

Summary for website home page:



September 02, 2016 - Congratulations to **Sandy Hunt**, FIFA & World Cup Referee, FIFA & World Cup Instructor, FIFA Match Observer, CONCACAF Referee Instructor and National Assessor - **Selected by US Soccer as a USSF Lifetime Member**

## **Sandy Hunt's Story - 1985 to Present**

I believe my first year of registration was 1985, Linda Velie taught the entry level course in Bellevue.

The first game I ever Refereed was a Boys U12 rec game at 60 Acres in the fall 1985 after the entry level course. The first call I ever made as a referee was in that game and it was wrong.

The boys had played for at least the first 10 minutes with no fouls and nothing to mediate. After 10 minutes or so there was an attack and I looked at the play and recognized the attacker was all alone behind the defense so I called offside. Just as I blew the whistle and had stopped running I looked toward the goalkeeper and noticed he and a teammate defender were standing on the post talking - no way it was offside, not by a mile. At that moment I realized I could probably never make a call that poor again so I may as well keep trying - and I restarted the game after apologizing to the 2 teams and dropping the ball to acknowledge my mistake. That first season I did over 100 Lake Washington club youth games for WSYSA. My involvement there grew into local games at the youth, amateur, HS, College and what was becoming the Professional Division.

In about 1994 the first professional game I was assigned to was as a 4th official in the Tacoma Dome between Sounders and Colorado Foxes. The National Referee was a local (lived in WA for only a short time and moved again shortly after this game) and

he struggled with control of the game all evening when finally, in full view of everyone in attendance, Coach Hinton stepped to the touchline and offered the Referee his glasses. As the rookie 4th official I walked to Coach Hinton and turned to face him and although he was pretty angry we both burst into laughter. I was finally able to stop chuckling and got Coach Hinton - and his glasses - back into his technical area by telling him "Coach Hinton, this is my very first game and I'm only the 4th official and if you don't help me out this will be my last game too."

I continued running lines and in 1995 I began to be appointed as a Referee in the USISL and PDL in the NW. I did games for the Everett Bigfoot, Puget Sound Hammers, PDL games featuring Cascade Surge, Spokane Shadow and the Yakima Reds. 1995 was also the year of my first International Friendly between USA and England in May in Portland, OR.

In the summer of 1996 I attended USSF National Camp for the first time in Philadelphia. I was the WA State rookie and went along with Oscar Myre, Mo Sagakhaneh and Mo Zarrabi. We had all been running and studying to be able to pass the fitness and written tests. Without their help I'm not sure I would have been able to be so successful. During the weekly get togethers they shared their previous experiences in games, training and testing for the benefit of all of us.

After passing the running test at 1996 National Camp, I was eligible to be assigned into Sounders middles to accompany the lines I had been running up to that point. At National Camp in January 1997 in Florida, I was asked to arrive 2 days early to officiate some preseason games for Major League Soccer. I was assigned 3 lines in the 4 days we were there for camp, the one day I didn't have a game was our annual fitness test. After camp I began to receive MLS assignments onto the lines, including a playoff game. At MLS preseason in 1998, after a satisfactory first year as an AR, I was assigned as a Referee and during the regular season to my first MLS game in KC. From that point on I stayed busy with league matches for the MLS, Open Cup, USL, and international women's friendly games as I had been appointed to the International Panel of FIFA Referees in 1999.

In 1999 one of the great highlights was officiating in the Women's World Cup which was held in the United States. For this tournament I was elated and honored to receive a first appointment to officiate in Portland, Oregon the match between Japan v Russia and later in Giants Stadium Australia v China. It was made all the more special to work that first game in person in front of so many wonderful friends and my own family.

In 2001 it was an honor to support the efforts of a new women's league by becoming a Referee in the WUSA (Women's United Soccer Association). My involvement in this league was memorable on many levels but chiefly in support of the terrific women's players who were forging their own league to succeed in.

There were many more special moments as a Referee which were made all the more memorable due to the fine people I am grateful to have worked with and gotten to know along the way. Over the years there were many memorable games, one local highlight was that along with Mo Zarrabi we were honored to officiate the first ever soccer game in the Clink together.

After retiring as a FIFA Referee at the end of 2004 the final match of my career was the NCAA final in 2005 between UCLA and the University of Portland. By this time, I had been recruited to begin instructing Referees and AR's for FIFA at tournaments and workshops around the world.

Again, there are many wonderful memories but maybe the one that stands out the most is from my visit to Tehran, Iran in November of 2008. Upon arriving (with no visa in hand but that's another story), I was asked what I would like to see while I was in Iran. Having done a bit of homework I innocently replied that I knew there was the biggest football match of the year near the end of my visit and I was really hoping to get to go to the stadium and watch this huge rivalry. Keep in mind that in Iran women are not allowed to attend football matches or be in mixed crowds. Of course this created quite a stir among the representatives there but on the 2nd to the last day the woman who was on the executive committee came to me to say it had been arranged. So at the appointed time she indicated that we should leave and I turned and said to the 10 Iranian women Referee Instructor's and Assessor's to get into the van to come along. For about 10 seconds you could have heard a pin drop in the auditorium. The immediate response was "Oh no, these other women cannot come to the match." My reply was, "Oh, well, I'm sorry, I misunderstood. I thought we would all go together and discuss the match. If they aren't going, then I will stay behind and be together with them." After much deliberation and phoning back and forth, the other women were told they could come along. This was the first live football match these women had attended in 30 years. A few of them had memories of attending matches as young girls but it had not been possible for so many years since then. When we arrived (just after the kickoff) we were ushered into the press box where nearly all jaws dropped upon us entering. The women Instructors and Assessors were taking pictures and texting them to all their friends during the match and afterward were so grateful to have been able to be present. The memory of the smiles and looks of joy on their faces while they were enjoying the football match live, in a stadium was and continues to be so inspiring.

For someone who got involved because of questionable officiating in a women's game that boiled over due to ineffective leadership by the official, I have traveled far and met some of my closest friends, all because of an 18 panel ball and a whistle.

List of some highlights as Referee:

1985 entry level clinic - first registered  
1996 First National Camp/National Referee/MLS AR  
1997 MLS Referee

1999 Appointed FIFA Referee  
1999/2003 Women's World Cup Referee  
2000 Referee Olympic Games/Referee MLS ALL Star game  
2002 Appointed to USSF Referee Committee

List of some highlights as Instructor/Assessor:

2004 Appointed to List of FIFA Referee Instructors, USSF National Instructor/Assessor  
FIFA Instructor for a number of tournaments and training events and member  
association courses from 2004 - present including:

2006 Youth Women's World Championships

2007 Women's World Cup

2008 Olympic Games

2008 Youth Women's World Championships

2010 Youth Women's World Championships

2011 Women's World Cup

And still ongoing:

2004 - present:

International Match Observer for FIFA and CONCACAF - Champions League, Olympic  
Qualifying Tournaments, men's and women's World Cup Qualifiers.

2004 - present:

CONCACAF Referee Instructor - for multiple Olympic Qualifying tournaments and  
member association events.