

National Assessments Keys To Success

➤ There is no substitute for experience

You should referee as many games as possible at a variety of competition levels. Officiating upper division matches of both sexes will give you a better understanding of how older players play the game and the difference between the men's game and the women's game. It also exposes you to experienced coaches who employ advanced tactics and players who "push the envelope."

Adult, high school, community college and club leagues offer additional opportunities to gain experience when sufficient AYSO matches are not available in your area.

➤ Physical *and* Mental conditioning are essential.

Do not attempt a National assessment if you have not recently refereed. Even if you have stayed in shape physically, you need the mental conditioning, which comes from doing matches.

➤ The match you are being assessed on *must* be your priority for the day.

You should not accept a match immediately prior to or following the match you are being assessed on. You need time prior to your assessment to do paperwork, meet with the rest of your team, inspect the field and players and give (or receive) pre-game instructions. The time immediately following the match is for the de-briefing and paperwork completion

➤ Select the proper environment.

A match at noon in mid-July or August is not the best choice. A match scheduled for a field that is in disrepair or plagued with dangerous conditions is also not a good choice. The teams competing in the match should also be considered. Teams playing a "grudge" match, though certainly challenging, might not be the best choice to be assessed on. Likewise, teams who are unskilled or shorthanded also present problems.

You should attempt to arrange the most favorable circumstances for the assessment. Early morning, late afternoon or night games are better suited to the physical demands. The best field available should be sought for your match.

➤ Show that you are confident in your abilities and are comfortable doing the match.

Command presence on the field is a must. Enter the field with confidence, treat the players and coaches with respect and be professional.

➤ Whether you "pass" the assessment or not, be courteous and considerate towards the assessor.

He/she is there not only to assess your performance in the match, but also to offer support and guidance. Be accepting of suggestions for improvement and put them to use in future matches. Thank him/her for their time.

- Learn from every match you officiate and every referee you officiate with.

We can all benefit from learning. Try to take something away from each match that will enable you to do a better job in your next one. Solicit input from your fellow officials and observe how they handle difficult situations.

- Be persistent

Do not be disappointed if you don't pass the first time. Be prepared for a long process. If you are unsuccessful in an assessment, learn from the experience. Work on the areas that your assessor felt needed improvement. Schedule another assessment. Repeat as necessary.