



Referee Quarterly Newsletter

February 2023

Welcome to the next edition of the U.S. Soccer Referee Department Quarterly Newsletter.

To catch up on the latest updates in the Referee Community, review important registration & licensing reminders, and review referee continuing education opportunities, please see the stories and updates below.

If someone you know is interested in becoming a referee for the first time, click [HERE](#) for more information!

U.S. Soccer and Referee Community Storylines

FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022

The FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 marked another year where USA match officials continued to represent the United States as some of the top officials in the world. We hope you were able to catch them in action!

The entire referee community celebrated [the first time in history that an all-female trio refereed a men's FIFA World Cup match:](#)

December 1st, Costa Rica vs Germany

Referee: Stéphanie Frappart (France)

AR1: Neuza Back (Brazil)

AR2: Karen Diaz (Mexico)

For a full listing of the USA FIFA 2022 World Cup officials and their assignments please see our World Cup Special newsletter coming next month!

Ismail Elfath, Referee
Kyle Atkins, Assistant Referee
Kathryn Nesbitt, Assistant Referee
Corey Parker, Assistant Referee
Armando Villarreal, VAR

FIFA World Cup Australia and New Zealand 2023

The following six U.S. Soccer and FIFA officials were also selected for the 2023 FIFA World Cup Australia and New Zealand. We hope you join us in watching and supporting them throughout the tournament!

Ekaterina Koroleva, Referee
Tori Penso, Referee
Kathryn Nesbitt, Assistant Referee
Felisha Mariscal, Assistant Referee
Brooke Mayo, Assistant Referee
Armando Villarreal, VMO

[U.S. Soccer Press Release](#)

2023 FIFA Panel

The 2023 FIFA Panel for the United States has been finalized. Congratulations to everyone!

The FIFA Panel is made of the top officials within the United States. They are nominated by the U.S. Soccer Referee Committee and then accepted by FIFA. [Read more about the panelists!](#)

Referee

Ismail Elfath
Katja Koroleva
Armando Villarreal
Joseph Dickerson
Tori Penso
Victor Rivas
Natalie Simon
Rubiel Vazquez
Danielle Chesky
Nima Saghafi

Assistant Referee

Kathryn Nesbitt
Corey Parker
Felisha Mariscal
Kyle Atkins
Brooke Mayo
Logan Brown
Meghan Mullen
Cameron Blanchard
Kali Smith
Cory Richardson

Video Match Official

Edvin Jurisevic
Chris Penso
Timothy Ford
Armando Villarreal
Allen Chapman
Kathryn Nesbitt
Felisha Mariscal
Ismail Elfath
Kyle Atkins
Katja Koroleva

Alex Billeter
Samantha Martinez
Alyssa Nichols

Tiffini Turpin
Corey Rockwell
Alicia Messer
Jennifer Garner
Luis Uranga
Jeremy Kieso
Jose Da Silva

Futsal Referee
Joshua Wilkens

Retiring FIFA Panel Officials

We would also like to thank our officials who have retired from the FIFA Panel for their many contributions to the sport and the referee community.

Jair Marrufo

“Jair has been an instrumental member of the U.S. Soccer FIFA Panel for so many years, and has been a leader for all the other FIFA officials through his example and on-field performances. Jair has represented U.S. Soccer, his family and himself at the highest level of the game including at the 2018 FIFA World Cup in Russia and the 2018 FIFA Club World Cup in UAE, where he was the referee on the Final. We will miss seeing him on the international stage, walking out of the tunnel and taking charge of some of the highest profile matches in the world. However, his legacy and example will always live on in the minds of the referees who have looked up to him for years.” – Mark Geiger

“I was fortunate to work a couple of games with Jair as my on-field career was winding down. The first thing you notice about Jair is his confidence. He brings this confidence to everything he does, and he is in complete control of what happens on the field. His accomplishments both domestically and internationally back this up. He was involved in multiple Youth World Cups, MLS All Star Game, MLS Cups, CONCACAF Gold Cups, COPA America Centenario, and ended with the 2018 FIFA World Cup Russia. An amazing career.” – Rick Eddy

Ian Anderson

“In Ian’s time as a member of the U.S. Soccer FIFA Panel, he was one of the most respected assistant referees on the international stage. Ian consistently provided world-class performances every time he stepped out of the tunnel in some of the region’s most difficult environments. He had a way of instilling confidence in the referee through his calm and relaxed demeanor. He finished his international career as one of the most respected match officials, one that every referee wanted to see on the touchline, and as someone who could handle any match with the utmost quality. Ian represented U.S. Soccer, his family and himself with a tremendous amount of class, and he will be missed on the touchlines of the games on the world’s biggest stage.” – Mark Geiger

“Ian was a FIFA assistant referee from 2017-2022. He made his MLS debut in 2010 and has worked over 290 games. Ian worked two MLS All Star games and two MLS Cups, and officiated the Lamar Hunt Open Cup Final. Internationally, Ian participated in the 2019 CONCACAF Gold Cup. Ian also works as a collegiate soccer referee and is in high demand as referee at this level.” – Rick Eddy

Frank Anderson

“Over his years on the U.S. Soccer FIFA Panel, Frank has shown that he is one of the very best to ever represent his country. He always had a way of keeping the referee focused on what needed to be done on the field without sacrificing the quality he brought to the team. He made it to the pinnacle of the refereeing world when he officiated three matches at the 2018 FIFA World Cup in Russia and the 2018 FIFA Club World Cup in UAE, where he was on the Final as an assistant referee. Frank has represented U.S. Soccer, his family and himself with quality and class. PRO is very fortunate that he has decided to be the Manager of Senior Assistant Referees, where he will continue to influence the future U.S. Soccer FIFA Panel in a very positive way.” – Mark Geiger

“Frank started his MLS career in 2005 and was appointed to the FIFA list in 2012 as an assistant referee. He excelled in the international arena. Frank has officiated an MLS All Star Game, two MLS Cups, CONCACAF Gold Cup, and capped off his international career by being appointed to the 2018 FIFA World Cup Russia. In addition to his work at the professional and international level, Frank is an accomplished collegiate soccer referee who works many matches each year. Frank is a referee that leads by example. He always takes the time to work with younger officials to help them improve on the field of play.” – Rick Eddy

Read on to see other prominent match assignments U.S. Soccer officials have received in recent months and upcoming community events.

FIFA Club World Cup Morocco 2022

Katy Nesbitt was selected for the FIFA Club World Cup Morocco 2022. She is one of 26 match officials participating.

[FIFA Press Release](#)

MLS Cup 2022

The officials listed below were selected for MLS Cup this year. The match between Los Angeles FC and Philadelphia Union was action packed, and ultimately went to penalty kicks, with LAFC winning the 2022 MLS Cup.

Ismail Elfath, Referee
Corey Rockwell, Assistant Referee
Ian Anderson, Assistant Referee
Joe Dickerson, 4th Official

SheBelieves Cup 2023

The 2023 SheBelieves Cup, presented by Visa, was held from February 16-22 as Brazil, Canada and Japan join the USA for the four-team international tournament. Part of U.S. Soccer's SheBelieves initiative to inspire and empower women and girls in sport and beyond. The 2023 tournament returned to its traditional three-venue format with matches played at Exploria Stadium in Orlando, Fla., GEODIS Park in Nashville, Tenn. and Toyota Stadium in Frisco, Texas.

More than 10 U.S. Soccer officials participated in the matches:

Brazil v Japan WNT, February 16
Tori Penso, Referee
Brooke Mayo, Assistant Referee
Meghan Mullen, Assistant Referee
Alex Billeter, 4th Official

USA v Canada WNT, February 16
Katja Koroleva, 4th Official

Canada v Brazil WNT, February 19
Katja Koroleva, Referee
Katy Nesbitt, Assistant Referee
Felisha Mariscal, Assistant Referee
Danielle Chesky, 4th Official

USA v Japan WNT, February 19
Alyssa Nichols, 4th Official

Japan v Canada WNT, February 22
Danielle Chesky, Referee
Jennifer Garner, Assistant Referee
Tiff Turpin, Assistant Referee
Katja Koroleva, 4th Official

USA v Brazil WNT, February 22
Alyssa Nichols, 4th Official

Referee Experience Event

United Soccer Coaches, an Associate Member of U.S. Soccer, is continuing to recognize the contributions of soccer officials at all levels beginning with “The Referee Experience” at the 2023 United Soccer Coaches Convention which was held on January 13-14 at the Pennsylvania Convention Center in Philadelphia, PA. United Soccer Coaches (formerly the NSCAA) has long recognized the need to include soccer officials, without whom the organized game cannot be played, into its extended family with the understanding of the importance of sharing common ground information as well as the need to improve communication, cooperation, and camaraderie between Referees and Coaches, who have long suffered from an unfortunate disconnect.

Classroom, field sessions, and social activities with presentations by top instructors from FIFA, US Soccer, CONCACAF, PRO, NCAA, and others highlighted the event. Speakers included Canadian FIFA Instructors [Hector Vergara](#) and [Michelle Pye](#), among other experienced officials as well as U.S. Soccer staff and instructors.

U.S. Soccer News

U.S. Soccer Announced Detailed Plans to Implement the Yates Report Recommendations

U.S. Soccer announced its detailed plans for implementing all 12 of the [recommendations](#) made by Sally Q. Yates following her independent investigation into allegations of past abusive behavior and sexual misconduct in women’s professional soccer. These next steps – approved by the U.S. Soccer Board of Directors – are a critical component of the Federation’s commitment to ensuring everyone in the sport has a safe place to learn, compete and grow. We are committed to communicating relevant safeguarding implications to our SRCs as they become applicable.

[U.S. Soccer Press Release](#)
[Participant Safety Hub](#)

Sporting Director, U.S. Soccer

U.S. Soccer Federation Sporting Director Earnie Stewart is departing the organization and will return to the Netherlands to join legendary Eredivisie club PSV Eindhoven. Stewart will remain with U.S. Soccer until Feb. 15 to ensure a

smooth transition as U.S. Soccer continues its search for its next Sporting Director.

[U.S. Soccer Press Release](#)

PRO General Manager

Mark Geiger has been appointed as the Professional Referee Organization (PRO) General Manager effective immediately. Please join us in sharing our congratulations with Geiger on this recent appointment!

[PRO Press Release](#)

U.S. Soccer AGM

U.S. Soccer's Annual General Meeting (AGM) will be held in San Diego, March 16-19, 2023. AGM is the event where U.S. Soccer membership comes together to celebrate U.S. Soccer award recipients, collaborate over shared priorities, elect officers, and vote on bylaws and new member organizations.

U.S. Soccer SheBelieves Summit 2023

In January, U.S. Soccer announced that the 2023 SheBelieves Summit, presented by Deloitte, will take place on March 11-12 at Deloitte University in Westlake, Texas. Returning to its original in-person-only format, the sixth annual SheBelieves Summit is part of U.S. Soccer's commitment to empower young women and girls while continuing to grow women's soccer in the United States and across the globe.

[U.S. Soccer Press Release](#)

U.S. Soccer Referee Department News



2023 National Camp

The 2023 National Camp took place in Chula Vista, San Diego December 3rd-12th. This year's camp certified 106 National Referees and Assistant Referees.

National Match Officials are at the top of the Referee Pathway. Nationals may be assigned top level matches within the country and international friendlies, become a career (full-time, paid) official, and nominated for the United States FIFA Panel, from which World Cup officials may be selected.

At National Camp, the officials attended technical sessions on handball, offsides, PAI (penalty area incidents), challenges, tactical fouls, and game management with top National Instructors:

Sandra Serafini, Richard Heron, Abbey Okulaja, Kim Oberle, Yuyu Kiuchi, Nami Imaizumi, Craig Lowry, Pedro Trejo, and Rick Eddy.

This year's camp also had a few guest speakers:

Rene Miramontes, U.S. Soccer National Instructor for Coaching Education, presented on the coaching perspective and relationship with officials during matches.

Margaret Domka, with [U.S. Center for Mental Health and Sport](#), co-led a session on mental health with her co-instructors. Margaret Domka is a retired FIFA Referee. If you are interested in learning more about mental health best

practices and ways to support others, see the [U.S. Center for Mental Health and Sport's resources linked here](#).





How to Become a National Referee or National Assistant Referee

To become a National Referee or National Assistant Referee, one must meet the eligibility requirements below, complete the annual application in the Learning Center and be selected by the Selection Committee. They must then attend National Camp and satisfactorily complete all technical and physical requirements.

2023 National Referee & National Assistant Referee Eligibility Requirements:

- Age 21 or older
- Must have held a Regional Referee license for the previous 3 registration years.
 - *Example: If you are applying for a 2024 National Match Official license, you must have held you held a Regional Referee license in 2023, 2022, and 2021 registration years. Check your Learning Center profile license history to confirm it is up to date and meets these requirements if you are applying.*
- Game Count Requirement: 65 games over your career as an official
- Game Assessment Requirement: Three (3) ADULT game assessments completed by three (3) different National Referee Coaches.
- Fitness Test Requirement: Two (2) PASSING regional level fitness tests or higher, with full result details.

For more on the eligibility application requirements, see the application guides of past years and look out for an updated 2024 National Match Officials Application Guide in the Learning Center this summer.

If you are a current regional referee who is eligible for and interested in becoming a National Match Official during the next registration year (2024), we recommend beginning the work to complete your three (3) required game assessments (must be completed by 3 separate National Referee Coaches at an adult game) this Spring.

The U.S. Soccer Referee Department will host a webinar for regional referees interested in applying for the 2024 National Referee or 2024 National Assistant Referee course during the summer. The webinar will review the application process, requirements, and answer any potential questions on the application and certification process. Look out for an email from referee@ussoccer.org inviting you to join the webinar for more information!

The 2024 National Match Official applications will open at the start of the next registration year (July 2023). More information to come!

Eddie Pearson Award Winners

Eddie Pearson is regarded as one of the most influential soccer referees in the US and made positive impacts in the sport throughout the 1960's and 1970's. The Eddie Pearson Award is presented to an individual who has made outstanding contributions to the National Referee Development Program of U.S. Soccer.

View past recipients!

[2020 Recipient: Brian Hall](#)

[2021 Recipient: Sandra Hunt](#)

Hall and Hunt were invited to the 2023 National Camp where they received their award and Eddie Pearson Award Recipient Blazer from Official Sports (OSI), and shared their experience and knowledge with the National Match Officials in attendance.



Left: Jozef Michna, Eddie Pearson Committee Secretary; Right: Brian Hall, 2020 Recipient



Left: Julie Tobin with Official Sports' Center: Sandra Hunt; 2021 recipient, Right: Rick Eddy, U.S. Soccer

Referee Community Page | Learning Center

For more frequent updates, see our community blog page on the Learning Center.

<https://learning.ussoccer.com/referee>

United Officials Group

[Review previous Referee Newsletters for more information!](#)

What is the United Officials Group?

In August 2021, U.S. Soccer's Referee Department started working with a group of women and minority officials. Many of these officials have not been given the same opportunities afforded to the majority of officials. The leadership of the group consists of State Referee Committee members, National Referee Coaches, Club Administrators and a PRO representative. The objective is to engage with the landscape to extend financial support, mentorship, coaching and development opportunities to marginalized groups.

How do I join?

Complete [this survey](#) to be invited to upcoming United Officials webinars.

Referee Continuing Education

Game Management

In this edition, we continue our discussion about 'game management' during the game. Now we present an example under match control - restart procedure (**Figure 1**).

The slide features a dark blue background with a red vertical bar on the left side. At the top left is the USA logo. The title 'GAME MANAGEMENT' is centered at the top in white. Below it, 'FIFA Considerations' is centered. Two columns of bullet points are listed: 'Match Control' and 'Player Management'. The 'Restart procedure' bullet point is highlighted in yellow.

Match Control	Player Management
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Football understanding• Restart procedure• Correct use of tools	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Respect• Communication• Body language

Figure 1. Portion of FIFA Considerations for the topic of Game Management

Prior to a free kick near the penalty area or a corner kick, opposing players sometimes charge, push, or hold each other. If this behavior is ignored, then players may intensify such actions prior to the restart of play. Referees, or match officials, must be aware to recognize when this occurs in their games. In addition, referees are encouraged to take preventative action, as appropriate, to avoid escalation (**Figure 2**).

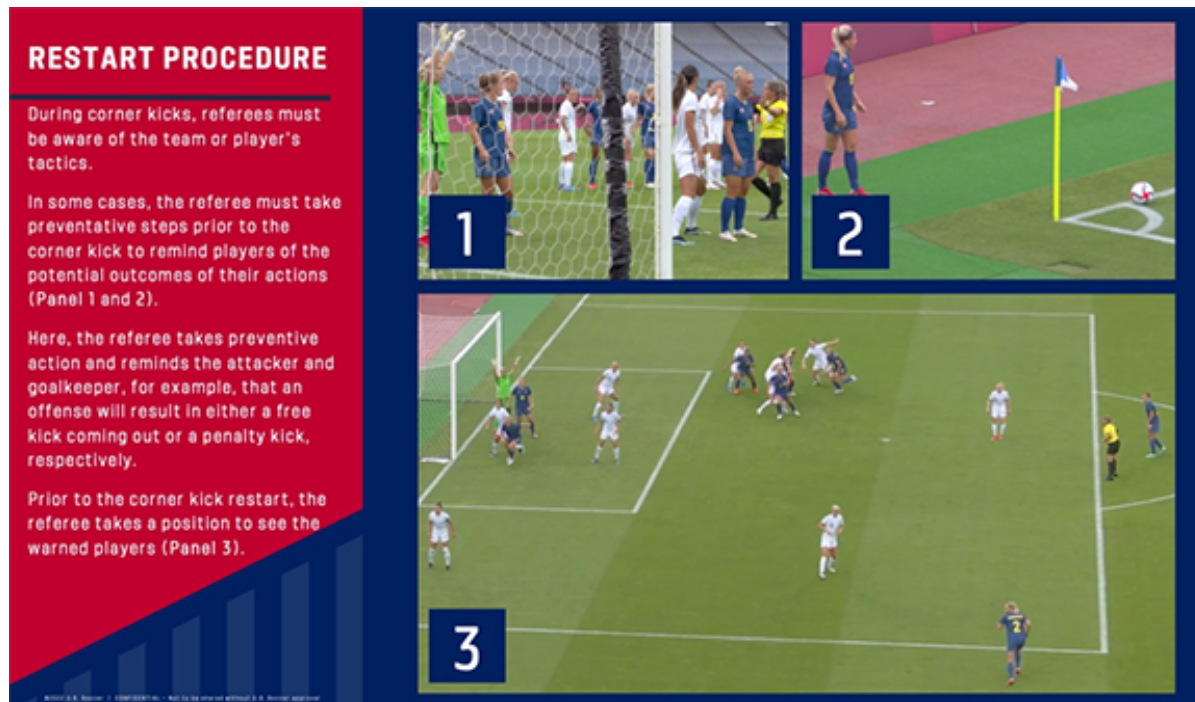


Figure 2. Example of preventative action for match control – restart procedure

When taking preventative action, ensure that the player taking the kick knows that the game will not restart until the referee signals by blowing the whistle. Identify and approach the player(s) conducting themselves inappropriately. Communicate clearly the behavior that needs to stop or be modified. Take an appropriate position to see prior to the restart. Then, blow the whistle to indicate that the kick can be taken.

We hope that this will help many in their **preparation** and **performance** in their next games. You will be ready for when a similar incident occurs in your game.

Continuing Education Webinars, 2023 Winter & Spring

Attention licensed referees! Continuing Education – Lifelong Learning (CELL) Webinar Series is back for 2023!

The CELL Webinar Series aims to help referees increase their knowledge and improve their officiating skills. The series also includes a webinar for referee coaches/mentors. The topic for the upcoming season of interactive webinars will be: **Offside**. During the webinars, we break down a few video clips, discuss the relevant considerations, and together, determine the correct interpretation and decision for each video clip.

SCHEDULE: *(Each webinar will start at 7:00 PM CT and end at 8:30 PM CT)*

[Tuesday, February 21 – Referees with the Grassroots License](#)

Tuesday, March 7 – Referee Mentors and Coaches

Tuesday, April 11 – Referees with the Regional or National match official license

Thursday, April 20 – Referees with the Grassroots License

[Full Details on the 2023 CELL webinar series and registration information available under Info > Resources](#) or on the [Learning Center Referee community page](#).

To ensure you always have the right gear on and off the pitch, see below a message from our partner, [OSI](#).



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