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## **Selection and Certification for National Candidates and National Officials**

Beginning July 1, 2014, all National Candidates and National Officials will be selected directly by U.S. Soccer. National Candidates, tracked as Referees and Assistant Referees, will be designated as Grade 5. National Officials, also tracked as Referees and Assistant Referees, will continue to be designated as Grade 4.

It is important to understand that the selection process for these grades is both quantitative and qualitative. In order to become and stay these grades, each official must meet a combination of administrative and technical requirements on an annual basis.

The window for completing the following requirements will open on Sept. 1, and close on Nov. 30:

- Register online and upload proof of citizenship or permanent residency
- Complete and pass the online Laws of the Game Test
- Pass the required online background check

These requirements will be managed by U.S. Soccer's administrative staff and specific instructions related to these requirements will be made available for download prior to Sept. 1.

Once these requirements are confirmed, U.S. Soccer's technical staff will begin a qualitative review of the official's online portfolio. The online portfolio will be generated in [ussoccer.gameofficials.net](http://ussoccer.gameofficials.net) and will include the official's assignment and assessment history, in addition to any other performance data collected through U.S. Soccer's identification efforts at various membership events.

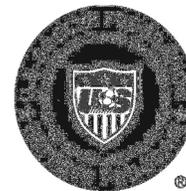
Note that it is the responsibility of the official to confirm that his or her assessments are listed in [ussoccer.gameofficials.net](http://ussoccer.gameofficials.net). If assessment information is missing, the official must work with the relevant assessor to make sure the information is entered into [ussoccer.gameofficials.net](http://ussoccer.gameofficials.net). This must be done by Nov. 30 for the official's online portfolio to be reviewed by U.S. Soccer's technical staff.

Decisions will be made on a rolling basis based on the review of each online portfolio. Because this review is qualitative, meeting the established minimum requirements listed in this document does not ensure certification or recertification.

If selected by U.S. Soccer's technical staff, the official must then attend a National Camp where he or she will be required to complete training and pass the appropriate fitness test. Once these final requirements have been met, the official will be certified as a Grade 5 National Candidate or Grade 4 National Official for the registration year.

If not selected by U.S. Soccer's technical staff, the official will be directed to register with the State Referee Association based on his or her qualifications.

Please note that this selection process and deadlines do not apply to Grade 3 Professional Officials, Grade 2 International Assistant Referees or Grade 1 International Referees.



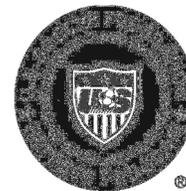
**Grade 5 – National Candidate**

Those officials selected as a Grade 5 National Candidate will have demonstrated exceptional ability as a Grade 6 State Referee. Based on the selection process, U.S. Soccer recommends that these officials be assigned to the most competitive national events and leagues available. This may include lower level professional matches as appropriate.

<b>Certification Requirements</b>	
Registration	Directly with U.S. Soccer
Nationality	U.S. Citizen or Permanent Resident
Training	Attend a National Camp
Laws of the Game Test	Pass the National Test
Fitness Test	Pass the FIFA Sprint and Interval Tests
Practical Evaluation	Minimum of 3 completed by 3 National Assessors
Other	Pass the National Background Check
<b>Annual Recertification Requirements</b>	
Registration	Directly with U.S. Soccer
Training	Attend a National Camp
Laws of the Game Test	Pass the National Test
Fitness Test	Pass the FIFA Sprint and Interval Tests
Practical Evaluation	Minimum of 3 completed by 3 National Assessors
Other	Pass the National Background Check

**Notes**

- Minimum of 3 passing assessments (from affiliated games with a minimum of 40 minute halves) completed by three different National Assessors, and at least 1 of these assessments must be from an adult game



**Grade 4 – National Official**

Those officials selected as a Grade 4 National Official will have demonstrated exceptional ability as a Grade 5 National Candidate. Based on the selection process, U.S. Soccer recommends that these officials be regularly assigned to the most competitive national events and leagues available. This includes matches played at the professional level.

<b>Certification Requirements</b>	
Registration	Directly with U.S. Soccer
Nationality	U.S. Citizen or Permanent Resident
Training	Attend a National Camp
Laws of the Game Test	Pass the National Test
Fitness Test	Pass the FIFA Sprint and Interval Tests
Practical Evaluation	Minimum of 3 completed by 3 National Assessors
Other	Pass the National Background Check
<b>Annual Recertification Requirements</b>	
Registration	Directly with U.S. Soccer
Training	Attend a National Camp
Laws of the Game Test	Pass the National Test
Fitness Test	Pass the FIFA Sprint and Interval Tests
Practical Evaluation	Minimum of 3 completed by 3 National Assessors
Other	Pass the National Background Check

**Notes**

- Minimum of 3 passing assessments (from affiliated games with a minimum of 40 minute halves) completed by three different National Assessors, and at least 1 of these assessments must be from an adult game



## Fitness Test Administration

### Sprint Test

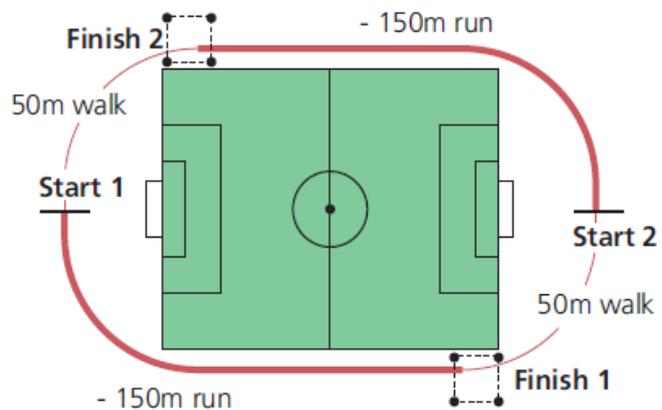
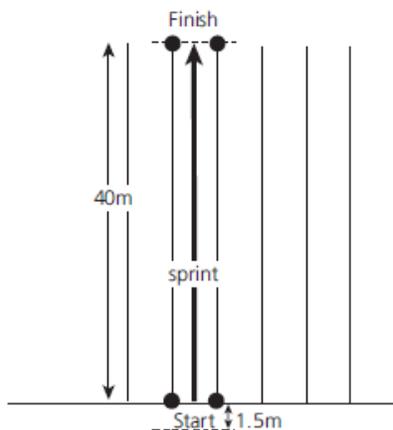
- Participants run six consecutive 40 meter sprints followed by a recovery period after each sprint (while walking back to the start line)
- Dynamic start with the front foot on a line that is 1.5 meters away from the electronic timing gates at the starting position
- If a participant falls or trips, they are allowed another attempt at that specific sprint
- If a participant fails one sprint out of the six, they are given one more attempt immediately after the sixth sprint
- If a participant fails two sprints, they fail the test

### Interval Test

- Participants run a total of ten consecutive laps
- A lap consists of two 150 meter runs with two 50 meter recovery walks
  - Starts with running 150 meters in the prescribed time
  - Followed by walking 50 meters in the prescribed time
  - This process is repeated to complete one lap
- Walking area is marked by cones three meters on each side of the 150 meter marks
- If a participant fails to reach the walking area in the prescribed time, they are issued a warning
- If a participant fails to reach the walking area for a second time, they fail the test

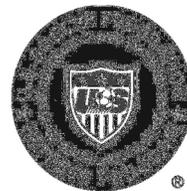
### Notes

- The time between the sprint test and interval test should be approximately 6-8 minutes



## Standards for National Candidates and National Officials

Based on the gender and track (referee or assistant referee) of the official, the current FIFA sprint and interval reference times will be used for testing.



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### **Physically Unable to Perform Policy**

If a National Candidate or National Official is unable to perform the physical duties required of a referee or assistant referee, including the completion of the fitness test required for certification at that level, he or she must contact U.S. Soccer and request to be placed on the Physically Unable to Perform (PUP) list prior to the completion of the National Camps.

When applying for PUP list consideration, officials are required to provide a comprehensive written description of why they are unable to perform physically and include the appropriate medical documentation. All requests must be submitted in writing to Nicole Ward at [nward@ussoccer.org](mailto:nward@ussoccer.org).

Inclusion of the PUP list can include but is not limited to:

- Pregnancy
- Injury

If approved by U.S. Soccer's technical staff and placed on the PUP list, the official will be allowed to have his or her registration record remain pending until the fitness test requirement is completed. Once the fitness test requirement is completed, the certification process will be completed and processed accordingly.

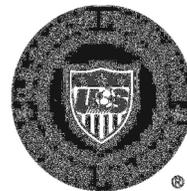
Note that the official is still responsible for satisfying all administrative and technical requirements, other than the taking of the fitness test, according to the established deadlines.

Any National Candidate or National Official on the PUP list will not be approved or certified for the current year and therefore, he or she may not officiate in any capacity until all requirements are met.

All expenses associated with the hosting and taking of the required fitness test are the responsibility of the official looking to exit the PUP list. Note that all aspects of the fitness test must be approved by U.S. Soccer prior to the test being conducted.

Officials will also be required to provide a doctor's note prior to taking the required fitness test required to come off the PUP list.

An official may not remain on the PUP list beyond the applicable registration year and U.S. Soccer reserves the right to remove an individual from the PUP list at any time for any reason.



**Grade 3 – Professional Official**

Those officials selected as a Grade 3 Professional Official will have demonstrated exceptional ability as a Grade 4 National Official. Based on the selection process, U.S. Soccer recommends that these officials be regularly assigned by to matches played at the professional level.

<b>Certification Requirements</b>	
Registration	Directly with U.S. Soccer
Nationality	U.S. Citizen or Permanent Resident
Training	Determined by PRO
Laws of the Game Test	Pass the National Test
Fitness Test	Pass the FIFA Sprint and Interval Tests
Practical Evaluation	Determined by PRO
Other	Pass the National Background Check
<b>Annual Recertification Requirements</b>	
Registration	Directly with U.S. Soccer
Training	Determined by PRO
Laws of the Game Test	Pass the National Test
Fitness Test	Pass the FIFA Sprint and Interval Tests
Practical Evaluation	Determined by PRO
Other	Pass the National Background Check

**Notes**

- Based on an ongoing analysis of Grade 3 Professional Officials and Grade 4 National Officials, the Professional Referee Organization (PRO) makes an annual recommendation to U.S. Soccer of who should be certified as a Grade 3 Professional Referee for the registration year
- All deadlines associated with the administrative and technical requirements will be communicated directly to the applicable officials



**Grade 1 – International Referee  
Grade 2 – International Assistant Referee**

The elite group of officials selected as Grade 1 International Referees and Grade 2 International Assistant Referees will have demonstrated exceptional ability as a Grade 3 Professional Officials or Grade 4 National Officials. Based on the selection process, U.S. Soccer recommends that these officials be regularly assigned to matches played at the highest professional and international levels.

**Notes**

- All deadlines associated with administrative and technical requirements will be communicated directly to the applicable officials
- Based on an ongoing analysis of Grade 3 Professional Officials and Grade 4 National Officials, the Professional Referee Organization (PRO) makes an annual recommendation to the U.S. Soccer Referee Committee for appointments to the FIFA Panel
- Following a review from the U.S. Soccer Referee Committee, these recommendations are then approved by U.S. Soccer's Board of Directors and submitted to FIFA for consideration
- FIFA makes the final determination of officials named to the FIFA Panel