

# CDL Game Day Referee (Shortage) Protocol

Many teams have had games over the past few seasons in which a referee was not present to officiate the game. Given this shortfall of available referees will continue to impact CDL games in the foreseeable future, the league is putting forth guidelines to assist teams in managing this scenario. By adhering to the guidelines listed below, clubs should be able to create a more positive experience for players, coaches, and parents when a referee is not in attendance.

## Club Staff in Communication with Referee Assignors

CDL clubs should have a designated member within their Technical or Administrative staff who is connecting with their respective Referee Assignor each week to identify games which are likely to be without an official. Upon receiving information that a game may not have a ref, the club (team) **hosting the game should notify the opposing team coach**, if possible at least 24 hours before the scheduled start-time, that the game will most likely be without an official.

## Pre-Game Meeting Between Team Coaches

If teams recognize a game is unlikely to have an official, the Team Coaches should meet at least 15 minutes before the scheduled start-time to come to an agreement on how the match will be officiated. Options to choose from:

#1: One of the teams has identified an individual (Parent, Club Staff Member, Team Coach) who is willing to take on the role of the official for the entire match.

#2: Each team selects a person to take on the referee role for one half of the match.

#3: Both teams appoint a person to officiate half the field for an entire match (Similar to a two-ref system with actual officials)

NOTE: The person selected in any of the three options should be knowledgeable in the general rules of the game (Ideally someone with referee or coaching experience). If the team does not have an Assistant Coach or parent meeting this expectation, then it is the responsibility of the Team Head Coach to take on the officiating duties if Option #2 or #3 is chosen.

## Planning for the Situation Ahead of Time

At the beginning of the season, teams are encouraged to do one of the following:

- Reach out to team families to find out if there is a parent/sibling with referee experience who would be willing to step-in when needed.
- Assign teams more than one coach so the person in the Assistant's role can assume the referee responsibilities.

In addition, if/when possible, Team Coaches should have whistles in their equipment bag, and a device (Phone, stopwatch) to track time.

## Balancing the Role of Coach and Referee

- In situations where the Team Head Coach assumes referee responsibilities, it should be expected this person will “coach” and officiate as the game is being played.
- If the team representative officiating is not the Head Coach, then it is expected that person focuses on being the referee while leaving coaching responsibilities, such as guiding and encouraging players, to the Team Head Coach.

## Educating Team Families Concerning This Scenario

- Clubs should be providing their member-families communication which outlines the items addressed above. The “no-ref” situation will be more manageable if families recognize there are protocols in place.
- As with all matches, spectators are expected to be respectful towards those managing the game. Clubs should have their members prepared for the game to be officiated in a less formal manner.

## Basic Rules of the Game

Roster sizes Maximum:

- 09U-10U (7v7) maximum of 12
- 11U, 12U (9v9) maximum of 16
- Small-sided: 7v7 @ 13U, 14U, 15U, 16U, 19U maximum of 14

Roster sizes Minimum:

- 09U-10U playing 7v7 minimum of 6
- 11U, 12U playing 9v9 minimum of 7
- 13U-19U playing 7v7 minimum of 6

Game length

- 09U-10U (Two 25-minute halves)
- 11U-12U (Two 30-minute halves)
- 13U-14U Small-sided 7v7 (Two 35-minute halves)
- 15U/16U Small sided 7v7 (Two 40-minute halves)
- 19U Small-Sided/High School Small-Sided 7v7 (Two 40-minute halves)

A full copy of the [rules could be found here](#) for reference.