



Member, United States  
Olympic & Paralympic Committee

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## HANDBALL REFEREE REQUIREMENTS AND GUIDELINES FOR USATH TOURNAMENT ORGANIZERS

### PURPOSE

This document provides tournament organizers with comprehensive guidelines for referee requirements, compensation, logistics, and best practices to ensure professional officiating standards at Handball tournaments across the United States.

### REFEREE STAFFING REQUIREMENTS

Minimum referee requirements by tournament size: The rule of thumb to remember for running a tournament are these key principles:

- 1) USATH Sanctioned vs USATH unsanctioned (friendly) tournament.

#### **Sanctioned**

For any USATH Sanctioned tournament, the referee aspect of the tournament is managed and organized by the NRC. As soon as you have your date confirmed (2 months in advance at least) contact the NRC to inform them about number of teams, number of games and NRC will inform you about referee requirement and NRC will nominate the referees. NRC can also help with referee logistics.

#### **Unsanctioned**

NRC does not handle unsanctioned and friendly Handball tournaments; while these events will not be covered by USATH sanction, policies, or rules, you can contact NRC in advance, and they can help put you in touch with referees locally to encourage the opportunity to play.

- 2) Each referee couple can do maximum 2 full Handball games in a day. If games are shorter, we have had situations that referees are doing 3 games a day but that is not ideal.

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Some examples:

#### Small Tournaments

( 2 days tournament, 1 court, from 10:00 AM to 5:30 PM, 90 min time slot for each game, games 2 x 25 min, 5 games per day)

At least you need 4 referees (2 couples) + 1 Technical Delegate

#### Medium Tournament

( 2 days tournament, 2 court, from 10:00 AM to 5:30 PM, 90 min time slot for each game, 2 x 25 min games, 10 games per day, 5 in each court)

At least you need 8 referees (4 couples) + 2 Technical Delegate

#### Medium Tournament

( 2 days tournament, 2 court, from 10:00 AM to 8:30 PM, 90 min time slot for each game, 2 x 25 min games, 14 games per day, 7 in each court)

At least you need 12 referees (6 couples) + 2 Technical Delegate

#### Large Tournament

( 3 days tournament, 2 court, from 10:00 AM to 8:30 PM, 75 min time slot for each game, 2 x 25 min games, 14 games per day, 7 in each court)

At least you need 12 referees (6 couples) + 2 Technical Delegate

Note: All official IHF or NACHC sanctioned tournaments is managed by IHF/NACHC and not USATH.

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## ADVANCE NOTICE REQUIREMENTS

You need to inform the NRC at least 6-8 weeks before the tournament to confirm the exact dates, number of teams and discuss referee requirements with the NRC.

4-6 weeks before the tournament NRC will get referee availabilities and send formal referee assignments and make the travel arrangement. It is recommended to arrange the referee assignment and travel booking well in advance as it will save money significantly on plane and hotel booking.

3-4 weeks before tournament the final schedule needs to be confirmed with the NRC.

2-3 weeks before the tournament you would need to organize all the final referee logistics with the NRC (airport transportation, lodging, meals, etc).

1 week before tournament you would arrange a technical meeting with all teams and confirm the technical requirement (match time, tournament rules or special protocols, etc) and the NRC will present the technical requirement to all clubs on the virtual call or via email.

Note: For major championships or tournaments please provide longer notice time to above timelines.

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## STANDARD EXPENSE COVERAGE AND COMPENSATION

While the NRC and our dedicated referees strive to be as flexible as possible—balancing their own time, expenses, and commitments—to support clubs, teams, and athletes and to maximize opportunities for high-quality, safe competition, the following outlines the standard expectations for cost coverage and reimbursement for traveling referees at all events:

### Travel Expenses

- Round-trip mileage reimbursement at current IRS rate (currently \$0.67/mile for 2025)
- OR actual airfare costs (economy class) with advance approval
- Ground transportation to/from airport
- Parking fees at venue

### Accommodation

- Hotel room for duration of tournament
  - Important notes:**
    - o If games on the first day starts early accommodation needs to be provided from the night before. General preference is to check-in night before first match, check-out the day after final assignment.
    - o If the games on the last date finish later than 5 PM an extra accommodation needs to be provided for the last night.
    - o Single occupancy preferred, if not, double rooms must have two separate beds.
    - o It is not permitted to allocate male and female referees in the same room.
    - o It is not permitted to allocate under-18 referees with adult referees in the same room.
    - o Hotel should be within 15 minutes of venue when possible.
    - o Hotels bookings must have breakfast included.

### Meals

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- Per diem: \$50-75/day recommended
- OR provide meal vouchers/catered meals at venue
- Ensure meals accommodate dietary restrictions

### Match Fees

- Normal 2 x 30 min match: \$40-60 per match
- Note in occasions the NRC has worked with tournament organizers to allocate Per diem instead of per match fee where appropriate.

### Payment Timeline

- Expense and match fee reimbursement must be completed within 10 working days of tournament completion.
- Tournament organizers are responsible to arrange the payment via online transfer methods or sending check directly to referees. Unless it is a “Managed Service” explained below.

## LOGISTICAL CONSIDERATIONS

### Pre-Tournament Preparation

NRC will be responsible for

- Assign referees to matches based on certification level and experience
- Create rotation schedule preventing back-to-back assignments
- Ensure no conflicts of interest
- Coordinate pre-tournament briefing
- Establish group communication channel (email list, messaging app)
- Co-ordinating logistics with the tournament organizers.

### Facility Requirements

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- Dedicated referee changing/rest area with secure storage if possible
- Access to water/refreshments throughout tournament
- Provide a referee room in a quiet space for breaks between matches
- Usually, NRC runs a referee clinic for 2-3 hours with all the referees before the tournament. Providing a room to run a referee clinic would be ideal.
- **Important Note:** Tournament organizers must comply with these guidelines to maintain good standing with USATH and ensure quality officiating. Failure to meet minimum requirements may result in a loss of the USATH sanctioning status for the tournament.

You must contact USATH Competition Director regarding minimum requirements of the facility, court size, equipment, scoresheets, time out cards, injury card, 2 min cards, score board, doctors/trainers, table officials, etc. If you are in doubt, you can always contact NRC to get information regarding Handball Rules and USATH regulations.

## REFEREE LOGISTIC MANAGED SERVICE

NRC has an offering to provide all the referee logistics handling for free to the tournaments. We have practiced this model on a couple of tournaments in 2025 and worked very well. In this model the NRC will arrange all referee logistics, and it proved to take a lot of loads from the tournament organizers. We believe this is a win-win situation and to take advantage of this model you can contact NRC when your dates, number of team and schedule is confirmed (ideally 6-8 weeks before) and provide your referee budget. After you agreed on a reasonable budget with the NRC, you must transfer the full amount of agreed budget to the NRC and the NRC will handle all logistic for referees from hotel booking, airport transports, meals and travel arrangement and reimbursement of referee expenses.

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## CONTACT INFORMATION

For questions regarding referee assignments, certification verification, or additional guidance, contact:

**USA Team Handball (USATH)**  
**National Referee Committee (NRC)**

**Vafa Ahmadiyeh (NRC Chair)**

[referee@handballusa.org](mailto:referee@handballusa.org)

**347 757 9013**

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