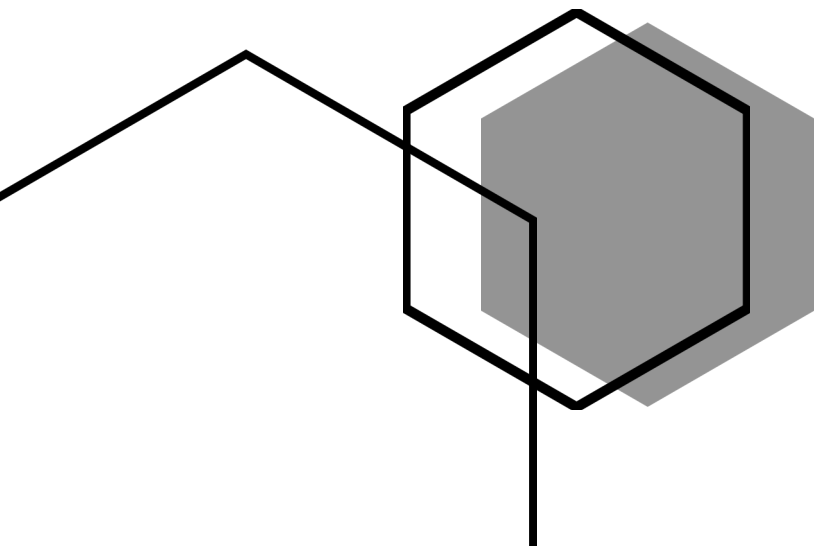




2018 ANNUAL REPORT

METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON SOCCER REFEREES ASSOCIATION

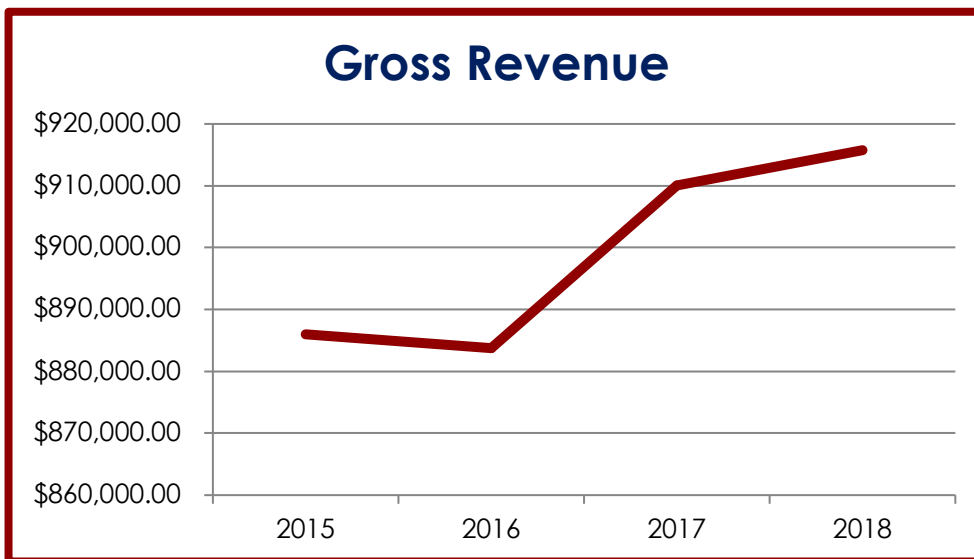
*Approved by the MWSRA Board of Directors
February 24, 2019*



PROGRESS IN 2018

GROWING IN THE REGION

Since 1956, MWSRA has provided dedicated soccer referees for a range of competitive youth (U8-U19), scholastic (middle – high school), and adult leagues and tournaments throughout the Washington, DC metro area. In addition to our continued Maryland partnerships in Montgomery County, Prince George's County, and Howard County, MWSRA increased its presence with new contracts and league assignments in Maryland and in Washington, DC.



WHAT'S NEW?

- ❖ MWSRA is pleased to announce that our new Board of Directors (2018-2020) is comprised of two female referees and three referees under the age of 30 – the most of either demographic group for the first time in its history.
- ❖ MWSRA comprehensively amended our Bylaws and Constitution for the first time since 2001, updating the governing documents to reflect our focus on referee retention and development, professionalism, and transparency.
- ❖ MWSRA completed the first-ever regional survey of challenges facing female referees, receiving 176 responses from male and female referees, to inform our efforts. This survey, coupled with individual interviews with female referees around the region, has informed 12 distinct recommended actions for key stakeholders.

Our Emphasis on Professionalism & Retention

In 2018, MWSRA affirmed its strong commitment to two guiding principles that will ultimately guide all future goals and initiatives:

Professionalism is of the essential, not just because this is a job, but in ensuring the safety, fairness, and enjoyment of the sport for all involved and earning the trust and respect of spectators, players, and coaches.

Retention is not only essential to sustaining MWSRA as a quality, healthy, and reliable organization, but also to building a collegial community among referees and address the regional shortage of referees.

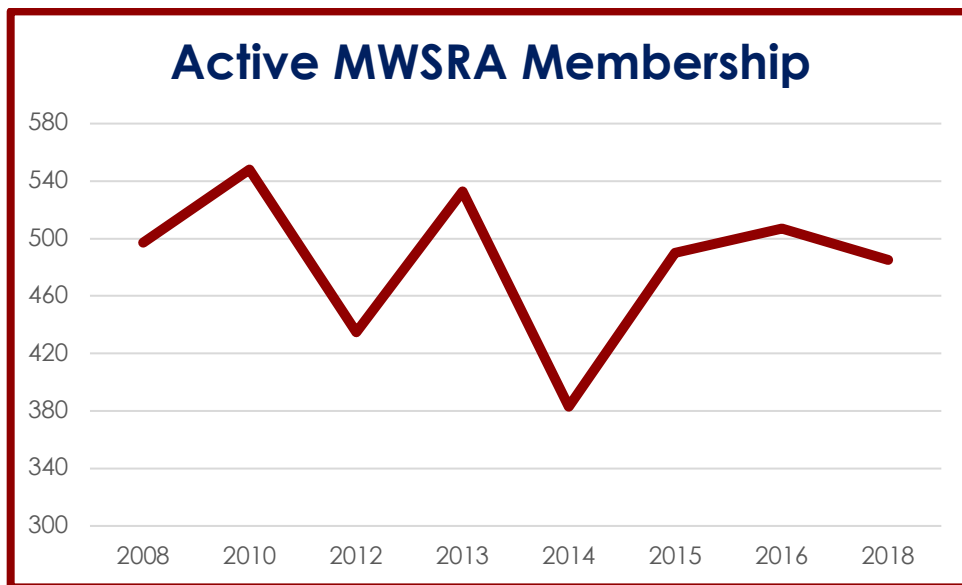
MENTORING & DEVELOPMENT

MWSRA is dedicated to actively improving the quality of officiating across the region. A cornerstone of MWSRA's growth strategy since 2016 has been our focus on referee mentoring and development to not only increase the quality of officiating but also attract and shape the next generation of soccer referees in the region. In August 2016, we launched the New Referee Development Program to specifically increase recruitment and retention activities for new referees, regardless of age. In 2018, we forged new partnerships with existing client leagues to advance our mentoring efforts and held our second on-field mentoring clinic. As a result of our investments, our programming increased and client partnerships were formed to partially compensate MWSRA for specific mentoring and development activities.

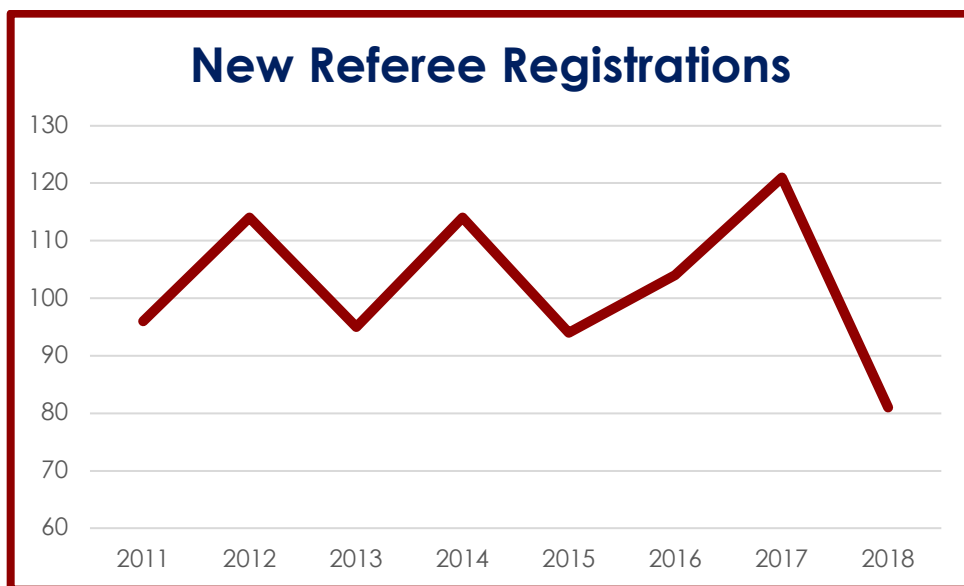
Most recently, MWSRA created the Recruitment & Development Committee to increase our ability to attract, retain, and serve new referees. This committee will be developing MWSRA's recruitment strategy and ensuring mentoring activities are well coordinated and efficiently organized. This committee consists of assignors, board members, mentors, and other referees.

CHALLENGES IN 2018

The association faced numerous challenges in 2018. The most significant challenge is a shortage of referees throughout the region, resulting in difficulty maintaining consistently high game coverage as well as referees having to work more games and longer days. MWSRA's New Referee Development Program is seeking to alleviate some of the impacts of this regional shortage, but given MWSRA's predominantly volunteer leadership team, scaling these programs has been slow. As a result of this and macroeconomic trends, MWSRA's total membership has remained fairly consistent since 2010. See chart below:



In addition, despite years of steady progress on attracting new referees to MWSRA peaking at 121 in 2017, the association faced its lowest new cohort of referee registrants in our Game Management System since 2010 with only 81 new registrants. MWSRA is confident that the newly created Recruitment & Development Committee will make significant strides in the coming year in attracting new registrants. See chart below:



Two other challenges are worth noting: adverse weather conditions and sportsmanship. First, coping with frequent adverse weather conditions, often resulting in consistent rescheduling and cancellations – with less predictability for assignors, referees, and the association's overall revenue. While it is difficult to foresee weather challenges, encouraging leagues to prioritize turf fields and to communicate promptly with referees and assignors in the event of changes have been our main efforts. Second, though sportsmanship has been a long-time focus of MWSRA and its leagues, there has been a growing focus on regional and national challenges associated with spectator behavior, noting the challenges that poor sportsmanship, aggression, and inappropriate verbal and physical behavior pose for referees. News reports of poor spectator behavior have also become more common, and MWSRA is concerned that this may negatively impact recruitment and retention. As a result, MWSRA supports its referees by providing designated liaisons between leagues and officials on incidents that arise, communicating with leagues about poor sportsmanship of teams and spectators, and promoting the state of Maryland's 2018-2019 new procedures for managing spectator abuse.

UPDATED MWSRA AWARDS PROGRAM

After decades of operating under an outdated and costly awards program, MWSRA leadership reinvented the awards program to better serve the organization's goals in the 21st Century. Three categories of awards are now suggested for consideration as a complete overhaul to the existing system: first-year awards, length of service awards, and meritorious service awards. The Administration & Professionalism Committee will manage this system. This system will more immediately recognize new referees performing well, with up to ten first-year awards distributed for high performing new officials. Moreover, awards will be more versatile and fitting for a diverse, multi-generational, modern organization. This restructuring will also significantly reduce awards-related expenses for MWSRA, with initial estimates for all new awards at more than 52% less than current costs for solely the previous 15 and 20 year awards each year. These cost savings will be reinjected into MWSRA's referee retention efforts.

2018-2020 MWSRA LEADERSHIP TEAM

Officers

President – Matthew Popkin
Vice President – Behnam Farzam
Treasurer – Seth Cohen
Secretary – Bob Moss

Board of Directors

Alex Echeandia
Fran Gavelli
Michael Greenwood
Noah Grill (Under 25 Representative)
Mike Kelley (Under 25 Representative)
Ted Kimani
Mary Ramirez de Arellano

Committee Chairs

Administration & Professionalism – Behnam Farzam
Observation & Evaluation – Pat Werner
Recruitment & Development – Fran Gavelli

Assignors

Wendell Hughes
Jack Kyriakos
Keyan Mohtashemi

Coordinators & Liaisons

Gabriel Ado
Michael Greenwood
Mike Kelley
Dan Lukash
Mary Ramirez de Arellano
Tom Schick

For questions or comments, please contact Matthew Popkin at mwsrapresident@gmail.com or Bob Moss at mwsrasecretary@gmail.com with questions