

OREGON REFEREE COMMITTEE

Uniforms for the New Referee

Just as the players proudly wear their uniforms to show which team they are on, we referees also proudly wear our uniforms. As one of over 135,000 referees in the United States, our uniform shows that we support each other as members of the same team. It also shows that we care about what we do. Wearing the proper uniform sends an unspoken message to players, coaches and spectators that “These referees look like they know what they’re doing.”

New referees are faced with a lot of choices in buying their first uniform kit. Experienced referees may have several hundred dollars worth of uniforms. What do you *really* need in the beginning? A number of soccer stores and online retailers have put together “starter kits” for the new referee. These can be an economical way to get started. The Oregon Referee Committee suggests that you will need the following bare minimum equipment:

- ❖ Gold (yellow) pin stripe referee shirt with short sleeves
- ❖ Solid black referee shorts
- ❖ Black referee socks with three white stripes at the top
- ❖ Whistle that makes a strong, clear sound
- ❖ Watch with a countdown timer feature
- ❖ Small note book
- ❖ Pen or pencil
- ❖ Red and yellow cards
- ❖ Coin
- ❖ Two assistant referee flags

The short sleeve gold shirt will be appropriate for about 90% of your games. If you expect to do mostly recreational games in a single league, you might ask the league assignor if any of the teams in the league wear yellow shirts.

As you begin to referee games (and get paid!), you should consider adding additional shirts. Ideally, the referee team should always wear the same color shirts with the same sleeve length, but having everyone in the same color is more important than having them in the same sleeve length. To avoid problems, you might think about adding shirts in the following order:

- ❖ Red or black short sleeve (which gives you a second color)
- ❖ Gold long sleeve (which gives you both sleeve lengths for gold)
- ❖ Black or red long sleeve (which gives you a third color)
- ❖ Blue short sleeve
- ❖ Blue long sleeve

As you continue your career in refereeing, you should expect to eventually have all of the shirt colors in both long and short sleeves. We also recommend a second whistle (in case someone on a nearby field has the same whistle) and a second pen or pencil. There are also socks with the USSF logo on the cuff, instead of the three stripes, but very few referees wear them outside of professional level games. It is not essential that the socks of the referee crew match.

Official Sports Inc. (www.officialsports.com) is the sponsoring supplier for USSF referees. Their shirts will have the USSF logo on the sleeve and are worn by all of the top referees. There are a number of other manufacturers of referee uniforms. There is no requirement that you wear uniforms from Official Sports or that the USSF logo appears on the shirt.

Occasionally, we are asked about referees wearing a hat, usually in bad weather. Hats are not part of the USSF referee uniform. You will never see a USSF referee wearing a hat on a high-level game. However, if you wear glasses and it's raining, or you are particularly at risk for skin cancer on a bald head, you may want to wear a hat of some kind. Any hat should be as unobtrusive as possible. Ideally, it would be an all black baseball-type cap with no logos or a USSF logo.

How you wear your uniform is as important as the type of equipment you have. Referees should be in uniform when they arrive at the field and remain in uniform until they leave. Please do not be seen at the field with your socks rolled down or wearing a long-sleeve sweat shirt under your short-sleeve referee shirt. If you are just there to watch a game, you should wear a warmup over your uniform or remove your referee shirt and replace it with another, non-referee shirt.