

# WWD Referee Development Program

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## Purpose

In order to host quality tournaments in the Western Washington Division (WWD), we need a large base of experienced referees to draw upon. Referees with national and international experience provide the fencers with the best refereeing available, which raises the quality of the tournament and encourages fencers to attend.

The WWD Referee Development program is designed to increase the number and skill level of WWD referees. This will be done by motivating experienced fencers to earn their referee rating and getting them to start refereeing at the local and national level. The program also aims to develop a pipeline of referees by introducing new fencers to refereeing through mentoring and clinics.

## Referee Pay Scale

The daily payment schedule for referees at WWD-hosted events will be the following:

<b>Rating</b>	<b><u>Small Events</u></b>	<b><u>Large Events</u></b>
1-3	\$120	\$160
4-5	\$100	\$120
6-10	\$50	\$60

**Small Events** are those targeted at local fencers such as JO and Divisional qualifiers and the WWD Championships. **Large Events** are those that draw regional and national competitors such as the Battle in Seattle.

A **developmental referee** shall be defined as an unrated referee that has not yet passed the written exam, or a newer rated referee seeking evaluation for a rating increase. Developmental referees are generally not paid for their services since they are receiving valuable practice and feedback at the event (as well as a possible rating increase.)

## Incentives

The WWD will pay new referees **\$150** if they complete the following program within a one-year timeframe:

1. Attend a referee clinic hosted by a USFA Certified Referee Instructor (CRI)
2. Passes the written (online) 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 **\$250** after they referee at their first national event (typically as a “walk-on” referee at a NAC or Summer Nationals.)

## The Fine Print

This program may be modified, suspended, or discontinued at any time. The WWD Executive Committee has 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 a refereeing seminar hosted by a USFA certified referee instructor.

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 (online) 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/Referee>.

### When and where are refereeing seminars held?

The USFA Referees’ Commission 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 seminars held locally will be published on <http://www.askfred.net> and announced via the WWD 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 is taken online at <https://member.usafencing.org>. 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 RC website (<http://www.refereescommission.org>).

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 is generally done at a local tournament where you are paired with a senior referee that will observe your refereeing and provide feedback and advice.

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. To take a practical exam, contact

the tournament organizer with your interest and they will let you know if they can accommodate your request. Tournament organizers are not obligated to offer observation at their events, but most will if they have the resources available.

## **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 RC member 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 person 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 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 a pool 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 USFA wants you to work, you know that you’ve made it into the ranks of “professional referee”!