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The History of the SOCCER SOUTH BAY REFEREES ASSOCIATION SSBRA

Pre-1976

The history of soccer in the South Bay has deep roots. In the early 1900's, soccer was played in small pockets of ethnic groups in separate communities. San Pedro, being a busy seaport, accounted for most of the area's soccer teams. Most of the area's young men had played soccer- "futbol" in the homelands, either in schools or neighborhood clubs. Soccer games were played from Daniels Field in San Pedro, to the Los Angeles Coliseum, out into the San Fernando Valley and eventually reaching down into Orange County regions. Daniels Field, one of the birthplaces of LA Soccer, was considered a "hellhole" to referee at in its early days, but its history superseded its condition. The Greater Los Angeles Leagues and the Pacific Soccer League Majors grew from these community clubs into a great number of teams stretching out over the Southland. Most of the soccer officials that did these games were associated with the USSF and the Mexican League of Referees. Many of our "founding referees" grew up through these organizations. The Greater Los Angeles League was organized and run under the "indestructible" Tony Morejon and his ever-present "sidekick", Chuck Bowerman. Of the SSBRA original roster, there are only four referees still "active" within our Association. They are Frank Troeger, Bob Hildreth, Dick Lujan and Walt Hoovler. Between them, they are "older" than the US of A, but younger than the Plymouth Rock. From the foundation built in the 1900's, came the evolution of a new organization — The American Youth Soccer Organization, AYSO. Hans Sterle and a few friends who coached these teams started the AYSO concept in our own "backyard" of Torrance in 1964. It was organized in Palos Verdes in 1969. And our own Frank Troeger was one of their initial "referee"-volunteers who could "blow a whistle" as Frank put it. In 1970, Frank was "elevated" to the Chief Referee of the Margate area. In 1971, the girl's AYSO League was started up in North Torrance. Currently, AYSO has grown to numbers reaching over 50,000 teams and nearly 700,000 players, 40% of which are girls.

With the kids now playing soccer all around the South Bay area, the adults soon decided they needed to play also. In the mid and late 1960's, men's teams were formed. Employees from companies such as Northrup, Hughes, Garrett AiResearch, TRW and the Air Force, to name a few, formed teams of their own to compete against each other. With a field of their own, TRW created their Recreation League and some co-ed teams and played their games off of El Segundo Boulevard. The organizer of those TRW games was Bill Mason, one of our referees, an AYSO Instructor and National leader. These teams were the frameworks for many of the Men's Leagues that formed in the South Bay areas. The earliest teams remembered were: Fram, PV Soccer Club, Riviera, Montemalaga, PV Rovers, Antarctica, Northrup, German American Eagles, Yugoslavs and others that have been long forgotten. As recalled, Miller Collins was the coordinator for the team managers. He and Frank Troeger, our referee assignor covered 4-6 games on a weekend. The 1st Registrar of the Peninsula League was Mrs. Marcelite Troeger.



Among the earlier referees were Frank Troeger, Dick McElwee, George Faragallah, Bob Hill, Bob Hildreth, Duane Johnson, Pablo Diaz, Dick Lujan, Walt Hoovler, Joe Mardesic, Pete Snodgrass, Bill Houghton, Rich Molony, Fritz Schmid, Len Marabella, John Holmes, Inca Nash, Waldo Rodman, Jack Demcak, Brian Urwin, Dan Matulich, Lonnie Lasman, Fred Nierath and Bill Cottle. Many of these referees worked with the USSF affiliated Leagues on weekends and weren't always available. Coverage was usually a 2-man system or 1 referee many times because of availability. Inca Nash, in later years did a high-level game in South America, Panama, as the center referee, a lady referee in those days was extremely rare. Inca was very good and received praise for a job well done! I would be remiss if I didn't mention a man who contributed much to the safety of soccer and was an avid referee. Joe Bonchonsky saw that the soccer goal posts were dangerous in the early days of the AYSO and made heavy metal posts for nearly all the fields in the South Bay area. These goal posts were/are used by the AYSO, high schools, Men's/Ladies' and Club teams. Some are still standing today. Joe has two sons, Joe Jr. and Andy, which also refereed for us at the youth levels and did a good job. As participation of women increased in the sport of soccer, a new organization was formed to accommodate the increasing demand. In 1974, the United States of America Ladies Soccer Organization was formed with 4 ladies divisions. This was the first organized Ladies League in the USA. The order of the organizers were: Bill Hughes, Waldo Rodman, Lou Kaufmann and Bob Fraser. Bob Fraser affiliated the ALSO with the USSF in 1990. Again Frank Troeger was "drafted" by the Ladies League to provide referees on the weekends. For the most part the 2-man system was used. Meanwhile, the youths were organizing into Club teams and becoming affiliated with the USSF. In these early years of 1970, Frank Troeger was assigning the referees he could contact to do games for numerous men's team, ladies teams and a few youth teams. Frank's "group" was a ragtail outfit doing games by phone and who called first got the referees. This was the start of what would become SSBRA.

1976 – 2005

The PV Soccer Club, dissatisfied with the arrangement, called a meeting with George Faragallah. George came up with an idea, called Frank Troeger and laid down the framework for an association devoted to serve the needs of Youth Club Soccer and the Men's/Ladies' Leagues of the South Bay areas. In early 1976, after a few meetings at George Faragallah's home, Frank Troeger, George Faragallah and a few others, with the legal aid of one J. B. McGuire, developed a set of by-laws along with the name for our Association — Soccer South Bay Referee Association.

The 1st SSBRA Board was:

- Chairman of the Board – George Faragallah
- Treasurer – Lennie Faragallah
- President – Frank Troeger
- Chief Instructor – Bill Mason
- Vice President – Bill Cottle
- Assignment Secretary – Hal Eggertso
- Secretary – Elise Eggertson



2006 – 2015

This New Board called an open meeting for all interested referees. About twenty referees showed up at South High School and we were in business. Since then, through training and recruitment we've grown to a large association that handles hundreds of games on Holiday weekends and thousands of games since our "birth". The incorporation of the SSBRA was arranged and paid for by George Faragallah. The original group also decided not to affiliate with the USSF, although members were encouraged to do so and did. The SSBRA badge, designed and redone numerous times since inception, is now only worn in non-affiliated games. Our basic agreement was to cover the area south of the 405 and west of the 110. In the first year, the membership grew to over fifty referees. We have since grown to a body of 122 referees. Over the years, by-laws have changed and dropped the Chairman of the Board position to an honorary position; the Referee's Agent and Delegate were deleted, as well as the Honorary Chairman later on. We had a Chief Referee for a few years, Frank Troeger, but that was dropped also as our Association congealed into a more compact group. George Faragallah, under the direction of Frank Troeger, filed for Incorporation as a Tax-Exempt Organization in 1980. It took Frank four long years to finally get over all the hurdles of paperwork, but it had finally been accomplished. George Faragallah later went on to the State Referee Administrator and other high levels before his retirement. Until the age of computers, all assignments were done by pencil and paper and long hours by Frank Troeger, Bob Hildreth, Karston Gronwald and "Dr." Billy Cooke. "Dr." Cooke became the first paid SSBRA assignor, with fees being charged the Leagues. Bill Cook is now the paid "computer guru assignor".

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Over the next 41 years, our Association and members have covered games in the following leagues:

- PSL Jr's.
- South High School Christmas Tournaments
- Tri-Valley Women's Soccer League
- El Camino Real Soccer League
- Coast Soccer League
- Pomona Women's Soccer League
- United States of America Ladies Soccer Organization
- Diamond Bar Women's Soccer League
- "Friendly" matches which are held throughout Southern California.
- Southern California Development Soccer League (SCDSL)
- SCDSL Spring League
- Coast Soccer League (CSL)
- CSL Spring League
- Los Angeles J-League
- South Bay Peninsula Soccer League (SBPSL)
- CYSA-S
- City of Lawndale
- Manhattan Beach 7v7, all Beverly Hills 7v7



2016 to Present

In 2016/2017 SSBRA grew its client base by adding several new leagues including;

- Culver City YMCA League,
- Mar Vista League
- Direct-Kix
- Aspire Juanita Tate Academy Charter School League
- ZogSports League
- SBPSL 40 Division

Our members have officiated in other affiliated games such as:

- FIFA games,
- International games
- Professional and semi-professional games
- Pacific Soccer League Majors
- NCAA/STATE and local and Jr. College games
- High School games
- AYSO games

SSBRA members have officiated in thousands of tournament games over our lifetime.

- State and National Cup
- Numerous Cal South Affiliated tournaments
- SBPSL year-end tournament games
- USALSO Labor Day and Memorial Day tournament games
- Pomona Ladies Memorial Holiday tournament games
- World Youth Tournament Games
- O'Rourke Memorial Weekend Cup games
- Semi-Valley tournament games
- Mission Viejo tournament games
- Diamond Valley tournament games
- Thousand Oaks tournament games
- ECRSL tournament games
- UC Irvine tournament games
- Long Beach Policemen's Olympic tournament games
- L. A. Coliseum tournament games
- Watts Summer Games tournaments
- Las Vegas Tournament games
- California State Youth Cup, assigned by ex SSBRA referee Leo Umana
- National Youth Cup games
- Other tournaments at the Rose Bowl, Home Depot Center, Los Angeles –Orange - San Diego - San Bernardino and Santa Barbara Counties



Dick Barkhuis organized these South Side Tournaments, in the early 1980's for boys U14 to U19. Dick Barkhuis was a leader of many great teams from the Fram Soccer Club, having their own field at Nansen created many opportunities for our members to do very spirited games.

We were privileged to officiate great teams from Asia, Europe, North and South America for five years. These games took place at South High School with great festivities surrounding them. Dick Barkhuis went on to coach his Fram Club team of boys U19 to a National Championship. Many of these tournaments ran for 2-3 day weekends covering 5-10 fields with total games running near 300 played from 7am to 7pm. Along with our hundreds of referees that have been members over our 30 years we have been privileged to have US National referees — Billy Cooke, Jim Keating, Heinz Wohlmerath and Toros Kibritzian — a FIFA referee working along with us. Some of us were lucky enough to have run lines for these referees at the L.A. Coliseum and elsewhere. They often did “friendly” International games at local schools and our own State level referees had the honor of running lines for them. This also has been the case during playoffs in the Greater Los Angeles League and the Pacific Soccer League Majors.

Such great speakers as have honored our monthly meetings:

- John O. Best – FIFA Referee
- Toros Kibritzian – FIFA Referee
- Kevin Stott – FIFA Referee
- George Noujaim – FIFA AR
- George Savic – FIFA AR
- Steve Davidson – FIFA AR
- Heinz Wohlmerath – National Referee, Instructor, Assessor, FIFA Inspector
- “Dr.” Billy Cooke – National Referee
- Jim Keating – National Referee
- Dio Cordero – National Instructor, Assessor and numerous State and Local positions
- Sigi Schmid – UCLA coach-National Championships, Galaxy coach-NASL Championship
- Paul and Larry Harris – AYSO officials and book writers

2005 – 2013

By the 2005-2006 season our Association had grown to 122 members. We have numerous Emeritus State referees, State level referees, referees and youth trainees. Our ages range from the 70's on down to our youths who are still in their “teens”. Meetings are still held monthly and training is still a major topic. In the “computer age”, we now have our own website, homepage and everything you need to know from today's news to next week's refereeing schedules. This “computerization” was done through the coordination of our President Keith Gendler and Lee Jordan, our “Website Master”. The trials and tribulations of our Assignment Secretary Bill Cook are made much easier by the computer and the cooperation of the Soccer Leagues that we serve. One has to wonder, how many hours were spent by the “old assignors” with pencil/erasers and pages of paper filling in game spots. Tournaments were done on newspaper size sheets and posted in the Referee tent before the 1st game. Telephone calls were made to confirm and reschedule and



balance assignments and reassignments. The US mail was rarely used because the delays were too long and how many assignments would be lost in the “mailbag”. Many, many times it was a nightmare. But looking back, it was all done with much cooperation.

Throughout this period SSBRA continued to promote the game of soccer throughout our community by encouraging a better understanding of the Laws of the Game. SSBRA continued to work to maintain a high level of soccer officiating to supply dedicated officials to all Soccer Leagues that request our support.

2014-Present

In 2014 after serving as the VP, Michael Hinz ran for and was elected as President on the platform of Professionalism, Growth and Change. Michael’s focus was on client relationships, membership growth and overall professionalism. Over the next year and a half, an entire new board was in place with the new board focused on the new initiatives. If it was not for all the great work and efforts from all the previous Presidents and Boards, the changes which were being implemented starting in 2014 could never have happened. As often said, change is not easy and SSBRA had to work its way through many things in the early stages of the change. But after a while the members saw the value in the changes and after Michael Hinz was reelected after his first term in it was clear that the membership agreed with the new direction and everyone understood the value in the changes made and the ones still in progress.

The current and past presidents of our Association are shown below:

- Michael Hinz – 2014/Present
- Warren Howell– 2009/2014
- Keith Gendler – 2004/2009
- Larry Stern – 1999/2004
- Vladimir Wergeles – 1996/1999
- Ed Lambert – 1994/1996
- Joe Robelotto – 1990/1994
- Bill Cook – 1989/1990
- Joe Robelotto – 1987/1989
- Bob Hildreth – 1985/1987
- Pablo Diaz – 1984/1985
- Dick Lujan – 1982/1984
- Dick McElwee – 1980/1982
- Frank Troeger – 1976/1980

Some of the main changes implemented by the new board was upgrading the Assigning system from what was basically a home grown XL back-end system to Arbiter which is a National recognized and proven assigning system. Before the start of the 2015-2016 season SSBRA completed its transition to Arbiter. This transition also involved a change in the SSBRA Assignor,



which meant saying good-bye to one of SSBRA's long term assignors who had helped SSBRA for years. However, moving to Arbiter was exactly what was required for SSBRA and it has proved to be the right decision over the last several years. Another change the New Board implemented. In addition to utilizing Arbiter, the Board implemented a Co-Assignor and now has multiple Back-up or Emergency assignors so SSBRA would never have an issue with only having a single assignor available for what can be a 24/7 job. In addition to changing to Arbiter, with the help of the SSBRA web master, Rick Roberts, the Board was able to obtain ownership of the ssbra.org domain. This allowed the Association from ever losing access to ssbra.org and to start using ssbra.org emails for all its Board members.

To help improve SSBRA's reputation throughout the Cal South Soccer Community and to implement a culture of continuous professional improvements in the membership's referee skills and knowledge, SSBRA teamed with Cal South to host Cal South's Referee Professional Development (RPD) course at North High School in the South Bay. RPD provides a physical fitness program and an advanced in class education program. Before SSBRA started to host the RPDs SSBRA has 7 members who held a USSF Grade 7 or higher Referee badge. This equaled less than 5% of the membership. Since the first RPD hosted by SSBRA in Sept of 2014, the number of SSBRA members holding a Grade 7 or higher badge has grown 700% to over 50 in 2017. In addition, SSBRA now has several Grade 6 (State) Referees. As of Aug 2017, SSBRA has hosted 30 RPDs with over 800 participants. Hosting RPDs has put SSBRA "on the map" in regards to the Cal South Soccer community and it shows all our clients that SSBRA is focused on being a professional Referee Soccer Association and the quality of our members refereeing skills and knowledge is important to SSBRA.

Another change involved improvements in the Ranking process. The ranking process was improved to emphasize Game Management, Fitness and Attitude/Appearance so these categories account for about 90% of the rankings. This change reduced the weights of other categories like SSBRA seniority, Meeting attendance and USSF Grade while maintaining these categories to break the tie between members. This means in the end a member who attends more SSBRA meetings or has a higher grade badge, will be ranked higher than a member who does not.

The Board of Directors who helped guide SSBRA through these times of change were:

- President Michael Hinz
- Vice President Bruce Anderson and now Steve Morgan
- Secretary Veto Galati, Michael Takeda and now Jay Pignatello
- Treasurer Steve Brandon and now Bruce Ashton
- Assignor Valle Altobelli and now Gabriel Goldsman
- Member At Large Chris Nevil
- Director of Assessment Donat McKenley, David Welch and now Taidgh Simpson
- Director of Training Armando Quiroz, David Welch and now Taidgh Simpson



Non-Board Positions

- Co-Assignor (New-position) Veto Galati
- Web Master Rick Roberts

Between 2015 and 2017 SSBRA grew its client base by becoming the Referee Association of Record for Direct-Kix, Culver City YMCA League, Mar Vista League, Aspire Juanita Tate Academy Charter School League, Zog-Sports League and expanded its position with SBPSL by winning a 2 year contract for both the SBPSL Division 40 league and the Open Division. The Board continues to work on other opportunities every month.

SSBRA is continuing to put the quality of refereeing, through continuous improvements in referee skills and knowledge and customer service as the number one goal for the association. The Board believes this will result in value for all SSBRA members by growing both the Association and the client base.

As of January 31, 2019 SSBRA has 65 members who have upgraded their USSF Referee level above Grade 8. SSBRA is proud to have two Grade 5 USSF referees, where Grade 5 indicates the referee's readiness to be considered for national service. In addition to the Grade 5 referees, SSBRA has eight Grade 6 (State) referees and fifty-five Grade 7 referees with several members in the progress of completing their Grade 6 upgrade. This shows the professionalism and dedication of the SSBRA membership in being the best possible referee service to the South-bay area soccer community.

SSBRA believes in working with its clients and developing the best possible referees to provide the best possible solution for the players, the leagues and SSBRA itself and SSBRA works hard to grow our relationship all our clients and help them grow and improve their leagues by providing the best referee coverage possible.