



ALBERTA SOCCER ASSOCIATION

The Governing Body of Soccer in Alberta

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What is Alberta Soccer doing for female referee development?

Currently, females make up only 25% of the referees in the Province, despite representing 37% of the registered players. Alberta Soccer recognizes that it must approach referee recruitment and retention differently if it wishes to create a gender-balanced referee pool.

To discover ways to increase the number of females in the game and help identify the issues they face, Alberta Soccer discussed the imbalance with current, female officials. What was heard was that the traditional, male-dominant courses often deter women and girls from becoming (and remaining) referees.

For this reason, Alberta Soccer is pleased to expand upon the [Create Your Advantage programs](#) that it piloted in 2018. The courses, led *by* females, *for* females, will create a more meaningful and empowering developmental environment. **Alberta Soccer will offer all-female Entry Level courses in both Edmonton and Calgary in the Spring of 2019.** These courses will be open to any female who is 14 years or older by May 15th, 2019.

- Entry Level Edmonton– April 6 & 7, 2019 (TBD)
- Entry Level Calgary- April 6 & 7, 2019 (Mt. Royal University)

Interested parties may register for these courses at this link: www.refcentre.com/Alberta - using the **code: dws001**. Cost is \$110.00 for students, 14 & 15 years old and \$ 131.25 for those 16 years +.

For Returning Youth and higher classified Officials, Alberta Soccer will once again host the Create Your Advantage program. This full-day program includes the outdoor refresher course + bonus development session, in both Edmonton and Calgary. Refreshers are a mandatory element for returning referees, and the development session builds upon the typical refresher by providing additional training and skill development – at no cost to attendees.

- Create Your Advantage, Edmonton – Saturday, March 30, 2019 (Concordia University)
- Create Your Advantage, Calgary– Sunday, March 31, 2019 (Mt. Royal University)

Returning referees will be able to register for the Create Your Advantage courses after the Referee Registration for 2019 opens on January 31, 2019 via their Ref Centre Accounts.

“Our goal for the Create Your Advantage program is to develop stronger officials, increase retention, and to be the genesis of a supportive network of officials - creating opportunities for mentorship and inspiring female officials to set and reach personal goals for growth and success,” said David O’Neill, ASA Referee Development Officer.



What can you do to help support and grow the numbers of female officials in your District?

Districts are encouraged to not only request regular referee courses, but to consider hosting all-female refreshers and entry level courses within their own communities.

These courses will need to meet the usual requirement of 6 registrants in rural locations and 10 in urban centres. Districts can follow the typical steps for requesting referee courses (via Ref Centre), simply making note that the course is for female students/officials. These courses will open for registration at the same time as all the other Spring courses.

What past participants had to say about their experiences in all-female courses:

"This the most thorough refresher I have attended... The confidence that one gained from the afternoon and the networking was fantastic. Real game situations at the stations were a great idea."

"It was an amazing experience and the leaders were very helpful!"

"I appreciated the access to knowledgeable referees who were approachable. Coming from a small remote area, our courses don't have the time and resources to get that necessary training and mentoring."

"I enjoyed the program as it gave us a freedom of speech zone without judgement...we [were] able to empower women referees no matter [their] age or skill. I would attend the event again!"

"It was a welcoming experience being with all females."

**If you have any questions about the Create Your Advantage program, please contact:
Dave O'Neill, refs@albertasoccer.com or Carmen Charron, programs@albertasoccer.com**