

Mentoring Program—Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

What is the Mentoring Program?

The objectives of the Mentoring Program are to aid the recruitment, development and retention of officials—specifically:

- Increase the success rate of retaining prospective officials at the initial certification levels.
- Increase the preparation of officials who are upgrading to discipline specific levels—aiding them to progress quicker and further into the officiating pathway.
- Encourage and retain the official’s participation and engagement in officiating. Help them feel part of the officiating community!

The Mentoring Program utilizes mentors to support and guide officials on their progression through the officiating pathway to become the best official they can be. At the initial certification levels, the mentor will ensure officials are welcomed and encouraged to become involved in the officiating community. At the higher, discipline specific levels, the mentor will guide the mentee in obtaining the knowledge, skills and experience for a successful upgrade to the next certification level. The mentor will also help the newly upgraded official transition to the expectations and operational realities of officiating at the higher level (e.g., first 100 days).

The Mentoring Program was developed by, and is overseen by, the National Officials Committee and applies to all officials in all jurisdictions across Canada.

Do I have to be a mentor?

No. The plan is for all officials in B.C. to have a mentor but not all officials have to be mentors. Mentoring is a great and satisfying opportunity to meet and interact with other officials and help them develop and grow into great officials.

Does the Mentoring Program mean I can no longer seek advice and experience from other officials?

No. The formal Mentoring Program ensures everyone receives a consistent level of support and advice during their officiating career. Seeking advice and experience from other officials you respect and are comfortable with has historically been a valuable component of developing officials and will continue under the new program.

What is my role as a mentor?

Mentors at the initial levels (i.e., upgrading to level 2) will focus on engaging the official in the officiating community and supporting their progression to Level 2 with a strong interest in continuing on to Level 3. As a mentor, you will confirm your mentee is ready to progress to level 2 by completing a simple checklist to confirm:

- the upgrading requirements have been met (e.g., online module completed, experience credits obtained); and

- the official’s aptitude and attitude for being an official (e.g., work in team, follow instructions, safe).

Mentors at the discipline specific levels (e.g., upgrading to levels 3 to 5) will focus on explaining the process and requirements for upgrading and then guiding and monitoring their progression to the next level. The mentor will not be evaluating the official but will interact with the evaluator to prepare for and debrief after the evaluation.

At the end of each season, the mentor will be expected to submit a short report on the strengths and next steps for the mentee.

How many people would I mentor if I become a mentor?

The table below illustrates the number of mentees that each mentor may be assigned. The number varies by level to reflect the anticipated effort. Mentoring officials at higher certification levels requires more commitment due to the complexity of the upgrading process and requirements while mentoring officials at initial certification levels is focused on welcoming the official and encouraging their participation and progression to the next level.

Mentee	Mentor	# of Mentees per Mentor
To Level 2	Level 3	8
To Level 3	Level 4 or 5	5
To Level 4	Level 5	3
To Level 5	Level 5	3

A mentor must be at least one certification level above the mentee. For example, an official upgrading to level 3 will require a mentor at level 4 or 5. Hence, officials at the highest levels will typically be mentoring officials upgrading to discipline specific levels (e.g., upgrading to levels 3 to 5) while officials at level 3 will be mentoring officials progressing to level 2.

Would I be mentoring officials outside my discipline?

Mentoring at initial certification levels (i.e., upgrading to level 2) will involve officials typically at level 3 from any discipline. Their mentoring role is not discipline specific or explaining technical rules—instead listening, answering questions, engaging the official in the officiating community, and supporting progression to level 2 with interest in continuing on to level 3.

Mentoring at higher certification levels (i.e., upgrading to levels 3 to 5) will involve officials at higher levels from within the same discipline.

Do I have to go to every meet with my mentee?

No. It is not envisioned the mentor will go to meets with the mentee. It is not required in order to be a mentor and most mentors will not have the availability to travel and observe mentees along with their regular officiating responsibilities. Mentors and mentees will debrief what happened at meets and mentors may wish to contact the mentee's supervisor/chief to get their perspective on the mentee's performance and experience gained at a specific meet.

What is the commitment to being a mentor?

There is no fixed schedule or requirement for meeting and interacting between the mentor and mentee. Each mentor: mentee relationship will be different depending on their availability and preferences for working together. Flexibility in the mentor: mentee process is important to find a way that works for both parties. An example of a mentoring process will start with the assignment of a mentor, followed by:

- **Introductions**—an initial discussion over coffee, phone or e-mail to introduce each other, set expectations for their relationship and discuss preferences for working together. The first meeting, or subsequent if more appropriate, will involve the mentee explaining their goals and plans for officiating for the coming year. The mentor will help the mentee develop the plan and set expectations for what is realistic for the year given the mentee's knowledge, skills and experience.
- **After first meet**—a discussion to debrief the experience, successes and challenges. The Mentor may contact the mentee's supervisor or chief at the meet to gather feedback on the performance. The mentor and mentee will discuss next steps for gaining experience towards the next level.
- **Throughout season**—check in and further discussions focused on debriefing meets, pointing out the nuisances of officiating at the specific level and further experiences required.
- **Pre and post evaluations**—discussing the evaluation process, outcomes and plans for moving forward. The mentor will contact the evaluator to collect any additional feedback and suggested next steps.
- **Year-end**—debrief the season and plans to continue next year. This information will be fed to the Provincial Mentoring Coordinator for use in their annual reporting requirements.

How are mentors assigned?

The Provincial Mentoring Coordinator will assign mentors to mentees in conjunction with the mentoring criteria and availability of mentors.

The Provincial Mentoring Coordinator will serve as a mentor to the mentors, answering questions from mentors and addressing any issues that may arise.

The Provincial Mentoring Coordinator is responsible for ensuring a consistent mentoring program in all regions across B.C.; monitoring outcomes and reporting out on the Mentoring Program to provincial and national officials committees.

What does it take to become a mentor?

The National Officials Committee designates officials as mentors. The mentor must be a minimum of level 3 and have successfully completed the mentoring workshop covering the process, reporting and best practices for mentoring.

The mentor will also be expected to participate in annual sessions that will communicate updates to the program and best practices. These short sessions may be via conference call, video conference or regional face-to-face meetings.

Officials who are currently titled Mentors will be invited to become Evaluators under the new Evaluation Program. The current designation of Mentor will be retired and replaced with Mentors under this program.

What is the difference between a mentor and an evaluator?

The Mentor will focus on engaging the official and guiding them on the way to becoming the best official they can be.

The Evaluator will observe and assess the official's readiness for promotion to the next level. The evaluator will work with the mentor on an effective and efficient process for the mentee's upgrading.