

An entry-level soccer referee clinic will be held this weekend at The Summit Fitness Center in Kalispell from 9-5 on Sat-Sun, February 21-22. This Grade 8 clinic is ideal for new referees, or anyone wanting to learn more about soccer. Attendance both days is needed to complete the clinic.

This will be that last referee clinic in the Flathead Valley until this fall. There are no plans for a Grade 9 (recreational) referee clinic during 2010.

Adults as well as teenagers are welcome, There is no cost for teens and first-time attendees. Those intending to participate should register at www.flatheadsoccer.org or else call Marla at the soccer office at 257-6631. Once becoming certified, there is no minimum number of games a ref is required to officiate. The clinic is recognized by the US Soccer Federation (USSF), an arm of the worldwide soccer association FIFA.

Newly-certified referees start with several assistant referee (AR) duties before being asked to Center a low-level match, and referee assignors work with new officials to develop at a pace they are comfortable with. On each three-person referee team, there's usually at least one very experienced member.

Each Select team is required to have at least two affiliated referees, not including coaches or players. The Montana Youth Soccer Association (MYSA) recently announced it will no longer schedule competitive matches for teams with insufficient referees.

The pay per match during spring Select games ranges from \$20-35 for Center, and \$10-20 for AR, depending on the age group of the players. The main expense during the first season as a certified ref is acquiring a uniform, and complete packages are available from on-line catalogs for less than \$40. Pay for recreational matches is usually similar to Select rates.

Previously certified referees need five hours of referee meetings within the past year to re-certify, or can participate in a clinic as needed. A recertification test will be given on Sunday from 3-5 pm at The Summit. First time referees, or those seeking to upgrade from Grade 9, must take the full 16-hour USSF-recognized clinic.

For clinic questions, contact Jack Fallon at jackfallon@centurytel.net (phone 752-1175 or 752-1490), or Dixon Rice at dixandmitzi@yahoo.com (phone 212-6433).