

What's in your bag?

Referee equipment: what and why. Do not buy all this gear at once, start with one each of the items marked with an (*) until you're sure you'll stick with it, then add as you go. Also, check for deals on the Web. OfficialSports.com is the official partner of US Soccer but there are many others. SatorSoccer.com and ScoreSports.com are two discount vendors; look for package deals. At local dealers, ask if they have a referee starter package at a discount.

3-compartment sports bag: water-repellent/proof nylon w/shoulder strap; \$15-40 at most sporting goods stores; Large central compartment for clothing, 2 end pockets for other gear; external mesh shoe pocket is nice.

Central clothing compartment:

*USSF uniform shirts: ***Gold, Black, Red, Green & Blue (Short Sleeve & Long)** (consider local colors)

Where to scrimp? Use your polypro shirt under the SS instead of LS; logo-less "high school" shirts are cheaper

***2 pairs of black shorts:** with at least 1 back pocket with flap for red card

***2 pairs of black socks with 2 white stripes:** one pair is always dirty & it's nice to have a dry pair.

Black "compression" undershirt: keeps jersey from sticking; let's you change without getting half-naked

Inner socks to avoid blisters on a long day **1+ T-shirt** to put on after the game

***1 set of AR flags:** to be sure someone has a set; everyone's responsibility

Weather pocket:

Sunscreen: SPF 30 or better, sweat-proof **Bug spray/lotion:** careful: leaks could dissolve plastic items in your bag

***Black polypro shirt (LS), black stocking cap, black polypro gloves** for cold weather games (it's Minnesota!)

Gold rain shirt (\$57) and/or **waterproof clear plastic raincoat** (~\$7); **black rain suit pants**

Black baseball cap: not sanctioned by USSF but sometimes a necessity for morning/evening/rainy games

***Garbage bag** to put your equipment bag in when it's raining cats & dogs.

Official supplies pocket:

Ziploc bag for wallet, car keys, cell phone, etc from your street clothes

***Current year badge(s) w/velcro backing:** keep the previous year in case your badge goes in with the wash

Notebook (3" x 5") or **pre-printed scoresheets** for game record (printable ones on the Internet or make your own)

***Ball point pens:** Bic soft-feel medium black are inexpensive or Rite in the Rain waterproof pen

***Pencils:** use softest lead possible for writing in the rain

***Yellow & Red cards:** heavy, flexible plastic that won't crack in freezing cold

Write-on laminated yellow & red cards with combination scoresheets (great in the rain)

Sharpie fine-point permanent markers **Wet-wipes** for erasing *laminated cards*

Pump with needle in the handle (Wilson) **Air gauge** **Extra needle**

Cleat wrench & spare removable cleats to replace missing or dangerous cleats

USSF Laws of the game & league rules of competitions to settle arguments (after the game)

***2 sets of 2 whistles on lanyards:** hi/low or with & w/o pea in case neighboring ref using same whistle

***2 watches** with countdown & stopwatch modes; suggest Casio Referee Timer or Timex Ironman series

***Coins:** your style -- official coin, dollar vs. penny, foreign coin (make sure to specify which sides is "heads")

Cash: how are refs/ARs paid in this league? Does the center have to pay the ARs? Venmo?

Band-aids for blisters, scrapes **Anti-inflammatory drug** of your choice

Energy Bars (that don't melt, waterproof packaging) to keep energy up when no time to eat between games

***Water bottle** to avoid dehydration-related problems (your own or someone else)

***Shoes (black w/black laces):** all-purpose "turf shoes" w/mini-studs, works on any type of field (soft/hard/artificial) and/or cleats: for hard field (most common conditions), molded cleats; for soft/wet fields, replaceable cleats. Treat shoes with care: make sure they get dry; use the leather treatment of your choice; polish occasionally.

Always keep a record of the game for yourself – for league questions, tax records and upgrade game count.

Record: date, time, league/ages, teams, other officials, scoring, misconduct, other notable issues.

Typically, if you earn over \$600 refereeing, you should declare this income on Schedule C of your income tax.

You should also track your expenses (auto, equipment, registration fees, etc), all of which can be deducted.

See your tax advisor as each situation varies.