

Head Referee Checklist

The Head Referee is a key planning role for every *FIRST*® LEGO® League event. The Head Referee facilitates required referee training, oversees official matches, supports consistent rule interpretation, and makes the final decision when a team and referee disagree about a ruling or score.

Before the Event

- ☐ **Complete Referee and Head Referee training** through the *FIRST* Dashboard or with your regional partner.
- ☐ **Review all official Future Edition game materials** including the Rulebook, Game Missions, Scoresheet, Field Map, videos, and official Updates.
- ☐ **Recruit volunteer referees:** Coordinate with the Tournament Organizer and Volunteer Coordinator to determine volunteer needs for the number of competition fields and the match schedule.
 - Requirement is 2 referees per table (one referee per half-field).
- ☐ **Communicate with referees.** Provide the game materials and referee training information before the event.
- ☐ **Communicate with teams.** Work with the Tournament Organizer to provide event-specific information.
- ☐ **Assemble and check that game fields are setup correctly.**
- ☐ Work with the Tournament Organizer and Judge Advisor to determine how many Game Performance awards will be given at your event, and if the optional *Coopertition*® Award will be given.
- ☐ **Create the match schedule.** Coordinate with the Tournament Organizer to ensure each team plays at least three official matches, and allow sufficient time for pre-match inspection, setup, the 2:30 match, score review, equipment removal, and field reset.
 - All teams at an event must play the same number of official game matches.
 - At least 10 minutes is required for a complete match cycle, but scheduling 15 minutes is recommended to allow time for team setup, questions, and scoring.
- ☐ **Prepare game documents.** Ensure referees and game field volunteers have access to Rulebooks, Scoresheets, Field Maps, and appropriate backup materials.
- ☐ **Determine whether you will use the *FIRST* LEGO League Event Portal (online) or paper scoresheets at your event:**
 - If your event is using the Event Portal to score game matches, work with your Tournament Organizer to set up your event. Additional training on using the Event Portal is available for volunteers.
 - If you are using paper scoresheets, print enough copies and spares for all game matches. You will also need to designate a scorekeeper to calculate game scores using either the online Score Calculator or Excel Score Calculator throughout the event.

Referee Training Requirements

Conduct required referee training and ensure that all referees receive instruction before officiating official matches. Head Referees should conduct their own referee training with reminders and event-specific updates on the following:

- ☐ **Review the game core principles:** Keep it Simple, Benefit of the Doubt, Official Sources, Game Updates, and Head Referee Final Decision.
- ☐ **Review the shared field format.** Make sure you understand how two teams compete on the shared field during a match and how cooperative and opposing interactions affect officiating.
- ☐ **Review the four player roles:** Driver, Operator, Technician, and Specialist. Players remain in their designated areas and cannot switch roles after the match begins.
- ☐ **Review the match sequence:** pre-match inspection, setup, match, scoring, equipment removal, and reset.
- ☐ **Review equipment limits and required field hardware.** Make sure referees understand permitted bricks, motors, sensors, controllers, connection cards, devices, and other electronic hardware.
- ☐ **Practice pre-match inspection.** Referees should be able to confirm permitted equipment, required field hardware, connection cards, devices, controller limits, starting placement, equipment height, and designated player-area requirements.
- ☐ **Review universal player rules,** including handling items within designated areas, operation of tools, movement of items between player areas, and how items may leave player areas.
- ☐ **Review role-specific rules,** including what each player may operate, handle, retrieve, modify, or control and courtesy rules.
- ☐ **Review stranded equipment rules** and how it is treated when it comes to rest outside its intended area.
- ☐ **Train carefully on interference and penalties.** Referees will need to distinguish normal shared-field play from actions that negatively block, restrict, redirect, or otherwise interfere with another team's movement, access, or scoring.
- ☐ **Practice interference penalties** and how to announce and record them consistently, including escalating penalties within a match.
- ☐ **Discuss referee authority** over intent, interference, penalties, and removal, while consistently applying benefit of the doubt when a situation is unclear.
- ☐ **Review scoring procedures** and how referees review and record results with teams after each match, including *Gracious Professionalism*® scoring and when it should be recorded.
- ☐ Include field resetters and other relevant game volunteers in appropriate portions of training so they understand field setup, model placement, shared-field requirements, and consistent resets.

On Event Day

- ☐ **Inspect game fields before matches begin.** Verify that both half-fields are correctly aligned, taped, and that mission models and field components are correctly assembled and positioned.
- ☐ **Prepare scoring materials.** Ensure referees have the current scoresheet or approved digital scoring method, and that scorekeepers understand the process for recording results.
- ☐ **Participate in the coaches meeting.** Review important updates, match schedule reminders, shared-field expectations, rule clarifications, and answer questions using official sources.
- ☐ **Observe matches across all game fields.** Monitor consistent interpretation of equipment inspection, role boundaries, courtesy rules, mission scoring, cooperative interactions, interference, penalties, and ensure that referees are completing the *Gracious Professionalism* section of the scoresheet for each match.
- ☐ **Monitor shared-field interactions** and help referees distinguish normal cooperative/shared-field play from negative interference.
- ☐ **Monitor interference penalty tracking** so each instance is clearly announced and accurately recorded.
- ☐ **Be available for disputed calls.** Listen to the referee and team, consult official sources as needed, apply benefit of the doubt appropriately, and make the final decision.
- ☐ **Support teams.** Encourage referees to communicate clearly and respectfully while applying rules consistently, especially as teams learn the new game format and four-role structure.
- ☐ **Communicate Core Values observations,** both exceptional and concerning, to the Judge Advisor. Focus on meaningful team behaviors that demonstrate or raise concerns about Core Values, rather than normal emotional reactions to competition.
- ☐ **Check score data regularly** and ensure official match scores are complete, correctly recorded, and disputed or missing results are resolved promptly.
- ☐ **Prepare for the award ceremony.** Confirm Game Performance results and other game-related information needed for awards

At the End of the Event

- ☐ Verify final game results before rankings and awards are finalized.
- ☐ When matches end, instruct referees to help pack up the game fields. Coordinate cleanup. Inventory game materials, pack game fields and models, and identify missing or damaged pieces.
- ☐ Thank referees and game volunteers for supporting the event and team experience and encourage them to attend the closing awards ceremony
- ☐ Organize and distribute paper scoresheets, if used, according to event procedures.
- ☐ Document unusual rulings or situations, including significant rule interpretations, recurring questions, technical issues, interference situations, or other concerns that should be communicated to program leadership.
- ☐ Share event feedback with appropriate program leadership. If teams advance, share relevant game situations with the next event's Head Referee through the approved process.

Thank you for being a Head Referee! Additional planning materials and requirements for Head Referees can be found in the Referee Toolkit and Future Edition Grades 3-8 Event Planning Guide.