


ONTARIO SOCCER
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Grading Protocol

Match Officials Development

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Preamble

The Ontario Soccer Grading Protocol is a result of a 2 year consultation with Leagues, District Referee Coordinators, The Ontario Soccer Referee Development Committee, Staff and Advisory Groups of Ontario Soccer.

The goals of the Ontario Soccer Grading Protocol are to:

- Ensure that grades are meaningful and standardized.
- Ensure that game assignments reflect Ontario Soccer Appointment & Game Fee Protocol and Ontario Soccer Grading Protocol.
- Provide effective tools to Districts and Assignors
- Standardize assigning

It is important to understand that grades are based on Referee standards only and may not reflect as an Assistant Referee. This will be addressed in Phase 2 of this process.

It is imperative to understand the Grading Protocol and requirements. This document should be reviewed in its entirety.

Ontario Soccer reserves the right to re-evaluate and adjust grading as required. No additional requirements may be mandated by districts, clubs or organizations without prior approval of Ontario Soccer.

Future Implementations

Requirements highlighted in orange and indicated with a single line in the left-hand margin are to be implemented on at a later date. The mention of these requirements in this protocol is to allow Governing Bodies and Match Officials to prepare and plan accordingly to meet these requirements.

Timelines to Review Grades

As important as establishing requirements for each Grade, it is also necessary to ensure grades are updated within a timeframe that allows Match Officials to meet requirements and prepare for next developmental stage.

The following timelines will be enforced to review and correctly adjust grades:

- April 1st to April 8th – Review of Grades based on Registration Exam Results obtained by March 31st.
- June 1st to June 8th – Review of Grades based on Fitness Standards obtained by May 31st.
- July 1st to July 8th ¹– Review of Grades based on Assessments marks obtained by June 30th.
- November 1st to 15th – Annual Review of Grades.

Referees that request move up to Grade 8 after June 30th deadline:

- The Match Official must provide a game log for the current season, and their assessment (if required by the grade into which the official is moving)
- Fitness test results will be confirmed by Ontario Soccer staff
- The District Referee Coordinator will have the opportunity to request ‘Consideration to Decline’ if serious circumstances exist. This will be filed on an official form and forwarded to Ontario Soccer staff.

¹ Review of results from the Fitness Test for Injured Officials. Following Fitness Test Protocol.

Serious circumstances could include, but are not limited to:

- Returning from injury
- Official discipline records
- Reported and tracked Code of Conduct breaches
- Tracked history of declines, no-shows, or late arrivals

Shared Responsibilities

Grade 4 to 5: Following the recommendation of the Club Head Referee, Match Officials meeting the requirements for Grade 5 are to be recommended to the DRC. The CHR must provide a written recommendation. Once graded as 5, all requirements to maintain grade must be met annually.

Grade 7 to 8: Following recommendation of the District Referee Coordinator, Match Officials meeting the requirements for Grade 8 are to be recommended to Ontario Soccer. The DRC must provide a written recommendation with additional information as requested. Once graded as 8, all requirements to maintain grade shall be met annually.



The Club Pool

Match Officials Development

Grade 1

Overview

Match Officials in this grade have met the criteria for Small Sided Game accreditation and are eligible to officiate 7v7 games only.

Accreditation

The Grade is obtained through accreditation on a Small Sided Game Course.

Age

Minimum 12 years old as of April 1st of the current year.

Examination

To obtain Grade 1, students in the Small Sided Game course are required to achieve minimum 70% mark on the Course Exam. To maintain a Grade 1, a recommended mark of 70% mark on the annual Small Sided 7v7 registration exam is advised; however no minimum mark is required.

Fitness Testing

No Fitness testing is required for this grade. Club Head Referees may implement fitness education.

History

To obtain Grade 1, the student is expected to have elementary soccer experience/knowledge. To maintain Grade 1, the Match Official is required to have a minimum of one year experience as an active Small Sided Game Referee.

Assessment

No assessments are required for this grade. Mentoring is strongly advised.

To Obtain Grade	
Accreditation	Small Sided Game Course
Age	12 or older as of April 1 st of current year
Examination	Minimum 70% on the Course Exam
Fitness	Not required
History	Elementary soccer experience/knowledge
Assessment	Not required

To Maintain Grade	
Accreditation	Small Sided Game Course – Completed in previous years.
Age	13 or older as of April 1 st of current year
Examination	Complete annually the Registration Exam
Fitness	Not required
History	At least 1 year experience as an active 7v7 Small Sided Game Referee
Assessment	Not required

Grade 2 (Not applicable until the Small Sided Game 9v9 Course is launched)

Overview

Match Officials in this grade have met the criteria for Small Sided Game 9v9 accreditation and are eligible to officiate 9v9 games only or be an Assistant Referees in both 9v9 and 11v11 Recreational games.

Please see *Match Officials Age Requirements* section for more details.

Accreditation

The Grade is obtained through accreditation on a Small Sided Game 9v9 Course.

Age

Minimum 13 years old as of April 1st of the current year.

Please see *Match Officials Age Requirements* section for more details.

Examination

To obtain Grade 2, students in the Small Sided Game 9v9 course are required to achieve minimum 70% mark on the Course Exam. To maintain Grade 2, a recommended mark of 70% mark on the annual Small Sided 9v9 registration exam is advised; however no minimum mark is required.

Fitness Testing

No Fitness testing is required for this grade. Club Head Referees may implement fitness education at their discretion.

History

A Grade 2 Match Official is expected to have elementary soccer experience/knowledge.

Assessment

No assessments required for this grade. Mentoring is strongly advised.

To Obtain Grade	
Accreditation	Small Sided Game 9v9
Age	13 or older as of April 1 st of current year
Examination	Minimum 70% on the Course Exam
Fitness	Not required
History	Elementary soccer experience/knowledge
Assessment	Not required

To Maintain Grade	
Accreditation	Small Sided Game 9v9 – Completed in previous years.
Age	14 or older as of April 1 st of current year
Examination	Complete annually the Registration Exam
Fitness	Not required
History	At least 1 year experience as an active 9v9 Small Sided Game Referee
Assessment	Not required

Grade 3 (Not applicable until the Small Sided Game 9v9 Course is launched)

Overview

Match Officials in this grade have met the criteria for Small Sided Game 7v7 and 9v9 accreditation and are eligible to officiate 7v7 or 9v9 games or be an Assistant Referees in both 9v9 and 11v11 Recreational games.

Please see *Match Officials Age Requirements* section for more details.

Accreditation

The Grade is obtained through accreditation of both Small Sided Game 7v7 Course and Small Sided Game 9v9 Course.

Age

Minimum 13 years old as of April 1st of the current year. Please see *Match Officials Age Requirements* section for more details.

Examination

To maintain Grade 3, a **recommended mark** of 70% mark on the annual Small Sided 7v7 & 9v9 registration exam is advised; however no minimum mark is required.

Fitness Testing

No Fitness testing is required for this grade. Club Head Referees may implement fitness education at their discretion.

History

A Grade 3 Match Official is expected to have elementary soccer experience/knowledge.

Assessment

No assessments are required for this grade. Mentoring is strongly advised.

To Obtain Grade	
Accreditation	Small Sided Game 7v7 and 9v9
Age	13 or older as of April 1 st of current year
Examination	Minimum 70% on Registration Exam
Fitness	Not required
History	Elementary soccer experience/knowledge
Assessment	Not required

To Maintain Grade	
Accreditation	Small Sided Game 7v7 and 9v9 – Completed in previous years.
Age	14 or older as of April 1 st of current year
Examination	Complete annually the Registration Exam
Fitness	Not required
History	At least 1 year experience as an active Referee
Assessment	Not required

Grade 4

Overview

Match Officials in this grade have met the criteria for 11v11 Entry Level accreditation and are eligible to officiate 11v11 and 9v9 games only (Unless previous accreditation on 7v7 has been obtained).

Please see *Match Officials Age Requirements* section for more details.

Accreditation

The Grade is obtained through accreditation on an Entry Level Course.

Age

Minimum 14 years old as of April 1st of the current year. Please see *Match Officials Age Requirements* section for more details.

Examination

To obtain Grade 4, students in the Entry Level course are required to achieve at least 80% mark on the Course Exam.

To maintain Grade 4, a recommended mark of 70% mark on the annual registration exam is advised; however no minimum mark is required.

Fitness Testing

No Fitness testing is required for this grade. Club Head Referees may implement fitness education at their discretion.

History

A Grade 4 Match Official is expected to have elementary soccer experience/knowledge.

Assessment

No assessments are required for this grade. Mentoring is strongly advised.

To Obtain Grade	
Accreditation	Entry Level Course
Age	14 or older as of April 1 st of current year
Examination	Minimum 80% on Course Exam
Fitness	Not required
History	Elementary soccer experience/knowledge
Assessment	Not required

To Maintain Grade	
Accreditation	Entry Level Course – Completed in previous years.
Age	15 or older as of April 1 st of current year
Examination	Complete annually the Registration Exam
Fitness	Not required
History	At least 1 year experience as an active Referee
Assessment	Not required

The District Pool

Match Officials Development

Grade 5

Overview

Match Officials in this grade have at minimum, one year of experience as a Referee on 11v11 recreational games. Officials must be recommended in writing by the Club Head Referee (CHR) to the District Referee Coordinator (DRC). The DRC must approve the written recommendation. Match Officials in this pool are eligible to be Assistant Referees on 11v11 competitive games. Please see *Match Officials Age Requirements* section for more details.

Accreditation

Accredited from an Entry Level Course for minimum 1 year.

Age

Minimum 16 years old as of April 1st of the current year. Please see *Match Officials Age Requirements* section for more details.

Examination

70% mark of above on the annual Registration Exam. Refer to *Registration Exam* section for information.

Fitness Testing

No Fitness testing is required for this grade. District Referee Coordinator may implement fitness education at their discretion.

History

Minimum 1 year experience as an active Referee on 11v11 games and previous year as a Grade 4 or above.

Assessment

No assessments are required for this grade. Mentoring is advised.

To Obtain Grade	
Accreditation	Entry Level Course – Completed in previous years.
Age	16 or older as of April 1 st of current year
Examination	Minimum 70% on Registration Exam
Fitness	Not required
History	1 year experience as an active Referee on 11v11 games and previous year as a Grade 4
Assessment	Not required

To Maintain Grade	
Accreditation	Entry Level Course – Completed in previous years.
Age	17 or older as of April 1 st of current year
Examination	Minimum 70% on the Registration Exam
Fitness	Not required
History	Previous year as a Grade 5 or above
Assessment	Not required

Grade 6

Overview

Match Officials in this grade have at minimum, two years of experience refereeing recreational 11v11 or higher and can officiate as a Referee or as Assistant referee on competitive games.

Please see *Match Officials Age Requirements* section for more details.

Accreditation

Accredited from an Entry Level Course for minimum 2 years.

Age

Minimum 17 years old as of April 1st of the current year.

Please see *Match Officials Age Requirements* section for more details.

Examination

Minimum 75% mark or above on the annual Registration Exam.

Refer to *Registration Exam* section for information on failed exams.

Fitness Testing

No Fitness testing is required for this grade. District Referee Coordinator may implement fitness education at their discretion.

History

Minimum 2 years of experience as an active Referee on 11v11 games and previous year as a Grade 5 or above.

Assessment

No assessments required for this grade.

To Obtain Grade	
Accreditation	Entry Level Course – Completed in previous years.
Age	17 or older as of April 1 st of current year
Examination	Minimum 75% on Registration Exam
Fitness	Not required
History	At least 2 year experience as an active Referee on 11v11 games and previous year as a Grade 5 or above.
Assessment	Not required

To Maintain Grade	
Accreditation	Entry Level Course – Completed in previous years.
Age	18 or older as of April 1 st of current year
Examination	Minimum 75% on the Registration Exam
Fitness	Not required
History	Previous year as a Grade 6 or above
Assessment	Not required

Grade 7

Overview

Match Officials in this grade must have at minimum, two years of experience as Referee in youth competitive 11v11 games or higher and experience as an Assistant Referee in older age groups. Referees in this grade can officiate competitive games and are also eligible to perform as an Assistant Referee at regional or provincial competitions.

Accreditation

Accredited from an Entry Level Course for minimum 3 years.

Age

Minimum 18 years old as of April 1st of the current year. Please see *Match Officials Age Requirements* section for more details.

Examination

Minimum 80% mark or above on the annual Registration Exam. Refer to *Registration Exam* section for information on failed exams.

Fitness Testing

Achieve at least the District Fitness Standards for Grade 7. See *Ontario Soccer Fitness Test Standards* for details.

History

Minimum 2 years of experience as an active Referee on 11v11 competitive games and previous year as a Grade 6 or above.

Assessment

To obtain a Grade 7, one district assessment at or above competency must be completed.

To maintain a Grade 7, one district assessment at or above competency must be completed annually. Eligible assessments must be District competitive or higher, 11 v11 and must include AR's, higher. (Effective Jan 1st, 2017)

To Obtain Grade	
Accreditation	Entry Level Course – Completed in previous years.
Age	18 or older as of April 1 st of current year
Examination	Minimum 80% on Registration Exam
Fitness	Meet the District Fitness Standard for Grade 7 by the published deadline
History	Minimum 2 years of experience as an active Referee on 11v11 competitive games and previous year as a Grade 6 or above.
Assessment	Complete District competitive or higher assessment at or above competency.

To Maintain Grade	
Accreditation	Entry Level Course – Completed in previous years.
Age	18 or older as of April 1 st of current year
Examination	Minimum 80% on the Registration Exam
Fitness	Meet the District Fitness Standard for Grade 7 annually by the published deadline
History	Previous year as a Grade 7 or above
Assessment	Complete district assessment or higher at or above competency. (Effective Jan 1 st , 2017)

The Regional & Provincial Pools

Match Officials Development

Grade 8

Overview

Match Officials in this grade have experience as Referee and as Assistant Referee in senior competitive 11v11 games. Officials must be recommended in writing by the District Referee Coordinator (DRC) to Ontario Soccer. Officials in this grade are eligible for appointments as Referee or Assistant Referee at regional or provincial competitions. **This is the only pool from where a match official can apply to the Regional Upgrading Program.**

Accreditation

Accredited from an Entry Level Course for minimum 4 years.

Age

Minimum 18 years old as of April 1st of the current year.

Examination

80% mark of above on the annual Registration Exam.

Fitness Testing

Achieve at least the District Fitness Standards for Grade 8. See *Ontario Soccer Fitness Test Standards* for details.

History

At least 1 year experience as an active Referee on 11v11 senior competitive games and previous year as a Grade 7 or above.

Assessment

To obtain a Grade 8, one district assessment above competency must be completed in the season prior to upgrade. **To maintain a Grade 8, one district assessment above competency must be completed annually. (Effective Jan 1st, 2016)**

To Obtain Grade	
Accreditation	Entry Level Course – Completed in previous years.
Age	18 or older as of April 1 st of current year
Examination	Minimum 80% on Registration Exam
Fitness	Meet the District Fitness Standard for Grade 8 by the published deadline
History	At least 1 year experience as an active Referee on 11v11 senior competitive games and previous year as a Grade 7 or above.
Assessment	To obtain Grade 8, an assessment 'at' competency is required. To be considered for the Regional Upgrading Program, an assessment 'above' competency is required

To Maintain Grade	
Accreditation	Entry Level Course – Completed in previous years.
Age	19 or older as of April 1 st of current year
Examination	Minimum 80% on the Registration Exam
Fitness	Meet the District Fitness Standard for Grade 8 annually by the published deadline
History	Previous year as a Grade 8 or above
Assessment	Complete one district assessment above competency. (Effective Jan 1 st , 2016)

Grade 9

Overview

Match Officials in this grade have demonstrated to the satisfaction of Ontario Soccer and Canada Soccer the ability to officiate at the Regional Level.

Accreditation

Accredited from an Entry Level Course for minimum 5 years.

Age

Minimum 19 years old as of April 1st of the current year.

Please see *Match Officials Age Requirements* section for more details.

Examination

Minimum 80% mark or above on the annual Registration Exam.

Refer to *Registration Exam* section for information on failed exams.

Fitness Testing

Achieve at least the Regional Fitness Test Standard for Grade 9. See *Fitness Test Standards* for details.

History

As per Ontario Soccer Regional Upgrade Program requirements

Assessment

To obtain a Grade 9, see *Ontario Soccer Regional Upgrade Brochure*.

To maintain a Grade 9, one assessment at or above competency must be completed annually. See Chart of Assessable Game for current year.

To Obtain Grade	
Accreditation	Entry Level Course – Completed in previous years.
Age	19 or older as of April 1 st of current year
Examination	Minimum 80% on Registration Exam
Fitness	Meet the Fitness Standard for Grade 9 by the published deadline
History	As per Ontario Soccer Regional Upgrade Program requirements
Assessment	As per Ontario Soccer Regional Upgrade Program requirements

To Maintain Grade	
Accreditation	Entry Level Course – Completed in previous years.
Age	20 or older as of April 1 st of current year
Examination	Minimum 80% on the Registration Exam
Fitness	Meet the Fitness Standard for Grade 9 annually by the published deadline
History	Previous year as a Grade 9 or above
Assessment	Complete assessment at or above competency

Grade 10

Overview

Match Officials in this grade have demonstrated to the satisfaction of Ontario Soccer and Canada Soccer the ability to officiate at the Provincial Level.

Accreditation

Accredited from an Entry Level Course for minimum 6 years.

Age

Minimum 20 years old as of April 1st of the current year.

Please see *Match Officials Age Requirements* section for more details.

Examination

Minimum 80% mark or above on the annual Registration Exam.

Refer to *Registration Exam* section for information on failed exams.

Fitness Testing

Achieve at least the Provincial Fitness Test Standard for Grade 10.

See *Ontario Soccer Fitness Test Standards* for details.

History

Minimum 3 years of experience as an active Referee on 11v11 senior competitive games.

Assessment

To obtain a Grade 10, see *Ontario Soccer Provincial Upgrade Brochure*.

To maintain a Grade 10, one assessment at or above competency must be completed annually. See Chart of Assessable Games for current year.

To Obtain Grade	
Accreditation	Entry Level Course – Completed in previous years.
Age	19 or older as of April 1 st of current year
Examination	Minimum 80% on Registration Exam
Fitness	Meet the Fitness Standard for Grade 10 by the published deadline
History	As per Ontario Soccer Provincial Upgrade Program requirements
Assessment	As per Ontario Soccer Provincial Upgrade Program requirements

To Maintain Grade	
Accreditation	Entry Level Course – Completed in previous years.
Age	20 or older as of April 1 st of current year
Examination	Minimum 80% on the Registration Exam
Fitness	Meet the Fitness Standard for Grade 10 annually by the published deadline
History	Previous year as a Grade 10 or above
Assessment	Complete assessment at or above competency

Grade 11

Overview

Match Officials in this grade have been appointed by Canada Soccer (CA) to the active list of National Officials in the current year.

All requirements for nominations are set annually by the Canada Soccer and reviewed by Ontario Soccer before nomination is submitted. Ontario Soccer does not confer the Grade 11, but rather recognizes within Ontario Soccer Grading System such Officials for their status at the National level.

Grade 12

Overview

Match Officials in this grade have been appointed by the *Fédération Internationale de Football Association* (FIFA) to the active list of FIFA Officials in the current year.

All requirements for nominations are set by FIFA and reviewed by Canada Soccer before nomination is submitted. Ontario Soccer does not confer the Grade 12, but rather recognizes within Ontario Soccer Grading System such Officials for their status at the International level.

Match Officials Age Requirements

Match Officials 18 years of age or under, can only officiate age groups up to two (2) years younger than their current age. This rule may apply to Match Officials in Grades 1 to 6.

For example, a 15 years old Referee can officiate games up to U13, a 16 years old Referee can officiate games up to U14.

This rule does not apply to Assistant Referees. There are no age requirements for Assistant Referees as long as their grade level corresponds to the game level being officiated.

For example, 16 years old Referee Grade 4 can be an Assistant Referee for a U15 recreational game, but not to a competitive game.

Registration Exam

If required standard for current grade on the yearly exam is not achieved and all other requirements for the new grade are met, a Match Official will be re-graded as follows:

Evaluation mark	New Grade
69% and below	Grade 4
Between 70% and 74%	Grade 5
Between 75% and 79%	Grade 6
80% and over	Grade 7 or above

If the required standard for current grade on the annual Registration Exam is not met, a Match Official may request **ONE** retake by emailing Lyndon Hooper at lhooper@ontariosoccer.net. Each case will be reviewed by the Ontario Soccer Referee Development Department individually.



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