

The NPSL aspires to provide the highest level of men's soccer and strives to continuously raise the overall standard of play. The NPSL is registered as an amateur league, however teams may elect to register amateur or professional players within the rules and regulations of USASA and the United States Soccer Federation (USSF). Teams operate with respect and adherence to NCAA and other college association eligibility requirements. The NPSL provides an excellent showcase opportunity for those players who aspire to move to the professional level.

Starting with the 2014 NPSL season, the Referee Program will be conducted under the auspices of US Soccer (USSF). Officiating assignments will be made through a network of US Soccer supervised Local Area Coordinators (LACs) and the NPSL Office of Officiating Services will be directed by Paul Scott

SECTION 2: MEMO TO GAME OFFICIALS

To: All Game Officials Selected to Officiate NPSL Games in 2015

From: Director of Officiating Services, Paul Scott

Re: Congratulations and Welcome

Congratulations on having been selected to officiate in the National Premier Soccer League (NPSL) and welcome!

It is my distinct pleasure to have been chosen to coordinate and direct officiating services for the NPSL and in doing so work directly with US Soccer and the US Soccer system of Local Area Coordinators (LACs). It is the goal of the NPSL to provide you with the necessary information and support to enable you to perform the duties of your assignment in a most professional manner.

Please use this Referee Handbook as a guide to your pre-game preparation and post match duties and responsibilities as you work NPSL games this season. Please feel free to contact me by e-mail or by cell phone (officials@npslsoccer.net) and 918-230-3325 if situations arise which need clarification.

On behalf of the NPSL Board of Directors, I wish you all the very best in the achievement of your officiating goals and objectives as we work together to provide the very best officiating in the NPSL.

SECTION 3 NPSL CONTACT LIST

NPSL General Information: 844-THE-NPSL

Web Site www.npslsoccer.net and NPSL.info

*Director of Officials:	Paul Scott	Officials@NPSLsoccer.net	918-230-3325
USSF Referee Coordinator:	Nicole Ward	Nward@ussoccer.org	312-528-1217
Score and Report Submissions:	NPSL	SCORES@NPSLsoccer.net	n/a
*Director of Operations:	Cindy Spera	Director@NPSLsoccer.net	917-602-0939
*Club Services Executive:	Robin Shacket	ClubServices@NPSLsoccer.net	917-509-5729
League Registrar:	Marian Gandara	Registrar@NPSLsoccer.net	951-233-9434
Media Director:	Gary Moody	Media@NPSLsoccer.net	303-205-2446
*Chairman of the Board:	Joe Barone	JBarone@NPSLsoccer.net	347-578-1511

** indicates decision makers for game disputes or postponements / cancelations as referenced in this handbook*

SECTION 4 NPSL PRE-GAME

Assignments

All assignments will be made by US Soccer and FPF local area assignors (LACs) and will appear on the US Soccer assignment web page <http://ussoccer.gameofficials.net>. Assignments are made typically one month in advance and should be checked and accepted or declined in a timely manner. Officials need to be cognizant of the possibility of back to back assignments (consecutive home, road or chronological dates or assignments with the same team in different competitions made by different assignors) and avoid their acceptance. Officials should keep their availability up to date on the assignment web page.

Pre Game Contact

Contact must be made between all officials days prior to the game. Whether by e-mail or by phone; the following items must be discussed: Uniform color, mode of transportation (shared when possible), transportation to and from the stadium, arrival time (1 hour 45 minutes prior to the match), and travel attire (dress slacks and polo, no warm ups or shorts) and time and place of the pre-game meeting.

Game Day Necessities

The following officiating necessities must be brought to the game by the officials: Current FIFA Laws of the Game book, NPSL Referee Handbook, Several copies of US Soccer Game report and Supplemental Report, AR flags (electronic preferred) Official Sports Uniforms of various colors, current US Soccer or FPF Officiating publications, radio communication devices if possible.

Certified Trainer or Physician Presence Required

The Referee must confirm the presence of a certified athletic trainer or physician at the match at least one-half hour prior to the match. The Referee shall not start the match without this confirmation. The Referee shall delay the start of the match for a maximum of one hour and shall abandon the match with the resultant forfeit score of 3-0 for the visiting team should the presence of a certified trainer or physician not be confirmed. The Director of Operations and/or the Director of Officiating Services must be notified during this process. It is also recommended that the name of the certified trainer and/or physician present be recorded on the Referee Game Report.

Teams may NOT agree amongst themselves to play the game without a trainer. If there is a no trainer available, and there is an opportunity have a physician on site, this is acceptable only if 1) the physician has credentials and certifies in writing that he or she can make assessments on player safety and continued play based on injury, particularly concussion situations, AND 2) approval by either the Director of officials, Director of Operations, Club Services Executive or an Executive Board Member (Chairman, Secretary or Treasurer) AND 3) this arrangement is in place before the one hour waiting period expires.

Home Team Referee Liaison (RL)

The Referee Liaison shall assist the officials with pre-match, halftime and post match duties, needs, requests and reports. He/she shall be in a position during the match that is easily accessible to the Fourth Official. The RL duties are to include the following: confirm inspection of the field and equipment meeting all standards, proper placement of the Fourth Officials table, availability and access to the substitution numbers or board, coordination of the teams various forms, and other game-related items the referee crew may need for assistance

Timeline

90 minutes prior to kick-off: The referees will inspect the field, including all game necessary equipment such as goals, nets, corner flags, and field markings. The home team field manager must be notified to correct any problems relating to the field and/or equipment.

80 minutes prior to kick-off: The referee crew will check at least three (3) game balls provided by the home team. These MUST be returned post t game. (Teams, please have the match balls waiting in the referees' locker room to facilitate the inspection.) The Fourth official will collect all necessary NPSL paper work and forms from the RL. A Team Roster Sheet must be collected from each team. This sheet contains the names of all players and team personnel and must be present with the Fourth Official in the Technical Area () throughout the match, in order to know all persons that are allowed in the Technical Area. The NPSL Official Line up Sheet is to be double checked against the Team Roster Sheet. (This will change if rosters are electronic)

55 minutes Prior to Kick-Off: Game Day Line-Up Sheets are to be collected from the respective teams. Each Line Up sheet is to be inspected by the Referee with particular note that the form MUST be signed by the coach. While teams may travel and dress 20 players for the match, only 18 may be on the game day line-up sheet and be eligible for the match. Teams are required to dress a minimum of 14 players. If less than 14 players are dressed the game shall be played and the Referee shall so indicate in the Supplemental Game Report.

45 minutes Prior to Kick-Off: Inspection of Players Equipment, Credentials (Player's Passes), Uniform numbers, and the identification of starters and the Captain. Only the eleven starters and the seven substitutes all listed on the Line up Sheet shall be subject to inspection. The fourth Official MUST maintain possession of the Game Day Line-Up Sheet throughout the Match. Player's passes shall be returned to the team upon completion of inspection.

Changes to the lineup sheet may be made by the Coach or Assistant up to 5 minutes prior to the start of the match.

Player's Passes

Each player must have a current NPSL/US Soccer/USASA Player Pass. If a Player Pass is not presented, the player must show some form of government issued photo ID to establish his identity. Failing this, it is sometimes possible to go to the NPSL web site and look up the team; then the roster, which often has the player's photo. In an emergency, this will suffice if you make a positive ID. As such, the game shall be played under protest, subject to the player's eligibility being confirmed.

Team Uniforms

Each team must travel with two sets of 26 identically numbered uniforms, one uniform of predominantly light color (shirt and socks) and the other uniform predominantly dark. Numbers must be only 2 digits. In the case of conflicting uniform colors, the visiting team MUST change. Tape on the socks must match the predominate color of the sock. Undergarments must be the same color as the uniform. No jewelry is permitted.

MITRE Official Game Ball

MITRE has provided the NPSL Official Game Ball. The ball has the NPSL logo. This ball MUST be used in all games that NPSL teams host. Please report if the Official Ball is not available /used in the match!

Just Prior to Kick Off

7 minutes Prior to Kick-Off: Officials and starting teams line-up for the international walkout (Referees, take this time to inspect the players on last time.) Referee carries the game ball, AR flags are furled. Player introductions are made, the National Anthem (s) played and the coin toss conducted. ARs then proceed to check the goals and nets one last time before taking their position on the touch line.

Coaches, bench personnel and substitute players walk directly to their benches from the locker room.

Immediately before kick-off, the Fourth Official will check the benches and technical areas for the proper personnel. The following persons are permitted in the Technical Area: Seven (7) substitute players listed on the Line-up form, two (2) uniformed additional players not so listed and not eligible to play, three (3) coaches, a Manager (1) and a maximum of three (3) members of the medical staff. A Maximum of 16 bench personnel should be professionally attired for the match.

Referee signals for the start of the game!

SECTION 5 THE NPSL GAME

All games shall be conducted in accordance with the current FIFA Laws of the Game except for NPSL Rules of Competition Exceptions

Substitutions

Each team is allowed a maximum of seven (7) substitutions which includes the goalkeeper. There shall be no re-entry. The NPSL Substitution Pass (7 per team) should be signed by the Referee prior to the match and given to the teams by the Fourth Official just prior to kick off.

Overtime

Regular season NPSL games may end in a tie. Games that require a winner shall be played according to the FIFA Laws of the Game Kicks from the Penalty Mark after completion of two 15 minute overtime periods which result in the teams still being tied. There is no golden or silver goal rule.

Game Day Emergency

If an emergency arises relating to Referee crew availability; the Referee must immediately contact the LAC responsible for the assignment and possible emergency replacement as well as the NPSL Director of Officiating Services. A listing of the Local area Coordinator responsible for assignments by State and Team may be obtained from the US Soccer Game Officials site.

Duties and Responsibilities of the Fourth Official

While the duties and responsibilities of the Fourth Official are clearly delineated on page 58 of the current FIFA Laws of the Game, it is important to reiterate the Fourth Official's responsibility for bench decorum and a familiarity with the US Soccer guidance of "Ask, Tell, Remove". Occupancy of the NPSL Technical Area by sixteen (16) individuals per team and a seven (7) substitute per team policy will test the Fourth Officials ability to assist the Referee in control of the match. In addition, accurate record keeping of goal scorers and time as well as assists and the record of cautions, substitutions and sendoffs is necessary.

In regard to substitutions, a substitute shall not enter the field of play until the player he is replacing has left the field. The substitute's equipment, number, substitution pass and eligibility must be confirmed. The substitution paddles or electronic board shall be used to indicate the player coming off the field and the player entering as a substitute. The board or paddle should also be used to indicate the amount of added time in each half or over time period as directed by the Referee.

NPSL Concussion Policy

Any player who loses consciousness during a match and exhibits signs, symptoms or behavior consistent with a concussion shall be removed from the contest and shall not return to play in that match. The home team trainer or physician is the only person who may identify concussive signs, symptoms or behavior. If the visiting team traveled with a trainer, the home team trainer is the decision maker. The home team trainer MUST provide a report following the game with the NPSL, with a copy to the visiting team (if applicable) for follow up.

Referees are advised to stop the game and immediately call the respective trainer and/or doctor onto the field when there has been a collision of heads, an elbow, foot or knee to the head of a player and that player goes down or otherwise shows any sign of a potential head injury, wound or no wound!

SECTION 6 AUTHORITY TO DELAY OR POSTPONE A MATCH

The Referee has the authority to delay the start of a match or suspend play once the match is in progress when the delay is caused by adverse weather, field conditions or conditions beyond the control of the teams which would make the playing of the match impractical or dangerous. Although the Referee has complete authority in this regard, it is important to immediately contact the Director of Operations or Director of Officiating Services if the match is to be postponed.

Should a match be terminated prior to the completion of the first half, it shall be rescheduled, if possible. A match terminated after the completion of the first half is considered to be an official match.

Grace period Before the Suspension of Play or Postponement of a Match

Unless both teams, the Referee, and League Management agree to an alternate plan, teams must wait a minimum of one (1) hour before abandoning a game that has been delayed regardless of circumstances. This is not an aggregate time for multiple delays but rather one (1) hour from the time of the most recent delay. The Home Team, in the presence of the Referee, must immediately notify the League Director via phone, of any postponement issues. The one-hour grace period may be extended, up to a maximum of three (3) hours from the time the match is delayed if there is a likelihood of resuming the match that day. Given the difficulty and cost of rescheduling, every attempt should be made to continue the game. The League Director of Operations has the final say on the length of the extended grace period due to weather (It is a minimum standard violation if the game is abandoned before the League Director is contacted). If the League Director or other NPSL designated decision maker is unavailable (see contact list), the Referee shall be the final authority. No match will be continued after any continuous 3-hour waiting period without the approval of the League Director. If the first game of a doubleheader has been delayed, the feasibility of completing the second game will be taken into account when determining an extended grace period.

SECTION 7 REFEREE TEAM POST GAME REPORTING DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Game Reports

As a matter of procedure, every member of the referee team should review the match report for accuracy before it is signed off by the referee. All members of the referee team are responsible if there is an improper report. Please remember, this is a legal document and it must be done correctly. Referees should check the following for accuracy:

Accuracy Check List for Game Report

- Box Score
- Scorer information: team, first and last name, and uniform number
- Yellow and Red Card documentation: team, first and last name, uniform number, time of offence, and offence code, from US Soccer's 7 + 7 Cautionable and Sending Off Offenses document.
- Spelling is correct and matches the line-up form, and all critical aspects above are legible

Supplemental Reporting

Referee must send a US Soccer/FPF Referee Report and Supplemental Report (if required) electronically within four (4) hours of the match to the NPSL Office to SCORES@NPSLsoccer.net

Officials are requested to contact Paul Scott, NPSL Director of Officiating Services to report any send offs, expulsions, unusual incidents by e-mail at officials@NPSLsoccer.net or in emergency at 918-230-3325.

If there is an instance of Referee Abuse or Assault, a US Soccer Match Report and Supplemental Report must be filed within 4 hours to the NPSL Director of Operations, the Director of Officiating Services (call immediately post game), Nicole Ward with US Soccer, the hosting states State Referee Administrator, and the LAC.

SECTION 8 ADDITIONAL NPSL POLICIES

After the Match

Approaching Game Officials - No player, coach or team staff member shall threaten game officials either verbally or physically nor make contact in any manner either before, during or after the match. Coaches and team staff shall not approach game officials prior to the game, at the end of the half, on the way to or from the locker room to lobby for a certain call, discuss the approach to the game, or to criticize a game official's performance. No one may enter the referees' dressing room without permission. It is strongly recommended that someone stand at the officials' dressing room door as security. The Referee shall report all such incidents in the Referee Game Report, and offending individuals shall be subject to a League fine and/or suspension. The Coach's Evaluation of Referees is the proper vehicle to express opinions on a game official's performance.

Entering the Field - A Player, Coach or other Team Staff member entering the playing field during a NSPL game when not authorized to do so shall be fined and / or suspended by the League.

NPSL Ejected Players & Coaches Removal Policy - Players and coaches sent off from the field of play shall be met at the sideline at midfield by home team security and escorted to the locker room, and are not permitted to watch the game. They must remain in the locker room for the remainder of the match. Additionally, coaches are not permitted to communicate with their team staff or players during the remainder of the game, and are not allowed to remain in the locker room during half time. The type of communication prohibited would include: cellular, 2-way radios, electronic / digital, written or verbal. Players or coaches returning to the field of play or stands during or directly following the match are subject to additional sanctions. Security personnel should only enter the field at the Referee's request .

Host Team responsibilities and requirements

Complimentary Tickets - The home team must provide two (2) complimentary tickets per referee crew member including the assessor if assigned.

Stadium parking - The home team must provide a complimentary parking pass on day of game for each crew member including the assessor if assigned. This pass must be provided through the use of a physical pass or by including the name of the official(s) on a parking list at the parking lot entry gate.

Locker Rooms - The home team must provide a locker room for the officials, separate from each of the teams. The locker room shall contain at the minimum towels and water. Absolutely no one is permitted in the Official's Locker Room outside of the officiating crew, the assigned US Soccer/FPF official assessor, the NPSL Director of Operations, and the Director of Officiating services. Outside member contact with officials on the field, in the areas adjacent to the field, etc. unless specifically approved by the NPSL shall not be permitted.

Reporters and Media Requests – Referee team members are not to comment on any matters related to the game. All inquires should be referred to the NPSL Media Director or to the Office of the Director of Officiating Services.

Social Media - The use of Social Media by game officials relative to the discussion of NPSL assignments, game day facts, NPSL teams and players, etc. is expressly prohibited.

SECTION 9 GAME OFFICIAL FEES AND TRAVEL POLICY

Game Fees: Referee: \$100, Assistant Referees \$75, Fourth Official \$50

Travel Expenses: There is no travel expense policy for travel inside of 100 miles round trip. Travel shall be reimbursed at the following levels for the Referee: 101-200 miles round trip \$40, 201+ miles round trip \$70. Assistant Referees: 101-200 miles round trip \$20, 201+ miles round trip \$35

There is no travel reimbursement for the Fourth Official.

Officials must contact the home team a minimum of three (3) days in advance of the match to notify the need to pay travel expenses and the amount due. In this way, clubs will have advanced notice of the need to pay travel and facilitate the writing of checks of the proper amount and officials being paid correct amounts in a timely manner.

Any travel that requires an official to be on the road after mid-night following a game is eligible for a hotel for one night, available by request to the home team with a copy to the Director of Officiating Services no less than ten (10) days prior to the match.

Where at all possible; game officials should travel together to minimize travel expenses. Mileage between an official's home and the game site should be confirmed via Google maps or Map Quest documentation. In addition, where a room is requested, officials should pair up and/or use a roll-a-way cot where possible to minimize hotel expense.

If this policy is not followed, particularly the three (3) and (10) day advance notice policy. The official is not entitled to travel reimbursement without proper pre notification. Contact information for the teams can be found on NPSL.info. Please cc Robin Shacket at clubservices@NPSLsoccer.net on requests for travel expenses and hotel. Please escalate to Robin Shacket if there is no response / acknowledgement from the team within 24 hours.

Game fees are the responsibility of the home team and are paid at the end of the match - after referee's completion of a full examination of the Game Report and required corrections / clarifications. The Referee shall not release the Game Reports to the teams until the Game Fees and Expenses (if any) have been paid. It is important for officials to provide any travel expense request to the home team administrator upon arrival at the match so that the team has time to prepare the exact amount of reimbursement due to the officials at the end of the match.

<End of Referee Handbook>

NPSL Handbook Addendum

Supplemental Match Reports

The supplemental match report is an important part of the referee crew's job. Without a complete description of send-offs and dismissals, the relevant governing committee cannot make informed decisions when it comes to suspensions and fines. To aid officials in the construction of the report, US Soccer has a summary of the important elements in their Advice to Referees. Section 5.13, which is included below, outlines items to address.

In the description of the event, it is vital to provide details so that the reader has a clear understanding of what transpired. As part of this then, it should describe the distances traveled, how long the action took place, what was said, visual actions of a player or bench personnel, and preventative actions taken by the officials.

Additionally, information is needed about the person who suffered the action leading to the opponent's misconduct. This includes: Who was the player? Where on their body was the impact? Did they suffer an injury? Did they receive treatment? Were they able to continue playing or did they leave the game then or later in the match due to the injury suffered?

For example:

In the 78th minute, John Smith, #99 of the Falcon's was sent-off for serious foul play. While attempting to challenge for the ball in front of his team's bench, he struck the Spirit's #8, Dave Davies with his cleats. Mr. Smith lunged from a distance of about three yards with a straight leg, catching Mr. Davies in the left thigh with his studs. A foul was immediately whistled and the referee and fourth official intervened to prevent mass confrontation by the players. A red card was shown and Mr. Smith left the field without incident. Mr. Davies received treatment from the trainer and continued playing. Approximately eight minutes later, Mr. Davies was substituted from the game due to this injury.

With a description containing such details, the NPSL disciplinary committee can contact the Spirit's team to inquire as to Mr. Davies' health and then come to an informed decision upon the length of suspension for Mr. Smith.

The NPSL has our own match report that the teams must submit after being signed by the coaches and center referee. This report reflects the rosters, score, misconducts, substitutions among other data. Both this report and the referees match report should be reviewed by all members of the referee team. By signing and submitting the reports, the referees state that the information is correct. Each of these documents serves a purpose so detail and accuracy is imperative.

Although all aspects of the referee's match report must meet high standards of clarity, accuracy, brevity, and pertinence, those sections involving misconduct require special attention, and reporting on acts of misconduct leading to a send-off merit the highest concern. In order for disciplinary committees to evaluate serious misconduct, match reports must start with:

- The name of (and additional identifying information for) the player who was sent off.
- The time of the send-off, and
- The specific reason in the Laws of the Game for the send-off (Law 12). In addition, however, the referee must supply sufficient detail regarding the circumstances of the misconduct to aid in evaluating its level of seriousness. Among the factors that should be addressed, where relevant, are:
 - Whether the action occurred during a challenge for the ball.
 - Whether the misconduct occurred at a stoppage of play or during play.
 - If anyone was injured as a consequence of the misconduct.
 - Whether there was any prior incident that may have led to the player's actions.
- The demeanor of the player during the send-off (including any difficulties in implementing the player's removal from the field).
- The location of the action in relation to the goal line and penalty area being attacked at the time.
- The subsequent intrusion of any other players (teammates or opponents) during the time the referee is managing the send-off.
- The specific words or gestures which were determined to be insulting, offensive, or abusive.
- The identity of the opponent or official toward whom the misconduct was directed.
- A summary of the prior misconduct (or a reference to the section of the report which detailed the prior caution) preceding the second caution for which the player was sent off.
- The identity of the assistant referee, fourth official, or reserve assistant referee who provided independently observed facts to the referee regarding the misconduct.
- All other details of the action which materially shaped the decision to send the player off.

Match reports provided independently by assistant referees or fourth officials should follow these guidelines as well.

When a player commits more than one form of misconduct at the same time (e.g., dissent and abusive language, denial of an obvious goal scoring opportunity and serious foul play, delaying the restart of play and failure to respect the required distance), the referee can use only one as the official reason for the caution or send off.

The reason given should reflect whichever act of misconduct is considered the most serious. However, all misconduct committed by a player must be noted in the referee's report, including any behavior in addition to the official reason for the caution or send off.