

# **Non-Skating Official Guides: Head NSO**

---

*Author* David Reed / Stacktrace

*Updated* 2026-05-11

*Words* 6640

*Reading Time* 34 minutes

*Permanent Link* <https://nonskating.club/guides/head-nso/>

*License* Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International

## **Table of Contents**

- Introduction
  - Resources
- Equipment
- Before Game Day
  - Statsbook Preparation
  - Staffing
- Pregame
  - Captains and Coaches Meeting
  - Officials Meeting
  - Venue and Equipment Checks
  - Number Checks
- In-Game
  - IGRF
  - Observing, Evaluating, and Developing Officials
  - Handling Challenges
  - Communication
  - Official Reviews
  - Managing Disagreement and Conflicts
- After Game
  - Finalizing the IGRF
  - Scores and Stats Submissions
  - Officiating Evals

## **Introduction**

The Head Non-Skating Official role is a broad and deep leadership position, and can be responsible for different scopes in different contexts. There's no one right way to be the HNSO. This guide aims to cover how the role is performed in events where the Head NSO and Head Referee are the highest level of officiating leadership. Crew head and tournament head positions are planned to be covered separately. It's also important to acknowledge that the boundaries between this role and others are not the same everywhere. While

I strive to cite everything I share, including where it's opinion, you may well find differences with your established practice

The Head NSO may or may not work another position during a game. If they do, it's typically best for the HNSO to be the Jam Timer, the Penalty Wrangler (if you or your region staff that role), or a Penalty Lineup Tracker. Other combinations *are* viable, but limit the HNSO's ability to observe the event and facilitate communication.

## **Resources**

The resources a Head NSO needs are the governing and procedural documents in effect for any given event. That will include some or all of:

- The Rules of Flat Track Roller Derby
- WFTDA Officiating Procedures
- WFTDA Officiating Cues, Codes, and Signals
- WFTDA Risk Management Guidelines
- WFTDA Statsbook Manual (MRDA uses the WFTDA statsbook).
- WFTDA Sanctioning Policy
- JRDA Rules, Casebook, and Code of Conduct
- JRDA Officiating Procedures
- JRDA Officiating Cues, Codes, and Signals
- JRDA Risk Management Guidelines
- MRDA Policies and Procedures
- JRDA Statsbook Manual
- JRDA Sanctioning Policy

Other documents with narrower applicability are linked throughout this guide.

## **Equipment**

The Head NSO requires no special equipment.

## **Before Game Day**

### **Statsbook Preparation**

The Head NSO is typically responsible for preparing the Statsbook for the game. WFTDA and MRDA use the WFTDA Statsbook, which is an Excel file. JRDA uses their own Google Sheets-based statsbook.

The Statsbooks are well-documented by association resources. Review in detail:

- WFTDA Statsbook Manual (MRDA uses the WFTDA statsbook).

- JRDA Statsbook Manual

To prepare the statsbook fully, you'll need:

1. Data about the event, such as location, time and date, and game number (if multi-game event).
2. Rosters from both teams (see below under Number Checks for notes about charters).
3. The officiating crew, including names, positions, league affiliations, and certification levels.

The statsbook has at least two roles. One is to provide the required data for sanctioning a game, which of course applies only in a sanctioned context. The other is to provide printable sheets for officials to use, which applies to any type of game.

If you're sanctioning a game, be rigorous with your statsbook and follow the guidelines provided by the association (WFTDA, etc.) carefully. Omissions and errors can result in your submission being refused. If you're not sanctioning the game, you have more freedom to be pragmatic.

You should come to the event with a printed copy of the statsbook as well as a completed XLSX file that you can upload into the scoreboard. If you're using the JRDA statsbook, you can do File -> Download -> Microsoft Excel (.xlsx) to get an offline version.

## **Staffing**

The head NSO is often, but not always, responsible for staffing. That can include recruitment as well as assigning officials to specific roles.

Staffing can work wildly differently across leagues, regions, and contexts. This guide will not presume to offer a workflow: talk to the rest of your event leadership team to get a sense of how things are done where you're working.

There're a few principles that I think are broadly applicable for building out a crew, but in no way universal. Keep an open mind, especially as you travel to new regions.

I think of the NSO crew as three distinct clusters:

1. The score table (SBO + SK + SK).
2. The penalty box (PBM + PBT + PBT).
3. The center (JT + PLT + PLT + optional PW + optional HNSO)

I like to site one of my more experienced officials in each cluster to anchor that group. That is most often, but not necessarily, the HNSO in the center

(with whatever second role they're working); the penalty box manager in the box; and either the SBO or one of the SKs at the score table.

Know your officials' needs and preferences. Whenever possible, I love to support officials' growth by letting them try a newer role, with backup from someone more experienced. Some folks prefer to focus on deep mastery of one or two roles. Some officials cannot stand for long periods of time. Some officials' personalities clash with one another (even if they're both lovely people). When you build a crew, you're solving a complex set of constraints. Do the best you can with what you have.

You should always communicate with your crew in advance of the event. Some good data to share in your pregame email are:

- The date, time, and location of the event.
- The person's schedule (usually via a link to a shared document).
- The call time and time of an officials' meeting, if any.
- Expectations around dress.
- Anything they need to know to access the venue (parking, gates, check-in points).
- What food and drink will be available.

Your own communication style and your familiarity with the crew will shape what you send out. It's important to remember, though, that communicating explicitly and proactively can help you include newer and visiting officials, who might not know how things are usually set up.

The JRDA Officiating Procedures include detailed analyses of staffing scenarios for when you do not have enough officials.

Stacktrace, the author of this guide, also built Stave, a free and open source application for managing roller derby staffing.

## **Pregame**

### **Captains and Coaches Meeting**

The Captains and Coaches meeting is not strictly codified everywhere. (It's only specified by JRDA Sanctioning Policy, p. 4). It's often a pragmatic way for the officials and the team leadership to exchange important information about how the game will run. Typically, the meeting will include:

- You, the Head NSO
- The Head Referee
- The captain and alternate for each team
- Possibly a bench coach for each team if the alternate is a skater

- If applicable, the GTO, the Tournament Head NSO, and the Tournament Head Referee

This attendance roster is not fixed or mandatory, and you may experience variation from event to event and league to league. Provided you receive and share the needed information, you don't need to worry too much about who's present. If you are working an unsanctioned game, you may find that your agenda shortens.

Come to the Captains and Coaches meeting with an agenda, so that you do not forget key items. The paperwork cover sheet provided by both the JRDA and WFTDA Statsbooks is a good start! Here's my agenda when I go to Captains and Coaches:

- Introductions and pronouns for all attendees.
- Identify the captains and alternates and ensure they have the A or C visible.
- Establish the high and low seeds.
- Establish how the teams will be cued, if this is a JRDA event or is participating in the WFTDA team name cues pilot.
- Establish colors. At a tournament, colors are often prearranged by the GTO. Always confirm to be sure everyone's on the same page. Ensure that the colors (including on helmet covers) meet the standard for contrast set by the association's sanctioning policy.
- Establish starting benches and switching benches at halftime.
- Get a bench staff count from each team and clarify whether or not that count includes a turn coach, if present. Assess whether the count complies with the association's requirements (WFTDA, MRDA, and JRDA are all different). Advise teams whether their turn coach may enter the bench area, based on those requirements. If this is a JRDA event, ensure that the bench staff are recorded on the IGRF.
- Discuss venue configurations, limitations, and concerns. Note the location of the medical staff. Make teams aware of boundaries around their bench areas and around the penalty box.
- Discuss any accommodations needed by the teams. See Accommodations.
- Have both teams review their rosters on the IGRF and strike anyone who will not be skating. If sanctioned, ensure both teams have 15 or fewer skaters slated to participate. (See below under Number Checks for references). If unsanctioned, whatever team- or league-level agreement is in place would hold.
- Advise the captains (or adult coaches, for JRDA) where they are expected to sign the IGRF after the game.

If this is a JRDA event, also

- Re-state and confirm the game level.
- Have both teams identify their designated chaperone.
- Confirm whether coaches or officials will perform gear checks.

In an unsanctioned context, or for local mix-up games, you may adopt a much less formal approach.

### **Benches, Bench Staff, and Color Selection**

Each of the three major associations (WFTDA, JRDA, and MRDA) has subtly different policies on bench staffing and on the selection of benches and colors. It's important to bear in mind that *all* of these policies apply, at most, to sanctioned games. Some apply only to postseason or to association-endorsed tournaments. For regulation games, where the rules are silent, or for sanctioned games where the association does not have a policy, **local per-event policy, team agreements, and convention will apply.**

The communication of, management of, and enforcement of these policies is not formally assigned to any role. It often falls on a mix of the Head NSO and interleague coordinator or event manager (for individual games) or the Tournament Head NSO and the GTO (for tournaments). Work with your leadership team or host league to suss out what's expected.

### **WFTDA**

WFTDA's Bench Staff policy applies to **all sanctioned events.**

**Bench Staff:** At least two must be allowed. The maximum is 4, venue space permitting, plus 1 turn coach. The turn coach may also be a bench staff member, subject to the maximum of 4 total, and may enter the bench area in that case. WFTDA Sanctioning Policy, p. 7.

WFTDA's other policies apply **only to the postseason.** These policies are otherwise unspecified by the association, and are set at the event level.

**Bench Choice:** Higher seed chooses (WFTDA Postseason Tournament Policies and Procedures, p. 8).

**Bench Swap:** Swap is required (WFTDA Postseason Tournament Policies and Procedures, p. 8).

**Color Choice:** Higher seed chooses (WFTDA Postseason Tournament Policies and Procedures, p. 7).

## **JRDA**

JRDA's policies apply to **all sanctioned events**.

**Bench Staff:** Maximum of 4 **including** turn coach, if any. Turn coach may enter bench area. (JRDA Sanctioning Policy, page 5).

**Bench Choice:** Home or higher seed chooses. (JRDA Sanctioning Policy, page 4).

**Bench Swap:** If either team wishes to swap. (JRDA Sanctioning Policy, page 4).

**Color Choice:** Home or higher seed chooses. (JRDA Sanctioning Policy, page 3). If there's no seeding or home team, the GTO assigns colors.

## **MRDA**

MRDA's Bench Staff policy applies to **all sanctioned events**.

**Bench Staff:** At least two must be allowed. The maximum is 4, venue space permitting. One turn coach is permitted but may not be bench staff and is not counted towards the 4; they may not enter the track or bench areas. (MRDA Policies and Procedures, p. 37)

MRDA's other policies apply only to **MRDA Endorsed Tournaments**.

**Bench Choice:** High seed chooses (MRDA Endorsed Tournament Playbook, p. 7).

**Bench Swap:** No policy found.

**Color Choice:** High seed chooses (MRDA Endorsed Tournament Playbook, p. 7).

## **Accommodations**

To ensure that roller derby remains accessible and equitable, we ask the teams to discuss any *accommodations* needed by their skaters. An accommodation is a modification of standard practice to make it accessible to a person who has needs distinct from what the rules anticipate.

Historically, the discussion of accommodations has focused heavily on skaters who are deaf or hard of hearing, with accommodation requests focusing on when and if an Illegal Exit or Insubordination penalty would be given for failing to leave the track and on touch-based cueing in the penalty box.

I believe in "accommodating-by-default roller derby". I open this section of the captains and coaches meeting by discussing the accommodating practices that teams may expect from the officials as a baseline. I then ask them to describe any *further* accommodations their skaters require only in

terms of the modification they need, and ask that they not disclose skaters' medical information.

The accommodating baseline boils down to:

1. Officials will ensure that a skater understands they are being penalized and has an opportunity to react before assessing a second penalty.
2. In the penalty box, officials will give loud verbal cues and perform the standard visual cues in the skater's peripheral vision.

I strongly discourage touch-based cueing in the penalty box. I advise captains that we make this available only if there is no other way to accommodate a skater's needs, because many officials prefer not to use touch-based cueing. I may need to re-arrange my staffing to make that accommodation available. If touch is the only way to accommodate a skater, they are asked to place one hand, palm up, behind them to be tapped with a pencil or clipboard. Note that in JRDA play, touch-based cueing should **never** be performed unless explicitly requested by the coach or the skater (JRDA Officiating Procedures 8.2).

Accommodating practices do vary by region, and historical practices persist by inertia. Always focus on the needs of the skaters and of the officiating crew.

## **Officials Meeting**

Pre-game or pre-event officials meetings aren't required by any rule or procedure. They are your opportunity, with your Head Referee, to introduce yourselves, set expectations, discuss concerns, metrics, and rules interpretations, and help the crew get to know one another.

At an officials meeting, my agenda typically looks like this:

- Introduce myself and the Head Referee.
- Introductions and pronouns for all officials, if any person in the room does not already know everyone.
- State what we're here for: what type of game, between whom, using what cues.
- Discuss any venue concerns or considerations.
- Discuss any accommodations requested by the teams.
- If this is a JRDA event, reiterate the JRDA Code of Conduct expectations and how officials should handle violations.
- Discuss my expectations for the officials, which generally center on working as a team and communicating.
- Tell officials where to locate their equipment and when to be in position.
- Invite any questions.

I'll then turn it over to the Head Referee.

Either at the officials meeting or separately, but before the first whistle, I ensure that a few connections have taken place.

- Make sure the scoreboard operator and the jam timer have discussed how they'll signal to one another.
- Make sure the jam referees have met their scorekeepers.
- Make sure the penalty lineup trackers and the penalty box staff know how they'll signal counts.
- Make sure the jam timer knows who the captains and alternates are.

### **Venue and Equipment Checks**

Before the game, I double-check that all of the items I and my crew will need are in place.

- At the score table, two clipboards with the score sheets from the Statsbook, two pencils, two copies of the Rosters page from the Statsbook.
- At the scoreboard station, a working keyboard and mouse, connection to the equipment used to display the scoreboard in the venue, and the IGRF loaded in the software.
- In the penalty box, two clipboards with the Penalty Box sheets from the Statsbook, two pencils, at least six stopwatches, a Penalty Box Whiteboard, a whiteboard marker, and an eraser.
- At the penalty box, colored swatches that denote which team is on which side. By convention but not by rule, these should be positioned opposite to the team benches; whether that alignment is meaningful differs by venue.
- At the penalty box, the box boundary clearly marked on the floor.
- I know where the medical staff are located.

### **Number Checks**

Before the game, ensure that skaters' numbers are checked against the roster on the IGRF. The Penalty Lineup Trackers often perform this check. It can be done during warmups or by approaching the benches. Verify that each skater's number matches the roster and that no additional skaters are present. If any skaters are not present but are *not* struck through on the IGRF, double-check with a coach to determine if that skater will participate, and ensure their number is checked too.

There is both a pragmatic and a policy reason for performing number checks. Pragmatically, in all contexts, it's confusing and disruptive to discover during

gameplay that a player's number doesn't match the roster, or that the player isn't on the roster at all. Catching this before first whistle lets you fix it.

Sanctioning takes rosters very seriously. Skaters must be listed on the league's charter to participate in a sanctioned game. (WFTDA Sanctioning Policy, p. 9, WFTDA Charter Roster Policy; JRDA Sanctioning Policy; MRDA Policies and Procedures, p. 29). An ineligible skater participating in a sanctioned game could call the sanctioning into question.

You can review the current charters for WFTDA and for JRDA on the public Internet. MRDA sanctioning information is in MRDA Central.

If the skater's number as shown on the IGRF is incorrect, but their number matches the charter, fix the IGRF, along with the scoreboard and other paperwork. The charter is authoritative.

In a tournament context, involve the GTO if you need assistance resolving roster and charter concerns.

## **In-Game**

During the game, you may or may not be working another role. In your role as HNSO, there are a few distinct responsibilities.

### **IGRF**

After each period, you should be populating scores and penalty counts on the IGRF. Ensure that your Penalty Lineup Trackers and Penalty Box Timers agree on penalty counts before you record that datum, and assist in reconciliation if needed.

Ensure that the Scorekeepers have checked their math and completed the verification columns on their paperwork. Record the period score for each team on the IGRF. If there is a discrepancy between the official score and the score sheets, record the offset on the IGRF and the Offsets sheet in the statsbook. Note that a math error on the score sheet can usually just be corrected if it brings the paperwork in line with the official score. The record of points and trips should never be altered, however. Offsets are used to correct errors that became part of the official score.

## **Observing, Evaluating, and Developing Officials**

Offering constructive feedback is an art that every leader practices differently. It's not easy, and it takes both practice and self-awareness.

Devote as much attention as you're able to the performance of the officials on your crew. The statsbook includes a page for you to record notes about each crew member, or you can take notes elsewhere.

Specificity is key when you record feedback: "JT is doing great" is nice to know, but "JT correctly called Delay of Game when team failed to field a jammer" or "JT needs to make jam-start whistle short and sharp" is much better. I try to compile feedback that reflects both what I'd like to see officials work on *and* what I recognize that they are doing well. Keep in mind that positive feedback is not just to be used to soften the blow of constructive criticism! It's your chance to reinforce good practices and let officials know that you recognize their expertise.

Your observations can and should cover more than the raw mechanics of the official's performance, although those are important. As a crew leader, you also want to understand how an official responds to stress. You'd like to see how they interact with other officials, and comport themselves as part of a team. Are they communicating effectively? Do they panic when they're timing two or three blockers in the penalty box? Did they remember that new Officiating Procedure update? Are they treating the people around them (officials and non-officials) with respect and dignity?

There are three main contexts where you'll use your observations.

1. In-game, to nudge officials onto the right path or express appreciation for something done particularly well.
2. As part of coaching outside the game to help officials grow.
3. In formal or informal written evaluations, to help officials grow and to attest to their performance to others.

I always aim to do in-game coaching while the official is not otherwise occupied (during a jam, for the Jam Timer). I'll ask "Hey, can I give you a quick piece of feedback?" (They might be struggling with something I'm not aware of, and not ready to hear it). Then I'll tell them what I need them to do, and if time permits, *why*. I always try to share that context because it gives the receiving official the knowledge of what they're working towards, not just the sense that they've done something incorrect. Expediency doesn't always permit many words in this circumstance; sometimes it has to be "Please do this; we'll discuss later." If there's minimal game impact and the feedback can wait, I hold onto it for halftime or after the game.

When you ask an official to change how they execute their position, always make sure what you're asking them to do is grounded in the Rules, Officiating Procedures, Sanctioning Policy, or other governing documents. Conventions vary from region to region, and theirs may not be wrong simply because it's different from yours.

If you need someone to change a habit so that the rest of the crew can understand them, or to ensure they're operating the same way as the officials around them, that's fine — but make sure to let them know that's what you're doing, and that you're not telling them their work is incorrect.

Couch your supportive feedback in your knowledge of the official's level and the game context. A first-time Scoreboard Operator should hear "Hey, you did really well staying in sync with the Jam Timer. I saw you do that fix in Jam 11, nice work". An experienced Penalty Box Manager might get "Beautiful A-B-A jammer swap." Good constructive feedback lets the official know that you saw and recognized their skill.

It's important to acknowledge when an official acts on your feedback. They may be wondering whether they're hitting the mark that you set. Make a note of how they respond, too: it's important context for an eval, if you write one for that official.

We'll discuss post-game feedback more in Officiating Evals.

## **Handling Challenges**

Roller derby never goes 100% according to plan. Part of your responsibility as the Head NSO is to assess situations where things *aren't* going to plan and decide how to respond. Along with the head referee, you're both the last route of appeal and the official positioned to observe and intervene as needed. There's no single right way to do this. It's about bringing your deep knowledge of the game, your relationship with your crew, and your assessment of impact together to decide on a course of action.

It is also part of your responsibility to make hard choices that are visible to everyone and that impact the flow of the game. That can be a tough responsibility to shoulder, and it's why you should always found your choices on the letter and the principles behind the Rules, the Sanctioning Policy, and the Risk Management Guidelines. You need to be prepared to explain your decisions to teams and other participants later, and to let everyone leave the game feeling it was officiated fairly.

Always communicate what action you're taking and why. It's important to be clear with yourself and with those around you whether you're resolving a question of fact or exercising your judgement, and whether there is uncertainty that needs to be addressed.

Working through a few examples may be helpful.

**You observe that your Jam Timer is issuing cues based on their stopwatch rather than the scoreboard.**

- **What is the issue?** The Jam Timer is not cueing based on the official scoreboard (Rules 1.4) but by their backup stopwatch. This might result in there being a small difference in time between the cue and what skaters and others observe on the scoreboard.
- **What is the game impact?** Skaters and others who rely on the visual of the scoreboard may be disadvantaged relative to those who can hear the Jam Timer's whistle, if the Jam Timer's stopwatch is even slightly (less than a second) misaligned with the scoreboard.
- **What can you do about it?** This is a good time to "nudge" the official, as we discussed in Observing, Evaluating, and Developing Officials. The game impact is not massive, but it is real, and you can help the official improve their work immediately.

**The scoreboard does not start during a jam.**

- **What is the issue?** The scoreboard being down means that Rules 1.4 is being violated.
- **What is the game impact?** Skaters and coaches rely on the displayed clocks and scores to make decisions, including during the jam. The game is no longer compliant with the requirements for Sanctioned or Regulation play.
- **What can you do about it?** If the scoreboard is not working at all, whistle the jam dead and go into an Official Time Out. Fix the scoreboard! If the scoreboard is functioning, but the Scoreboard Operator is just a little slow on the Start Jam button, you can give them a few seconds to sort it out. (They are allowed to adjust the Jam Clock within the first 15 seconds of the jam to correct their mistake). The scoreboard being down does have significant game impact and falls outside the rules, so don't allow play to continue in that state.

**Your Penalty Lineup Tracker tells you they are signaling six penalties to the box, but the box says only five.**

- **What is the issue?** A disconnect in penalty counts means that you risk fouling out a skater at the wrong time. Additionally, teams may make lineup decisions based on what they believe the penalty count to be.
- **What is the game impact?** If the skater receives an additional penalty, the right action for the officials to take is not clear. Teams may make suboptimal decisions because they are viewing incorrect data.
- **What can you do about it?** If the skater receives an additional penalty during the jam, stop the jam and call an Official Time Out. Reconcile the penalty counts and ensure that the skater is correctly fouled out, or not fouled out. If the skater does not receive an additional penalty, call an

Official Time Out after the jam and reconcile. This decision sequence minimizes impact to the flow of the game, while ensuring that the *much larger* impact of a skater being fouled out or not fouled out incorrectly is avoided. Note that if the discrepancy were between 3 and 4 penalties, you'd almost never need to stop gameplay to address it.

**You notice that the turn coach is wearing flip-flops.**

- **What is the issue?** This is a violation of the Risk Management Guidelines, which are mandatory for events covered by WFTDA Insurance. (WFTDA Risk Management Guidelines, 4.1, p. 9; JRDA Risk Management Policy, p. 2; MRDA follows WFTDA).
- **What is the game impact?** There's no game impact. It's an insurance concern, and a personal injury concern (a skate to the coach's unprotected feet could produce a serious injury).
- **What can you do about it?** Stop the jam, if one is running. Call an Official Time Out. Tell the coach they must leave the play area until they have closed-toed shoes on. Issue an Illegal Procedure (Equipment Violation) penalty to the team captain (see Casebook Scenario C4.2.4.G).

**It will never be possible to codify responses to all of the situations that happen in a roller derby game.** Focus your energy and attention on what the Rules and the Casebook say, the principles *behind* what they say, and how you can best apply that information to maintain safety and game flow.

I like to tell my crews that resilience is more important than perfection. Steering roller derby smoothly back onto the right path is where your skills and judgement really show themselves.

**Communication**

The Head NSO is almost always more mobile than other officials on the track. You'll either not have a second role, or your second role will be as a Jam Timer, Penalty Lineup Tracker, or Penalty Wrangler who can move from the center to any of the officiating stations.

This mobility allows you to ensure that communication flows between the three off-skates clusters: the center, the score table, and the penalty box.

- Ensure that a failed or illegal Star Pass is noted as such by the scorekeepers.
- Guide officials on how to number a jam that was started in error.
- Overtime jams, sudden scoring, injury continuations
- Getting a substitute in the penalty box

- Support Penalty Lineup Trackers in getting missed penalty information
- Convey the success or failure of an Official Review, if an alt is not available to do so.

The more experienced your crew is, the less you'll need to play this role. However, it's almost always going to be true that you are present in decision-making, able to hear and transfer information across the track, and have direct access to the skating officials. Use that to enable the officials around you.

## **Official Reviews**

Only the Head Referee is required by Rules 1.3.2 to participate in Official Reviews. However, it's usually beneficial for the Head NSO to be present. In many cases, you'll be involved in implementing the outcome of the Official Review (such as adding or rescinding a penalty), and you may have relevant information to share with the other officials.

Someone should complete the Official Review paperwork during the review. If an Alt Referee or Alt NSO is staffed, they should typically assume this responsibility. If not, the HNSO can complete it.

The Scoreboard Operator needs to know if the review is retained or not. There is no standard way to signal this; a convention I like is to signal the *number of reviews remaining*. Thus, a hand signaling "zero" over the chest means "not retained" - no reviews remaining. A hand signaling "one" means "retained" - one review remaining. Thumbs up and down are also widely used but can have ambiguous meaning.

## **Managing Disagreement and Conflicts**

All leadership roles involve some level of conflict resolution. That can run the gamut from interpersonal problems to different training backgrounds to disagreements about what the Rules actually say. There's no single correct approach to resolving conflict. It always rests on the persons involved (including you!), on your relationship to the parties, and on the context. That said, there's a three-prong principle that I have found to be widely applicable:

1. Step back. Remove my ego and personal stake in the conversation, and by doing so invite the other parties to do the same.
2. Reground. Establish the shared values and goals we're working towards. In a roller derby context, these are always drawn from the Rules, Officiating Procedures, Sanctioning Policy, and other governing documents.

3. Move forward. Define what an outcome looks like: nobody is going to "win"; we're going to find a consensus based on our shared values and goals.

You'll develop your own rhythm and strategy for managing disagreements as you practice.

There are times when the question is one of *fact*. "What is the rule for X situation?" Experience as an official isn't necessarily the decider here, as rules and procedures change over time and experienced officials sometimes retain older versions. Don't be afraid to admit ignorance and involve other officials where you need to, such as an HR, THNSO, or GTO. It's more important to get it right in the end and preserve the safety and integrity of the game than it is to be right on the first impulse. Be willing to change your mind in the face of new information.

Other times, you can move forward not by selecting one of the options or viewpoints presented to you, but by changing the question. Regrounding the conversation in the goals of the Rules and procedures will sometimes allow you to see that *you don't have to solve the disagreement at all*, but can go a different direction. This is often a very good outcome, because it cements the message that nobody's winning the argument. It's about finding a route to a shared goal.

Bear in mind, too, that you'll still make mistakes and that's not the end of the world. You're human. The teams can use their Official Review if they need you to revisit a decision.

## **After Game**

### **Finalizing the IGRF**

Complete all of the data entry in the IGRF. As at halftime, verify your scores and penalty counts with the scorekeepers and the penalty lineup trackers. **Make sure to follow the statsbook manual closely**, as it includes detailed requirements for completing the IGRF. This guide is explicitly not comprehensive as to data points you need to enter. Always follow the statsbook manual.

Once your data entry is complete, get the signatures of the two captains (or adult coaches, in JRDA) and of your head referee. Sign the IGRF yourself.

Collect and retain all of the paperwork. You'll need it for statsbook preparation, and as backup in the case of a technology failure.

Make sure to download the stats from the scoreboard immediately and preserve them in a location other than the scoreboard computer, such as a thumb drive or cloud storage. Don't wait; technology breaks!

## **Scores and Stats Submissions**

Scores and statsbooks must be submitted only for sanctioned games. For non-sanctioned play, your teams may or may not want a statsbook or a look at the raw data. In those cases, you can negotiate timelines and expectations with them.

Carefully follow the submission instructions (and timelines!) for your association. It's worth a second or third look; mistakes will just get your statsbook sent back to you.

- WFTDA requires the score within 24 hours, the scanned IGRF, official review sheets, and expulsion forms within 48 hours, and the completed statsbook within 2 weeks.
- JRDA requires the official score, signed IGRF, and any expulsion forms submitted online within 48 hours. The completed statsbook must be submitted online within 14 days.
- MRDA requires scores in 24 hours, the IGRF in 48 hours, and the statsbook in 2 weeks (or 4 weeks for 5+ game events). All submissions are in MRDA Central. See MRDA Policies and Procedures p. 29-30.

Preparing a statsbook can take anywhere from 15 minutes to several hours, depending on whether or not you used ePLT and the quality of the in-game data entry. Both the WFTDA and JRDA statsbooks come with instructions and detailed manuals for completing them; this guide defers to that official documentation.

It is a good idea to run your statsbooks through Adam Smasher's Statsbook Tool, which identifies a huge set of common mistakes you can fix before submission. Using the Statsbook Tool is typically an iterative process. Run it once, fix some issues, run it again, find other issues. Repeat until you're satisfied with the situation.

You'll often find, either during your data entry or via the Statsbook Tool, that there are discrepancies in the data. Did this skater go to the box in jam 16, jam 17, or between jams? Did both jammers really lose lead in Jam 22, even though only one went to the box?

Some are clear mistakes that you can and should rectify. A skater can't go to the box in two different jams for the same penalty; one of the entries is wrong. You can often resolve these kinds of issues by correlating paperwork:

- Your PBT sheets can help you interpret and correct PLT data, establishing when a skater actually sat in the box.
- Marginal notes made by the scorekeepers can help straighten out odd-looking jam structures.
- PLT data can clarify Lost Leads and confusing Star Pass lines.

Some issues you can reason through, or attribute to common mistakes: this scorekeeper just forgot to mark No Initial. Others you might need to consult game footage to rectify, if it's available to you. In the end, you sometimes must accept that you can only pick the most likely of two interpretations. A small mistake that doesn't affect the outcome of the game is unlikely to get your statsbook rejected.

## **Officiating Evals**

Sharing formal and informal evaluations of officials' performance is an important part of the HNSO role, although it's not mandatory and practices differ widely. You generally have two options for this:

1. A formal evaluation submitted to WFTDA. This option is available only if the official is WFTDA Certified or is opted-in with WFTDA to receive evaluations. WFTDA provides extensive guidance on how to write an evaluation, or an Overview of Officiating Skill, which is a longer-form review not scoped to a single event. Evaluations are shared with the official.
2. Informal, but longer-form feedback. This is something I particularly like to offer in a tournament context, where I have the opportunity to see an official perform over multiple games and where they have an opportunity to grow from day to day. I generally give this feedback via email, and follow the themes discussed in Observing, Evaluating, and Developing Officials.

For those officials who are part of the WFTDA certification program, evaluations have considerable value. If you yourself are part of the program, writing evaluations may be considered as part of your performance as a head official. It's an important way to get officials' excellence, gaps, and growth on record, for them and for any future certifications they seek.

Informal feedback is your opportunity to be part of an official's growth. It's not easy, but it is rewarding: just about every official I've shared post-event feedback with has been delighted to be recognized and has welcomed suggestions for adjustments.

Giving feedback is also part of your journey as a leader. Your open discussion of successes and mistakes and adjustments builds psychological safety within your crew. It opens a conversation that can lead to valuable feedback for *you* as you develop as an officiating leader.