



The Flag and Whistle
Newsletter of the South Bay Soccer Referee Association
Serving the Soccer Community since 1976



Written by: Jonny Joseph
Edited by: Alan Siegel

January 2026

Happy New Year!

Did you make any New Year Resolutions? Any referee resolutions?

In a survey, thanks for all the responses, we determined the following top 10 SBSRA referee resolutions for 2026:

1. Attend SBSRA monthly membership meetings on the last Tuesday of each month to be properly prepared for your games and be informed about the Association
2. Read the Flag & Whistle each month, at least the minutes of the monthly membership meeting (see 1 above)
3. Look good – wear clean, neat uniforms that still resemble their original color
4. Keep your blocks up to date in Arbiter
5. Accept game assignments timely
6. Study your game assignments to determine game locations, feasibility of getting from one location to another and informing your teammates you may be late
7. Arrive at your field at least 30 minutes before kickoff
8. Communicate with your teammates and assignors appropriately – telephone calls and text messages are best,
9. Recruit at least one female referee this year
10. HAVE FUN on the field!

Before we move onto 2026, let's look at 2025:

Month	Game Count
January	272
February	302
March	627
April	594
May	580
June	231
July	259
August	257
September	1,210
October	1,165
November	665
December	224
Grand Total	6,386

Day of Week	Game Count
Monday	407
Tuesday	752
Wednesday	593
Thursday	519
Friday	261
Saturday	2,071
Sunday	1,783
Grand Total	6,386

Based on the above, we can expect a quiet January and February but be ready for March!

Board of Directors

President: Jonny Joseph	Vice-President: Steve Brandon	Secretary: Kiku Annon
Treasurer: Bruce Ashton	Member-At-Large: Tony Calandra	Assignor: Gabriel Goldsman



Website

Having problems signing into our website with your password? Getting a “Can’t find php template” error?

Step 1 – clear the cache on your device

Step 2 – try logging in again

Step 3 - if that doesn’t work, reach out to our webmaster Rick Roberts, at web@sbsra.org.

Bylaws Amendments

The Association’s bylaws provide for amendment proposals to be made at various times during the year. The next opportunity is at our February membership meeting. To be considered amendment proposals must be submitted to a Board Member, preferably our Secretary, in writing for presentation at the membership prior to the meeting at which they can be voted on, i.e., before the January meeting on January 27th.

To that end, we include the bylaw amendment proposals received to date, in bylaw number order. There will be an opportunity to discuss them at the January meeting when “friendly changes” may also be offered. All proposed changes are **in red** below

Proposed Amendment #1 – Bylaw # V MEMBERSHIP DUES AND FEES TO BOARD MEMBERS

Proposer: Board of Directors

Reason for change:

One of the main purposes of monthly membership meetings is to provide ongoing training and development instruction to referees. This continuing training enables the Association to address referee and league issues that arise on a continual basis, with the intention of improving our refereeing services, protecting the business of our association and enhancing our reputation within the Southern California soccer community.

Accordingly, by definition, members who do not attend a sufficient number of meetings each membership year cannot be properly trained. Assigning referees who are not properly trained and thus not adequately equipped to provide high quality refereeing services presents a risk to our business and the earning potential of our members.

To encourage members to attend at least three, monthly membership meetings, a **fully refundable deposit** equal to the forthcoming membership annual dues will be payable by those members who have not attended three membership meetings in the prior membership year. The deposit (resulting in twice the annual dues amount being payable) is refundable in full after the member has attended three meetings in the subsequent year. Members will be encouraged to attend the first three meetings of each year to recoup their deposit as soon as possible and to attend three of the most important meetings of the year.



Proposed Change:

Add the following to Section V.:

B. For a Returning Membership Application to be considered for approval by the Board of Directors, applicant members who have not attended three membership meetings in the prior membership year must submit a fully refundable deposit (resulting in an amount twice the annual dues amount payable) with their application. The deposit is refundable in full after the member has attended three meetings in the subsequent year. Partial refunds for attendance at less than three meetings per membership year may not be made.

Proposed Amendment #2 – Bylaw # VII ELECTED OFFICERS

Proposer: Board of Directors

Reason for change:

To encourage board position nominations to be made prior to board member elections which take place at our Annual General Meetings in June each year, but to still allow for last minute nominations in the event none have been made prior to the Annual General Meeting .

Proposed Change:

Add section A. 4. to existing bylaws:

4. Nominations for elected Board Member positions must be made at the Monthly Membership Meeting (May) prior to the Annual General Meeting at which the Board Member elections are to take place. Nominations for these Board Member positions may be made after the prior Monthly Membership Meeting only if no nominations were received at that Monthly Membership Meeting.

Proposed Amendment #3 – Bylaw # VII. ELECTED OFFICERS

Proposer: Michael Hinz

Reason for change:

If the membership wants to remove a Board Member they can do that with a two-thirds vote (Bylaw X. E. or during the normal 2-year Board Member Term cycle. If the membership does not want to remove that Board member, that Board member should be able to remain in his/her position.

Proposed Change:

Delete Section VII A. 6.:

~~Elected Board Members will be limited to three (3) consecutive terms, elected or appointed on the Board, effective from the election following adoption of this provision. A two (2) year/twenty four (24) months continuous absence from the Board will reset this requirement and the Board Member may be elected or appointed to any office thereafter.~~



Proposed Amendment #4 – Bylaw # X MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS

Proposer: Board of Directors

Reason for change:

One of the main purposes of monthly membership meetings is to provide ongoing training and development instruction to referees. This continuing training enables the Association to address referee and league issues that arise on a continual basis, with the intention of improving our refereeing services, protecting the business of our association and enhancing our reputation within the Southern California soccer community.

Accordingly, by definition, members who do not attend a sufficient number of meetings each membership year cannot be properly trained. Assigning referees who are not properly trained and thus not adequately equipped to provide high quality refereeing services presents a risk to our business and the earning potential of our members.

change of membership attendance to minimum 3 meetings per membership year, X. B.

Proposed Change:

Add section B. to existing bylaws:

B. Attendance at a minimum of three, monthly Membership Meetings per year is required to maintain membership in the Association.

Proposed Amendment #5 – Bylaw # XII MEMBERSHIP CODE OF CONDUCT

Proposer: Board of Directors

Reason for change:

Reallocation of certain duties to the secretary from the president.

Proposed Change:

Proposed changes to existing bylaw XII. C. and D. are noted **in red**:

- C. All charges of a breach of Association conduct against a member shall be made in writing to the **Secretary**~~President~~ setting forth full details. The **Secretary**~~President~~ shall notify the member of the charges against him. The member will be given seventy-two (72) hours either to offer a written response or, at her/his option, request a hearing before the BOD.
- D. The **Secretary**~~President~~ shall present the written charges and the member's response, if any, to the BOD. The BOD shall afford the member a hearing on the charges.



Proposed Amendment #6 – Bylaw # XII MEMBERSHIP CODE OF CONDUCT

Proposer: Board of Directors

Reason for change:

To provide members charged with misconduct with an opportunity to appeal a Board decision to fine the member, the Association's bylaws provide a mechanism for the member to have the appeal heard by a Grievance Committee. The process involves a number of people who are required to spend considerable time on this endeavor. To avoid frivolous appeals and the potential for refusal by the member to abide by the final decision to pay a fine, the member shall be required to pay the fine before a Grievance Committee is formed to hear the appeal.

Proposed Change:

Proposed changes to existing bylaws are noted in red:

- G. Following the decision of the BOD, the offending member may request an appeal of the decision to the Grievance Committee. This appeal shall be made in writing to the Secretary within seven (7) days of receiving the notice of upheld charges **and must be accompanied by payment of the fine determined by the Board of Directors. Following a favorable decision by the Grievance Committee, any reduction in the fine shall be returned to the charged Member as soon as possible.**

If you wish to propose any bylaw amendments, please submit it/them in writing to any Board Member, with a copy to the Secretary and President, at least 24 hours before the January, monthly Membership Meeting or bring at least 50 copies in writing to the meeting.

Parking at Games

SBSRA reimburses members for parking in limited cases. We have a small number of locations that charge for parking, most notably Historic Belmar Park in Santa Monica. Please be reminded

- Always use free parking when available even if it means walking an extra block or two,
- Send a copy of your parking receipt to our treasurer within 7 days of the game.

Professional Appearance

It is important to avoid the following non-compliance with uniform standards:

- Long-sleeve undershirts, of any color, are unacceptable under short-sleeve referee shirts
- The only acceptable socks are black with two stripes above the ankle
- Shorts and socks that are not quite black
- Desert style, or any other floppy style, hats with neck flaps.

DO NOT EXPOSE bodily bare skin or underwear at the fields. Please wear an appropriate undershirt to and from the field to avoid this unnecessary exposure!

Jersey Badges

We have 4 alternatives:

- USSF Soccer
- USSF Futsal
- SBSRA



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- CSL “5 Star Referee” (for CSL games only)

Please ensure you wear the correct one for each game. Generally, most youth games require a USSF badge (current year or next year’s badges only), middle school and most adult games require an SBSRA badge.

League Rules

Please be reminded to visit each league’s dedicated page on our website, which can be found at <https://www.sbsra.org/competitions> before going to the fields to officiate their games. If you have any questions about a league, please check the website before asking an assignor or anyone else.

A variety of problems on and off the pitch occur when members are not familiar with the rules of the league in which they officiate and are easily avoided with just a few minutes of research on our part.

Certified Athletic Trainers

The Elite Academy (EA) requires the presence of a certified athletic trainer at all of their matches other than U11 and U12 (not required but considered best practice) and is optional for EA2 matches.

The EA Standards & Rules (2025-2026) state:

- *Matches are instructed to not start without a Certified Athletic Trainer (ATC) and*
- *If a club does not provide ATC the game will go down as forfeit and all referee expenses will still need to be paid for by the home team.*

Other leagues may have similar requirements, and we need to enforce them as appropriate.

Single Referee Call-In Procedures

Please be reminded of our day of game single referee call-in procedures as follows:

- Weekday games – continue to call into our SBSRA hotline, (310) 955 9905, and select 1 to leave a message,
- Weekend games – send a text message to the Assignor, (213) 220 3580 and include the following:
 - Your Name,
 - Field Location,
 - Time of Game.

Referee Quick Tip

Bending the Laws of the Game may be the right thing to do!

For most games that we officiate, we do so in accordance with IFAB’s Laws of the Game, all 17 of them, and any rules prescribed by the league or organization with jurisdiction over the applicable game. We are required to follow every law and rule, right? ALWAYS!

Or not? Is it sometimes advisable not to follow the letter of the Laws or Rules?

Consider this situation:

- Team A is winning 6-0
- There are just a few minutes remaining in the second half
- Team B is awarded a direct free kick in Team A’s half



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- Team B's free-kick taker asks for Team A to be at least 10 yards from the ball before the kick is taken
 - You instruct the kicker to wait for your whistle
 - You determine the nearest opponent is at least 10 yards away and bring the whistle to your lips
 - Before you blow your whistle, Team B's coach starts complaining loudly that Team A's wall is not 10 yards away. His/her protests increase in volume and his/her annoyance is obvious.

What should you do?

- a. Caution the coach for dissent. If he/she continues, show a second yellow card and send him/her off. (This is what a referee did recently)
- b. Ignore the coach and blow your whistle to continue the game
- c. Request the nearest opponent to retreat another step

The "book answer" is a. Preferable answers are b. and c. although they are not strictly in accordance with "the book."

Do you have a quick referee tip to share? Please email it to President@sbsra.org.

Approval of Minutes

Included below are the General Membership Meeting Minutes for our most recent meeting for approval by the Membership at our next meeting.



SBSRA General Membership Meeting Minutes November 25, 2025

1. Called to order at 7:05 pm
2. Approval of October 2025 Meeting Minutes, Motion made by Steve Brandon, second by Scott Jarus, Approved by acclamation.
3. Monthly Training:
 - a) Jorge Reyes - The Assistant Referee, a very challenging job, they have to look over the whole field and multi-task:
 1. Basics for AR:
 - a. positioning
 - b. have a flag in the correct hand
 - c. clear signaling
 2. Skill set
 - a. understand your role
 - b. involvement (players, coaches, parents)
 - c. anticipation (think about possible future events)
 - d. priority of control (Law 11, Law 9, Law 12)
 - e. both AR and CR are responsible for offside, wait and see for participation if there might be an ONSIDE player getting to the ball
 - f. penalty area/goal/touchline
 - g. reaction/speed/long ball/explosive movement
 - h. peripheral vision (need for lateral movement)
 - i. teamwork/communication
 3. ARs needs awareness
 - a. be aware of all moving parts
 - b. understand a team's system of play
 - c. our knowledge and anticipation
 - d. which hand holds the offside signal (RIGHT HAND), need to point direction of throw in, can be either hand depending on the team getting the ball
 4. Primary responsibilities of the Assistant Referee
 - a. help with goal scored
 - b. substitutions
 - c. assist with fouls (if you have a better angle)
 5. When to get involved
 - a. proximity to the play
 - b. not seen by the referee
 - c. the game demands it,
 - d. CR and AR should watch different aspects of play if possible
 - e. AR's need to be aware of the CR's position to assist with calls, ARs have front and side view (sometimes ARs don't call things if the CR is a dictator or the AR is afraid of being wrong. Need to show character and courage!)
 - f. Game Critical Decisions
 - obvious Penalty Kick - CR should communicate how the AR should signal a penalty kick (go to the goal line or the flag below the waist),
 - defender foul inside or outside penalty area
 - goal or no goal decision
 - DOGSO
 - misapplication of the laws



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- trigger events leading to mass confrontations (take numbers)
 - help the CR with second YC and RC
 - help CR with correct restart
 - serious foul play or violent conduct that referee did not see
6. Offside
- a. responsibility of the whole referee team
 - b. referees need to know when it is a deliberate play or a deflection/rebound
 - ball under control with possibility of pass, clear or gain possession
 - consider ball distance, ball speed, ball trajectory and time to play the ball
 - c. gaining an advantage after a deliberate save
 - d. interfering with an opponent (challenging, preventing, obstruction)
 - e. teamwork/communication is key
 - f. video examples were shown where ARs positioning helped the CR make calls
7. Miscellaneous
- a. GG mentioned that a drop ball needs to touch the ground before it can be considered in play
 - b. ARs need to be aware of the substitution rules and help the CR apply them correctly, especially tracking the number of "moments," when applicable
4. Treasurer's Report:
- a) Checks for October games are available
 - b) Referee earnings need to be included on a schedule C for the IRS, not included in wages, if you get contacted by the IRS, please let SBSRA know. We cannot offer advice but we need to keep track of this
5. President's Report
- a) Membership Meeting Attendance Incentives: Proposed minimum of three meetings attended to be a member - additional dues to be paid by members who do not attend 3 meetings in a year which will be refunded after attending 3 meetings in the following year, raffles, monetary incentives were brought up, assignors taking attendance into account when assigning games. Possibly have end of year incentives for people who attend meetings
 - b) New Member Introductions: Luc Niren, Tim Carr, Danijel Dukic,
6. Vice President's Report
- a) ROL Update and SafeSport - USSF registration begins in July of each year and expires on December 31 of the following year; SafeSport is required annually and is valid for 12 months from the date of the most recent training. SafeSport notifies us approximately 6 weeks before its expiration date. SafeSport for one organization is good for other organizations, but the certificate of completion must be shared with the subsequent organizations.
 - b) USSF Registration for 2026 - Must be done by Dec 20, 2025 (need to be on the ROL by Jan 1, 2026) to be assigned games in early January
7. Secretary's Report
- a) SBSRA Membership Report
 - i. Full Members 121
 - ii. Probationary Members 23
 - iii. New Member Applications:
 - 1. Approved this month 2
 - 2. In progress 2
- Delays in processing new membership applications are mostly due to references not responding to our requests.
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8. Assignor's Report:
 - a) League Updates - We covered close to 4,000 games during the season. We have EA, ECNL games until the end of the year, In January we will have tournaments and State Cup, Beverly Hills and Middle School Leagues start in late January and early February also
 - b) CORE Training - Resumes in January, all members can benefit from attending CORE, even less-experienced referees
 - c) Spring starts in February, SoCal and CSL have spring league and cup games as well as the usual year-round leagues
9. Member-At-Large Report: Tony Calandra has SBSRA badges and coins
 - a) Supplemental Reports - Have been very good lately, thank you to all those doing the reports
10. Other Business - Have a very happy holiday season!

Meeting adjourned at 9:00 pm