

# WWD Referee Development Program

---

## Purpose:

This pilot Referee Development program is designed to increase the number and skill level of Western Washington Division referees. This will be done thru three avenues:

1. Motivate experienced fencers to earn their referee rating and start refereeing at the local and national level.
2. Develop a pipeline of referees by introducing new fencers to refereeing through mentoring and clinics.
3. Provide referees for club tournaments that do not have access to referees in order to improve the quality of the tournament and to help train referees at the host club.

To increase the quality of fencing the Western Washington Division (WWD), we need to increase the quality of referees. When referees have national level experience, there is a direct correlation with the overall quality of fencing. By growing a cadre of national level referees at a divisional level, we can have a direct impact on how well our WWD fencers fare at the national level. This program will help develop referees at a grassroots level instead of needing to always hire more expensive referees that need to be flown in.

## Program Details:

The payment schedule for referees at WWD-hosted events will change to the following:

<u>Rating</u>	<u>Payment/Day</u>
1-3	\$100
4-5	\$75
6-10	\$50
Developmental	\$25

A **developmental referee** shall be defined as an unrated referee that may or may not have yet passed the written exam.

For clubs that have a demonstrated need<sup>1</sup> for rated referees for a tournament, the WWD will assist in locating available referees rated 7 or higher. The WWD Referee Development Coordinator (RDC) will maintain a list of available referees and will refer them to the hosting club. It is not the duty of the RDC to hire referees for the tournament - this is still the

---

<sup>1</sup> The WWD Executive Committee shall be the sole determiner of whether or not a club or tournament has a demonstrated need for referees provided by this referee development program.

responsibility of the club. The WWD will pay the referee \$25/day for their services. This is in addition to any payment made by the club to the referee. It is hoped that host clubs will use the payment schedule shown above, but it is ultimately up to the club to negotiate the rate with the referee based on their budget.

It is recommended that the club hosting the event pair each WWD-provided referee with a developing referee from that club. Doing this will provide the club's referee with the opportunity to ask questions and get feedback from the more experienced referee. This "mentoring" approach is the key to helping clubs develop their own referee cadre over the long term.

### **Incentives:**

The WWD will pay new referees **\$100** if they complete the following program during the course of a season:

1. Attend the official FOC Referee Seminar
2. Passes the written referee exam
3. Take a practical exam and earn a rating of 9 or higher
4. Volunteer to referee at a local event

The WWD will pay new referees an additional **\$200** after they referee at their first national event (typically as a "walk-on" referee at a NAC or Summer Nationals.)

### **Fine Print:**

This is a pilot program and may be modified or discontinued at any time. The RDC and WWD Executive Committee have the sole authority for this program.

## Frequently Asked Questions for Potential Referees

### How can I get started as a referee?

The first step towards becoming a certified referee is to get familiar with the rules. This is best done by reading the USFA Rulebook and asking questions of experienced referees. Once you are familiar with the rules, you should attend an FOC refereeing seminar.

The most essential part of becoming a referee is to practice, practice, and practice! No matter what stage you are at, take every opportunity to practice your refereeing. A great time to do this is during open fencing at the local clubs – most fencers love to have a referee officiate their practice bouts.

### How are referees rated?

Just like fencers, referees have ratings in each weapon to indicate their level of proficiency refereeing that weapon. The referee rating scale starts at “P”, which means you have passed the written exam and understand the rules. Beyond the “P” rating, referees are rated numerically from 1 to 10, with 1 being highest.

Referee ratings for an individual can be looked up online at <http://foc.askfred.net>.

### When and where are FOC refereeing seminars held?

The Fencing Officials Commission, or FOC, is the “branch” of the USFA responsible for certifying referees in the USA. As part of their charter, they hold seminars throughout the season to teach the rules.

These seminars are held each year at Summer Nationals, and on occasion, in our local area. Any FOC seminars held locally will be announced to the membership via the WWD website and mailing list. The seminar covers the rulebook and often talks about *why* the rules are the way they are.

### How do I take the written referee exam?

After attending a refereeing seminar, you should study for and take the written referee exam. This exam can be taken at any NAC, but also can be proctored by local referee examiners (Greg Jones and Steve Colton are our local examiners.) The best way to study for the exam (or test your knowledge of the rules in general) is to use the referee study guide, found on the FOC website ([www.fencingofficials.org](http://www.fencingofficials.org)). When you are ready to take the exam, contact the examiners directly and make arrangements to come take the test (it should take about an hour.)

The referee test has four parts – a general section, and a section for each weapon. All referees must take the general section and at least one of the weapon-specific sections. You do not have to take the weapon test for weapons that you do not intend on refereeing.

### How do I take a practical referee exam?

Once you have passed the written exam, you may take a practical exam. This can be done either locally, or at a NAC (generally, the Division II/III NACs.)

Practical exams can be given by our local referee examiners. They can recommend ratings up to a 7, depending on how well you do and the strength of the tournament. At some of the larger events in the division, we bring in one of the FOC members to referee. These FOC referees can award ratings up to a 5 depending on the strength of the event.

To take a practical exam, you must make arrangements with both the examiner and the tournament organizer (since they have ultimate say as to who referees at their event.)

## **How do I referee at a NAC or Summer Nationals?**

The process for getting started refereeing at a national event is very poorly documented. It often depends on who you know – knowing an FOC or other high-level referee can help you get a foot in the door.

Most first-time referees will need to start off as “walk-on” referees. This means you show up at a NAC and let the head referee know you are there and would like to work and be observed for the day. If you can contact the head referee beforehand and give them advance notice that you will be showing up, it helps. If they are short-staffed on referees, however, it is unlikely they will be able to observe you since that uses a referee that otherwise could be working.

To “walk on” as a referee, you will want to have at least a 7 or 8 rating in a weapon. Also, you will most likely only be able to referee Division II/III events, or perhaps some youth events. Higher level events such as Division I, Junior, Cadet, and Veteran events require experienced referees, so you will not get hired for those if you are brand new.

It helps greatly if you know the FOC that is assigning referees for the event. If they know you and have a sense of your skill level, you are more likely to get observed. Having an experienced referee that the FOC knows vouch for you can also help here.

If you get a chance to referee and are observed, the observer will usually be a referee rated 5 or higher. He or she will have an evaluation form that they will fill out as they observe you ref. Generally you will take turns refereeing with him/her – you ref three bouts, then they ref three bouts, then you again. This is the standard procedure when multiple refs are available on the strip. Some observers, however, may let you ref the entire pool while they watch.

After the pool is complete and you have turned in the score sheet, the ref will review the evaluation form with you. They’ll give you tips and offer feedback on areas for you to work on. They will also make a recommendation to the head referee on whether you are doing well enough to ref in the DEs.

Some time after the event (it could take months), you may discover that your rating has been increased. Generally this is only found out by checking on [foc.askfred.net](http://foc.askfred.net) – there’s no official “your rating has been increased” notification process.

When you have reached a certain level of proficiency (usually a 5 or better in at least two weapons), you will start receiving emails prior to NACs inviting you to referee. When the FOC wants you to work, you know that you’ve made it into the ranks of “professional referee”!

## **Frequently Asked Questions about the Referee Development Program**

### **How do I hire referees for my tournament?**

If you need referees for your tournament, contact the WWD Referee Development Coordinator (Kevin Mar) with your exact needs as well as the dates and times of your event. Include any information on how much you will be paying your refs (in excess of the \$25/day paid by the WWD). The RDC will provide you with a list of referees that may be available for hire. You then can contact those referees directly to see if they are available.

### **I am a referee, how do I volunteer to assist other clubs?**

If you are a referee willing to help ref at club events, provide your name and information to the RDC. He will make your name and email available to tournament organizers seeking referees for their events.

### **I ran a tournament with WWD-supplied referees, how is payment handled?**

On the day of the event, pay the WWD-supplied referees the full amount (including the \$25 subsidized by the WWD.) Email a list of the WWD-supplied referees to the RDC as well as the WWD treasurer ([treasurer@wwdfencing.org](mailto:treasurer@wwdfencing.org)). The treasurer will cut you a check for total amount that needs to be reimbursed.