

February 23, 2025

SOUTH CAROLINA REFEREE COMMITTEE ZOOM MEETING

1. MINUTES

The minutes from the January 30th meeting were emailed out with the Zoom meeting details.

2. REPORTS

- A. State Director of Instruction (SDI) Rick Rogers - reported that registration is up and we currently have over 400 new referees and the final numbers will easily be over 500 new officials for 2025. The expect total of officials statewide will be close to 1500. The state has ordered 1700 badges for 2025. The state has had great success with the return to in person certification classes. The online webinars are also doing well. The SC Referees' website has the updated webinar dates posted.
- B. State Director of Assessments (SDA) Danny Thornberry – reported USSF has not released the new guidelines for the Mentor or Mentor + program. He is currently developing guidelines for the on-field sessions. He is going to send those guidelines to the ARA's and mentors. His goal is consistency in the training across the state. Currently, he has 3-5 assessments in the works for New Regional referees
- C. Area Referee Administrators (ARA's)
 - i. Greenville/Spartanburg #1 Steven Faria reported that his next field session will be March 9th. He is also working on sending mentors to the fields with the new league rules to educate the officials.
 - ii. Rock Hill #2 – George Cobbina reported that his region had 1 on field training this month and they have a lot of young referees coming in. He has 1 candidate for Regional that will need the PFT soon.
 - iii. Columbia #3 – Marion Shull reported that they had an on the field training yesterday and they plan on 2-3 more in the next month. He has Chris Park as a regional candidate.
 - iv. Myrtle Beach #4 and Florence#6 Jack Schultz reported that he has 2 regional recertifications that need to take place. His region Myrtle Beach region held 2 free referee clinics for rec leagues in the area, and they found that it was a great tool for recruiting referees to become USSF Certified and work club games. He has had several on-field training sessions. Kevin Kollegger from SCYS asked about the Florence region sharing that SCYS has signed a contract to use the

Florence facility for the next 3 years. Jack said the area is really growing and that will be a good location as hotels are being built for visiting teams and they are in the process of developing a referee base there as well. The local club there has increased in numbers as well.

- v. Charleston #5 Bucky Jones reported that he received the \$3600 from the SRC and it has been added to the CASRA account. The money from the SRC will be used to pay mentors and mentoring programs. There are currently 3 candidates for Regional Referee, 288 referees in the database for the area, but not all are marked ready to work. There is an issue with extensive use of multiple sites, however for the most part, the games are being covered.
 - vi. Aiken #8 Brian Marshall reported that he had just attended an advanced referee course and there are a lot of good resources if we ask. His region has also had some field training session. Paige Bell has completed her PFT to go Pro.
- D. Treasurer – Gary Smith reported that all region checks have been issued. Credit cards have been sent out to qualified SRC members and the account is just shy of \$200,000. Money has been budgeted for 3 tournaments.
- E. State Youth Referee Administrator (SYRA) - Chris Woods had a presentation and budget proposal for the selections to Regionals. He is waiting on availability responses from the ranked candidates. Regionals will be held in Texas and that will add to the cost. Decision on how many to send needs to be made and formal invitations to attend will be mailed through the postal service. Another idea for referee development and exposure is to consider sending the referees to some high-level championships. It would be a scholarship offered to offset the cost of travel. The games would be paid, and housing supplied by the tournament.
- F. State Referee Administrator Joe Balazs ... **missing data**

3. OLD BUSINESS

- A. Website update – Danny & Marion reached out to North Carolina and Florida to find out who designed and maintain their websites. Florida is run by a company and cost prohibitive. North Carolina has a web designer that is also a referee Jeremy Smith, and he produced a proposal and mockup. The anticipated cost is \$2,000-3000 with an hourly fee of \$35 for ongoing Maintenance and Support. Questions were asked about Jeremy setting up the website and giving the SRC access to update. Danny was able to communicate with the designer, and it was determined that he would be able to provide an SRC member with that access. There were other questions about domain name and QR codes that will be addressed as we move forward. Gary said there is money in the budget to make this move.
- B. Bylaws, Policies and Procedures – Michael Copeland reported that he is working on them as well as a mission statement. He is also looking for suggestions from the SRC on the wording of the mission statement.

- C. Selection of Referees to Youth Regional and Presidential Cups – Chris Wood has a ranked list of officials that have been recommended to represent South Carolina. The SRC agreed to sending 8 to regionals and 4 to southern regionals.
- D. Selection of Referees to Adult Regionals – Sofia Hernandez reported that the Adult Regionals will be held at Brian Park in Greensboro, NC on June 13-15. She said we will need to send REGIONAL referees.
- E. Communication Channels to the Youth Association - Kevin Kollegger was present as the representative of SCYS. He is working hard to support the referees to assist with growth and retention.
- F. Communication Channels to Adult Association Sofia Hernandez is the main point of contact. She also is a representative for Linos. Linos reported that he will be doing quite a bit of traveling, and it will be hit and miss for his attendance or response.

4. NEW BUSINESS

- A. Rollout of USSF Referee Abuse Prevention (RAP) Michael put it to the board as to how we should share the information with the referee community. Chris recommended that we use the materials provided by US Soccer found in the Materials Tool Kit and just add our logo to it as directed. Marion pointed out that it is already out there as many people have already seen it so we do not need to change it. The real issue is how do we report it? We do not want to be flooded with red cards and referee reports because of minor violations that we know how to handle. General consensus was that referees are going to continue reporting as they have already been and the guidelines for sanctions will be applied accordingly. We will not look to sanction under normal circumstances, but when these actions are reported the penalty matrix provided by US Soccer is the minimum sanction that should be applied. A goal of sending out the RAP information by March 1, Chris and Joe will take point on that. Joe asked about tracking red cards. Questions were brought up as to how this affects adults and youth leagues. The response is that in adult leagues the abuse is mostly likely done by a player and the sanctions are easy to enforce because the offender can be removed from the roster. Sofia shared that the adult league already has strict guidelines for sanctioning referee abuse. She said that they will compare with the matrix and make sure that they are meeting or exceeding expectations. In youth, the abuse is usually from an adult coach or spectator. The coaches can be sanctioned easily, but tracking the sanctions of spectators is more difficult. SCYS has a zero-tolerance policy that should help and coaches saying that they will talk to the offender is no longer the accepted response. SCYS is going to enforce policies to help identify offenders and hopes the guidance from US Soccer will take the pressure off the coach because it is not their decision. Danny brought up concerns about referee abuse and asked who sits on the disciplinary committee. Linos informed the group that the adult leagues have a

disciplinary board established and recommended the youth have one as well. It was also recommended that members of the SRC or referee community sit on that board as well. Kevin said he would take that under consideration.

5. PRIORITIES GOING FORWARD

- A. Rolling out the Referee Abuse Prevention Policy and Matrix to the referee community by March 1.

6. OUR NEXT MEETING

- A. Zoom Call 30 March @8pm expect it to last 1 hour 15 minutes.
- B. Agenda items
 - i. Training programs
 - ii. Website Update
 - iii. SAC program
 - iv. Referee recruitment and retention
 - 1. *Should we reach out to referees that have been out of the game for several years? Where do we get their contact information and a list of names?*
 - v. Chris wants the SC referee community to participate in a Retention Resilience Survey.
 - vi. Regional Tournaments - who are we sending?

7. ATTENDANCE:

Michael Copeland, Joe Balazs, Rick Rogers, Danny Thornberry, Kris Kenney

Steven Faria, George Cobbina, Marion Shull, Jack Schultz, Bucky Jones, Brian Marshall, Gary Smith, Chris Wood, Lenos, Sofia Hernandez, and Kevin Kollegger