

## **Mentor Program Profile: Arrowhead Youth Soccer Association**

**Contact persons:** Dave DeWitt <daviddad@charter.net>  
Doug Marshak <vetshak@gmail.com>

**Mentors:** We have 10 to 15 mentors each year, ranging from 17 year-olds to adults.

**Training:** We train our mentors using a combination of online instruction and on-field observation and practice.

**Mentees:** Our target mentees are inexperienced referees. Our mentors also work with experienced referees who are assigned to crews that include target mentees.

**Games:** Our mentors work in-house rec matches, MYSA competitive matches, and tournament matches.

**Mentor roles:** Our mentors work as off-field observers.

**Payment:** Our mentors receive \$20 per game for younger rec matches and \$25 per game for older rec matches and competitive matches.

**Miscellaneous:** In 2010, we provided mentors for the U10 division of Gitch Gummi Soccer Club's Head of the Lakes tournament. We assigned two referees and two mentors to each game. One experienced mentor and one new mentor observed each match together.

The two mentors and referee A (off-field) observed referee B (on-field). Midway through the half, A and B switched places. B then received feedback from the mentors and observed A.

The two referees benefitted from feedback that related to events that were fresh in their minds. The new mentor benefited from observing the experienced mentor and practicing skills in a "live" environment.

The results were excellent. Mentors saw referees gain confidence and fix mistakes, often within the same game. New referees had opportunities to ask questions and receive advice and support immediately. Referees who were timid at the beginning of the day looked like seasoned pros by their third game. Mentors also discouraged negative behavior on the part of coaches, both passively (by their presence) and overtly (protecting referees when coaches got too critical).

## **Mentor Program Profile: Blaine Soccer Club**

**Contact persons:** Dan Bauman <danearl@q.com>  
John Fox <john.fox8@comcast.net>  
Charles Speckman <bsc@refassignors.com>

**Mentors:** We have 10 mentors, all adults.

**Training:** Dan trains our mentors using the MYSA course.

**Mentees:** Our target mentees are mostly beginning and intermediate referees.

**Games:** Our mentors work in-house rec matches, MYSA competitive matches, and tournament matches.

**Mentor roles:** Mentors for U10 and younger matches, and for tournaments, worked as off-field observers who watched multiple fields. Mentors for other matches worked as on-field crew members.

**Payment:** Some off-field mentors are paid per hour for multiple fields. Others are volunteers. All on-field mentors receive standard referee or AR fees, as appropriate.

**Miscellaneous:** We work hard to increase novice officials' confidence.

In 2010, we provided mentors for the Coon Rapids boys tournament. The club was so pleased with the results that the board budgeted to pay mentors for both of its tournaments in 2011.

We need to persuade more clubs of the value that referee mentoring provides and convince them to budget funds to pay for mentors at their games.

## **Mentor Program Profile: Eagan Wave Soccer Club**

**Contact person:** Shaji Varghese <shaji.referee@gmail.com>

**Mentors:** We have 5 mentors who helped novice officials and 3 who worked with intermediate/advanced officials. All are adults; most are retired referees.

**Training:** We have our own training for mentors.

**Mentees:** Our target mentees are beginning and intermediate referees. We assign mentors to all first-time referees and ARs.

**Games:** Our mentors work in-house rec matches, MYSA competitive matches, and tournament matches.

**Mentor roles:** Our mentors work as off-field observers.

**Payment:** Our mentors are paid per time slot (roving between multiple fields) or per game.

**Miscellaneous:** Our basic focus is to build confidence. We hold preseason meetings to explain the objectives and expectations of the mentor program. We also organize preseason field training which includes small groups, scrimmages, and shadowing/mirroring.

Mentors wear distinctive red shirts so match participants can identify them easily. Mentors have authority to resolve conflicts and report negative behavior by coaches and spectators.

Mentors discuss their observations with mentees at halftime. The approach is frank but supportive. Mentors submit postgame reports to mentees and to a shared database where they are accessible to other mentors and to the assignor, who considers these reports when determining future assignments.

## **Mentor Program Profile: Fairmont Soccer Association**

**Contact person:** Gene Bullock <gbugus@yahoo.com>

**Mentors:** We have 5 mentors, all adults.

**Training:** MYSA provides training for our mentors.

**Mentees:** Our target mentees are inexperienced referees. Most are young. Our mentors also work with any experienced officials who are assigned to the same crews along with the novices.

**Games:** Our mentors work in-house rec matches, MYSA competitive matches, and tournament matches.

**Mentor roles:** Our mentors work primarily as referees or ARs, but occasionally as off-field observers.

**Payment:** On-field mentors receive standard referee or AR fees, as appropriate. Off-field mentors receive \$10 per game.

**Miscellaneous:** Training mentors together is important so everyone gets the same information at the same time and feels like part of the team. It's crucial to include assignors in training and to maintain effective communication so assignors know how referees are doing.

Mentors were a huge benefit at our annual tournament. Young, inexperienced referees had the security of knowing that someone was there to help them. Having mentors present also discouraged players, coaches, and fans from criticizing young referees.

## **Mentor Program Profile: MapleBrook Soccer Association**

- Contact person:** Mary Ellingsen <marysoccer37@hotmail.com>  
Wendell Brainerd <>wendellbrainerd@yahoo.com>
- Mentors:** Currently, we have 1 adult mentor.
- Training:** MYSA provides training for our mentors.
- Mentees:** Our target mentees are young (mid-teens) referees.
- Games:** Our mentor works MYSA competitive matches (U12-U13 C2 and C3).
- Mentor roles:** Our mentor works as an off-field observer.
- Payment:** Our mentor is paid the same as the referees.
- Miscellaneous:** Mentors should tell mentees that they (mentees) are in charge of matches. Mentors are there to provide guidance and support but are not crutches for mentees, who must learn from both good and bad experiences.
- Mentors must avoid being so critical that they offend, discourage, and drive away mentees.

## **Mentor Program Profile: Plymouth Soccer Association**

- Contact person:** Tom Nilles <refs@plymouthsoccer.com>  
Alan McIntosh <almacref9@yhoo.com>
- Mentors:** We have approximately 15 mentors.
- Training:** Alan trains some of our mentors using the MYSA course. Tom trains the other mentors.
- Mentees:** Our target mentees include all first-year referees as well as other "young" referees. The assignor tries to have mentors work with mentees at least twice during the season.
- Games:** Our mentors work in-house rec matches and MYSA competitive matches.
- Mentor roles:** Our mentors work as off-field observers and watch entire crews along with specific mentees. In rare cases, mentors may have to fill in as crew members.
- Payment:** Our mentors are paid.
- Miscellaneous:** The assignor meets with mentors to discuss the mentor checklist and expectations for mentees.  
Mentors complete online reports after each game. Reports cover the basics of attitude, appearance, mechanics, and game management. The assignor uses these reports when determining future assignments.

## **Mentor Program Profile: Rochester Youth Soccer Association**

**Contact person:** Dennis Rickert <dr.socref@gmail.com>

**Mentors:** We have 12-15 mentors who work rec matches and 11 who work competitive matches.

**Training:** Dennis trains our mentors using the MYSA course.

**Mentees:** Our target mentees are mostly officials with 3 years of experience or less. We also work with some officials who have 4-5 years of experience.

**Games:** Our mentors work in-house rec matches, MYSA competitive matches, and tournament matches.

**Mentor roles:** For rec matches, mentors work as off-field observers and watch multiple fields. For competitive matches, mentors work primarily as off-field observers watching single fields, with a few serving as on-field crew members.

**Payment:** Mentor fees are similar to those paid to officials, but many mentors refuse to accept payment.

**Miscellaneous:** Coaches and administrators offer many unsolicited positive comments about mentoring. As word has spread about the program, other officials have requested mentors.

## **Mentor Program Profile: Shakopee Soccer Association**

**Contact person:** Darla Teslow <refereedirector@shakopeesoccer.com>  
Erik McInroy <admquix@charter.net>

**Mentors:** We have approximately 5 mentors.

**Training:** The club provides training for most of our mentors.

**Mentees:** Our target mentees are basic, intermediate, and advanced referees.

**Games:** ?

**Mentor roles:** Our mentors work as off-field observers with novice officials, watching up to 4 fields at one time. They also work as on-field crew members with novice, intermediate, and advanced officials.

**Payment:** Mentors are paid the same as referees.

**Miscellaneous:** We hold preseason meetings to explain the program. The assignor is very involved.  
Mentors have authority to intervene when necessary to discourage negative behavior by coaches.

## **Mentor Program Profile: Waseca Soccer Club**

**Contact persons:** Sam Macklay <smacklay@msn.com>  
Suzanne Adams <dms\_sznn@yahoo.com>

**Mentors:** We have 4 local mentors and 3 from other clubs.

**Training:** Three mentors from our club participated in the MYSA training course.

**Mentees:** Our mentors work with all referees.

**Games:** Our mentors work in-house rec matches, U10 rec tournament matches, and MYSA competitive matches.

**Mentor roles:** Our mentors work as off-field observers for rec matches, watching two or three fields at once. They work as off-field observers or on-field crew members for competitive matches.

**Payment:** Off-field mentors for rec matches receive \$10 per hour. Other off-field mentors volunteer. On-field mentors receive standard referee or AR fees, as appropriate.

**Miscellaneous:** Being positive and reinforcing good habits is helpful. Mentors first offer praise for things that referees do well. Then when they ask what needs improvement, the referees often bring up the same subjects that the mentors want to discuss with them. This approach avoids any negative feelings and encourages referees to think for themselves.