



# Football FOR LIFE

Long-Term Officials  
Development Model (LTOD)





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## Canadian Football: Proud Tradition, Exciting Future

Football Canada's Long-Term Officials Development Model (LTOD) is the blueprint for officials development throughout the nation. It provides direction, for all football officials, both existing and aspiring, in the three football disciplines (tackle, flag, and touch) on the critical decisions that need to be made to reach their goals and full potential in their chosen discipline.

The philosophy and principles of LTOD leads us to a new way of thinking about our programs, a way that requires us to make appropriate changes to officials education, recruiting and retention programs, and education of the football community on the role of officials.

This model was created by bringing leaders and experts of the football officiating world together with Football Canada staff and stakeholders. It is the policy framework for the future development of Canadian Football officials by Football Canada, our provincial/territorial partners, clubs and stakeholders. Successful implementation of this document will result in a flourishing sport, with growth in the number of quality officials from coast to coast to coast.



## The Global Football Family

The first games of “North American” style football were a series of international competitions in 1874 between Montreal’s McGill University and Cambridge’s Harvard University. The first two contests took place in May at Cambridge, Massachusetts (USA) and a third game was played in the fall at Montreal, Quebec (Canada).

The McGill-Harvard series is recounted by three sources posted below. One is a reprint of two actual game accounts from “The Gazette” in Montreal and one from “The Harvard Crimson” in Cambridge. The other source is from recollections of former McGill student Henry Joseph, who played in that first game, in a piece entitled “How the 1874 McGill-Harvard Football Games Forever Changed Football”.

North American style football has evolved greatly since those first contests. The rules of the game being played globally are the American rules and specifically the rules of the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA). Canada, of course, has its own unique characteristics and playing rules. “American” football has grown in popularity in more than 50 countries on six continents. The sport has generated fans in countries as diverse as Australia, South Korea and Finland.

The first “American” Football Federation outside of the United States was formed in Canada in 1884. In 1936, American Football expanded further with the emergence of the game in Japan, and in 1976 Europe founded its American Football federations.

The sport has experienced a significant expansion especially in Europe. In 1996, European Federation of American Football (EFAF) was founded.



## International Federation of American Football (IFAF)

The International Federation of American Football (IFAF) was founded in 1998. Currently, there are more than 50 member country federations in IFAF, located in such diverse locations as Australia, South Korea, Finland and Argentina. IFAF cooperates closely with major US American Football organizations, such as USA Football, the National Football League (NFL), and the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA).

The goal of the organization is to be part of the international sporting community. In 2005 IFAF became a full member of the General Association of International Sports Federation (GAISF), now called “Sportaccord”. IFAF is actively pursuing membership in the IOC with the objective to participate in the World Games as well as the Olympic Games and membership development. In 2007, IFAF launched a new membership development program with the mission to strengthen the quality of American Football in those federations who are in need of support and in spreading the sport in those countries where domestic structures do not exist yet.

Competitions are at the core of IFAF and the basis for friendly relationships between countries and people. Currently, IFAF conducts three major world championship events (Senior Men’s Tackle Football, Junior Men’s Tackle Football & Senior Men’s & Women’s Flag Football).

## Football Canada and the IFAF

Canada joined IFAF in 2004 and is providing leadership and expertise on several of the IFAF Committees including; Governance, Marketing, Technical, and Competition.

In 2008, Football Canada hosted its first IFAF World Championships. The Men’s and Women’s Senior World Flag Championships were held in St. Jean-Sur-Richelieu, Quebec where Canada won Gold in the Men’s and Silver in the Women’s competitions. The event returned to Canada in 2010 where Ottawa hosted the 5th Senior World Flag Championships.

In Tackle Football, Canada won Gold at the 2012, 2016 and 2018 IFAF World Junior Men’s Championship and Silver at the 2009 and 2014 World Junior Men’s Championship. The Women’s program has won the Silver in 2010 in Sweden, 2013 in Finland and 2017 in Langley, British Columbia. The Men’s National Team won Silver in Austria in 2011.



## Development of the Canadian Game

Canadian football was still developing after adopting the Burnside rules in 1903 which separated itself from the American version of the game by enforcing 12-players per side, 10-yards for a first down, 3 plays to get a first down, and the location of the goal posts to name a few of the rules. The Grey Cup was established in 1909 as an amateur competition that soon turned into Canada's premier football championship. It wasn't until the late 1940s that the Grey Cup started receiving attention from professional organizations with goals to eliminate the amateur teams and capture the cup for themselves. Soon after, the Canadian Football League (CFL) formed in an attempt to better organize these professional teams and make it a spectacle that fans could also get behind. From the youth level all the way through university, our amateur football players and officials use variations of the Canadian rules in order to prepare themselves for a career in a professional league.





## Football Canada's Role as the National Sport Organization

### Mission

As the National Sport Organization, Football Canada's mission is "to initiate, sustain, and encourage programs, services and activities targeted at all levels, from the novice to the elite, which foster safe and ethical participation in the three disciplines (tackle, flag, and touch) of amateur football."

### Values

Football Canada believes in and promotes the following values:

- Safety first
- Athlete centered
- Pursuing excellence
- Achieving equity and fairness
- Growth and development oriented
- Fostering a fun and safe environment
- Advancing accessibility to all Canadians
- Practicing responsibility and accountability
- Encouraging sportsmanship and ethical participation



### Commitments

Football Canada is committed (but not limited) to:

- Athlete centered sports programs
- Harassment and abuse free environment
- Fair play code
- Gender equity and accountability
- Access for persons with a disability
- Doping-free environment
- Appeals process
- Protection of personal information
- Code of ethics and code of conduct
- Official language policy
- Implementation of Long Term Athlete Development



## Structure of Officiating in Canada

### Football Canada

Football Canada is the governing body for amateur football in Canada. The National Office is located in Ottawa and provides programs for Coaches, Players, and Officials.

### L.T.O.D. committee

The Long Term Officials Development committee of Football Canada develops officiating programs (certification, etc.) and officiating updates.

The LTOD consists of a number of experienced Officials who represent the different streams of football (contact and non-contact). They have regular meetings to review and create officiating procedures and programs.

### C.F.O.A.

Chartered in 1969, the Canadian Football Official's Association (CFOA) consists of 35 - 40 autonomous member associations from across Canada.

The C.F.O.A. implements programs for the development of contact Officials through Football Canada training guidelines.

Regional representatives form the C.F.O.A. Executive Committee, which administers the day-to-day affairs of the Association.

### Provincial Football Association

Each province has a provincial body that administers football in their respective province. These bodies oversee the overall football program for their areas.

They offer services to their membership in the form of Coaches' clinics, Officials' clinics, Player development programs, administrative assistance and in some cases financial assistance for training programs.

### Provincial Football Officials' Association

A number of provinces have a provincial Officials Association which serves as an administrative body for amateur football Officials in that province.

They are responsible in part for the training of its membership under FCOCP guidelines by providing training materials and clinicians where necessary.

### Local Football Officials' Association

Local Officials' associations administer their local football association's affairs. This would include recruiting, local training programs (under FCOCP guidelines), game assignments, etc.



## Benefits and Goals of the LTOD

### Standardization

To develop and implement standard methods and procedures of officiating in Canada.

### Standardization of Positioning and Mechanics

To develop standardized positioning and mechanics across Canada. With the exchange program for Officials for national playoffs (e.g. USports) it has been seen that the FCOCP has been successful in that a crew can be brought together and work with very few, if any, variations in officiating procedures.

### Standardization of Rules

To develop standardized interpretation and application of rules. Various national conferences alongside virtual meetings have been held and the regional representatives on the CFOA Executive and Training Committees work with local FOAs to assist in rules study, rule interpretations and their application.

### Motivation

This is a system designed to provide incentives for new and existing Officials. A higher level of certification opens officiating 'doors' for being assigned to work higher levels of play in various locales or for provincial, regional and/or national playoff games.

### National Recognition

Officials will be registered with the Football Canada national database upon successful completion of each level of certification. An Official who transfers from one region to another will have his/her level of certification recognized. However, local associations may require some reassessment when an Official transfers from one area to another.

### Improvement of Image of Officials

To improve the image of football Officials in the eyes of athletes, coaches, fans, administrators, and among Officials themselves through improved techniques and higher standards of officiating.

### Improvement in Confidence

To assist participants to develop more confidence in their ability to perform their duties at a higher level of excellence.



## The Roles of the Officials

Basically, the objective of a football game is to get the ball over the opponent's goal line in various ways more often than they get it over your goal line. This is done by Players who perform the tasks involved in scoring or defending against scoring. They are assisted by Coaches who are there to encourage sportsmanship and to ensure that their players perform the tasks to the best of their ability. Officials are present to ensure that the players / coaches stay within the rules and that no one gains an advantage by going outside of the rules.

The players, the coaches and the officials are all Participants of the game, all equally essential to the success of football. No one group is any more important than the other and all are dependent on each other in order for the development and play of football.

It is essential that officials are viewed as participants rather than an adversary that has to be tolerated instead of embraced as fellow game participants. Each individual involved in all aspects of football must help to change the attitude towards officials in all sports in order to ensure that these individuals are recognized as well as respected for their contributions to their sport.

Officials provide an important role in helping to promote the ideals of fair play, sportsmanship, leadership and safety.

### 1. Smooth Flow to the Game

Officials are present to administer the game and to assist in having the game proceed in as smooth a fashion as possible. It is the Officials' job to set a pace that allows the game to move quickly and smoothly.

### 2. Game Played Within the Rules

A main function of an Official is to enforce the rules – to see that the game is played within the rules and within the spirit of the rules. Officials are there to ensure that no Player takes an “unfair advantage” of an opponent. Where possible, Officials may prevent fouls and injuries by their presence. Officials must always be concerned for “Player Safety” as part of “Rules Enforcement”.

### 3. Little Interference

Officials should NOT take the game away from the Players. The game is for the Players and people go to games to watch the play and Players, not the Officials. One of the greatest compliments for an Official is to go unnoticed because of his/her efficient handling of a game.

### 4. Preventing Fouls

Preventive officiating is the watchword for today's successful Official. Positive action can often prevent Players from committing fouls/infractions. Field presence can often be a deterrent to infractions being committed. Using your voice to give warnings and being in position to make rulings are great assets towards successful “preventive officiating”.

### 5. Making the Call

Learning to recognize what is “legal” and what is “illegal”. Recognize fouls/infractions and “make the call”. Don't back away from the “close calls”, act with courage. Sometimes the best call is a “no call”. A rule of thumb to follow, “no harm, no foul”.

## Notes

Learn the basics of officiating first, details and refinements will come with experience.



Development as an Official is a type of apprentice program where there is an ongoing learning program.

### 1. Educator

- a. Give assistance to Players, Coaches, league administrators, and fellow Officials (i.e. rules clinics, officiating clinics, on the field assistance and guidance). Help with a better understanding of the playing rules and their interpretation.

### 2. Sales Person

- a. Influence fair play and good sportsmanship.
- b. Present and sell yourself as a competent Official to others.
- c. Always display honesty and integrity in all aspects of the game.
- d. Make your calls/no calls to the best of your ability.
- e. Try not to be influenced by the score, time of game, position on the field, the fans, etc.

### 3. Psychologist

- a. Be humanistic in your dealings/relationship with others.
- b. Be businesslike in your approach to each game towards the Players, Coaches, administrators, fans, etc. You're there to do a job, not to be a "friend".

### 4. States Person

- a. Limit your contact with the above persons to the affairs of the day and matters concerning the game. This is not a social gathering. Your primary concerns should be "The safety & well-being of the Players" and "The game is for the Players".

Officials should work at developing positive relationships with:

- Coaches
- Players
- League administrators
- Fellow Officials
- Fans



## Officials Development Pathway (new FCOCP)

The Football Canada Officials Development Pathway (FCOCP) provides a system, which will allow the amateur football Official in Canada to progress through a standard program from novice to a level completely consistent with the level of football played in his/ her locale.

While each discipline of football (tackle, flag, and touch) has their own unique set of requirements and criteria on how to pass officials through each stage of development (levels 1 through 4), those criteria are under the umbrella of Football Canada's Officials Certification Pathway which can be seen in the picture below. We use this to ensure that the officials for our games match the level of athletes laid out in the LTAD. Unlike the LTAD's stages of development, the LTOD does not have specific age requirements for officials. Rather, advancing through the development stages will be based on knowledge, experience, and drive for excellence.

### Level 1

This is the entry level for new officials, regardless of their age. At this level, they will start learning the roles, responsibilities, and principles of being an official alongside a basic understanding of the rules. The games they officiate are on a local, or club level to try and alleviate as much outside pressure as possible. At some point during these games, they must not only receive an evaluation, but reach the desired outcome set by the experienced evaluator to ensure they are fit to officiate. Once familiar with how to manage the responsibility and power they are entrusted with when officiating, they will start to naturally progress towards Level 2. An official is typically only in this stage for 1-2 years.

### Level 2

This stage of development is where the largest percentage of officials are. This is the next step for the Level 1 official looking to further their officiating career. At this stage, more responsibility and pressure can be added to the official as they are challenged more on rule knowledge alongside the games they officiate increasing in skill, intensity, and age. Officials are introduced to the teamwork side of officiating and start to understand the politics and basic game management skills that surround the sport. This stage can also contain the casual official who does not look to make a career out of officiating or push their boundaries of knowledge to the limit. Rather, these officials look at officiating as a way to stay involved with the game/community alongside staying in shape. A recertification or evaluation process will occur for officials with consecutive years in Level 2 to ensure they are staying up to date with rule changes and mechanics.

### Level 3

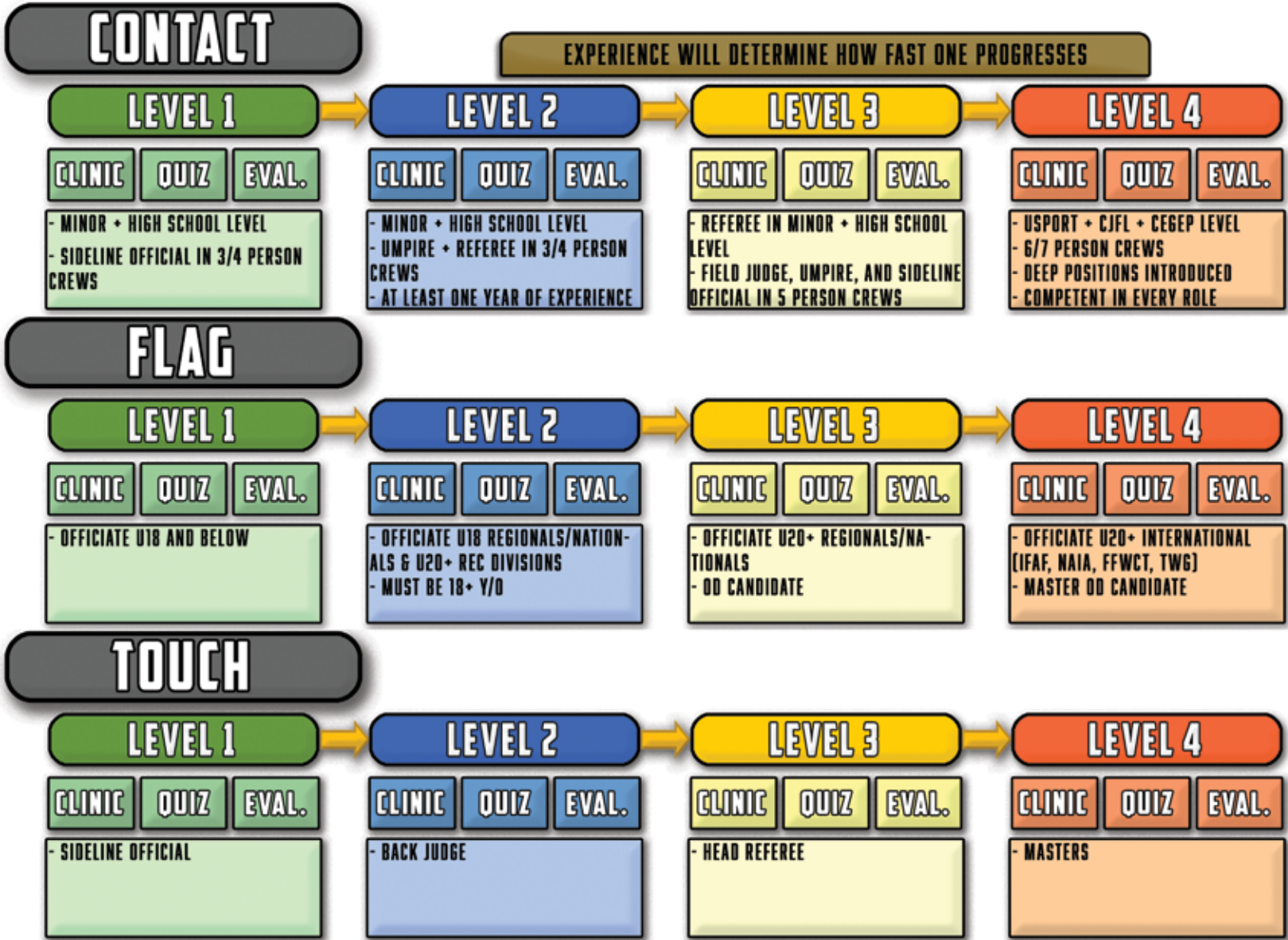
This stage is for the Level 2 official that is now looking to be an expert of the rules, game management, and seeks to officiate in the largest games available to them on a provincial or national level. With several years of experience under their belt, they can often be thought of as a 'rock' or mentor in the community of officials in their local association with willingness to help train newer officials, evaluate existing ones, as well as face the pressure of large scale games. This is also where the official may start to specialize in a certain position or area of the game where they feel they are strongest at, whether that specialization occurs at a position on the field (i.e., umpire, offensive official, etc.), or off the field (trainer, evaluator, mentor, etc.). Level 3 is the landing spot for officials who would like to still be involved after their careers are done (retired, older, or injured officials) as they can actively participate in a number of ways with their local and provincial football associations (recruitment, retention, evaluation, mentorship, training, etc.).



## Level 4

This stage is for the Level 3 official who seeks to turn officiating into a professional career and work the highest level of games available to them nationally and internationally. Rule knowledge is perfected and the largest area of focus for the official will be on game management when the stakes and pressure are the absolute highest. These officials continuously aim for the highest levels of success, understanding, and excellence in every aspect of officiating. They have specialized in one or more roles and can act as a mentor within their officiating association and community.







## The Ideal Official

A review of the qualities advocated indicates the improbability of becoming a perfect Official. How many Officials have you observed who combine all of these qualities? The point to be made here, however, is that you and any other prospective Official can improve each of the qualities. Your performance and your enjoyment of officiating will depend upon how much you improve.

1. Top physical condition and impeccable appearance.
2. Professional and confident appearance.
3. Thorough knowledge of the rulebook. Knows what the rules say and what they mean. Understands the spirit of the rules and their applications.
4. Intelligent and co-operative Teamwork.
5. Understanding and application of approved mechanics - in the right place at the right time.
6. Notices everything, yet is not noticed.
7. Considerate and courteous without sacrificing fairness.
8. Does not shy away from close or difficult decisions.
9. Consistent in their calls (tough but consistent vs. lenient but inconsistent)
10. Uses good judgement. (When in doubt – don't call.)
11. Calls rough play and unnecessary roughness fouls without compromise.
12. Uses common sense and good judgement rather than the letter of the law on technical rulings.
13. Has a calm and confident manner, which spreads confidence.
14. Makes decisions clearly.
15. Keeps the game moving.
16. Makes no public announcements and does not discuss the games with Coaches, press or the public. Understands their role in the game and does not draw attention to themselves.
17. Accepts public criticism and remarks as part of their work as a public figure.
18. Is professional in dealing with other stakeholders in the game, including but not limited to coaches, fans, administrators, media.
19. Demonstrates high personal integrity.
20. Does not criticize other Officials in any public situation.



## Female Officiating

Football officials are an eclectic group of individuals because they all have different motivations and reasons for becoming officials. The desire to become an official differs from person to person which makes our group unique. Most officials were once players, some have children who played, others sought a way to become involved in the game, and a rare few come from officiating families – these reasons apply to both men and women. Unfortunately, the current system for recruitment is not doing enough to attract new officials, particularly female officials.

The current system needs to modify how it seeks out new recruits, both men and women. Many officials have chosen to officiate after speaking with an official about what the sport has to offer. This sort of recruitment needs to be happening more today. We should be speaking with players (both men and women) about life after football and what officiating has to offer. In addition to speaking with players, we should also be reaching out to individuals who work with their high school teams. Most of these students are looking for a way to be involved with the sport and are looking for an avenue that does not require them to play. Finally, we should reach out to officials and athletes from other sports. Looking for new officials in these areas would be extremely beneficial to our officiating program and it would allow for the continued education and growth of our current members.

The main challenge that officials face is stress, proper education, good evaluation, and opportunity. The current system is changing to foster the development of officials in many areas. This fact impacts female officials' experiences within football more than the men, especially since many female officials are not as openly welcomed into the community as their male counterparts. Many female officials have been subject to crude comments, misogynistic opinions and alienation from their fellow male officials. A new approach to the recruiting, development and retention of officials has the potential to influence how new officials, particularly women are welcomed, educated, and mentored by their peers.

It would be wonderful to see a platform created that would connect female officials within a province and across the country, something that would allow us to discuss ideas and issues, seek advice, and trade “war stories” that only a female official could understand. Most of the time the male officials can not offer advice in certain situations because they have never had a similar experience. It would also be nice to hear from women across the country to see how they handle certain situations with players, coaches or officials and learn from each other. This sort of platform has the potential to help female officials greatly to have a way of communicating because it would show all of us that we are not as alone in the sport as we think.



## Retention of Officials

There have been few case studies examining the mental, psychological and physical effects of officiating on officials in the sport of football.

By examining the effects on officials in other sport Adrian H. Taylor (Ontario, Canada) concludes that the strongest predictor of official burnout is 'Fear of Failure'. He found this 'Fear of Failure' was significantly greater in newer/younger officials and advanced two theories:

1. Newer/Younger Officials do not properly manage/deal with the stress associated with the high intensity of sport;
2. Newer/Younger Officials are treated more harshly by coaches and parents with the view that they being newer/younger can be more easily intimidated, influenced and manipulated.

The solution to these issues starts in off-field pre-season activity.

### Football Canada supports

1. Adding a stress-management course/component to required study prior to officiating. This course/component would be dedicated to handling and dealing with associated pressures in a non-threatening manner.
2. Add and/or strengthen coaches training and understanding of the effects their actions (at all levels) have on officials and retention. All coaches, players, parents and fans want great officials. However, great officials start off as newer/younger officials. If you disparage or intimidate these officials they will choose not return; turnover increases, resulting in a revolving cycle and the future of officials being in constant disarray.

A study by Guillien and Fletz (2011) uses a term Referee Efficacy (refficacy) which they define as the extent to which the official believes they have the capacity to perform successfully. Officials with a high refficacy:

- a. Make faster and more accurate decisions;
- b. Have greater physical fitness;
- c. Have athletes and coaches report greater satisfactions with official performance; and
- d. Report lower stress.



Football Canada believes enabling officials with confidence, testing rule knowledge; supporting on-field endeavours and instilling on-field confidence will increase and improve efficacy in all officials. Football Canada believes Football Official Associations should key on, implement and support these endeavours in all officials.

One area that Football Canada, the CFOA, alongside Local Football Officials Associations need to do better at is trying to recruit and retain athletes to transition them into officials after their playing careers are concluding. There is a current void in our LTAD for athletes once they have finished playing competitively regardless of the age/level. A natural transition to stay involved with the game and community that these athletes have dedicated so much time to would be for athletes to become officials. Through their years of playing experience, these athletes will know the fundamentals of how a game is supposed to flow and what games are supposed to 'look' like. This gives the former player the potential to progress through the ranks at a faster pace compared to someone with less playing experience.

Reaching out to athletes will look different from league to league, and province to province. However, a concerted effort should be made between the league operations and the Local Officials Associations for a streamlined way for the two groups to meet. People often choose to officiate after speaking with an official about what the sport has to offer outside of participating as an athlete. Whether via the coach, or through a presentation from the officials association, attaining officials who also play the game is a great way to ensure the idea of a lifelong athlete who will stay involved in their local football community.







**CANADA**

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