

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Sunshine Leagues Announces 2025/26 Season Initiatives and 2026/27 Season Referee Fee Adjustment

Florida – February 6, 2026 – Sunshine Leagues (SunshineLeagues.org), a unified collective of youth soccer leagues across Florida, today announced a series of operational and program improvements for the remainder of 2025/26 season, along with a structured update to referee compensation designed to support quality officiating and long-term league sustainability starting with August/September kickoff of their respective 2026/27 Seasons.

Over the past year, Sunshine Leagues has expanded competitive opportunities for players and clubs, enhanced alignment with state and national pathways, and invested in technology and administration to improve the experience for families, coaches, and referees. These efforts include upgraded scheduling and communication tools, clearer game-day procedures, standardized rules of competition, and strengthened collaboration with certified assignors and FSR referee leadership to ensure consistent, high-level match management.

“SunshineLeagues.org exists to deliver a safe, competitive, and development-focused environment for every player on every field,” said Mickey Briscoe, EDP Florida League Director and SunshineLeagues.org member. “A critical part of that mission is recruiting, developing, and retaining qualified referees, and that means keeping our game fees in line with current market standards while respecting the financial realities of our clubs and families.”

Highlights of Work Completed

Work Already Accomplished (and implemented in Leagues Rules)

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Work Completed : Green Checkmark indicates already implemented

	EDP	GCF	SFPL	TFL	USA	i10	SFU	GHSL
Referee Abuse Policy - verbiage	✓	✓		✓		✓		✓
U11 NO HEADING U12 HEADING ALLOWED	✓	✓	✓	Spring '26		✓		Combined
No Mercy Rule	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
Standard RainOut Policy	✓	Spring '26	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
Only the Captains	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
Handwritten Player = Forfeit	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
Designated home changes uniform	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓
Game Report Upload	✓	✓	Spring '26	✓	✓	26/27 Season		✓

For the 2025/26 cycle, SunshineLeagues.org partners have focused on:

- Streamlining league structures and scheduling to better align with state and national competition pathways and reduce calendar conflicts for clubs.
- Implementing clearer match-day policies and referee procedures, including standardized pre-game protocols and payment guidelines, to support consistency across all venues.
- Strengthening referee recruitment and education by working with certified assignors and mentoring programs, reflecting broader trends in youth soccer that emphasize quality officiating and retention.

These initiatives lay the groundwork for continued growth in participation and competitive standards in the 2026/27 season.

Referee Fee Adjustment for 2026/27

To remain competitive within the broader youth soccer marketplace and to reflect increased expectations placed on match officials, SunshineLeagues.org leagues will implement an updated referee fee structure beginning with the 2026/27 seasonal year. The new schedule is designed to:

- Support recruitment and retention of qualified referees by moving fees toward prevailing regional rates for comparable competitive levels.
- Recognize the preparation, travel, and professionalism required from referees working higher-level youth matches.
- Maintain transparency for clubs by publishing standardized, age-group-based fees in advance of the seasonal year.
- Standardize referee costs across all the member leagues
- Assist clubs by placing a slight increase of responsibilities on referees.

Effective for all league matches on or after August 1, 2026, the standard per-game referee fees will increase on an average of 16%, with another increase possible in 2027/28 season if standards are met by the referee community.

Region	League	Division	Format	Game	Goal	Total by	Total Ref	Ref Split	Rosters	Ball Size
Region A-D	League	Division	Format	Game Duration	Goal Size	Total by Team	Total Ref Fee	Ref Split	Rosters	Ball Size
current										
A+B+C+D	MOST LEAGUES	U8-U10	7v7	2x25	6.5x18.5	80	\$95	45/25/25	Photo Match Cards / team	4
A+B+C+D	MOST LEAGUES	U11/U12	9v9	2x30	6.5x18.5	100	\$115	55/30/30	Photo Match Cards / team	4
A+B+C+D	MOST LEAGUES	U13/U14	11v11	2x35	8x24	120	\$135	65/35/35	Photo Match Cards / team	5
A+B+C+D	MOST LEAGUES	U15/U16	11v11	2x40	8x24	140	\$155	75/40/40	Photo Match Cards / team	5
A+B+C+D	MOST LEAGUES	U17+	11v11	2x45	8x24	160	\$175	85/45/45	Photo Match Cards / team	5

“These adjustments are not made lightly,” added Shenoy Raguraj, President The Florida League. “They reflect both the rising demand for experienced officials across youth sports and our responsibility to provide a safe, fair, and well-managed environment for our players and coaches. Our goal is to keep Sunshine Leagues among the most professionally run and affordable competitive options in Florida.”

Communication and Club Support

Referee fee details, along with updated match-day procedures and payment instructions, are distributed directly to clubs and posted on the Sunshine Leagues website at www.sunshineleagues.org on an ongoing basis. Sunshine Leagues volunteers will host informational sessions with club leaders and referee assignors to address questions and ensure a smooth transition to the new structure.

This Press Release is being issued in January so that all participating clubs can plan their budgets for the upcoming year long before the tryout period and registration opens for their players.

Next Steps

SunshineLeagues.com member leagues will host a Zoom session for all Florida Referee Assignors, with support from FSR and FYSA in February. It's imperative that all clubs share Save The Date information with their Referee assignors promptly. Thanks.



About Sunshine Leagues

Sunshine Leagues provide a competitive, development-focused environment for youth soccer clubs in Florida, connecting local teams to state and national pathways through structured competition, standards-based operations, and an emphasis on a positive game-day environment. These leagues serve boys and girls teams from the foundational competitive ages through older youth, emphasizing player development, sportsmanship, and community.

For more information about Sunshine Leagues or the 2026/27 referee fee schedule, please visit www.sunshineleagues.org or contact:

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