



Iowa Soccer
Iowa Referee Committee

www.IowaSoccer.org



MEMBER CLUB
**APPLICATION
GUIDE**
2023-24 & 2024-25

INTRODUCTION



Iowa Soccer is the governing body for youth and adult soccer in Iowa. The professional staff is organized to provide educational, developmental, and competition opportunities, in addition to administrative resources, support, and processes for member organizations.

The Iowa Referee Committee (IRC) is responsible for promoting and implementing U.S. Soccer's referee programs and initiatives for all affiliated members. It is also responsible for recruiting and educating new certified referees.



Leading Together

Iowa Soccer and the Iowa Referee Committee have engaged in a formal agreement to work collaboratively to increase the number of referees in Iowa.

Through specific programming, that includes addressing participants' behavior during games, the strategic alliance will leverage the strengths of both organizations to achieve the goals to recruit, retain, train, and support referees, ultimately increasing the number of certified referees in Iowa and supporting the game experience for all involved.



Dan Cataldi, CEO Iowa Soccer

"Our member youth clubs and adult leagues see the referee shortage as one of the most urgent problems impacting the experience players and families have. This partnership will allow two strong organizations to work together."

Rob Sorey, SRA Iowa Referee Committee

"We all have a role to play in the development of soccer and we have been losing referees at an alarming rate. This relationship will help bring us all together working toward a common goal."

How will we address the referee shortage?

Between 2018 and 2022 the number of certified soccer referees in Iowa decreased by 46%. *Iowa Soccer, the IRC,* and *Iowa Soccer member clubs* ALL have a part in being the solution to this critical challenge.



#BeTheSolution

INTRODUCING: Referee Development Program (RDP)

Club-based & Free

The RDP will help participating member clubs recruit, develop, and retain referees.

- A "train the trainer" approach will enable a club to build the capacity to eventually run a self-sustaining Referee Development Program.
- There is NO COST for clubs or individuals to participate.

RDP's goals

- Recruit new referees to broaden the base of the pyramid.
- Eliminate the most common barriers to becoming a referee.
- Improve the experience, particularly for new referees and especially in their first matches.
- Create an environment that promotes and expects good sportsmanship from all 4 participants in the match: players, coaches, supporters and referees!
- Provide early-career, low pressure training experiences.



RDP Fast Facts

- An Iowa Soccer member program, based on "train the trainer" model
- \$250,000 investment by Iowa Soccer
- FREE for Iowa Soccer members
- By the 2025-26 seasonal year, goal is to have:
 - 40 participating clubs
 - 60 RDP training sessions completed
 - 750 new youth RDP referees
 - Conversion of 100 of the 750 to U.S. Soccer Grassroots certified Referees
- Led by Iowa Soccer Referee and Sportsmanship Director Hidajet Tica (former Professional Referee)
- Support and mentoring involvement from the Iowa Referee Committee
- Application process for member clubs to qualify to participate



KEY Program Elements



Learn

ELIMINATE THE BARRIERS

- Participating clubs will invite their member players to become "Next Gen Referees" with initial training provided by Iowa Soccer. Iowa Soccer also "trains the trainer" to help the club sustain its training and recruitment program.
- The Next Gen Referee training environment focuses on common-sense and age-appropriate application of the Laws of the Game. These referees are put on small-sided, younger age group matches, typically involving intra-club matches only. Their first game experiences are in a lower pressure environment.

Grow

IMPROVE THE EXPERIENCE

- Clubs will deliver a sportsmanship program that will be provided by Iowa Soccer. Will include facility signage and educational materials for distribution to club's members.
- Sportsmanship messaging aimed at all 4 participants in a match: players, coaches, referees, and supporters! Better behavior will have a positive impact on the retention of Next Gen Referees and will improve the experiences of those referees already certified.
- Clubs will track and ensure compliance their with RDP requirements.

Excel

FIND YOUR PLACE

- Next Gen Referees will start at small-sided, younger age group matches, where sportsmanship initiatives and mentoring will support their experience. These participants can look to pursue the Iowa Soccer Referee Pathway as they develop.
- The next opportunity is for Next Gen Referees to complete/earn a U.S. Soccer Grassroots Referee Course certification, and then advancing to older age group matches. *This is where the RDP aims to convert 100 Next Gen Referees to certified referees!*
- After certification, the next opportunity is the Iowa Soccer Referee Academy, held each July. It is a residential experience offering training and mentoring in a camp setting.



Eligibility: Members Only

01 | Iowa Soccer Member Club in Good Standing

- Must be approved as a member club for the seasonal year(s) participating in the Referee Development Program.
- Must have players registered with Iowa Soccer for the seasonal year(s) participating in the Referee Development Program.
- Must be in compliance with all Iowa Soccer, U.S. Soccer, and US Youth Soccer Member Rules, Bylaws, and Policies.
- Must not have any outstanding balances of over 60 days past due to Iowa Soccer.

02 | Age Groups & Registered Participants

- Club must have 6U and/or 8U age group(s).
- Club must register all recreational players/teams which will be officiated by a Next Gen Referee.
- All youth participating as Next Gen Referees must be currently registered with Iowa Soccer.

03 | Prospective "Next Gen Referees"

- Participating Next Gen Referees must be 12-14 years old in the seasonal year in which he/she starts in the Referee Development Program.
- Next Gen Referees must be registered with Iowa Soccer as a player in the seasonal year(s) of his/her participation in the Referee Development Program.

REQUIRED

OF CLUB



IDENTIFY & COMMIT

An RDP Coordinator for your club, who must be SafeSport trained and pass a background check.



RECRUIT PARTICIPANTS

Club will look to its Iowa Soccer registered player pool of those ages 12-14 to invite individual's participation in and commitment to the RDP.



ASSIGN NEXT GEN REFS

The club's RDP Coordinator and/or the club's referee lead will place the Next Gen Referees on the club's 8U and 10U matches.



SPORTSMANSHIP PARTNERS

Display signage at club field or complex throughout the season. Share Iowa Soccer-provided sportsmanship program materials to member parents and team coaches.



COMPLIANCE & REPORTING

RDP Coordinator and/or Club Leadership will ensure club's compliance with requirements in an on-going basis. Club will submit, on time, regular and simple reporting via a standardized form provided by Iowa Soccer.



Apply now

[>>> Link to online app](#)



Together we will **#BeTheSolution!**

QUESTIONS? Contact RDP Leader
Hidajet Tica, Referee and Sportsmanship Director
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