

USA HOCKEY



OFFICIATING MENTOR PROGRAM

ABOUT THE PROGRAM

Life as an official is never easy, and when you are first beginning to wear the stripes, it can be intimidating, scary and overwhelming. The Mentor Program is designed to link up a younger or newer official with an older or more experienced official. By doing this, a helping hand can be given to the newer official in the form of a friend, experienced ear, and a constant partner during the hockey season. This way, the insecurities and lack of confidence that newer officials experience can be addressed and these officials can work through their problems with the help of a person who has already traveled the same road. In essence, the Mentor's role is to contribute to a positive officiating environment for the new official.

WHY IS THERE A NEED FOR A MENTOR PROGRAM?

Every year there are an influx of new officials who register with USA Hockey. Annually, approximately 33% of all of USA Hockey's registered officials are new officials. Unfortunately, within 3 years, about 50% of these officials choose to stop officiating. There are many reasons for this including the new official's frustration with not getting enough games and dealing with the many tough situations into which all officials, young and old, are placed. The purpose of the Mentor Program is to get young officials excited about officiating hockey and keep them involved for a long period of time.

WHAT IS INVOLVED?

For those officials who are willing to participate in the program as mentors, there are a few basic requirements and duties that must be performed. Once the mentor has been assigned a new official, the mentor should begin by helping him/her with the first most basic duties an official has. That is, the mentor should attend the Level one Seminar with the new official. Secondly, the mentor should try to arrange a time with the student when they can take the open book exam together. Not only will this be a good time for the student to get to know the rules, but it will also be a good time for the mentor and new official to get to know each other.

After the initial contact between the mentor and student, an effort should be made by the mentor to introduce the student to the various ways to obtain game assignments as a hockey official. Then, it is very important that the first few times that the new official works, he/she works with the mentor. This enables the mentor to be there during the initial jitters that the new official will experience.

As the season progresses, it is important for an effort by both officials to continue to work together as well as to watch each other work with different partners. This way the mentor may do evaluations from the stands, and conversely, the student may watch and learn from the mentor, as well as other officials who may be working with the mentor.

END OF THE YEAR FOLLOW-UP

By the time the season winds down, the mentor should have a very good feel as to how the new official is doing and whether or not he/she enjoyed the program. The mentor's follow-up should include a written evaluation of the new official as well as his/her personal opinions on the program.

The same documentation process is important for the new official, so there is a written record of the new official's thoughts on the effectiveness of the program.

Finally, there should be an attempt made by both parties to work together in the same manner the following year, to monitor improvement.

ESTABLISHING A MENTOR PROGRAM IN YOUR AREA

Once a Local Officials Association determines that they would like to have their own Mentor Program, there are a few steps that must be taken to start the program up correctly:

First, a coordinator must be chosen to head up the program. This individual will be responsible for administering the connection between mentors and new officials. He or she will organize all the publicity about the program. This includes developing and distributing flyers, posters, and other materials to be distributed through the area. Once the season begins, this person is responsible for monitoring the

program to ensure that the new official and his/her mentor are working together in all the facets of the program. This will require phone as well as written contact with the participants. If there are any problems with the chemistry between the new official and his/her mentor, it is the job of the coordinator to make any changes in pairings that will permit both the new official and mentor to get the most that they can out of the program. Finally, the coordination of all year end follow-ups will be handed by this individual as well.

USING THE SHADOW PROGRAM TO MENTOR OFFICIALS

An extension of the above mentioned mentor program is called the shadow program.. This process provides an experienced official to actually work with two younger officials in a game environment where the experienced official “shadows”, or follows, the official(s) around the ice giving pointers and immediate feedback. In this system, the younger officials are still responsible for calling the game and the shadow will only get involved in making a call if something blatantly obvious was missed. The main purpose of the shadow is to serve as a coach to the on-ice officials by providing immediate positioning and procedural tips along with positive reinforcement. More information on this porogram and how it works is provided at the end of this handbook.

ENCLOSED FORMS

Mentor Sign Up

Student Sign Up

End of Year Evaluation (Mentor)

End of Year Evaluation (Student)

**USA HOCKEY OFFICIALS MENTOR
PROGRAM**

MENTOR SIGN UP SHEET

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone Number: H - () _____ W - () _____

Age _____ Level _____ Number of Years Officiating _____

Why would you like to be a Mentor? _____

Do you have any specific requests for your pairing with a new official? _____

What arenas do you work most often in? _____

**USA HOCKEY OFFICIALS MENTOR
PROGRAM**

NEW OFFICIALS SIGN UP SHEET

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone Number: H - () _____ W - () _____

Age _____

What other forms of involvement do you have with hockey? (i.e., player, coach, parent) _____

Why are you choosing to officiate? _____

What areas or arenas would you like to work in? _____

**USA HOCKEY OFFICIALS MENTOR
PROGRAM**

END OF THE SEASON EVALUATION
(To Be Completed By Mentor)

Mentor's Name _____

New Official's Name _____

How many total games did you work with the new official? _____

Did you and the new official experience any personal programs this season in respect to your working relationship? _____

Do you think the new official enjoyed the program? _____

Did you enjoy your participation in the program? _____

How do you feel the program can be improved or changed? _____

**USA HOCKEY OFFICIALS MENTOR
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**END OF SEASON EVALUATION
(To Be Completed By New Official)**

Official's Name _____

Mentor's Name _____

How many total games did you work with your mentor? _____

What areas was your mentor able to help you with? _____

Overall, did you enjoy the program? _____

What improvements, if any, would you make on the program? _____

Mentor/Shadow Program

For Hockey Officials

(Two-official system)

Pre-Game Meeting

Prior to the game, the mentor will meet with both on-ice officials and explain the program. He/She will answer any last-minute positioning questions the officials may have and remind them of some basic officiating procedures and positioning. The mentor will also remind the officials that it is their game to call and that he/she will only get involved if it is absolutely necessary.

Positioning – Start of the Game

Before the game begins the mentor will let both coaches know that the game is being officiated by the assigned officials. The mentor's responsibility will be that of a coach providing positional instruction for the officials who were assigned to that particular game. The mentor will not get involved in the game unless it is absolutely necessary. The mentor will also inform the off-ice officials of his/her purpose on the ice.

At the start of the game, the mentor will assume a position in the vicinity of the official who is not dropping the puck. Initially, the mentor will work with this official on positioning. This position will also be assumed after goals are scored or for any center ice face-offs.

As play enters the attacking zone

As play enters the attacking zone, the official who did not drop the puck, should be in position to make the off-sides call on the blue line. The mentor will follow this official to the blue line and observe his judgment call looking at their technique and positioning. The mentor should only get involved in making the call if it is blatantly wrong and allow the official to exercise his/her judgement.

If the play is off-sides, the mentor may have to communicate to the official what his/her responsibilities are now – players, puck and finally positioning. The mentor may also discreetly indicate where the face-off location should be if the officials appear to be unsure. This type of communication/questions from the mentor to the official must be brief so that the flow of the game is not disturbed. As the official takes his position for the face-off after the off-sides infraction, the mentor may make brief comments about the procedures without delaying the game. The mentor will then take the position with the other official. **On all face-offs the mentor will always be positioned with the official who is not dropping the puck.**

Play in the attacking Zone

As play proceeds into the attacking zone the mentor will follow the official into that zone. Communication from the mentor to the official should be directed on positioning and not penalty selection. As penalty situations arise, the mentor may comment on a particular situation but only when there is a stoppage of play or in between periods. The main responsibility for the mentor is to communicate proper positioning so that the official is able to see the infraction and can make the correct call. The mentor should communicate to the official when to get closer to the net and when to leave the attacking zone, along with other positioning tips.

End-zone Face-offs

When play is stopped in the attacking zone, the mentor may need to communicate to the official what his/her responsibilities are now - players, puck, and positioning. Comments from the mentor to the official may include; which side was the shot taken from, where should the face-off take place, are the correct number of players from each team on the ice to conduct a proper face-off, and is the goalkeeper ready for play to resume? As the official takes his position for the face-off in the attacking zone, the mentor may once again make comments on conducting a “fair” face-off but should not delay the game. The mentor will then take his position with the other official who is positioned at the blue line for an end-zone face-off.

The mentor may want to make comments to this official as to the positioning of the opposing wingers who are behind his/her partner who is dropping the puck in the end zone. Once the puck is dropped the mentor should communicate to the official as to what he/she should be looking for as the back official and his/her positioning along the blue line. Comments from the mentor may include; look at the play directly but open up your field of vision, read the play, are the defensemen from the attacking team leaving the zone and if so, should you leave the blue line, is there a cherry picker from the defensive team leaving his/her defensive zone into the neutral zone and should you leave the blue line to cover this player, is there going to be close play around the net and should you anticipate a stoppage of play, is there a penalty infraction that you should be looking for that your partner did not see? These are all questions that may be communicated by the mentor to the back official while play is going on in the attacking zone.

If there is a stoppage of play inside the attacking zone, the mentor may want to communicate to the back official what his/her responsibilities now are – players, puck and positioning. The mentor may want to emphasize hustling into the attacking zone on the stoppage of play to prevent any altercations that may take place around the goal crease area. Picking up the puck, handing it off to his/her partner and getting back to his/her position are all areas of interest that the mentor may want to communicate to the back official during a stoppage of play.

Play in the neutral zone

When the play enters the neutral zone the mentor should communicate to the official the proper pursuit of play and field of vision. Other responsibilities, such as icing and off-sides, will also come up as they occur. The mentor should follow the official in the neutral zone and into the attacking zone if play proceeds in that direction. If play should stall in the neutral zone, the mentor may want to communicate to the official that he/she needs to be aware of his/her partner’s position in order to establish the proper diagonal position and make sure both blue lines are covered. If play should change directions and head back into his/her partner’s attacking zone, the mentor should communicate the proper pursuit of play and teamwork issues.

Calling of Penalties

Only in severe and blatant situations (injury potential) should the mentor call a penalty for the officials who are working the game. The mentor is there to instruct and not question judgment of the officials. One area where the mentor may become more involved deals with unsportsmanlike behavior from the coaches. In this case, the mentor should step in quickly to diffuse the situation and even assess a bench minor penalty, if appropriate. The mentor can then discuss these situations after the game with the on-ice officials in a learning atmosphere.

When an official calls a penalty, the mentor will observe the infraction and look for proper technique for assessing a penalty. The assessment by the mentor should include; was it a delayed penalty and if so, did the official raise his/her arm and wait until the offending team gained possession and control of the puck, did the official making the call come to a complete stop and utilize the proper penalty technique, was the other official aware that a penalty was being called and did he/she position themselves so that any other infractions may be defused? Communication from the mentor to the official who did not make the penalty call is crucial during this time. Once the infraction is called, the players on the ice should be the official’s first concern, then the puck and finally the face-off location. Depending on who the mentor is with at the time of the infraction, communication with that official should take place from the time of the infraction until the time the puck is dropped.

Icings

Icing infractions are an area where communication between the officials working the game is crucial. The mentor needs to be able to react appropriately to the official he/she is currently shadowing and encourage the probability that the right call is made. Whether the mentor is with the front or back official on a potential icing situation, he should once again follow them from the beginning of the play till the puck is dropped.

Misc. Situations and Conclusion

There are many other situations that may arise in the game where the mentor may have to communicate on positioning to both officials such as: puck out of play, intentional off-sides, high sticking the puck, hand passes, etc. but these should be done in a quick and efficient manner as to not to delay the game.

Most of the situations listed above can also be discussed before or after the game and it is imperative that the mentor be positive and take advantage of teaching opportunities. Doing so will make the official more comfortable and allow them to develop confidence. Establishing confidence and a comfort level will result in a positive experience for the new official, which ultimately keeps them involved in the game as an official.