

United States Soccer Federation
Referee Committee Meeting
Chicago O'Hare Hilton
August 16, 2006

Members present: Baldeosingh, Bratsis, Collins, Lyslo, Machnik, Mason, McCormick, McKee, Silva

Regrets: Burns, Hunt, Lindsey

In Attendance: Staff: Baharmast, Garibay, Ilacqua, Kleinaitis, McGuire and Tamberino. Also attending; Sunil Gulati, President, Dan Flynn, General Secretary & Executive Director and Jay Berhalter, Deputy Executive Director.

Call to Order: Brooks McCormick, Chairman called the meeting to order at 8:00 a.m. CDT.

Agenda: The agenda was included in member's packets.

Welcome: The Chair welcomed new members to the committee and acknowledged the special guests in attendance. He stated his appreciation at being given the opportunity to serve in this position and contribute to the continuing efforts to maintain and build the National Program for Referee Development.

Approval of minutes: **Moved and seconded to approve the minutes of the September 13 conference call.** Discussion. On a voice vote the minutes were approved. **Moved and seconded to approve the minutes of the October 1, 2005 meeting.** Discussion. On a voice vote the motion was affirmed.

Reports: Mason discussed his written report found in member's packet. He highlighted that the US Soccer Referee Department will send a representative to their annual Fall Workshop. It was noted that Rick Davis is their new National Executive Director.

Machnik reviewed the statistics involving yellow and red cards issued by the referees in MLS. The statistics included the officiating stats for each of the 28 referees assigned to the first 120 games of the MLS season. Extensive discussion followed. It was noted that with the addition of Toronto to the League next year an International referee exchange program would be initiated with Canada. US referees will be assigned in Canada and Canadian referees will be assigned in the US. Also discussed was the positive effect of the referee instructional program that has improved the awareness of both referees and ARs to tackles that endanger the safety of an opponent.

Silva discussed the up-coming MISL season. A six-team league will start play in November continuing through mid April. In cooperation with the Referee Department indoor clinics are being scheduled. More information on the League will be forthcoming following the MISL owner's meeting in September.

McKee and Silva discussed their assignment to the US Soccer Youth Finals in Des Moines IA. They found quality officials that were very receptive to the feed back sessions they conducted in addition to the formal assessments conducted by the assessors.

Financial Report: Ilacqua presented the June 30th financial report that is included in the member's packets. Although the year to date Referee Revenue shows a slight deficit the final projections are for a minimal surplus.

Registration Report: Garibay gave a PowerPoint presentation on the revisions made to the Registration Report and the National Referee Database program. The updated system has increased efficiency and integrity and makes it possible for real time updates 24/7. Individual referees can access their personal information (using their personal password) and make up-dates to their biographic status without contacting administrators. The system is available to any web browser so there are no limitations on access. Administrators have different levels of access and there is error checking at all levels. The system has provisions to provide for clinic scheduling, calendar of events that is state specific and the potential for on-line training. One important aspect to remember is that the basic registration remains the same whether it is done by paper or by electronic means. Garibay then continued with a live demonstration of the system. Currently there are 135,914 registered referees with a total of 144,118 referees, instructors, assessors, assignors and Indoor/Futsal officials.

New Business: MLS expansion. As previously noted the 2007 season will see the addition of Toronto to the league. In 2008 another team will be added with the proposed expansion to total 16 teams by 2010. The addition of these teams will have a major effect on the available pool of qualified referees to work MLS matches.

Upgrade Proposal: A proposal to provide for additional requirements to attain the National Referee Grade was discussed. This proposal would require that referees seeking to attain a national badge must successfully complete the "D" coaching license program. The rationale for this proposal stated that while candidates are versed in the Laws of The Game they do not have a firm understanding of team tactics and how they affect the game from the perspective of the referee. Extensive discussion. **Moved and seconded to approve the concept** as proposed and ask staff to prepare a final document for approval by the committee. Proposed implementation would be during the 2008 National Referee Camp. It is anticipated that this would entail an additional day of training at camp for National Candidates. On a voice vote the motion was affirmed. As a result of the adoption of this proposal an extended presentation on tactics by a respected coach will be a part of the 2007 National Camps.

Coach – Mentor Program: Tamberino and Machnik discussed the details of how this program develops relationships that better prepare referees for game day. General discussion on the variations between different coach – mentors followed. It is difficult to get all participants on the same page and it is difficult to find people who can be effective in using the program.

Assignment of Grade 9 Referees: A comment was received concerning the assigning of these referees. Across the 55 member state associations there seems to be a wide variation in defining recreational and competitive play. Discussion. Because of these variations it was the consensus of the committee to leave the Authorized Assignment Level for Grad 9 as detailed in the Referee Administrative Handbook as is. Local assignors should be held accountable for assuring that these standards are maintained.

Criteria for referees attending Regional Professional Clinics: A proposal to establish a fixed set of criteria for referees desiring to attend a pro clinic was discussed. Questions such as who should attend, what should their grade be, who invites, etc. were discussed. A point was made that the right to invite also means the right to exclude. It was decided that a sub-committee consisting of Baldeosingh, Bratsis, Collins and Kleinaitis (staff liaison) will review the process and present their findings to the full committee.

Physical Fitness Test: A proposal to raise the standards for the 50 and 250-meter sprints was received. Discussion. There was no motion to approve or deny the proposal. Standards will be left as is.

Eddie Pearson Award Criteria: The Pearsonians sent the committee a revised criteria regarding eligibility to be considered for this award. Discussion. No motion was made to approve or deny the proposed change. The criteria for nomination will remain the same. The 2006 nominee for the Eddie Pearson Award was reviewed and discussed. The committee voted to accept the name of this individual. The award will be presented at the National Referee Camp in 2007.

Waiver Requests: the Referee Office has received several requests.

1. A long-term disability waiver request was reviewed and discussed. **Moved and seconded to approve this request.** On a voice vote the motion was affirmed.
2. A request to waive the six-month requirement for a Grade 6 Emeritus Grade was discussed. **Moved and seconded to approve this request.** On a voice vote the motion was affirmed.
3. A request to be excused from the 2006 camp for personal reasons was discussed. This person later attended a Regional Pro Clinic and passed both written and physical fitness tests. **Moved and seconded to approve this request.** On a voice vote the motion was affirmed.
4. A request to be excused from the 2006 camp for personal reasons was discussed. **Moved and seconded to deny this request.** On a voice vote the motion was affirmed.

It was the consensus of the committee that staff may act upon future waiver requests with input from the Referee Committee Chair, unless it is a request that is out of the ordinary where an agreement cannot be reached. If this happens it will be brought to the full committee for review.

Timeline for FIFA nominations: Baharmast discussed the outline contained in the member's packets. He pointed out that all eligible referees for both the women's and men's lists will be considered. The committee will have a conference call to finalize the list for presentation to the BOD.

For the Good of the Game: Copies of an article in Referee Magazine interviewing Adolfo Reginato regarding the instructional program was discussed.

Print/Media: A general discussion ensued over the negative comments by writers and commentators about players and referees. It seems that many of these "experts" expose their lack of knowledge about the Laws of the Game and instead promote the "myths." Education of the media representatives is a task that all must undertake if a solution is to be found. At times the negative behavior of the players contributes to these media reports. The recent World Cup had several examples of player behavior that negatively affects the way the game as a whole is reported.

Group Discussion Planning session:

- *The committee and guests discussed the mentoring program. All leagues would benefit from such a program.

- *The number of registered referees as compared to the number of registered players: there is a wide disparity from region to region.

- *Establishment of "scouts" to ID up-and-coming referees to the administrators.

- *The possibility of adding full-time referees to MLS; would it work, could the pay be high enough to find the right referees?

- *Game day preparation. What does the "crew" do to prepare for the match? How many days does it take? How many games can/should an official do in a week?

- *The need for a full/part time staff as technical observers.

- *Recruiting former players to be referees.

Adjournment: There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 2:30 p.m.

Submitted by: Wally Lyslo. Recording secretary