



STATE REFEREE PROGRAM



West Virginia Soccer Association State Referee Program

2023 Annual Report

Submitted by:

Michael J. McCarthy, State Referee Administrator Emeritus

March 23, 2023

www.wvsareferees.org

CONTENTS

State Referee Committee Membership	2
Recent and Upcoming Regional, National and International Changes	3
WV Referee Registration Overview	5
Misconduct Toward Officials	8
2023 US Youth Soccer Regional Referee Delegations	9
2023 Young Referees of the Year	15
Other State Referee Program Events in 2023	16

State Referee Committee Membership 2023

<u>Position</u>		<u>District</u>
State Referee Administrator	Michael McCarthy *	4
State Youth Referee Administrator	Sonya Hedrick	3
State Director of Instruction	Douglas Sharpe	3
State Director of Assessment	Geoffrey Petsko	3
State Director of Assignment	Kevin Nicholson	3
At-Large Youth Coach Representative	Drew Sutler	4
At-Large Adult Player Representative	Stacy Bridgette	4
At-Large Referee Representative	Justin Parnicza	2
At-Large Referee Representative	Tim Eller	3
Ex-Officio, WVSA President	Len Rogers	4
Ex-Officio, WVSA Executive Director	Dave Laraba	5

**Retired as SRA December 31, 2024*

State Referee Committee Membership for 2024

<u>Position</u>		<u>District</u>
State Referee Administrator	Douglas Sharpe	3
State Youth Referee Administrator	Sonya Hedrick	3
State Director of Referee Development **	Justin Parnicza	2
State Director of Assignment	Jason McClain	3
At-Large Youth Coach Representative	Drew Sutler	4
At-Large Adult Player Representative	Stacy Bridgette	4
At-Large Referee Representative	Tim Eller	3
Ex-Officio, WVSA President	Len Rogers	4
Ex-Officio, WVSA Executive Director	Dave Laraba	5
Ex-Officio, SRA Emeritus	Mike McCarthy	4

***Combined USSF responsibilities of State Director of Instruction and State Director of Assessment*

Recent and Upcoming Regional, National and International Changes

Selected, Highlighted 2023/24 Modification to IFAB Laws of the Game Effective July 1, 2023

(For more details, including specific verbiage of these changes, see www.theifab.com)

New text in bold / ~~Deleted text in strikethrough~~

- Change in terminology (Law 10 – Determining the Outcome of a Match)

The term ~~“kicks from the penalty mark”~~ is changed to **“penalties (penalty shoot-out)”** in all locations within the Laws of the Game, including Laws 2.2, 3.5, 5.3, 10.3, 12.3, the Glossary, and the Practical guidelines for match officials.

- Clarification of guidelines to distinguish between ‘deliberate play’ and ‘deflection’ as outlined in circular 26 (July 2022) (Law 11 -- Offside)

A player in an offside position receiving the ball from an opponent who deliberately ~~plays~~ played* the ball, including by deliberate handball, is not considered to have gained an advantage, unless it was a deliberate save by any opponent.

‘Deliberate play’ (excluding deliberate handball) is when a player has control of the ball with the possibility of:

- **passing the ball to a team-mate;**
- **gaining possession of the ball; or**
- **clearing the ball (e.g. by kicking or heading it)**

If the pass, attempt to gain possession or clearance by the player in control of the ball is inaccurate or unsuccessful, this does not negate the fact that the player ‘deliberately played’ the ball.

The following criteria should be used, as appropriate, as indicators that a player was in control of the ball and, as a result, can be considered to have ‘deliberately played’ the ball:

- **The ball travelled from distance and the player had a clear view of it**
- **The ball was not moving quickly**
- **The direction of the ball was not unexpected**
- **The player had time to coordinate their body movement, i.e. it was not a case of instinctive stretching or jumping, or a movement that achieved limited contact/control**
- **A ball moving on the ground is easier to play than a ball in the air**

- Clarification that when a referee awards a penalty for a DOGSO offense committed by a defender within their own penalty area, the offending player is only sent off if the offense was committed without the possibility to play the ball. If the offending player was challenging for the ball or attempting to play the ball, the offending player must be cautioned. (Law 12 – Fouls and Misconduct)
- Clarification that the senior team official can be sanctioned only for an offense committed by an ‘unidentified offender’ who is in/from the technical area, i.e. this does not apply to an offense committed by an ‘unidentified player’. (Law 12 – Fouls and Misconduct)
- Clarification regarding prohibited behavior by the goalkeeper at the taking of a penalty kick (Law 14 – The Penalty Kick)

The defending goalkeeper must remain on the goal line, facing the kicker, between the goalposts, ~~without touching the goalposts, crossbar or goal net,~~ until the ball has ~~been~~ is kicked. **The goalkeeper must not behave in a way that unfairly distracts the kicker, e.g. delay the taking of the kick or touch the goalposts, crossbar or goal net.**

WV Referee Registration Overview

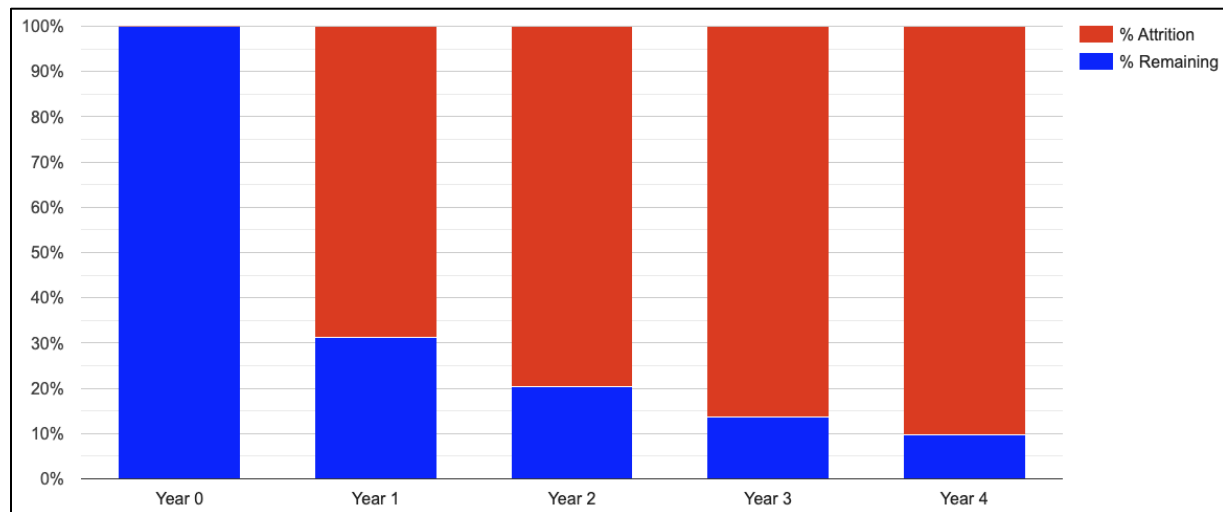


Figure 1. Cumulative WV referee attrition in Years 1 - 4 following initial license year

Notable Observations from 2023 Data:

- Referee attrition remains a concern (Fig. 1), with **only 30% of new referees returning after their first year**, and **only 10% remaining after 4 years** as a match official. Note that this first year attrition rate is worse than the 35% rate in 2022.
- The number of referees returning from the previous year improved as a percentage from the prior year, but remains significantly lower than the average of the five years before the COVID-19 pandemic – indeed, **22.8% LOWER than the average, annual, pre-COVID rate**.

Registration Year	Returning WV Referees	% Change
2015	406	--
2016	411	+ 1.2%
2017	422	+ 2.6%
2018	398	- 5.7%
2019	417	+ 4.8%
2021 *	389	+ 6.7%
2021	256	- 34.2%
2022	317	+ 23.8%

* COVID-19 Pandemic Year

- More than 35% of referees in West Virginia were 15 years old or younger in 2023, up from 20% the year before and 15% in the year before that. **This is the highest ratio of young referees since 2007** (which was a year when 811 referees registered in WV).

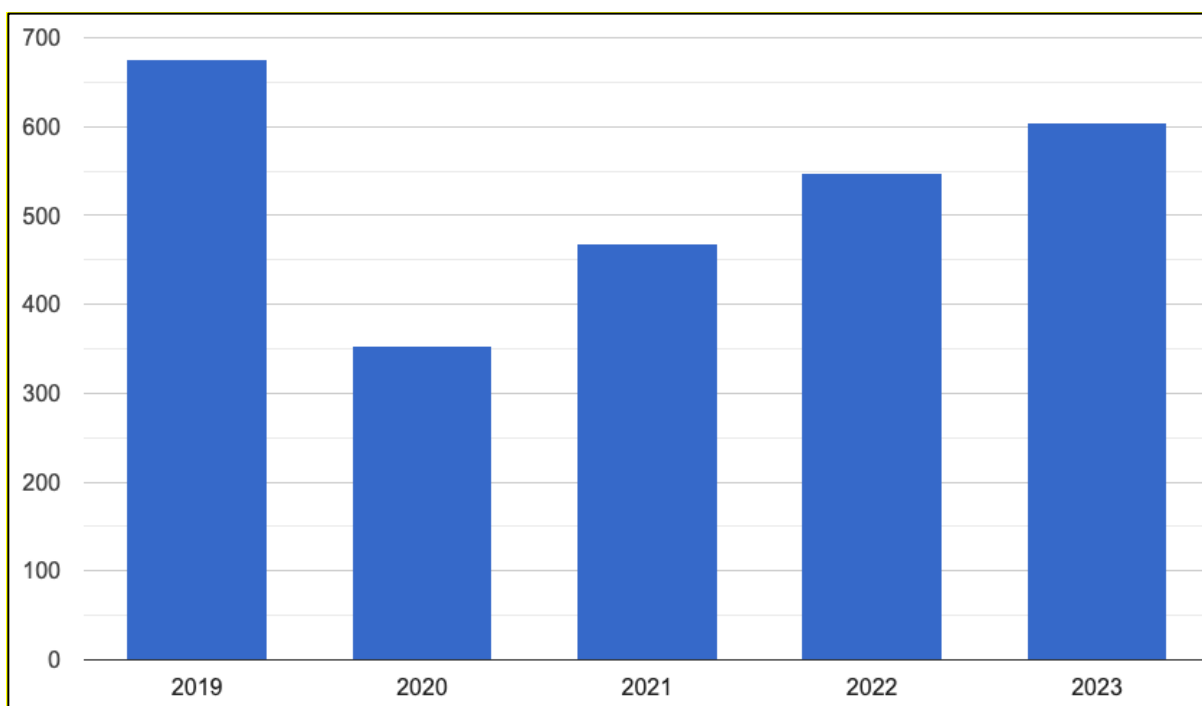


Figure 2. West Virginia Referee Census, 2019-23

- Registration numbers in 2023 (Fig. 2) continued to recover since the pandemic years and ended with a 10.4% increase over 2022. But WV referee registration in 2023 still ended more than 10% lower than in the most recent year prior to the pandemic.

Registration Year	WV Referees
2015	652
2016	735
2017	731
2018	686
2019	675
2020 *	353
2021	468
2022	548
2023	605

* COVID-19 Pandemic Year

- Although a steady recovery since the COVID-19 pandemic continues, the overall trend of declining referee registration numbers over the most recent 15 years persists (Fig. 3).

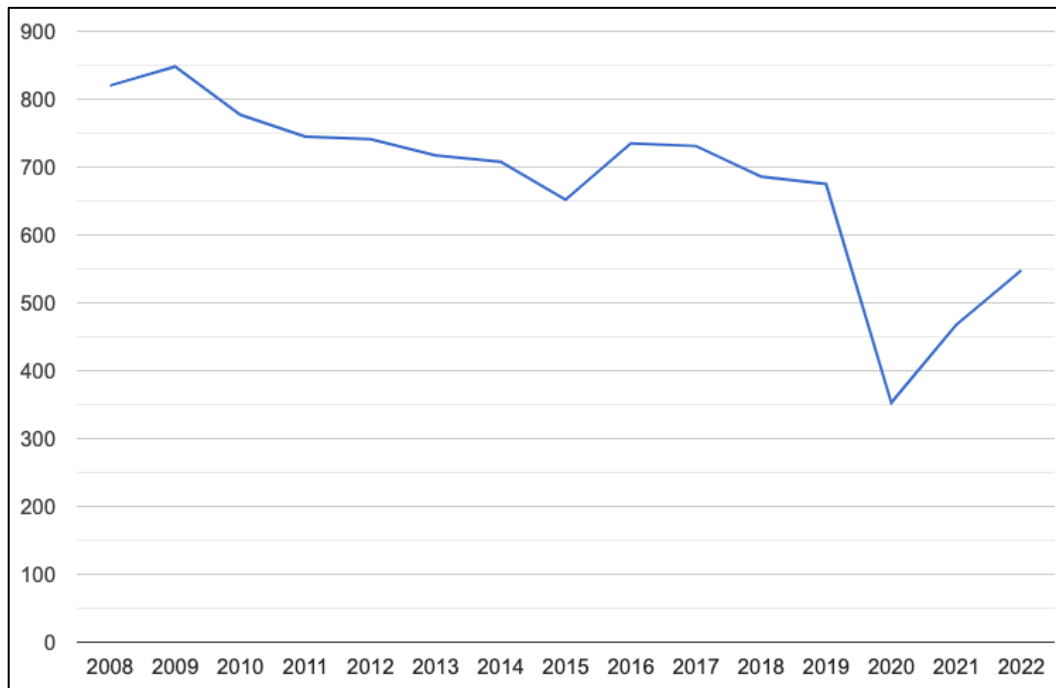


Figure 3. WV Referee Census, 2009 - 2023

- The percentage of **West Virginia Referees who are female continues to climb and has reached its highest point in history at 34.1%**, a full 10% higher than the average of the five years prior to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Misconduct Toward Officials

Adjudicated Incidents:

Level of Misconduct	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
WVSA Admin Rule 4.2.6 "Misconduct Toward Officials"	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0
U.S. Soccer Policy 531-9 "Misconduct Toward Officials: Abuse"	1	1	0	1 ²	1	0	1	0
U.S. Soccer Policy 531-9 "Misconduct Toward Officials: Assault"	0	0	2 ¹	0	0	0	1 ^{1, 3}	0

Notes:

1. All the individuals found to have committed Referee Assault per U.S. Soccer Policy 531-9 received suspensions of three months, the standard sanction "for a minor or slight touching of the referee" per Policy 531-9.5(A)(1)(a).
2. Coach was investigated for alleged Referee Abuse but found to not be a rostered team official. U.S. Soccer policy, therefore, had no jurisdiction. Referee was coached to be sure to check team rosters before the match and the league was informed that the coach was not properly credentialed.
3. An allegation of Referee Assault against a referee licensed by West Virginia per U.S. Soccer Policy 531-9 was filed with a U.S. Soccer member organization outside of West Virginia at an out-of-state event. That matter was adjudicated by a hearing panel convened by the out-of-state member organization and the alleged team official was found not guilty.

2023 US Youth Soccer Regional Referee Delegations

East Region Presidents Cup, Conshohocken, PA, June 16 – 20

- John Allen
- Tristan Brogan
- William Chang
- Jason Holland
- Elise Moll
- Yue-kei Ng
- Michael Pacyna
- Justin Partnicza (Mentor) *
- Alex Perez (Mentor)
- Jaren Wolfarth
- Mike Wolfarth
- Nick Young



WV Referees selected for the 2023 US Youth Soccer National Presidents Cup (L to R): Elliot Chang, Yue-kei Ng and Jason Holland.

** Selected as “Mentor of the Event” by the National Referee Coaches on the East Region Referee Committee*



The WV Referee Delegation to the 2023 US Youth Soccer East Region Presidents Cup

East Region Championships, Loudon County, VA, June 23 – 29

- John Allen
- Kofi Boateng
- Elliot Chang
- William Chang
- Jack Clouse *
- Audrey Deutsch
- Tim Eller (Mentor)
- Emma Hedrick
- Sonya Hedrick (Mentor)
- Jason Holland
- Ben Meyer
- Elise Moll
- Yue-kei Ng
- Mike Pacyna
- Justin Parnicza (Mentor)
- Colin Petsko
- Dante Ricci
- Nick Young

** Selected to attend the 2023 US Youth Soccer National Championships*



The WV Referee Delegation to the 2023 US Youth Soccer East Region Championships



Referee Coach and WV State Youth Referee Administrator Sonya Hedrick leads a postgame reflection with a referee crew at the 2023 East Region Championships



WV Referees enjoy a relaxing Delegation Dinner at the 2023 East Region Championships



The WV Referee Family at the 2023 East Region Championships

Mini Golf

1. 46 Mike Pacyna
2. 51 Colin Petsko
3. 52 Ben Meyer
4. 52 Will Chang
5. 52 Jack Clouse
6. 53 Emma Hedrick
7. 53 Elliot Chang
8. 58 Sonya Hedrick
9. 59 Justin Parnicza
10. 60 Elise Moll
11. 61 Dante Ricci
12. 63 Nick Young
13. 63 Jason Holland
14. 67 Yuchi Ng
15. 68 John Allen
16. 72 Audrey Deutsch

The Leaderboard at the end of the WV Referee Delegation Miniature Golf round at the 2023 East Region Championships

WV Referees on Semifinal matches at the 2023 East Region Championships



Audrey Deutsch, Referee, U13F Semifinal



Emma Hedrick, Referee, U13F Semifinal



Colin Petsko, Referee, U13M Semifinal



Dante Ricci, Referee, U13M Semifinal

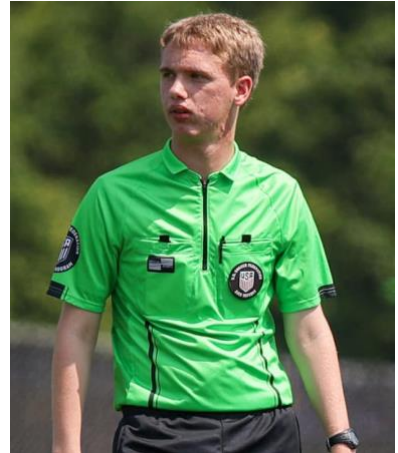
WV Referees receiving finals assignments at the 2023 US Youth Soccer East Region Championships (L to R): Jack Clouse, Elise Moll and Kofi Boateng



Elise Moll, Referee, U12F Final

2023 WV Soccer Association Young Referees of the Year

John Allen (Athens, WV) – John began his referee career in 2017 working matches in his local grassroots league. He quickly advanced and was selected as part of the WV Referee Delegation to the East Region ODP Tournament in 2019. He demonstrated a thorough knowledge of the Laws of the Game, and his efforts were rewarded with assignments on two final matches at the 2022 USYS East Region NCS, including the whistle on a contentious U12M championship. *“Throughout his referee journey, John has maintained his humility and an infectious sense of humor. Indeed, he is one of the most enthusiastic cheerleaders for his fellow referees that I’ve ever known.”* (Excerpt from nomination). John was also selected not only as the 2023 East Region Young Male Referee of the Year, but also as the 2023 USYS National Young Male Referee of the Year.



Elise Moll (Webster Springs, WV) – Elise began officiating in 2021 and has steadily and rapidly developed since, attending high level competitions such as US Youth Soccer East Region events in both 2022 and 2023. As noted by USSF National Referee Coach Kris Bailey: *“[Elise] has an amazing work ethic that allows her to make correct and strong decisions; she is very open to any types of instructional content, and she can execute suggested improvements immediately.... This very capable young referee has the ability to work at the next level already and has potential to be one of the finest in the profession.”*



**John was also selected as the 2023 USYS
NATIONAL Young Male Referee of the Year!**

Other State Referee Program Events and Achievements in 2023



Referee Coaches for the 2023 WVFC Capital Cup (L to R): Rob Sbiga (PRO), Chico Grejeda (PRO), Mike McCarthy (WV SRA), Rob Fereday (Former FIFA AR) and Douglas Sharpe (WV SDI)



Two More Members of WV State Referee Program Earned U.S. Soccer Referee Coach Licenses in 2023: Douglas Sharpe and Justin Parnicza. At the end of 2023, WV had six licensed Referee Coaches.

USSF National Referee Coach Kris Bailey attended the WVSA Open Cup in Barboursville in May 2023





WV Referees at the 2023 ECNL Girls National Finals in Richmond, VA (L to R): Elliot Chang, Sonya Hedrick, Jason Holland, Yue-kei Ng and William Chang



Referees for the 2023 WVSA State Championships

*WV Referee Lloyd McIntyre received the
2023 US Youth Soccer National
Girls Grassroots Coach of the Year Award*



Referee Coach Justin Parnicza hosted several “WV Referee Office Hours” in 2023, a series of weekly, online meetings of referees throughout the state, offering participants opportunities to discuss, reflect and seek guidance.