



Change History	
August 1, 2007	Lesson Plan First Developed
November 1, 2008	Update
December 12, 2011	Update
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October 17, 2013	Customer Service Pod Added
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1. DESCRIPTION

Experienced women referees and coaches will answer questions and lead discussions on the challenges and opportunities for women in this male-dominated arena. In this roundtable they will participate in discussions surrounding female referee and coach issues.

2. GOALS

At the completion of this roundtable, the women participants will understand they are part of a larger community of women in AYSO soccer who have had many of the same experiences, challenges and successes that they have had. Women at all levels should realize that the panel members are no different from themselves. During the roundtable, participants should also identify ideas for attracting and retaining more women as coaches and referees.

3. PREREQUISITES

There are no prerequisites. All are welcome to attend.

4. STUDENT MATERIALS

None

5. INSTRUCTOR EQUIPMENT AND MATERIALS

None

6. INSTRUCTOR NOTES

It is recommended that this forum be led by women who are National Referees and National Coaches. If women with national certification in these disciplines are not available, then women with advanced certification should lead the course. At a minimum, you need one coach and one referee on the panel but ideally there should be four to six panel members. Instructors should be aware of the scenarios for discussion included at the end of this Lesson Plan and, if appropriate, use them (or ones they develop themselves or that are offered by the participants).

7. ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1: Scenarios

Attachment 2: Table of "Strengths Women Bring to the Game"

LESSON PLAN

A. INTRODUCTION

1. The panel members should introduce themselves. These introductions should include name, home city location, the number of years they have been refereeing and/or coaching as well as the number of years at each certification level.
2. Ask the attendees how many Regional, Intermediate, Advanced and National Referees/Coaches are in the audience. Also ask how many assessors, instructors, instructor evaluators and administrators are represented

Take your time doing this exercise since this is part of the getting-to-know-you process. (You can also take this opportunity to encourage the women to take on these additional responsibilities.)

3. The roundtable is intended to allow participants to share experiences and be reminded that they are part of a larger group that supports women as coaches and referees. The roundtable should also offer the opportunity to identify ideas for bringing additional women into AYSO as coaches and referees. Try to generate a list of ideas that the participants think would have made being a coach or referee more appealing to them, and what the participants think should be done to attract more women to those positions in the future.

B. BODY

Encourage the attendees to ask questions. This roundtable is designed for active participation. If this group is not immediately forthcoming, one panel member can break the ice by using the Scenarios provided as Attachment 1 or by asking the panel members any of the following questions:

1. Why did you get started?
2. What made you keep upgrading?
3. Was there someone who encouraged you early in your AYSO career? Did it make a difference?
4. Have you experienced any discrimination and if so, what form did it take and how did you handle it?
5. What do you love about what you do?
6. What has been your biggest challenge?
7. What has surprised you?

8. Was there pressure from your spouse/family not to volunteer so much?
9. How did people in your region treat you at the beginning? How long did it take you to earn their respect?
10. What other AYSO "jobs" do you do?

Questions you can ask the attendees to involve them:

1. Are we (women) doing our part to earn respect?
2. What types of resistance have you encountered and how do you handle it?
3. Are you personally open to constructive criticism from your peers? Do you ask for feedback in order to get better?
4. Do you mentor other women?
5. How do you prepare for a game?
6. What kind of training do you do to stay fit?
7. What makes refereeing/coaching fun for you?
8. What can we do to encourage and support women coaches and referees?
9. What different traits and/or skills do you bring to the game as a coach or referee? (See Attachment 2 for a table of strengths that women bring to the game; these may be used to help participants identify and leave the roundtable more confident that women DO bring skills to the game.)

INSTRUCTOR NOTE: It is not necessary to go through the entire list of questions. Use these sparingly to stimulate the audience to ask questions of their own. Instructors are advised to manage the discussion carefully so that an individual does not monopolize it.

INSTRUCTOR NOTE: The workshop is usually attended primarily by women but it is not unusual to have men in the audience who are looking for ideas for recruiting more women coaches and referees. Thank them for attending and ask why they chose this workshop. Expand the scope of the discussion if necessary to address their reasons for attending. (For example, if a male participant asks what can be done to recruit more female coaches and referees, ask for feedback from the other participants about what has worked in their regions to attract more women as coaches and referees.)

C. CONCLUSION

Conclude by reminding the attendees that whatever their levels of certification and experience, women have more in common than they have differences. If ideas for recruitment were generated, summarize them. If scenarios were discussed, summarize the various ways of dealing with difficult situations that were discussed.

Remind participants that women referees and coaches bring different traits and skills to the Game. As women in sports we should encourage and support other women in our program. Thank them for their participation and encourage them to share their experiences by bringing new women into AYSO refereeing or coaching.

ATTACHMENT 1

OPTIONAL: SCENARIOS FOR DISCUSSION

(These are samples of experiences that senior women referees have had; participants might have encountered similar situations and want recommendations on how to handle them or they might have their own experiences they would like to discuss. These scenarios may also be used to start conversation at the beginning of the roundtable. If scenarios are used, the groups should try to identify various solutions that most of the participants find acceptable.)

Scenario #1: You are an experienced female referee assigned to a competitive championship game. It is well known that this is a game all referees want because of the expected level of play and competitiveness. You almost give up the game to some of the more senior referees because you are concerned that you might not be good enough compared to the male referees who you know were also interested in the game, but you decide to keep the assignment. Just before you go out to the field, one of those senior male referees comes up to you and starts giving you advice on how to referee the game. You think he is trying to be helpful, but you wonder whether his “helpfulness” is actually an indication that he doubts that you can do the game as well as he could. You wonder: would he have given the same advice to a male referee?.

What should you do? What should you say?

Scenario #2: You are the AR on the far side of the field from a very vocal coach; you are also the only woman on the referee team. The coach screams every time you call offside against his team but you are confident about your calls. At times the center referee misses your offside flag, so you hold the flag until the ball goes the other way and then you resume. At halftime, you start walking towards the center referee and you hear him tell the coach (who came running up to him as soon as the whistle blew), “Don’t worry, you’re switching sides and she’ll be doing the other team.” You are stunned.

What should you do? What should you say? If you are the Regional or Area Administrator and this incident is reported to you, what should you do?

Scenario #3: You arrive at a tournament without having assignments but in uniform and ready to fill gaps in the schedule. You are wearing your badge, which shows that you have received training above the Regional referee level. The tournament assignor sends you to a game that is about to start but that has only two referees, who are standing in the center circle talking and are just about to get the game started. They appear to know each other and to have refed together before. You introduce yourself and say that you’ve been sent over to be an AR. The center referee looks at you, looks at your badge, and says “OK, you can help, but don’t make any offside calls.”

During the first half, you automatically raise your flag for offside a couple of times but put up your hand to apologize. At the half, the center tells you that may make offside calls. After the game, he asks if you'll be around for future games in the tournament and would like to work with him.

What should you do? What should you say?

Attachment 2

Women Referees: The Strengths They Bring to the Game

Why we need women referees; How we respond to stereotypes about women referees;
 How we help develop women referees

1. Why We Need Women Referees

Why We Need Women Referees	Elaboration	Bringing this to the Pitch
Girls need female role models	Many of our players are girls and they like having women referees. Girl players who see women referees are more likely to view their own participation positively. It is important for young girls to see women in positions of authority so that they can envision themselves taking responsible roles later in life.	Be sure to make your interactions as positive as possible. When you give that early word of warning, try to eliminate negative words. For example, say "You're a better player than that" instead of "Don't do that anymore."
Women referees make positive role models for boy players	It is equally important for boys to see women in positions of authority. Seeing women in responsible positions will help to foster respect for women in young men.	As the referee you can help develop this respect by respectful treatment of the players and fair application of the LOTG.
Women referees are less likely to over-protect older girl players	Some male referees have a natural instinct to protect women and girls. This sense of gallantry may cause them to call more fouls in girls' games.	Women are less likely to do this. By applying the LOTG fairly, they help girls develop their skills and progress as athletes.
Women referees are less likely to be dismissive of the capabilities of girls as players at all ages	Some male referees don't want to referee girls' games because of a perceived inferiority in the level of play. Referees are teachers on the field, even at the upper level, and quiet words during a game, acknowledging skilled play and discouraging inappropriate behavior, will	Women often hold female players to the same high standards that they would apply to male players. Athletes, like other people, often rise to the level that is expected of them. Women referee's expectations help female players develop their full potential.

encourage girls to bring their best to the game.

2. Some Generalizations about Women as Referees: Favorable and Not-So-Favorable

Generalization	On The One Hand	On The Other Hand	Application on the Field
Women aren't as tall as men	Height often conveys authority.	Height can intimidate young players.	A shorter referee (or one who puts him/herself at eye level with the younger players) to talk to them often puts them at ease. Older players don't care about a referee's height, only how the referee calls the game.
Women aren't as fast as men	"Presence lends conviction": referees need to be positioned close to play in order to lend credibility to their calls.	As players get older, few referees are as fast as the upper division players. Women referees, in general, are not as fast as their male counterparts.	<u>Learn to read the game:</u> Knowing what the teams are trying to do will help you anticipate where the next challenge is likely to come and you can begin to move to your position earlier. Women can make up for the lack of speed by understanding where they need to go during dynamic play and getting there as quickly as they can while maintaining the angles they need to see play. <u>Be decisive:</u> The sooner you decide to change position on the field, the more time you will have to make the change.
Children are more comfortable around familiar figures	Most children have had women as teachers; for young players, AYSO referees are more teachers than policemen.	Players are familiar with male teachers and coaches.	Young players often view women referees as teachers and better accept decisions and instructions, since they are seen as "teaching" rather than punitive or "enforcing"
Women make natural	Many women must arbitrate	Many men handle disputes at home	Be respectful of the players. It comes naturally to many people

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Generalization	On The One Hand	On The Other Hand	Application on the Field
referees	disputes at home.	as well.	(men and women both) to make decisions based on fairness; that is the foundation of being a referee. Keep in mind that being fair includes making the best decision on each call: avoid making a wrong call later in the game to “make up” for a missed or wrong call earlier in the game.
Women are more inclusive of others	Inclusiveness can make other adult volunteers (linesmen; ARs) feel involved and needed.	Appearing to rely too much on assistants can weaken the center referee’s authority.	Use skills of inclusion to make linesmen and ARs feel like they are part of a team. However, remember that the center referee has responsibility for the final decision. Most women easily work on a team and can use the information provided to quickly come to a decision; this is particularly important in upper-division games.
Women have experience communicating verbally with children	Many women have developed phrases they use off the field to calm, encourage, and redirect children.	It’s important to avoid “talking down” to players, particularly as they get older.	Talk to the players; that is often as effective as a whistle. Often a quiet word will prevent more serious problems. Many women are natural communicators who can tell players why they should or should not behave in a specific way, and these women can present the information in a manner that is logical to and accepted by the players.
Women have good non-verbal communication skills	A stern look (or a kind one) can resolve many problems.	Looks and gestures can be misinterpreted.	Eye-contact, smiles, shakes of the head are often as effective as a whistle in helping players know what to do (or to stop doing)
Women don’t want to referee higher level games	Women oft times question their own skills and lack the confidence to referee upper-	Women sometimes avoid higher level games because they fear the pressure and criticism of upper-	Women should actively seek advisers and mentors who will support and defend them. Evaluations of referees’ skills can be very subjective; everyone referee needs someone in her

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Generalization	On The One Hand	On The Other Hand	Application on the Field
	division games.	division players and coaches. The also often fear that they won't be supported if they make a mistake.	corner who will encourage, support, and back her up
Women aren't as strong as men, so they need help to handle troublesome coaches or players	Women are perceived as non-threatening, which can keep tense situations from escalating. If a man threatens a woman, he will often look like a bully.	If men intervene to protect a woman, it can undermine a woman referee's authority.	A calm but firm demeanor often helps defuse negative situations. Women can be aware of (and use) the assistance from men that is often available. Women often need to deal with situations sooner than a man in order to avoid letting a situation escalate to the point that assistance is needed
Women aren't really interested in sports (or: women didn't play the game when they were girls) so they won't be good referees	Refereeing and playing soccer are distinct activities. Prior sports experience does not necessarily produce referees who are physically active and fit.	Women who didn't play team sports as youngsters might need to educate themselves on dynamics of teams and teammates.	Women often bring a willingness to learn the LOTG (something that former players often think they don't need); this can lead them to become a resource for their colleagues: a "go to" person for fellow officials. Women also usually bring a desire to help educate and develop young players, so their focus is often more on the players (on creating a safe, fair and fun game for the players) than on showing off their own skills. This focus on the players can lead to a better experience for the players and spectators. Upper-division players recognize a referee who has experience, is fair, and has knowledge of the Laws, and they tend to accept a woman referee with those attributes
Women Shouldn't Be	Teen boys often don't	Teen boys sometimes try to	Older teen boy players often view a woman referee's decision as

Generalization	On The One Hand	On The Other Hand	Application on the Field
Assigned to Older Boys' Games	perceive women as rivals, so they don't try to prove themselves against a woman referee.	turn a match into a contest of force instead of a demonstration of skills. Some cultures are less respectful of women, and are less inclined to accept their authority.	what it is – an application of the LOTG – rather than an attack on their developing sense of manhood. Women referees can use this lowered level of confrontation to enhance their ability to control a match. Quickly recognizing player reluctance to acknowledge a woman referee's authority can allow a woman referee to address problems early in the match, whether by building rapport with the team captains rapidly or firmly (but patiently) dealing with the first sign of dissent.
Women think that any contact is "unfair" so they call too many fouls	Many women focus on skills and find displays of force less appealing.	Soccer is a physical game, involving physical contact, which can be a challenge to women who played non-contact sports. as girls.	Women who are not former players might need to work harder than those who played soccer as youths to discern fair levels of contact. But many people (men and women both) who are not former players have a natural sense of fairness that is the core of AYSO soccer
Women are too concerned about their appearance, so they won't want to referee	Some women may not want to referee because they find the uniforms unattractive.	Many women are accustomed to working out and appreciate the benefits derived from physical activity (regardless of the dress code).	Women can order jerseys made for women (standard-issue jerseys are often men's styles) and alter the equipment to make it fit better. Uniforms can help equalize the sexes, and wearing a full uniform gives the referee a professional appearance that conveys that her or she has the training and skills to do the job. Players, spectators, and coaches often look only at the uniform, not who is wearing it. A professional appearance is the best "look" to have on the pitch.

3. How Do we Develop Women Referees?

Women Referee and Coach Forum

Where Women Start Out	What Strengths Women Bring	What Can Hold Women Back	The Next Step
<p>Women are good at supporting others and so make good team members</p>	<p>Women often focus more on getting a job done and less on who gets credit for it.</p>	<p>Allowing others to receive credit for one's own work can result in a woman's skills not being noticed or recognized.</p>	<p>Women can ask for assignments as center referees. They can seek out experienced referees who are willing to mentor and provide feedback. All referees need the support and appreciation of their Region,</p>
<p>Many instructors have found that women referee candidates make good students.</p>	<p>Many women don't have a background in soccer, so they are more willing to learn. They might also have less to "unlearn."</p>	<p>Women without a background in the sport might need additional study.</p>	<p>Most instructors want to teach and pass along what they've learned. Women should make a point to recall their instructor's and assessor's names and use them as a resource when questions arise on the field. When the occasional instructor or assessor acts in a discriminatory manner, women should not give up but instead find another guide: they are out there.</p>
<p>Women are willing to ask for help</p>	<p>Many women readily admit that they need help or information; asking for help or advice can open doors and let women learn from others' experience.</p>	<p>Thinking that they have to compete on the terms that men compete on often leaves women at a disadvantage.</p>	<p>Women can play to their strengths: if a woman is perceptive, she can spot tension between opponents before a game gets out of control. If teenage boys don't view her as a threat, a woman can often enforce rules that would be challenged if they came from a man. If a young player is intimidated by a brusque coach, a woman can adjust her demeanor to make the game seem welcoming to a child. The strengths are there; it's up to the women to bring them to the fore.</p>