



HOCKEY MANITOBA OFFICIALS MENTOR & RESOURCE GUIDE

The purpose of the Hockey Manitoba Officials Mentorship Program is to support grassroots and development officials through positive observation, education, constructive feedback, and continued encouragement. Remember this is a guideline to help you at the rink.

Mentorship helps officials:

- Improve officiating skills
- Build confidence
- Increase retention
- Create consistent officiating standards throughout Manitoba

Mentors are responsible for:

- Observing game performance
- Providing constructive feedback
- Supporting growth and development
- Sharing officiating experience
- Building confidence
- Encouraging self-reflection
- Promoting professionalism

Mentors are **not evaluators**. Their role is to support learning and improvement.

The program is founded on the following principles:

- Development over criticism
- Building confidence
- Creating positive experiences
- Promoting continuous learning

Key Development Areas

The below are the key development areas that mentors can focus on when attending the rink. Remember to pick 2-3 areas to focus on and try not to overwhelm with too much information

1. Positioning



Effective positioning allows officials to make accurate decisions, anticipate play, and maintain credibility with players and coaches.

Sight Lines

- Maintain open viewing lanes to the puck and players.
- Avoid being directly behind players when making decisions.
- Adjust positioning proactively as play develops.
- Recognize situations where moving a few feet can significantly improve visibility.

Anticipation

- Read the play before it happens rather than reacting after the fact.
- Identify likely passing lanes, shooting opportunities, and player matchups.
- Anticipate transitions, turnovers, and potential conflict situations.

Skating Efficiency

- Skate with purpose rather than excessive movement.
- Use strong edge work and proper pivots.
- Arrive early to the next position instead of racing to catch up.

Blue Line Positioning

- Establish proper depth on entries and exits.
- Maintain awareness of attacking players near the line.
- Use body positioning to create the best possible offside sight line.
- Don't become puck-focused and lose awareness of players.

Icing Procedures

- Move quickly into proper position for potential icing situations.
- Use correct Hockey Canada icing mechanics.
- Maintain awareness of player races to the puck.
- Communicate clearly with partners throughout the sequence.

Face-Off Positioning

- Conduct face-offs efficiently and professionally.



- Ensure fair player positioning before dropping the puck.
- Use consistent procedures at all face-off locations.
- Be prepared to react immediately after the puck drop.

Teamwork

- Understand the responsibilities of both officials.
- Avoid both officials covering the same area.
- Support partners when they require assistance.

Possible Discussion Questions

- Were you consistently in a position to see important plays?
- What situations caused you to lose sight lines?
- How effectively did you anticipate the flow of play?
- Were you moving with purpose or reacting late?

2. Communication

Strong communication prevents problems, improves game flow, and builds respect.

Verbal Communication

- Use clear, concise language.
- Communicate preventative messages when appropriate.
- Avoid unnecessary conversations.
- Speak confidently and professionally.

Examples:

- "Keep the sticks down."
- "Move it, play it."
- "I've got it, let's go."

Body Language

- Maintain confident posture.
- Use calm and controlled movements.
- Avoid frustration or emotional reactions.



- Demonstrate authority without appearing confrontational.

Signals

- Use crisp and decisive signals.
- Ensure signals are visible to players, coaches, and spectators.
- Hold signals long enough to be recognized.
- Avoid rushed mechanics.

Professionalism

- Remain respectful when challenged.
- Listen without becoming defensive.
- Separate criticism from personal emotion.
- Represent the officiating program positively.

Team Communication

- Communicate regularly with partners.
- Share information during stoppages.
- Support one another on difficult calls.
- Discuss unusual situations calmly and efficiently.

Possible Discussion Questions

- Were your signals clear and confident?
- How effectively did you communicate with players?
- Did your body language increase or decrease your credibility?
- Were you a good partner?

3. Rule Knowledge

A strong understanding of rules creates confidence and consistency.

Rule Understanding

- Regularly review the Hockey Canada Rule Book.
- Understand both the wording and intent of rules.



- Stay current with annual rule changes and interpretations.

Rule Application

- Apply rules consistently throughout the game.
- Recognize game situations requiring discretion.
- Balance technical accuracy with common sense.

Judgment

- Distinguish between infractions and legal play.
- Understand standards for penalties.
- Avoid "guessing" on calls.

Consistency

- Establish standards early.
- Apply the same standard to both teams.
- Avoid changing standards based on game pressure.

Preventative Officiating

- Address issues before penalties become necessary.
- Use communication to manage minor situations.
- Recognize escalating behaviour early.

Possible Discussion Questions

- Were there any rules you felt uncertain about?
- Were your penalty standards consistent?
- Did preventative officiating reduce potential issues?
- How can your rule knowledge improve before the next game?

4. Confidence Building

Confidence grows through preparation, experience, and constructive feedback.

Reinforcing Strengths



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- Recognize positive performance regularly.
 - Build on areas of success.
 - Understand what worked well and why.

Learning from Mistakes

- Treat mistakes as development opportunities.
- Focus on solutions rather than blame.
- Understand that every official misses calls occasionally.

Encouraging Questions

- Create an environment where officials feel safe asking questions.
- Promote discussion about difficult situations.
- Encourage curiosity and learning.

Goal-Oriented Development

- Set achievable short-term goals.
- Measure improvement over time.
- Celebrate progress.

Growth Mindset

- Understand that officiating skills develop over time.
- View challenges as opportunities to improve.
- Accept constructive criticism positively.

Possible Discussion Questions

- What was your strongest area tonight?
- What challenge taught you the most?
- What is one thing you would do differently?
- What is your next development goal?

5. Game Management

Great officials manage games rather than simply enforce rules.



Presence

- Demonstrate confidence and professionalism.
- Be visible during important situations.
- Establish credibility early.

Composure

- Remain calm under pressure.
- Control emotions during confrontations.
- Avoid reacting to criticism.

Preventative Officiating

- Address developing issues early.
- Use communication to prevent escalation.
- Be proactive rather than reactive.

Conflict Management

- Separate players when necessary.
- Defuse situations with calm communication.
- Recognize emotional triggers during competition.

Managing Game Flow

- Maintain an appropriate pace.
- Conduct face-offs efficiently.
- Minimize unnecessary delays.

Escalating Situations

Recognize:

- Increased physicality
- Retaliation behaviour
- Verbal confrontations
- Players targeting opponents



- Bench frustration

Possible Discussion Questions

- What situations required active game management?
- Did you recognize warning signs before conflict occurred?
- Did your actions support game flow?
- How effectively did you manage player emotions?

6. Professional Habits

Professional habits build trust and advancement opportunities.

Punctuality

- Arrive early and prepared.
- Complete pre-game responsibilities on time.
- Respect partners, teams, and organizers.

Preparedness

- Review rules and expectations.
- Have all required equipment.
- Conduct a thorough pre-game discussion.

Appearance

- Maintain a clean and professional uniform.
- Ensure equipment is in good condition.
- Present a positive image of officiating.

Accountability

- Accept responsibility for mistakes.
- Be open to feedback.
- Follow through on development goals.

Reliability



- Honor assignments.
- Communicate professionally when issues arise.
- Demonstrate commitment to development.

Respectful Conduct

- Treat all participants fairly.
- Maintain professionalism in person and online.
- Promote a positive officiating culture.

Possible Discussion Questions

- Were you fully prepared for the game?
- What habits contribute most to your success?
- How do others perceive your professionalism?
- What professional habit needs improvement?

7. Supporting Young Officials

Young officials are the future of the officiating program.

Creating a Welcoming Environment

- Introduce yourself before games.
- Learn names and experience levels.
- Encourage participation and questions.

Building Confidence

- Focus on successes first.
- Avoid overwhelming criticism.
- Provide specific, actionable feedback.

Mentorship

- Share experiences and lessons learned.
- Model professional behaviour.
- Demonstrate patience.



Development-Focused Feedback

- Tailor feedback to experience level.
- Focus on one or two key improvements.
- Avoid excessive technical detail for new officials.

Encouraging Retention

- Make officiating enjoyable.
- Recognize effort and improvement.
- Help officials feel valued and supported.

Possible Discussion Questions

- Did the young official leave feeling more confident?
- Was the feedback age and experience appropriate?
- Did you identify strengths as well as development areas?
- What support can be provided moving forward?

Post-Game Feedback Process

1. Self-Reflection

Start with the official's perspective.

Questions

- What went well tonight?
- What was challenging?
- What would you do differently?
- What did you learn

2. Development Discussion

Explore key game situations.

Topics

- Positioning
- Communication



- Rule application
- Game management
- Professionalism

Use guided questions rather than lectures whenever possible.

3. Reinforce Strengths

Identify specific positives.

Examples

- Excellent hustle
- Strong penalty recognition
- Effective communication
- Good composure under pressure

Officials should leave knowing what to continue doing.

4. Development Areas

Prioritize one to three key learning points.

Effective Feedback Should Be

- Specific
- Observable
- Achievable
- Actionable

Focus on behaviour rather than personal characteristics.

5. Goal Setting

Create concrete next steps.

Good Goals Are

- Specific
- Measurable



- Realistic
- Relevant

Examples

- Improve blue line positioning.
- Increase preventative communication.
- Review penalty standards for body checking.
- Arrive earlier for pre-game preparation.

Mentorship Closing Philosophy

Develop the official before evaluating the official.

The most effective mentors create an environment where officials feel respected, supported, and motivated to improve. Try not to overwhelm them too many areas, stick to 2-3 if you can. Mentorship conversation should leave the official knowing:

1. What they did well.
2. What they need to improve.
3. How they can improve.
4. What success looks like at their next game.