



USA Pickleball Referee Program

The steps from newcomer to becoming a USA Pickleball Certified Referee are described below.

Initial Training

1. You must be a USA Pickleball member in good standing and at least 16 years of age.
2. Complete a referee training class conducted by a USA Pickleball registered referee trainer. The *USA Pickleball/IFP Referee Handbook* (available on the USA Pickleball website) is the official resource for training and contains the pickleball officiating standards and procedures used by USA Pickleball Referees.

Note: Referees may be self-trained, however, the preferred method is training by a USA Pickleball registered referee trainer.

Level 1 and Level 2 Credentials

Level 1 Referees are capable of refereeing basic non-medal matches at tournaments but may require some assistance.

Level 2 Referees have proficient rule knowledge and skills to handle on-court situations that typically arise during skill level tournament matches including medal matches.

1. Obtain an assessment of your refereeing skills by your trainer or a Certified Referee. As part of the USA Pickleball referee training session, your trainer normally provides an initial skills assessment. The assessment can also be provided at a later date by either your trainer or a Certified Referee. If not assessed as part of a training session, you are responsible for arranging your assessment by contacting the Referee Training Coordinator (RTC) for your region. The RTC will work with registered trainers or other Certified Referees to help arrange the assessment.

Trained referees will normally be rated as a Level 1 or Level 2 Referee, depending on their level of proficiency. The assessor will provide a credential to Level 1 and Level 2 Referees and report the assessment results to the Regional RTC. **Note:** Those not scoring at least a Level 1 rating will not receive a credential and will remain as trainees until they are rated higher.

2. After completing training, referee a wide variety of games and matches (including those where teams stack and when line judges are used) using the USA Pickleball best practices for referees. Begin with refereeing recreational games so there is not added pressure from making a mistake. Many recreational players welcome the opportunity to have someone referee a game for them, especially if they are getting ready to play in a tournament. As you gain experience, volunteer to referee at tournaments. Continue to work with your trainer or a credentialed referee to ensure you are applying the USA Pickleball best practices properly.

Note: Referees must obtain a Level 2 rating before proceeding to prepare to become a Certified Referee.

3. Contact the RTC for your region to request an assessment for Level 2.
-

Level 2 Referee Preparation for Certification

1. Request a Mentor through your regional Certified Referee Coordinator (CRC).
Note: You are not required to have a mentor, but it is highly recommended.
 2. When your mentor determines you are ready to be evaluated for certification, you must undergo an Advanced Training Session (ATS). The ATS is designed to simulate game situations that may occur during the certification evaluation. Undertaking the ATS increases the likelihood you can pass the evaluation. Your mentor, a Certified Referee, or the regional CRC administers the ATS and will ask 4-8 players to be present. You are responsible for finding a court and paying any associated fees. The ATS results will be shared with you at the end of the session and will be reported to your CRC.
 3. After you successfully complete your ATS, the CRC will conduct a phone or in-person interview with you to review of the best practices and rules. This review is similar to the compulsories portion of the certification evaluation.
 4. When the CRC determines you are ready for an evaluation, the CRC will notify the USA Pickleball Certified Referee Administrator to establish your eligibility to apply for referee certification.
-

The Certified Referee Application Process

1. Effective 1/1/21, you must meet a requirement of 20/30 visual acuity with both eyes (with or without corrective lenses) and obtain a statement from a physician or optometrist to submit with your application for certification.
 2. Within 60 days prior to submitting your application for certification, you must have refereed at a tournament conducted in accordance with USA Pickleball/IFP rules. You will be asked to provide the date and name of this event.
 3. Within 14 days prior to submitting your application for certification, you must have achieved passing scores on the USA Pickleball Referee and Line Judge Tests.
 4. Complete the online Certified Referee Application Form.
 5. After your application is received and the prerequisites validated, you will receive an email confirmation of acceptance into the program. A link will be including for paying the evaluation fee. If your application is not accepted, you will be notified accordingly. The nonrefundable evaluation fee affords the applicant two opportunities to pass the certification evaluation, which includes on-court observation.
 6. After your payment is received, you will receive an email detailing the evaluation process along with a schedule of upcoming on-court evaluation venues and dates. Scheduling for each venue will be done strictly on a first-to-respond basis. You will be asked to select your preferred dates/tournaments. You are responsible for any costs associated with traveling to the venue. **Note:** The scheduling of on-court evaluations is based on evaluator availability and the number of applicants in an area. Therefore, there may not always be an on-court evaluation venue and/or date that is convenient for you to attend. In such cases, a significant amount of time could elapse between paying the evaluation fee and when you are scheduled for an on-court evaluation.
 7. After you are scheduled for a venue and date, a USA Pickleball Certified Referee Evaluator will contact you directly to coordinate further details relating to the evaluation.
-

The On-Court Evaluation

The evaluation involves a USA Pickleball evaluator critiquing your skills and rules knowledge while you referee a minimum of three doubles matches, at least one involving a stacking team and at least one medal match using line judges.

During the evaluation, you must:

- Display professionalism in your actions, words, and demeanor.
- Maintain an efficient flow in the matches.
- Conscientiously watch for and call faults, especially in the non-volley zone.
- Use a numbered clip to track servers, moving it to the correct server at every service change.
- Mark the scoresheet using the USA Pickleball requirements for each point, side out, and other actions as they occur.
- Position the clipboard so the clip end always points toward the serving team.
- When time-outs are called, follow the best practices procedures.
- Detect incorrect servers and out-of-position players.
- Follow all USA Pickleball refereeing best practices contained in the *USA Pickleball/IFP Referee Handbook*.

After refereeing the evaluation matches, you will answer a series of questions, called compulsories, that will cover basic situations that did not arise during your on-court matches. These questions are designed to test your knowledge of the Rulebook and the Referee Handbook.

Upon passing the evaluation, the evaluator will take a passport-size head and shoulders digital photo for your photo ID badge.

Note: If you fail to qualify on the first evaluation, you are entitled to a second attempt. A second evaluation is allowed after a waiting period of 30 days, during which you must successfully complete another ATS that is confirmed by your Certified Referee Coordinator. You will need to select another evaluation venue, which may or may not be the same as the first.

If the second attempt results in failure, there is a waiting period of 6 months. The third attempt requires that you re-apply for certification. The process for a third attempt starts as a new application, requiring completion of a basic referee training class taught by a registered trainer, a successful ATS, and recommendation from your CRC. The third attempt also requires payment of another evaluation fee.

If the third attempt results in failure, a fourth evaluation may be attempted but only after waiting an additional 12 months during which you must take another training class, work with a mentor, successfully complete an ATS, and received approval for evaluation from your CRC.

If the fourth attempt results in failure, further attempts are not encouraged. However, if extenuating circumstances warrant, permission may be granted with the approval of your Section Leader of Officiating.

There are no appeals for failure to pass an evaluation if the candidate failed to call a violation that occurred (e.g., missed foot faults or out-of-position players). Candidates undergoing an evaluation, however, are welcome to record their matches. The recording must be performed at the candidate's expense and shown

to the evaluator if the candidate thinks there is sufficient reason to question a judgment decision by the evaluator. The evaluator is the only person who can grant relief if the recording clearly shows a mistake was made. Appeals on procedural grounds may be made by email to refcertadmin@usapa.org, with a copy to the evaluator who conducted the evaluation. Procedural appeals without a copy to the evaluator will not be accepted.

The Credentials Package

After passing your evaluation, you will receive:

- Two official USA Pickleball Certified Referee shirts
 - A USA Pickleball referee photo ID badge
 - A USA Pickleball badge holder pocket wallet with lanyard
 - Certified Referee designation on the USAPickleball.org website
 - One-time acknowledgement of your accomplishment in *Pickleball Magazine*
 - Priority for refereeing medal and pro matches at USA Pickleball-managed events
 - Certified Referee compensation (where available)
 - Other benefits associated with being recognized as having earned distinction as a USA Pickleball Certified Referee
-

Decertification

As a USA Pickleball Certified Referee, you agree to perform officiating duties in accordance with the refereeing best practices contained in the current issue of the *USA Pickleball/IFP Referee Handbook*. Non-compliance will result in disciplinary action, up to decertification. A referee's certification may be revoked for one year after official notification to the referee and an opportunity for the referee to respond to the issue(s) identified. To be reinstated after the one-year revocation period, the referee must reapply for certification and repeat the evaluation process.