

# USA HOCKEY OFFICIATING PROGRAM



## OFFICIALS EVALUATION PROGRAM

### EVALUATORS HANDBOOK

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# FOREWORD

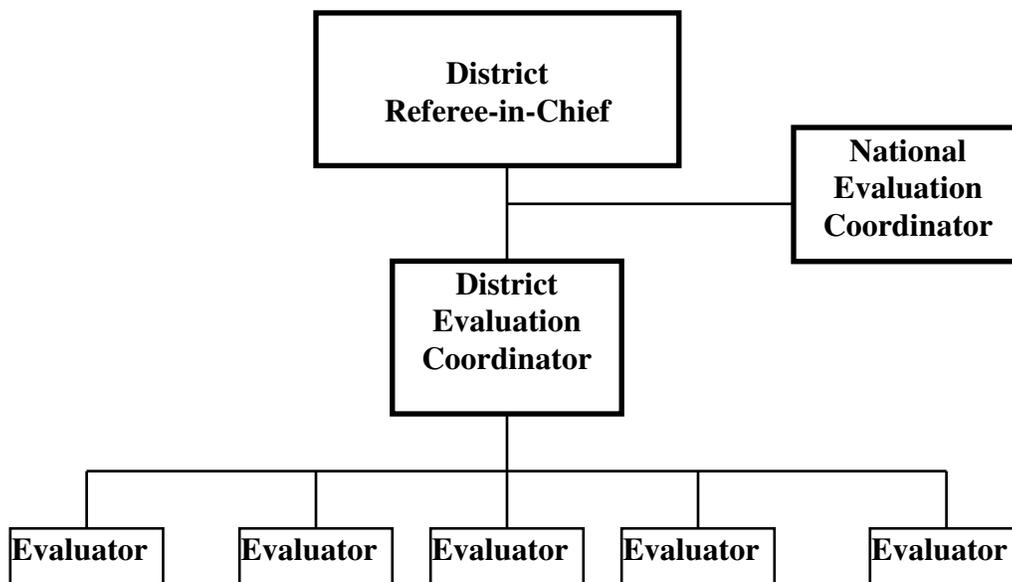
On-ice Evaluation is designed to enhance the development of officials through useful feedback. The Evaluation Section of the USA Hockey Referees Committee has developed this handbook to serve as a guide for volunteer Officials Evaluators, nationwide. The guidelines contained in this manual have been designed to foster a standardized approach to the evaluation of all USA Hockey Officials.

Because evaluation of officials is one of the most important, yet most overlooked functions, the Officiating Program is attempting to formalize the evaluation process from coast to coast. The game of Ice Hockey changes so quickly that attendance at one eight-hour seminar at the beginning of the season is no longer adequate for the average official. Thus, follow-up education is essential in establishing a strong core of officials.

Through the Evaluation Program we will attempt to gain consistency in the competence of most of our 26,000+ grassroots Officials and to generate enthusiasm towards the evaluation process. A National Evaluation Program Coordinator has been appointed by the USA Hockey Referee Committee to guide and oversee the program. Secondly, one Evaluation Program Coordinator has been appointed for each of the twelve USA Hockey Districts. These Coordinators will be charged with the task of implementing the program throughout the district. Initially, this means recruiting a wide base of experienced, respected and interested officials, training them and turning them loose to complete their task. The Coordinator is also responsible for monitoring the progress of the District Program and recommending changes to be implemented nationally.

Eventually, we will conduct workshops in all areas of the United States for the further refinement of Evaluation skills. Evaluators will be trained in the mechanics of evaluating officials in the areas of officiating technique and, most importantly, "people" skills. We are committed to developing this program as completely as possible with the ultimate goal of having each registered official evaluated, by a trained evaluator a minimum of once per season. In addition, level 4 officials must be evaluated once per calendar year in order to maintain their level 4 status.

Below is the District Hierarchy as it relates to the Evaluation Program. This chart represents the proper channels for information flow and idea exchange:



As this program continues to evolve, you will see many changes and enhancements. These changes will be made for the good of the overall National Officiating Program based upon input from all sources. By operating in this manner, the Officiating Program will be better equipped to "Speak with one Voice." We thank you for your commitment to the betterment of the USA Hockey Officiating Program. We are excited about this program and are happy to have you with us.

# **OBJECTIVES OF THE USA HOCKEY EVALUATION PROGRAM**

The USA Hockey Officials Evaluation Program is designed as an educational tool to assist in the development of our grassroots officials. The evaluation process will provide instructional follow-up which reinforces information presented at USA Hockey Seminars and is outlined in the officiating manuals. In essence, the evaluator is an officiating “coach” who is dedicated to successful officiating. Although the evaluation process is a means of providing opportunities for officials to work at their appropriate level, success at this particular level of play is not a guarantee of advancement.

The National Officials Evaluation Program will accomplish many goals upon its implementation in a local area. Among the goals are:

- 1) To provide instructional follow-up which reinforces materials presented at USA Hockey Seminars.
- 2) To improve the overall quality of local grassroots officiating.
- 3) To develop more consistent officiating standards in terms of rule interpretation and enforcement, positioning and techniques.
- 4) To identify candidates for advanced training and higher level competition.
- 5) To provide officials opportunities to work at their appropriate level.
- 6) To improve consistency in the USA Hockey Evaluation Process.

## **ROLE OF THE EVALUATOR**

Before we can begin to discuss the evaluation process, we must first develop our core of evaluators. As we know from experience, not every good hockey player is capable of becoming a good Coach. Likewise, not every good official possesses the necessary skills to become a good Evaluator. Good Evaluators are, in essence, Coaches of the officiating world. Thus, it is vital to the success of the program that only well qualified officials are utilized.

## **DEDICATION TO QUALITY**

Each evaluator must be:

Dedicated to improving the quality and consistency of officiating;

Prepared to provide positive, as well as negative, feedback to individual officials evaluated;

Able to recognize their area of responsibility and not get involved in policy or supervisory matters, whenever possible;

Respected by the officials who are being evaluated;

Objective in their assessments, since these evaluations can be an important teaching, as well as promotional, tool.

Able to be neutral enough to divorce themselves from the evaluation of family members, personal friends and frequent partners.

## QUALITIES OF AN EFFECTIVE EVALUATOR

All high quality Evaluators have the following traits in common:

Have a thorough understanding of all current USA Hockey rules, interpretations and officiating techniques.

Know the special league rules and regulations that may apply to fairly evaluate an official for a particular game.

Develop and encourage a positive relationship with officials.

Identify an official's strengths and encourage continued development of these areas.

Identify an official's weaknesses and indicate ways of overcoming these problems.

Promote enthusiasm towards the perfection of officiating skills.

## COMMUNICATION TIPS

Alert both Team Coaches to your presence at the game (primarily at upper level games)

Be honest, tell the official the same things that are written in your report.

Be objective. If there are problems, indicate methods that the official can use to improve.

Be a good listener. Be attentive to what the official is saying so that there is no misunderstanding.

Use the "Positive, Negative, Positive" approach when speaking to the official. Everybody has some positive attributes; accentuate these at the end of your conversation.

Present negatives in a positive manner. Don't give a reason for the official to be defensive

Don't simply tell the official that he made a mistake. Teach him/her methods to prevent it from occurring again

Ask questions about game situations you may be unsure of.

Be sympathetic, particularly when working with inexperienced officials.

Keep your conversations and your reports confidential.

Do not openly criticize game officials or the local officials organization. (Doing so hurts their credibility and yours).

## **WHEN TO COMMUNICATE WITH OFFICIALS**

Communicating before the game requires these special skills:

Inform officials at the pre-season seminars that the Evaluation Program will be in place and that most officials will be evaluated and critiqued during the season.

Except under extreme circumstances, the Evaluator should always visit the On-Ice Officials prior to the game. Respect the officials right to privacy in their dressing room. Knock and wait to be invited in before entering the room. Be brief and to the point and do not hang around to socialize.

If an official is experienced, the evaluator should discuss goals and things to work on for the upcoming game, during a short pre-game visit. He/she should ask the official to identify areas in which the official has been attempting to improve upon. Tell him/her that you will key in on these areas to observe his/her progress. Answer any questions about situations that may have arisen during the past few weeks. Shake hands and wish the official a good game.

If the official is inexperienced and may be upset by the presence of an evaluator a short, friendly pre-game visit is in order. The Evaluator should present himself/herself as a "Coach" and not an "Evaluator." Use phrases like "I'm here to help you to improve your game." The Evaluator should not give an inexperienced official a list of goals and things to work on prior to the game, unless he/she has been working closely with the official in prior games.

During the intermissions between periods (usually during upper level games) the Evaluator may go into the officials room to discuss the previous period. During this time, the evaluator should only discuss situations that relate to the mechanical part of the game. Unless, comments are solicited by the official, judgment should be discussed minimally, if at all. This is done to prevent an overreaction by the official and a drastic change in standards during the game. At very high levels (Junior, Minor Pro and College) this aspect of the "Coaching" process becomes more important.

During intermissions, be brief. Discuss only a few small fine-tuning types of things. The intermission is a time for the On-Ice Officials to regroup and relax. Do not use the entire intermission for a critique.

After the game, the evaluator should discuss the evaluation report with the official (unless specifically instructed to do otherwise). Wait for the official to complete his/her change of equipment into his/her street clothes. Be prepared to discuss the major parts of an official's performance only.

Talk to the officials being evaluated on an individual basis and in private, if possible (i.e., in locations other than dressing room).

An evaluation over the telephone should be used only when there is insufficient time after the game to discuss the game with the official.

## **SELECTION OF EVALUATORS**

Evaluators should possess all of the qualities described earlier in this manual. The best candidates should be selected from the following groups:

- \* Level 4 officials -- They are people who have already demonstrated a high degree of competency in the USA Hockey Program.
- \* Senior officials who are willing to sacrifice On-Ice time to evaluate other officials. (No evaluation is to be done by an official who is working on the ice with the official who is being evaluated.)
- \* Retired officials who have accomplished a high level of competency, but no longer actively officiate.
- \* Affiliated (non-skating) officials.
- \* Past Elite Development Program Participants.

\*NOTE: An evaluator must possess maturity and interpersonal communication skills. He/she should attend seminars conducted by USA Hockey and should be older than High School age. The respect that an Evaluator has earned from his/her fellow officials in key when selecting Evaluators.

## **EVALUATION FREQUENCY**

The following guidelines have been developed as a "wish list" for the Evaluation Program in each district. It is recommended that the following groups of officials should be evaluated:

All Level 1 and Level 2 officials: at least once per season.

Level 4 officials ; Once per calendar year.

Potential "Tournament" officials: mid to late in the regular season.

Potential "Camp" officials: well in advance of application deadlines.

Officials who request an evaluation for recognition, identification and corrective measures

Officials who have been identified as needing corrective assistance: as soon as possible.

Other officials may be evaluated as deemed appropriate by the District Evaluation Program Coordinator.

Do not evaluate non-USA Hockey registered officials.

## **THE EVALUATION WORKSHEET**

USA Hockey has recently developed a worksheet that Evaluators can use to take notes while watching the game and also provide to the officials during the review process. This worksheet provides rink diagrams where positioning and procedural items can be diagramed, along with a section for notes next to each diagram. The Evaluator can use this worksheet for their own note-taking purposes or can give it to the official as a means to provide additional information and visual reinforcement to the evaluation process. The evaluation worksheet is displayed in Appendix I of this manual.

# THE EVALUATION FORM

The Official USA Hockey Officials Evaluation form has been developed by a hand selected group of highly respected evaluators from all levels of officiating from the Mites and Squirts through the Collegiate and Professional ranks. Their goal was to develop one form that encompasses the main areas of concentration for officials at all levels. The form has recently been modified to become more user friendly and better accomplish the goals and the objectives of the program. The result of their work can be found in Appendix II of this manual

The top portion of the form contains vital information relative to the officiating of the game. It identifies the skill level of the game, the teams involved and the officiating system. This information is necessary as a reference when reviewing the evaluation at a later date. This portion of the form allows you to identify whether pre and post game meetings with the official took place and has a space set-aside for the official to initial in order to verify his/her receipt of the evaluation. It also allows for easier tracking purposes in those multi-state districts by including the home state of the officials being evaluated.

The evaluation form allows for officials to be evaluated using two different sets of criteria; basic and advanced, which have been outlined in this manual. For each set of criteria, a four-level scale of Excellent, Good, Satisfactory and Needs Improvement is used for each item to be rated. This scale has been designed to be very general in nature to help the official identify his/her general strengths and weaknesses. By having the scale general in nature, more emphasis will be put on the important part of the evaluation, the written comments.

Even though the same scale is used for both the basic and advanced criteria, a difference in performance should be recognizable based on the level of the official, level of the game, and the rating given. Naturally, we would have greater expectations of experienced officials who are being evaluated using the advanced criteria. For this reason, an inexperienced official receiving a Good using the basic criteria may be different than an experienced official receiving a Good using the advanced criteria. The scale may be the same, but the presence of different criteria and expectations distinguishes between the basic and advanced level official. If necessary, the Evaluator can make reference as to which criteria were used in the summary section at the bottom of the form.

As you can see, the main body of the form, containing the important information, is broken down into seven (7) critical areas of concern that form the first column. They are Appearance, Skating, Position, Face-Offs, Signals, Judgment and Awareness. These are the general areas in which officials are evaluated by coaches, players, spectators and by other officials. They are the true determinants of an official's overall acceptability.

Each of the seven general areas of concern can be broken down into several specific items that are outlined on the back of the evaluation form. These specific topics are the most important aspects of each general category. Within each of the seven main categories, there is space to rate the official on the above-mentioned scale with a simple checkmark.

As you may notice, there is no longer space for a numeric rating in each category. This is done purposely so that the official will be more likely to concentrate on the written comments instead of a bottom line score. In most evaluation systems that use a raw score to rate an official, the official becomes more interested in moving from a 65 to a 70 than they are about improving on a specific weakness. This evaluation form will, hopefully, eliminate this competitive aspect of the evaluation process.

With experienced officials, the Evaluator can be more technical in his/her evaluation. He/she will be more apt to use the advanced criteria for such an official. Conversely, when evaluating a new, less experienced official, the Evaluator must be more general in nature, overlooking the small detailed aspects of officiating. When evaluating these officials, he/she will be more likely to use the basic criteria.

Thus, the criteria being used to rate a particular official is, generally, based upon the amount of detail that is contained within the evaluation. For example, if the written portion of the evaluation

mainly contains comments about very basic concepts like getting to the blue line ahead of the play and signaling a penalty infraction, the basic criteria is being used. An evaluation that speaks mainly of judgment and the thinking part of the game, calls for the advanced criteria to be used. The subsequent rating in each category should reflect the performance based on the criteria being used and the level of play.

Evaluators must be sure to give "true" ratings in each category. If an official is honestly "Excellent" at a certain category, he/she deserves a rating of "Excellent". Attitudes such as "I never give anybody an Excellent, because there is always room for improvement," defeat the entire purpose of the program. This is also true of the lowest end of the rating scale. These evaluations must be completed solely on the basis of the official's performance and not compared to another official's rating. Fill in the ratings last, based upon the written comments.

The last column is a blank column reserved for "Comments." In these spaces the evaluator can write down pointers, reinforcements, notes or other items that can be referred to during the verbal review with the official. The evaluator must make these notes so they are clear and understandable to the official. Additionally, it must be written clearly enough so that both the official and the evaluator will be able to understand its intent long after the evaluation has passed. This comment section has been enlarged in order to provide more flexibility and space for the evaluator to write comments. If more space is needed for comments, use another form.

The summary, located at the bottom of the form, indicates some things for the official to work on during his/her future assignments. This summary presents the "big picture" and must be general, simple and to the point. There should be no more than 3 or 4 items written in this summary. Just as important, the summary should accentuate positive attributes and improved areas. Additionally, the summary should contain information about special league rules that are being played and unusual situations that have occurred.

At the bottom of the form, the evaluator should note the difficulty of the game. Judging the difficulty level is a very subjective issue. It should be determined according to the style of game within the participating age group. A difficult Squirt game, for example may be a roughly played game with a significant amount of body contact while an easy Squirt game might be one played well within the rules with a wide margin of goals. Generally, officials will tend to have better scores for easier games because there aren't as many things that can go wrong.

The form distribution is listed on the bottom of the form. It is intended for the District Evaluation Coordinator to get the top (white) copy, the official to get the middle (yellow) copy and the evaluator to retain the bottom (pink) copy for his/her records. On the back of each copy is a reminder as to the Mission Statement and a description of each of the seven main categories. This explanation capsules each of the categories and briefly describes the attributes that go into the determination of a rating for each. For example, when we speak of "Control of Players" in the "Face-Offs" section we are referring to the manners in which the official handles encroachment of wingers, communication with players and partners, player ejection and player position. This chart will help to serve as a reference when the official reviews his/her evaluation in the future.

## **GUIDELINES FOR EVALUATING BASIC AND ADVANCED OFFICIALS**

The next section of this training manual is the most important section to you, as an evaluator. We have attempted to describe each of the attributes that are to be considered when evaluating officials in each of the areas that have been identified on the evaluation form.

You will note that, when reviewing each of these guidelines, we have supplied you with the particular criteria that you are to evaluate. Each attribute is further designated as being either basic or advanced. Generally, Level 1 and 2 officials should be evaluated on the basic criteria and Level 3 and 4 officials on the advanced criteria. However, based upon the experience level of the official being evaluated and the level of game being played, variations may occur.

These criteria are purposefully general in nature. This is done so that the Evaluator will have a general idea on what aspects of the particular category he/she should be concentrating on. This publication is not intended to teach the Evaluator on the basics and fundamentals of officiating USA Hockey games. Rather, it is designed to assist in the observation of performance.

Each Evaluator is personally responsible for knowing the proper USA Hockey mechanics, procedures and philosophies. These procedures are defined in the Officials Manuals, the Official Playing Rules and the Playing Rules Handbook. If you have questions concerning the "official" policies of the Officiating Program, please do not hesitate to contact your District Evaluation Coordinator or District Referee-in-Chief.

# APPEARANCE

## UNIFORM

The uniform contributes greatly to an official's overall first impression on the ice. The official who looks clean and sharp is more likely to present a positive image than the official who appears dumpy and unkempt. When reviewing the official's uniform the Evaluator must look at the official in the locker room as well as on the ice. Sometimes imperfections can be hidden when viewed solely from the stands.

The wearing of the proper equipment and the proper fit of this equipment are equally important. Likewise, the grooming of the official and the cleanliness of his/her apparel must be observed.

### BASIC

- Approved black hockey helmet with Chin strap fastened.
- Neatly groomed face/neck.
- Clean sweater, current crest on left chest. Proper fit.
- Metal finger whistle.
- Black creased trousers with suspenders and no belt.
- Skates polished black with tendon guards taped. No Goalie skates or figure skates.
- White laces.
- No jewelry.

### ADVANCED

- Polished, proper helmet per league issue or sponsorship.
- Facial hair discouraged. Neatly trimmed mustache is acceptable.
- Name plate white Latin letters with black background. Orange or red properly fitted armbands.
- Whistle protected with tape.
- Sewn in crease. Hemmed to touch top of skate.
- Skate toes untattered, black tape around ankles.
- White, clean, bright laces.
- Appropriate street attire off-ice.

# APPEARANCE

## ATTITUDE

At the amateur levels of Ice Hockey, the attitude of the official must be stressed. Ideally, each official should strive to work at his/her best ability during every game, strive to work on his/her weaknesses and accept constructive criticism as a learning tool. Hockey officials must possess the appropriate "people skills" on the ice to promote an atmosphere of cooperation between coaches, players and officials.

The attributes listed below are the traits that the Evaluator must assess for each official:

### BASIC

- Seriousness.
- Rules and technical knowledge of the game.
- Enthusiasm.
- Interest in the game.

### ADVANCED

- Business-like mannerisms.
- Enthusiasm.
- Respect towards participants.
- Interest in the game.
- Confidence, without arrogance.
- Dedication.
- Composure.
- Professional demeanor.
- Capability of earning respect.
- Willingness to admit a mistake.
- Integrity and Fairness.
- Enjoyment of Officiating.
- Maturity.
- Rules and Interpretation Knowledge.

# APPEARANCE

## PRESENCE AND POISE

This area of an official's evaluation has not often been included on official's evaluations in the past. Because the presence of an official is an intangible trait, it is not easily measured. Essentially, presence and poise can be described as "how an official carries himself/herself," on the ice. This includes skating posture (to an extent), body language, physical conditioning, gestures, mannerisms and how he/she reacts under pressure.

Officiating presence and poise is enhanced by:

### BASIC

- Good physical condition. Height and weight.
- Composed under pressure, control of emotions.
- Use of body language.

### ADVANCED

- Upper body strength, athletic body type.
- Conveys authority assertively when necessary.
- Use of signals, physical presence and voice during difficult situations.
- Maintains a positive rapport through mannerisms and personality without jeopardizing integrity.
- Adjusts emotions to coincide with intensity level of game.

# SKATING

## FORWARD

Skating ability is the fundamental building block around which all other traits revolve. Good skating ability helps an official to be in good position to view the play. This position, in turn, helps the official to see more of the play and make more sound judgments. The key elements of skating are reviewed in the video, "Fundamentals of Skating for Officials" and in the Officiating Manual series.

You will find that most officials are much more proficient at skating forward than backward. Nonetheless, every official, no matter how strong a skater, can improve some aspect of skating forward. To properly evaluate skating, it is recommended that each Evaluator personally attend a recognized USA Hockey Powerskating Program that has been designed for officials.

### BASIC

- Comfortable appearance on skates.
- Proficient, strong strides.
- Proper ready position.
- Efficient starting ability.
- Able to stop in both directions (facing play).
- Controlled manner of stopping.
- Turns facing the middle of the ice.
- Uses crossunder turns in both directions.
- Pivots in both directions facing play.

### ADVANCED

- Comfortable appearance on skates.
- Exaggerated knee bend.
- Full extension and recovery.
- Proper arm swing.
- Proper "V" and "T" starts (limited crossunders).
- Stops in ready position.
- Uses stops at proper times (play on same side of ice).
- Control turns at proper times (play on opposite side of ice).
- Proper technique and balance when using control turns.
- Fluid crossunder style.
- Skates stay close to the ice during crossunders (eliminate "hop").
- Smooth transition and proper posture while pivoting.
- Able to change directions quickly (proficient lateral movement).

# SKATING

## BACKWARD

Backward skating requires the same skills as utilized when skating forward. Generally speaking, what an official can do forward, he/she should be able to do backward with equal proficiency. When evaluating an official's backward skating skills, you will notice that most of the same guidelines for forward skating are also used for backward skating. Those attributes that are unique to backward skating are listed first in each of the columns below:

### BASIC

- Starts backward as opposed to skating forward then turning backward.
- Comfortable appearance on skates.
- Proficient, strong strides.
- Proper ready position.
- Efficient starting ability.
- Able to stop in both directions (facing play).
- Controlled manner of stopping.
- Turns facing the middle of the ice.
- Uses crossunder turns in both directions.
- Pivots in both directions facing play.

### ADVANCED

- Uses "C" cuts when starting and striding backward (limits crossunders).
- Uses "V" and "T" stops in appropriate situations.
- Uses legs to skate with no wiggling from the hips.
- Exaggerated knee bend.
- Full extension and recovery.
- Power starts (limited crossunders).
- Stops in ready position.
- Uses stops at proper times (play on same side of ice).
- Fluid crossunder style.
- Skates stay close to the ice during crossunders.
- Smooth transition and proper posture while pivoting.
- Able to change directions quickly (proficient lateral movement).

# SKATING

## HUSTLE

Hustle is one aspect of officiating that players, coaches and spectators subconsciously use when evaluating an official's overall ability. An official who demonstrates the use of a strong skating style to get into the proper position at the right time is generally more accepted than one who does not.

With each passing season, hustle seems to be an increasingly more difficult aspect to teach officials. Successful officials not only hustle, but hustle at the appropriate times. By this, we mean that when an official simply skates hard and fast he/she may be sacrificing awareness levels for speed.

Hustle incorporates strong, hard skating when getting into position without lowering awareness levels.

### BASIC

- Ability to maintain proper distance from play.
- Skating hard when necessary.
- Gets to the appropriate line before the play.
- Readiness before players during a stoppage.
- Does not appear tired or fatigued.
- Gives the appearance of a positive effort.

### ADVANCED

- Quickness on skates.
- Ability to read and react quickly to situations.
- Utilization of the proper speed in pursuit of the play.
- Skates quickly into the Attacking Zone.
- Limited gliding during stoppages.
- Keeps feet moving, especially when skating backward.

# POSITION

## GOAL LINE (ANY OFFICIATING SYSTEM)

The ultimate success of an official greatly depends on his/her ability to effectively manage the game around the goal line. Even though there are two Officiating Systems that are used by USA Hockey, goal line position remains the same.

Simply stated, an effective official uses limited movements, keeps the play in front of him/her at all times and moves to the goal when a scoring opportunity is present. When evaluating the goal line position of any official, during play, the following attributes should be observed:

### BASIC

- Keeps the players in front of him/her at all times.
- Never turns back to the front of the goal.
- Skates completely into the Attacking Zone to the goal line.
- Skates to the goal line quickly.
- Stays away from the end boards.
- Stays out of the play.

### ADVANCED

- Displays the proper anticipation of reading of play leaving the Attacking Zone.
- Minimal movements along goal line.
- Skates behind the goal only in emergency situations.
- Moves towards goal on goal scoring opportunities.
- Proper use of "home base" (on goal line where face-off spot would be).
- Moves towards benches when signaling line changes.

# POSITION

## BLUE LINE (LINESMAN OR 2 OFFICIAL SYSTEM)

Blue Line position is important to officials, especially Linesmen. It is difficult to "sell" a call that is made when the official is not on the line, watching the play. There is a definite "art" to proper blue line positioning. When evaluating blue line position, use the following criteria:

### BASIC

- Gets to the Blue Line before the play.
- Gets inside the Blue Line to make the call (approx. three feet).
- Maintains proper Blue Line position while the play is in the Attacking Zone.
- Use of release signal (3 official system).
- "Shades" into zone during End Zone Face-Offs.

### ADVANCED

- Flows well into the Attacking Zone when play is going toward the official at the Blue Line.
- Leaves the Blue Line position with last attacking player when play exits the Attacking Zone toward the far Attacking Zone.
- Maintains position in the Neutral Zone as the Back Linesman to assist partner, if necessary.
- Maintains position in the opposite zone from the puck (3-official system).
- Proper reading of play for release of partner from Blue Line (3-official system).
- During a power play in Attacking Zone, the Back Linesman moves up near partner's line (3-official system).

# POSITION

## REACTION TO PLAY

The "Reaction to Play" evaluation revolves around the official's ability to follow the play as it moves from zone to zone.

One of the truly important attributes of a successful official is his/her ability to "read and react" effectively to the play. To do this, the official must learn to use a wide field of vision instead of concentrating on the puck, only. Puck watching is easy to detect in an official. Such an official moves constantly, even with the slightest change of direction of the puck. The official who utilizes a wide field of vision, generally sits back and watches the play from a distance.

Officials who effectively read the play rarely get hit with the puck, see most occurrences on the ice, move only when necessary and move in a controlled manner.

### BASIC

- Follows play 10-15 feet behind (Referee).
- Follows play close to the boards.
- Stays out of the play.
- Officials maintain diagonal position to each other (2-official system).

### ADVANCED

- Uses stops and starts when play is on same side of ice.
- Uses control turns to follow play on opposite side of ice.
- When play is on opposite side of ice, follows play further away from boards.
- Gets up on the boards to avoid play only when physical contact is eminent.
- Maintains position that allows him/her the best vantage point of the play, and is not obstructed by players or objects.
- Avoids contact with the puck, when possible.

# POSITION

## DURING STOPPAGES

Officials need to utilize proper position during stoppages of play for one reason: to see all happenings on the ice. This awareness is most important, especially during the more hostile games. More often than not, penalties assessed during stoppages assist the officials in maintaining control of the game. In fact, during difficult games the actions that take place after the whistle are more important than those that occur during the play.

Good officials will recognize these facts and react by being physically present during stoppages of play.

### BASIC

- Use proper positioning for all face-offs.
- Use of proper positioning to view line changes, benches, goal activity, altercations, etc.
- Uses proper positioning at end of period and during handshake line.

### ADVANCED

- During Neutral Zone Face-Offs, official not conducting face-off "shades" (moves in) toward closer goal (5-7 feet) (2-official system).
- Positioning at penalty bench when multiple players leave during stoppage.
- Hustling quickly to get in between players after the whistle.
- Skating route always provides focus on the players' benches and the players during stoppages.
- Positioning which enables the coach to better view line change signals.
- Positioning during face-offs that assists the Linesmen when during difficult situations (Referee- 3-official system).
- Staying away from players when assessing penalties.

# FACE-OFFS

## CONTROL OF PLAYERS

During properly executed face-offs, the official who is conducting the face-off must be sure to create a fair opportunity for both teams to win possession of the puck. In order to accomplish this, it may be necessary for the official to take control of certain players. At lower levels, face-offs are fairly easy to conduct as the players line up quickly and correctly.

The Evaluator must evaluate the speed of the face-off, the methodology used in lining up the players and the communication that occurs during the process. The following attributes contribute to successful face-offs:

### BASIC

- The official takes up position quickly and directly following the stoppage of play.
- The officials line up prior to all players.
- Sticks are placed in white portion of face-off circle or a stick length apart (Attacking team first).
- Other players are completely out of face-off circle.
- Players are separated by marks.
- Centers who do not line up properly are replaced.

### ADVANCED

- Officials watch line changes while carrying out duties during stoppage.
- Centers place sticks on ice fairly (Attacking team first).
- Encroachment is kept to a minimum.
- Whistle is blown for hash mark encroachment well in advance of face-off.
- Official skates out of face-off stance to verbally correct flagrant encroachment.
- Referee assists Linesman only during "Penalty potential" encroachment. He/she positions himself/herself on the same side of the ice to help (3-official system).
- Proper assessment of delay of game penalties when necessary to control face-offs.
- Use of good communication that players respond to in a positive manner.
- Use of verbal and visual communication with partner during encroachment situations.

# FACE-OFFS

## STANCE AND DROP

The basic stance and actual dropping of the puck are to be evaluated under this column. Dropping the puck flat is one of the easiest tasks that officials are responsible to accomplish. Most officials, however, are not proficient at this maneuver simply because they don't take the task seriously enough to practice regularly.

### BASIC

- Use of proper USA Hockey stance and technique.
- Balanced and comfortable stance.
- Puck lands flat on ice with no bounce.
- Minimal telegraphing of drop of puck.

### ADVANCED

- Consistency to drop puck well during difficult face-offs.
- Pushes the puck down to the ice without slamming it down.
- Stops play when the puck accidentally hits shaft or blade of players stick prior to hitting the ice.
- Delivers the puck at the instant both players are set.
- Methodically uses the proper cadence when lining up the centers.

# FACE-OFFS

## MOVEMENT OUT OF AREA

Leaving the immediate area of a face-off is an important aspect of the conducting of Face-Offs. It is imperative that the official be more concerned with the proper execution of the face-off than getting out of the way. Many younger officials tend to move before dropping the puck and seem to race back into position along the boards.

More experienced officials are less concerned with getting out of the face-off as they tend to wait until a clear path is established. Additionally, they tend to watch the play more when leaving.

The evaluator must be able to see these traits in an official and assess them according to the patience and maturity that is demonstrated by the official.

### BASIC

- Proper cadence of drop, pause, look, then move.
- Moves backwards to side-boards then to proper position when a clear path is available.
- Skates out of end zone forward or backward, facing play at all times (Linesman 3-official system).
- Proper release of covering partner (Linesman 3-official system).

### ADVANCED

- "C cuts" are used to exit the immediate area of face-off.
- Official who drops puck reads the play and moves based on location of play and situation.
- Releases partner only when he/she is not involved in the immediate play (Linesman 3-official system).
- Hustles out and Reacts to partner on blue line when play leaves the zone for the other end of the ice (2-official system).

# SIGNALS

## EXECUTION (SIGNAL ITSELF)

The proper use of signals is an official's sole means of communication at the amateur levels of ice hockey. Clear, distinct signals demonstrate that the official has confidence in the calls he/she makes. Conversely, signals made with hesitation convey a sense of uncertainty. The following criteria demonstrate the proper use of the signal given for infractions of the rules.

### BASIC

- Makes appropriate signal for the infraction.
- Signals delay quickly after an infraction is committed.
- Signals clearly.

### ADVANCED

- Does not react too quickly for restraining fouls.
- Signals with authority.
- Does not allow for discussion with players
- Does not use creative signals.

# SIGNALS

## ASSESSMENT PROCEDURES

A good official will use assessment procedures to help sell the call. The gestures and mannerisms used in assessing a penalty can be as important as the penalty call itself. Assessment procedures communicate infractions to the spectators, coaches, off-Ice officials as well as to the players. Poor assessment procedures tend to confuse others because they are unclear, hurried or incorrectly executed.

### BASIC

- Blows whistle sharply and comes to a complete stop prior to assessing penalty.
- Identifying penalized player by pointing properly, states player(s) number(s), states color(s) of sweater(s) and states the infraction.
- Uses correct USA Hockey penalty signal.
- Skates backward to penalty bench after assessing penalty to player.
- Reports violation to scorekeeper and repeats signal at penalty bench.

### ADVANCED

- Puts whistle in "ready" position while skating and signaling delayed infraction. Uses a control stop after stopping play.
- Points "in the vicinity of" and not directly "at" penalized player. Proper verbal communication and eye contact during penalty situation.
- Waits until attention is on the official prior to assessing penalty.
- Indicates infraction in a methodical, deliberate manner.
- Skates backward or forward to penalty bench to keep all players in front of official.
- Knows the proper time to skate through and signal without stopping to report penalty.
- Avoids players at the penalty bench.

# JUDGMENT

## RULE KNOWLEDGE

Rule knowledge is one of the most difficult areas of an official's performance to evaluate. Unless a rule is flagrantly misapplied or a seldom-used rule is properly administered, it is difficult to determine the extent of rule knowledge. Thus, it is important to discuss the performance of the official directly with him/her. During the conversation, it is easy to interject rules questions when discussing some of the various aspects of the game.

In some cases, this category will not be able to be assessed. In these cases, leave the column blank rather than guessing.

### BASIC

- Thorough working knowledge of the major playing rules.
- Precise understanding of the intent and "spirit" of the major playing rules.
- Periodic review of the entire rule book.

### ADVANCED

- Knowledge of frequently and infrequently encountered playing rules.
- Knowledge and understanding of all USA Hockey interpretations of the playing rules.
- Knowledge of differences among various rule books (ex. NCAA, NHL, National Federation, etc.)

# JUDGMENT

## RULE APPLICATION

The actual application of the rules is much easier to identify through assessing the nature of each penalty assessed and not penalized. The official should be assessing penalties that fit the philosophy of USA Hockey, the Points of Emphasis and the individual philosophy of each league.

A successful official will apply the rules according to the "spirit and intent" of each rule. For example, if hooking and holding are Points of Emphasis and the official allows these infractions to occur un-penalized he/she will rate low in this category.

Do not confuse this category with the Game Control category. Rule application simply means that the rules are being called according to the nature for which they were intended.

### BASIC

- Implementation of the spirit and intent of the rules.
- Proper application of the correct rule to suit the situation.
- Knowledge of the criteria that constitute a particular infraction.

### ADVANCED

- Factors other than the literal interpretation of the rule that apply in various situations.
- Rules are applied based on the impact on the play.
- Knowledge and application of infractions that tend to aggravate and frustrate players.
- Proper implementation of the Points of Emphasis.
- Proper implementation of local or league rules and officiating policy.
- Use of common sense in applying the rules.

# JUDGMENT

## CONSISTENCY

Consistency is a difficult aspect of officiating to measure. We tend to expect consistent performance from our officials while the intensity of most games varies from period to period. Thus, we must measure how the official reacts according to the changing flow of the game. Generally, when the game is calm, he/she should allow the game to flow. When the game becomes more violent in nature, he/she is expected to assess penalties for these flagrant infractions.

Officials who hold their line regardless of the changes in a game are said to have no "feel" for the game. These officials can do just as much harm to the game as can officials who assess too few penalties.

### BASIC

- Does not allow score to dictate.
- Applies rules in similar manner regardless of the teams involved.
- Penalizes similar infractions for similar infractions, regardless of the time of game or the score.

### ADVANCED

- Knows what actions are acceptable at different levels of competition.
- Carries a uniform standard of officiating from game to game.
- Disregards outside influences.
- Able to assess the proper call in crucial situations.
- Reacts in a manner that fits the situation.

# JUDGMENT

## DECISIVENESS

Decisiveness refers to the officials mannerisms used when calling the game. This is primarily a trait that can be measured by watching physical clues. Reaction time is clearly an indicator of decisiveness. Additionally, the body language that is displayed will also demonstrate the confidence that the official is feeling when making these decisions.

### BASIC

- Makes split second decisions.
- Uses loud sharp whistle to demonstrate authority when stopping play.
- Displays confidence in making calls.

### ADVANCED

- Uses additional emphasis on signals to demonstrate assuredness, without being antagonistic.
- Able to communicate effectively with players and coaches, but only when appropriate.

# JUDGMENT

## GAME CONTROL

Even though most game control problems should be addressed by the coaches of each team, we can't depend on each team official to guide his/her team in a responsible manner. Officials are charged with the task of controlling each game, on the ice, to the extent necessary to allow each team an equal opportunity to win the game. This means the elimination of the undesirable aspects of the game. The violent and dangerous actions that may be created need to be handled in a stern manner.

Additionally, the application of rules relating to the Abuse of Officials are to be evaluated in this category. Officials are generally not required to tolerate verbal abuse and the manner in which the official handles this aspect of the game will influence the related score and comments.

### BASIC

- Attempts to control the violent aspects of the game.
- Displays confidence in making calls.
- Does not overly-discuss his/her judgment with the players and coaches.

### ADVANCED

- Able to distinguish between good, hard, aggressive play and play that violates the intent of the rules.
- Does not allow players and coaches to openly challenge judgment, yet has an open line of communication with each of the teams.
- Takes charge of altercation situations.
- Becomes aggressive as an official when necessary.
- Demonstrates the ability to control difficult situations.

# AWARENESS

## RINK CONDITIONS

The primary authority as it relates to the assessing of rink and arena playing conditions is the On-Ice Officials. They determine whether or not the game conditions can promote the safe conduct of the game. With Risk Management playing an ever-increasing role in hockey, this extra burden is often placed upon the officials.

This category not only encompasses sticks and other debris on the ice, it also involves more complicated aspects of game management. The following attributes should be observed when assessing awareness of rink conditions

### BASIC

- Visually inspects the playing surface.
- Recognizes debris and other equipment on the ice quickly.
- Reacts promptly to arena defects such as open door, fallen glass, etc.
- Stops play immediately when the goal post becomes dislodged.

### ADVANCED

- Fixes holes on the ice without having to be requested to do so.
- Recognizes and reacts properly when the clock malfunctions or Game Timekeeper has problems.
- Recognizes dangerous conditions and stops the play when they can potentially affect the game.
- Suspends the game whenever rink conditions become unsafe for all participants.

# AWARENESS

## DURING PLAY

Awareness is one of the most important qualities that an official can have. An official who sees more of the play and the surrounding events that occur has a better opportunity to demonstrate consistent judgment. After all, an official cannot assess a penalty for an event that has gone unnoticed.

Usually, better positioning habits can assist an official who is weak in the awareness department. The evaluator should be looking for the official to have his/her head "on a swivel" to view as much as possible.

### BASIC

- Watches play around the puck and in front of the goal.
- Visually knows where partner is located on the ice.
- Watches line changes during the play.
- Watches the goalkeeper change during a delayed penalty or near the end of the game.
- Watches encroachment of players when partner is conducting face-off.

### ADVANCED

- Checks frequently behind the play. Keeps head on a swivel. Does not always follow the puck.
- Watches play around the puck and in front of the goal.
- Takes over partner's position when partner is forced out of the play.
- Skates toward all potential altercations.
- Demonstrates the People, Puck, Position mentality consistently.
- Awareness of partner's location and status at all times.
- Recognizes and reacts to unusual situations that occur on and off the ice.
- Properly anticipates a stoppage of play.

# AWARENESS

## DURING STOPPAGES

Awareness during stoppages of play has become a huge part of an official's role. In fact, the emphasis that is placed on awareness is far greater in North America than anywhere else in the world. This is due strictly to vast differences in the style of play, particularly after the whistle. After the whistle blows, officials must be concerned first with the "P"eople on the ice, second with the "P"uck and last with reassuming the proper "P"osition (3 P's).

Additionally, it isn't enough to skate hard after the play stops to get close to a potential altercation; officials must be physically present between players. Other awareness situations occur during scuffles. Watching for the defensemen to come in past the tops of the circles and watching the players' bench for changes are two good examples of awareness during stoppages.

This category is different from the "Hustle" category. The official must first recognize a potential situation before he/she can react (hustle) to it.

### BASIC

- Counts players prior to face-off.
- Watches line changes as they occur after the whistle.
- Observes encroachment during Face-Offs.
- Watches for Defensemen skating into Attacking Zone during a gathering of players.
- Practices the 3 P's.
- Awareness after icing situations.

### ADVANCED

- Pauses after stopping play for a penalty to look for retaliation.
- Properly monitors line changes.
- Constantly observes players' benches and players leaving the ice.
- Positions himself/herself in the best position to see everything.
- Escorts penalized players to the penalty bench, when necessary.
- Assists Trainer onto the ice, when necessary.

# AWARENESS

## TEAMWORK AND COMMUNICATION

Officials quickly learn that they are a part of the third team that is on the ice. They must assist each other whenever possible to help ensure that the game progresses as smoothly as possible. This "Brotherhood" often results in many valuable friendships that occur off the ice. On the ice, it is easy to detect officials who are working well together. They cover each other's position, discuss matters as openly and as often as necessary and generally have fun doing it.

Officiating hockey is a game of cooperation among the officials. It is especially nice for an Evaluator to watch officials who do well in the areas of teamwork and communication.

### BASIC

- Covers partner's position, when necessary.
- Establishes eye contact with partner often.
- Knows where partner is at all times.

### ADVANCED

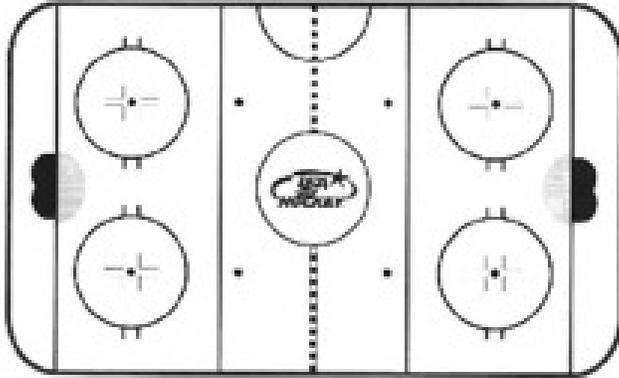
- Meets in the Referees Crease to discuss altercations, disputed goals, etc.
- Reads each other and reacts off of the partner's actions.
- Anticipates the needs of the officiating team.
- Unselfish when dividing the work load.

APPENDIX I

EVALUATION PROGRAM WORKSHEET



**OFFICIATING DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM**



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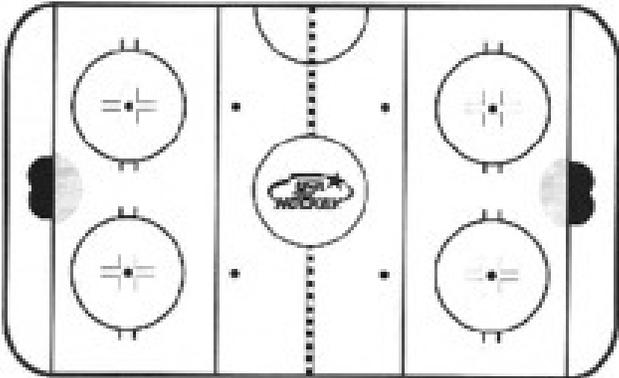
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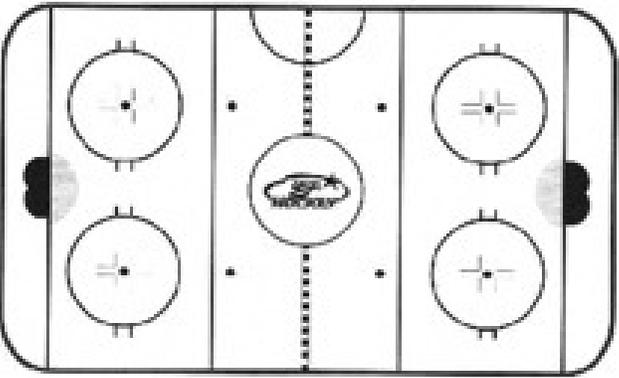
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## APPENDIX II



### USA HOCKEY OFFICIALS EVALUATION FORM

Official Evaluated: \_\_\_\_\_ Official's Level: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_

Assignment:  Referee  Linesman System:  2  3 Evaluator: \_\_\_\_\_

Game Level: \_\_\_\_\_ Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Team: \_\_\_\_\_ ( ) vs. Visiting Team: \_\_\_\_\_ ( )

Pre-game meeting held Official's state: \_\_\_\_\_ USAH Official's Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Post-game meeting held Official's initials: \_\_\_\_\_

CATEGORY	COMMENTS
<b>Appearance</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Excellent <input type="checkbox"/> Satisfactory <input type="checkbox"/> Good <input type="checkbox"/> Needs Improvement	
<b>Skating</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Excellent <input type="checkbox"/> Satisfactory <input type="checkbox"/> Good <input type="checkbox"/> Needs Improvement	
<b>Position</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Excellent <input type="checkbox"/> Satisfactory <input type="checkbox"/> Good <input type="checkbox"/> Needs Improvement	
<b>Faceoffs</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Excellent <input type="checkbox"/> Satisfactory <input type="checkbox"/> Good <input type="checkbox"/> Needs Improvement	
<b>Signals</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Excellent <input type="checkbox"/> Satisfactory <input type="checkbox"/> Good <input type="checkbox"/> Needs Improvement	
<b>Judgment</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Excellent <input type="checkbox"/> Satisfactory <input type="checkbox"/> Good <input type="checkbox"/> Needs Improvement	
<b>Awareness</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Excellent <input type="checkbox"/> Satisfactory <input type="checkbox"/> Good <input type="checkbox"/> Needs Improvement	
<b>Summary:</b>  <div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 40px; width: 100%;"></div>	
Type of Game: <input type="checkbox"/> Easy <input type="checkbox"/> Average <input type="checkbox"/> Difficult	

## APPENDIX III

### USA HOCKEY OFFICIATING PROGRAM EVALUATION PROGRAM COORDINATORS

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# Acknowledgements

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Scott Brinkman

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Jim Rushing

Mark Rudolph (Staff)

they're the guys who put this program together.

