

# **SPECIAL REPORT**



**THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF SPORTS OFFICIALS**

## **ACCOUNTABILITY IN OFFICIATING**

**SPORTS OFFICIATING 2003**



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## ACCOUNTABILITY IN OFFICIATING

### **SPORTS OFFICIATING 2003**

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Written By Dave Sabaini

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for the National Association of Sports Officials  
Racine, Wis.

*NASO Special Report: Sports Officiating 2003 – Accountability In Officiating*

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## Introduction: Brave New World

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The issue of accountability in officiating has long been misunderstood. Who hasn't heard the cry from coaches, both famous and local, that officials aren't held accountable? That we show up to work the games and disappear immediately after, leaving any number of messes in our wake?

As officials, we know we are accountable. When it comes to accountability, we understand and readily accept that we are accountable to our games, but also that the games — and the people who run them — are accountable to us. In June, officiating leaders from all over the country, representing every level of competition from the pros, colleges and high school on down, gathered in Portland, Ore., to discuss issues of accountability and to seek answers to critical problems.

There is an inevitability to accountability. Historically there's been general banter about that. We've talked about being held accountable in the dressing rooms, in the bar after the game. But let's formalize that concept because once you buy into the formality of the concept that you're going to be held accountable, it causes you to look at these things in a different way.

By and large, when we hear the word accountability, it means what? Pounding them down and not lifting them up. It can have negative connotations. We were very careful in putting a program together to make sure we had an equal dose, if you will, of both.

One of our goals is to help put a different face on accountability in the mind of the officiating community, as well as the administrators of the games we work. Scrutiny can tear down, or it can be a way to build up. And for the latter, it needs to be part of a system that includes training, evaluation, accountability and rewards.

As you go through this report, which reflects the educational program of the Portland conference, you're going to be confronted with such topics as the principles of accountability, codes of conduct and covenants for and with sports officials, ways to reward officials, and the role and inevitability of the media.

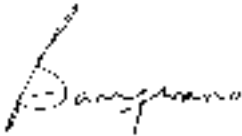
You're also going to read about disciplining officials. First of all you ask the questions, should we be disciplined? Should we ever be disciplined? If the answer is no, this is easy. But if the answer is yes, we have to define a spectrum now.

Defining, understanding and implementing — those are the goals in discussing accountability.

Please share this report with those you know who can influence change. Accountability in officiating needs to be demystified and discussed. While NASO is taking the lead to make a difference, it's up to you and your fellow officials back home to continue to carry the torch. All of us must pull together to make a meaningful difference. The responsibility lies with anyone interested in furthering excellence in officiating.

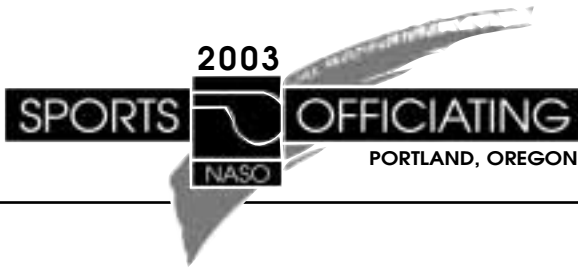
NASO takes great pride in serving as a catalyst for that endeavor, and in providing a forum for sports leaders to come together and tackle officiating issues face to face and hands on. We hope this report helps you continue to reach for officiating excellence in your organization.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Barry Mano". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "B" and a long horizontal stroke.

Barry Mano  
President, NASO





## ACCOUNTABILITY IN OFFICIATING

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### Educational Program

All the sessions at NASO's 21st annual national conference related to the overall conference theme of accountability in officiating, with each examining the issue from a different angle.

Structured to have a logical flow, the educational program outlined accountability topics, begging questions such as what are the principles of accountability, why is a code of conduct important, what does the game owe officials, how and when should officials be disciplined, as well as many others.

What follows is a breakdown of each session in order, including a speaker list and pertinent information of what was discussed. Additionally, throughout this report, you will see supporting information from a survey of NASO members, in which they noted their opinions of a wide spectrum of accountability issues. The entire survey, including results, may be found in Appendix 1, NASO Accountability Survey Results, on p. 56.

# The Buck Stops Here: Principles of Accountability

*Presenter: Jerry McGee*

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With accountability as the theme for the 2003 NASO Conference, what could be more appropriate than defining what accountability is, who is to be held accountable and how? That was the assignment laid before Jerry McGee, president of Wingate University and a major college football official.

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“While I’m confident that professional sports have workable and useful plans in place, my experience has shown that for the most part in college and high school officiating, accountability programs are characterized by fragmentation, frustration and a lack of utility,” noted McGee.

He believes the problem is particularly acute at the collegiate level since there is a conscious effort to hold officials accountable there.

“I certainly don’t mean to sound too critical of those who supervise college officiating,” McGee said. “They usually come to their positions from backgrounds where they would not be required to supervise others, and they’re asked to assume these positions with very little or no training. Too often the result is a continuation of a process that has been flawed for many years.”

McGee indicated that as long as things go well, nobody notices all the hard work everyone has put in, but let something go wrong, and everyone begins looking for someone to blame. When some sort of review or corrective process takes place, McGee feels that it is often more negative than constructive.

To help point the way toward a clearer model of accountability, McGee gave his version of effective tenets for accountability:

## **Clear, measurable and significant goals**

These may include making preseason expectations clear, mandatory study sessions, national and/or regional clinic attendance, standards for physical conditioning, rules preparation and game performance expectations like mechanics and judgment. “What’s expected in terms of rule preparation? Are you going to be given an individual test at your clinic? Will it be a group test? Will be an open book test? Will it be a test given by crew? All those things are important because it all goes back to how you prepare for it,” McGee noted.

“All of us want to do a good job,” said McGee, “but we have to know what the rules are. As supervisors change, as high school administrators change, or the high school athletic director changes, there’s always a constant change in what’s expected. We need to know exactly what’s expected of us.”

“The most important thing is what’s expected in terms of game performance,” McGee urged. “We have more people who get in trouble officiating by doing one of two things: being late and talking when they should be listening. How many outstanding officials have you known who have had wonderful judgment on the field or on the court, but they make the wrong remark to an assistant coach or the wrong remark to a fan or to a player?”

## **Monitor progress: focus on improving performance, not punishing failure**

That could include individual annual evaluations along with a performance comparison to previous years’ results. Accentuate the positive. Provide game tapes whenever possible. Assign senior officials to mentor newer officials. Demonstrate officiating techniques to be emulated.

McGee noted that the type of analysis needed of officials to improve significantly is just beginning to become available at the collegiate level.

“I think it’s important for us to look at (officiating patterns),” said McGee, “because you probably have missed a few calls. The idea is not to go out and call 10 more fouls a game. But the idea is to have consistency from official to official. The only complaint I ever hear from coaches is ‘last week that wasn’t a foul and today it’s a foul.’ What’s the difference? It’s that loss of consistency.”

Accountability through intimidation should be avoided, according to McGee. “If I’ve heard a young official told this once I’ve heard it a thousand times: ‘Son, there are 5,000 high schools officials in the southeast who want your job.’ That’s no way to develop loyalty. That’s

no way to develop confidence in a young official. I couldn't imagine you could say anything much worse than that."

### Use multiple tools for evaluation

Use coaches' evaluations along with observers' evaluations. Perhaps even peer evaluations could be a part of a multi-faceted approach to this area. McGee, unlike many officials at lower levels, is a supporter of coaches' evaluations.

"When we first started having the coaches grade the officials, I just fell on the floor. I thought it was the funniest thing I've ever heard of," he recalled. "You get graded from zero to 10. Well, the losing coach is going to give you a zero, and the winning coach is going to give you a 10, so every official in the country is going to have an average of five. But that's not what happens. Those coaches and staff take that very seriously. It's usually some assistant coach who spends hours and hours looking at that film, and they give you a really good critique."

McGee also supports the all-too-rare concept of peer evaluations. "Who knows better what kind of official you are than the people who are working with you on the court or on the field? They're out there with you. They hear every word you say. They see every call you make," he noted.

Regular film review with fellow officials is very important, as is film review by your supervisor. It also isn't unreasonable, especially at the collegiate level, to include some sort of fitness requirements.

When it comes to evaluation, some people evaluate all officials on the same basis, regardless of level worked or experience. McGee thinks that can be a mistake. "Too many times we assume that everybody knows a lot more than they know," he observed. "Having some discussion about the way to do things is a better way to do it than to wait for somebody to make a mistake and then punish them."

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"When we first started having the coaches grade the officials, I just fell on the floor. I thought it was the funniest thing I've ever heard of ..."

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## **Employ incentives for those who produce results**

Covered in-depth during other sessions, it was noted that accountability without rewards wouldn't likely be successful. McGee speculated that incentives could include a bowl game or other playoff assignments and major conference games. "If you're going to have all these evaluations, I think there has to be some meaning to them," he said.

## **Invest in the results of accountability.**

Select only the best officials for the toughest games, eliminating the "good-old-boy" syndrome. Fix any problems revealed by the process without excuses. Develop a plan for future success. According to McGee, as we get older, we have to work twice as hard for success.

"I've known thousands of sports officials," he stated. "I have never known one who did not want to improve his or her performance. After all, everybody who is officiating sports are competitors, and we certainly have been competitors all of our lives. And we want to develop our potential to the fullest."

According to McGee, "those basic tenets very seldom change, and when they do they change very little, although our interpretation of those tenets tend to change over the years."

McGee emphasized again the need for evaluations and expectations to be positive and clear. He stressed that intimidation tactics are to be avoided.

So, the buck stops where? Here, it seems, with every official. As McGee concluded, officials are accountable to everyone associated with the game, including themselves.

"My respect for my mentors, observers and supervisors is very similar to the respect I had for my coaches and my parents when I was a kid," he says. "I want them to be very proud of my performance and my efforts. I feel accountable to them."

"I respect the players and the coaches and I want them to be looking for me on game day, because they know I'll be well prepared and they'll be treated fairly. I feel accountable to them," he continued.

"I have the utmost respect for my fellow officials, just like I respected my teammates from my playing days. I want them to know that I will always be there for them, and they can be absolutely sure that I will do my job and that I will perform at a very high level. I also feel accountable to them," he concluded.

McGee finished by stating we are, perhaps, most accountable to "our most difficult critics, to those who hold us to the highest standards of accountability, ourselves."

# Code of Conduct: What Now?

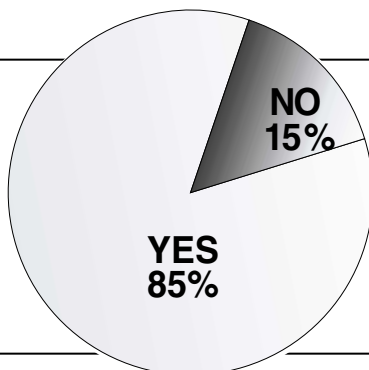
*Presenter: Mary Struckhoff*



Recently, the Officiating Development Alliance (ODA) created a code of conduct for officials. While the concept of such a code is not new, (there have been codes in rulebooks for many years), the scope and intent of the ODA code certainly seemed revolutionary.

For the first time, a code was created that could easily be adopted by officiating organizations at any level and of any reach. Further, any group to more specifically meet their needs could modify the ODA code.

**Should officials be expected to adhere to higher standards of ethical and moral conduct than the general public?**

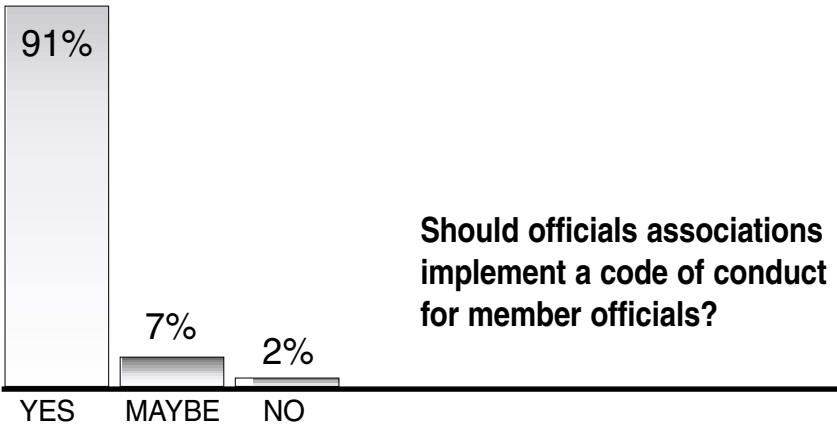


But having a code is one thing. Having groups and individuals “buy into” the code is something else. What can we do to get officials to adopt a code that seemingly holds them to a higher standard than most of the rest of society? That was the task of the session led by the NFHS’s Mary Struckhoff, herself an ODA member.

**CODE OF CONDUCT FOR SPORTS OFFICIALS**

1. **Officials shall** bear a great responsibility for engendering public confidence in sports.
2. **Officials shall** be free of obligation to any interest other than the impartial and fair judging of sports competitions.
3. **Officials shall** hold and maintain the basic tenets of officiating which include history, integrity, neutrality, respect, sensitivity, professionalism, discretion and tactfulness.
4. **Officials shall** master both rules of the game and mechanics necessary to enforce the rules, and shall exercise authority in an impartial, firm and controlled manner.
5. **Officials shall** uphold the honor and dignity of the profession in all interactions with student-athletes, coaches, school administrators, colleagues, and the public.
6. **Officials shall** display and execute superior communication skills, both verbal and non-verbal.
7. **Officials shall** recognize that anything which may lead to a conflict of interest, either real or apparent, must be avoided. Gifts, favors, special treatment, privileges, employment or a personal relationship with a school or team which can compromise the perceived impartiality of officiating must be avoided.
8. **Officials shall** prepare themselves both physically and mentally, shall dress neatly and appropriately, and shall comport themselves in a manner consistent with the high standards of the profession.
9. **Officials shall** not be party to actions designed to unfairly limit or restrain access to officiating, officiating assignments or to association membership. This includes selection for positions of leadership based upon economic factors, race, creed, color, age, sex, physical handicap, country or national origin.
10. **Officials shall** be punctual and professional in the fulfillment of all contractual obligations.
11. **Officials shall** work with each other and their governing bodies in a constructive and cooperative manner.
12. **Officials shall** resist every temptation and outside pressure to use one's position as an official to benefit oneself.
13. **Officials shall** never participate in any form of illegal gambling on a sports contest, may never gamble on any sporting event in which they have either a direct or indirect involvement, and may never gamble on events involving high school athletics.
14. **Officials shall** not make false or misleading statements regarding their qualifications, rating, credentials, experience, training or competence.
15. **Officials shall** accept responsibility for all actions taken.

“We think that having a code of conduct evaluates the profession and the avocation,” stated Struckhoff. “It certainly improves the image of officials to the public. It clearly expresses the expectations. And it promotes the integrity and a higher standard of behavior for officials. All officials certainly are living up to the same set of standards.”



The challenge faced by those in attendance at the Portland conference was to come up with a list of implementation tactics or strategies that local associations could employ to ensure that their members buy into the code.

To accomplish that, Struckhoff split the assembly into 10 groups. Each group was charged with the same task: Come up with at least five implementation strategies that they could take home with them. Each group would then present their ideas to the larger group for discussion.

The breakout sessions netted some outstanding ideas, which included:

- Allow members of local associations to establish their own codes of conduct.
- Rewards and consequences for various code behavior.
- Due process for any violations.
- Lead by example. If spectators, players and coaches have a code, then so should officials.
- Make adherence to the code part of the evaluation process for officials.



- Make the code part of the mission statement for your local association.
- The code must be accessible, and leadership must buy into it first.
- Make the code a reward element of your association.
- Make individual officials responsible by making them sign a document in which they agree to abide by the terms of the code.
- Make the code part of the educational process for new officials.
- Survey your membership to determine what should be in the code and how the code could be implemented.
- Make portions of the code part of your regular pregame conferences and postgame analysis.
- Make the code part of association meetings.
- Put the code on your association's website.
- Perhaps representatives from the NFHS, NASO, NFL, etc. could create a video presentation that stressed the importance of the code for use by local associations.
- Enforcement of the code should be communicated to the membership.
- Let your "clients" (i.e. teams, athletic directors, assigners, etc.) know about the code.
- Incorporate the code into your association bylaws.
- Public recognition for those modeling the code.
- Show members how recent situations could have been addressed by the code.
- Create an Ethics Committee within your local association.
- Base playoff assignments upon compliance with the code.
- Have clearly defined penalties for non-compliance.
- Educate members on the perceptions and responsibilities of officials.

The breakout sessions netted a number of excellent implementation proposals for any code of conduct. There were several tactics, however, that were selected by a majority of the groups. They included:

1. Have your members “sign-off” on the code, creating a sense of ownership of the code on behalf of all members.
2. Use the code to educate your newer members, and make sure your most senior members model it.
3. Make compliance with the code part of your evaluation system.
4. Create an awareness of the code’s existence with the public, and develop a reward/penalty system.

Struckhoff pointed out that having a strategy was crucial, but meaningless if implementation didn’t follow. “We hand out this code of conduct and we’re complacent in the NFHS,” she said. “We put it in our rulesbooks. We never draw any attention to it. We just are assuming people are reading it, and we’re assuming that people are doing it. Let’s take what’s already done, because there’s some great things out there, and let’s bring it down to a concrete enforceable or implementation level so we can bring these ideas to the forefront in your local or state association.”



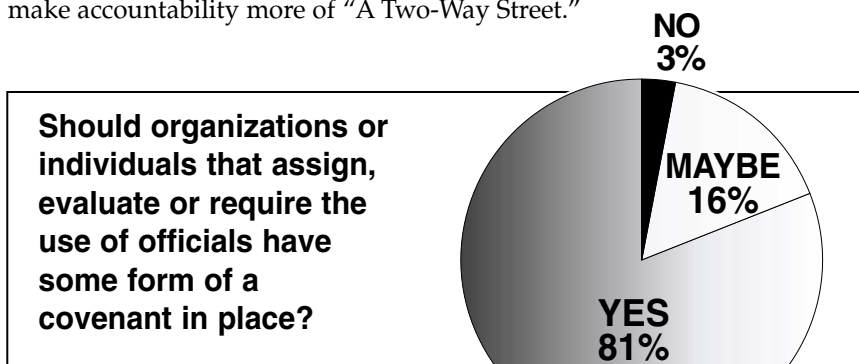
## It's a Two-Way Street

*Moderator: Jeff Stern;*

*Panelists: Jack Roberts, Howard Mayo, Bill Topp*

The primary topic of the 2003 Conference, accountability in officiating, raised many issues. One of the recurring questions from the audience was: What can officials expect in return for an increased level of accountability?

One realistic answer to that question might well be a covenant between sports officials and those whom they serve. Certainly a covenant would make accountability more of "A Two-Way Street."



In the accompanying chart, you can see that the majority of officials support the idea of a covenant. If so many officials agree that a covenant would be a good idea, why don't more officials benefit from one? Why are covenants so rare? Perhaps the answer is that the benefits may not be clearly perceived by those who stand to gain something.

*Referee* Editor Bill Topp related a personal story in which, after a recent high school basketball game he worked where the coach had been ejected, the school's female principal let herself into the officials' dressing room to protest the call. When the officials were finally able to persuade her to leave, an assistant principal came into their area to continue the complaint.

Although Topp's situation was resolved at the state level, the existence of a covenant would have been a strong arrow in the quiver of the confronted officials.

Much discussion centered around a document NASO produced, called "A Covenant With Sports Officials."

## A COVENANT WITH SPORTS OFFICIALS

### PREAMBLE

Sports officiating is an honorable profession requiring those who engage in it to have strong moral character and integrity. Officials must be fair-minded and courageous. They are expected to embrace and adhere to the *Code of Conduct for Officials*, as adopted by the Officiating Development Alliance in January, 2002, a copy of which is available from the National Association of Sports Officials.

It takes a special person to be an official. Sports officials bear great responsibility for engendering public confidence in sports. They are critical to the health of athletic competitions. Officials ensure games are played fairly, by the rules, within the spirit of the rules and in a safe manner. Officiating takes a great deal of preparation, continuing education and commitment of time. Much is asked of those who officiate.

Therefore those organizations and individuals that assign, evaluate or require the use of officiating services are hereby asked to resolve and affirm the following:

- 1) That game assignments and career advancement be provided without regard to age, sex, race, national origin, religion or other factors unrelated to the ability to properly perform officiating duties.
- 2) That effective security be provided to protect sports officials from physical assaults, unseemly verbal abuse and the loss of, or damage to personal property, from the time of arrival at the game site through the time of departure.
- 3) That efforts be supported to limit the liability sports officials can incur as a result of the reasonable and customary decisions they make in fulfilling their officiating duties.
- 4) That the obligations sports officials are expected or required to fulfill be clearly communicated, preferably in writing, in advance of when those obligations are to be carried out.
- 5) That sports officials who are subject to an inquiry concerning alleged improper or inadequate fulfillment of their responsibilities, be given fair treatment and an opportunity to respond to the findings through a prescribed appeal process before disciplinary measures are taken.

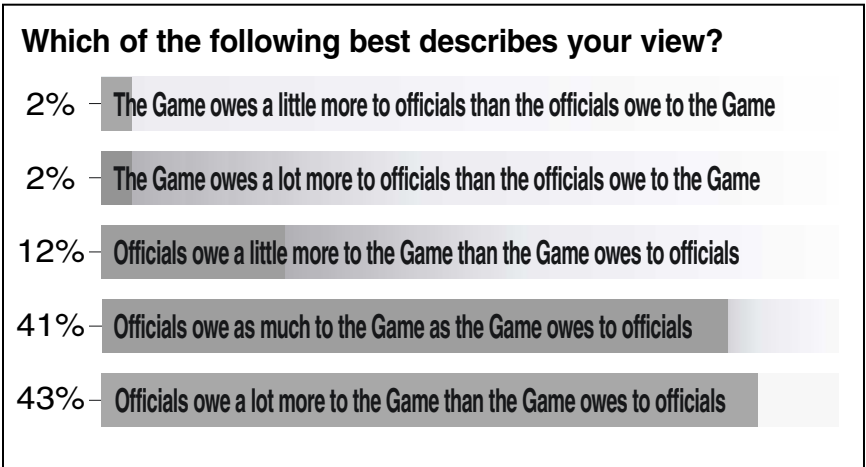
“There’s nothing wrong with the local officials association having certain expectations from the others that are involved in the game,” stated Jack Roberts of the Michigan High School Activities Association (MHSAA). “But if we’re not articulating those expectations, shame on us.”

Roberts suggested that if, perhaps, enough local associations adopted covenants, then their state associations might follow suit.

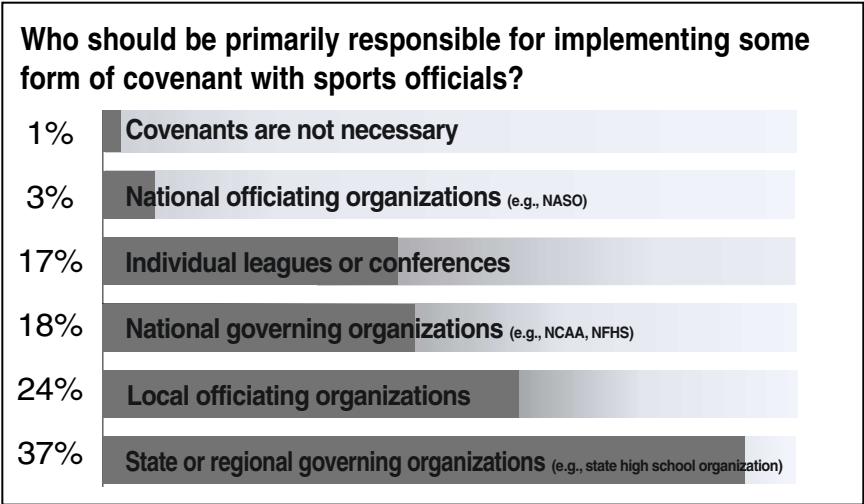
Howard Mayo, a rules interpreter for the Oregon School Activities Association, thinks that in most cases, covenants are unnecessary. “If it ain’t broke, don’t fix it,” Mayo stated plainly. “We’re happy with the way we’re doing it right now. Until something pops up that is against what we stand for, then we’re going to continue on as we’re doing now.”

But Michigan’s Roberts believes in being more proactive. Michigan has adopted a covenant with local adoption urged, but not required.

“The covenant is not something that is imposed upon all member



schools to adopt,” noted Roberts. “They have to do it school district by school district or league by league. So what we’re trying to do is get it to local official associations and then to the member schools that they serve. It’s a long road to get it to be the policy of that particular school district no matter what occurs. But the covenant speaks to effective security and a safe place for officials.”



**MHSAA Expectations for Tournament Host Sites**

What might a covenant include to make officials’ jobs easier and more pleasant? The MHSAA’s “Officials Accommodations Guidelines for Tournaments” offers an excellent prototype.

- MHSAA indicates that certain minimum provisions are “essential” or a mandatory minimum on the part of tournament host sites:
- Host:** an identifiable person who will meet the official, escort the official to the dressing area, and assist the official as necessary.
  - Security:** a person(s) identified to the officials who will assist in moving from the contest site to the dressing area. A security person can be assigned to the dressing area to assure that officials are not interrupted by media, fans, players or coaches.
  - Officials Room:** The room for officials should be private and separate from the dressing area of any contestants and provide security for valuables belonging to officials. At no time is it reasonable to expect an official to use an area accessible to the public.
  - Showers/Restrooms:** ... should be available to officials for private use.
- The MHSAA also suggests that certain amenities would also be a nice touch:
- Supervised Parking:** near an exit, out of the main traffic pattern.
  - Game Program**
  - Refreshments or Snacks:** Perhaps a choice can be provided.
  - Towels and Soap**
  - A Key to the Area:** provides unlimited access, convenience and trust.

## Game Accountability

*Moderator: Jerry Grunski; Panelists: Larry Boucher, Randy Christal, Jerry Seeman, Esse Baharmast*

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Much of the content of the 2003 Conference focused on off-field accountability of officials, how what we do in our time out of uniform can have an impact on the pursuit of our avocation. But what about when an official comes up short during a game? In what ways should officials be held accountable for onfield mistakes? How does that accountability affect officials' onfield performance?

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One of the first issues discussed was the tendency by some officials to call a game differently when the score gets out of hand to help move things along. While many would contend that is a perfectly acceptable officiating maneuver, NCAA football and baseball official and NASO Board member Randy Christal wasn't so sure.

"In baseball, when the score gets out of hand, we may tell coaches, 'OK, coach, we're opening it up,'" Christal observed. "The problem is what about the player who only gets in a few innings each season? He'll be at a disadvantage." Your credibility may be hurt as well.

Such problems can be compounded if the official is less experienced. Larry Boucher, an assistant commissioner of the Kentucky High School Athletic Association, noted that experience is a big factor in onfield accountability. "Newer officials tend to want to over-officiate," Boucher notes. "From a practical standpoint, at the entry level, we have to deal with that while still nurturing them. We're also more tolerant during the regular season than the postseason. Patience must be meted out, the (newer) officials don't know the rules as well as they should."

The panel then turned its attention fully to the issue of onfield officiating mistakes. Should officials face some sort of penalty for mistakes in judgment or rule interpretation? Does the importance of the game become a factor?

Esse Baharmast, the USSF director of advancement and international referee development, said that if there are doubts about the competence of a certain official, the USSF is likely to take assignments away from the



Larry Boucher



Randy Christal



Jerry Seeman



Esse Baharmast

official or move the official down a level or two in an attempt to determine where the problem lies. But officials are not fined for errors made during contests.

“Officials should have to be accountable for minimum in-game accuracy,” Baharmast contends. “The referee who changes the outcome of a game (from a poor call) does not meet minimum standards.”

At the collegiate level, things are largely the same. According to Christal, if an official has too many significant judgment errors, perhaps four or five a year, “you don’t have a job. You’re fired. The game is too big.” Christal said many collegiate conferences will also suspend officials for significant onfield errors.

NFL officials do not hesitate to stop a game and confer as a crew to make sure that a call is correct. As Jerry Seeman, an NFL officiating consultant noted, “The important thing is to make sure you get the call right. If a call isn’t right, come in and eat the flag. Don’t work too fast.”

But what about officials in other sports at other levels?

“(In Kentucky) we hold officials accountable,” said Boucher. “We penalize coaches and players for inappropriate conduct. We feel like in order to maintain any credibility with the coaches and the players that we’ve got to have some type of discipline with the officials. We can’t just have them not be accountable for their actions. I cannot defend the young official who has misapplied a rule.”

Boucher said that misapplication of rules is not the only problem he sees with some high school officials. “It seems to me most of the troubles that we deal with and where we end up penalizing officials is in lack of people skills. They get themselves in some kind of trouble in that regard. I think that’s where the biggest void is in training today is teaching officials better people skills and how to deal with irate folks, disgruntled fans and angry players. Sometimes we get ourselves in trouble in our high school ranks with our lack of people skills.”



Christal echoed that concern. “I attend a lot of clinics,” he said, “and I know of very few officials who were jackasses who made it to the top levels of officiating. We have to look out for each other. There’s more to (officiating) than scoring 110 on some test.”

A spirited question-and-answer session concluded the presentation.

The feeling among most of those in attendance was that mistakes are bound to happen. When they do, swallow some pride and try to get them corrected then and there. That option is almost always better than any alternative and certainly better than having some sort of sanction handed down.

The vast majority of officials expect to be held accountable, even welcome accountability. This session showed that accountability doesn’t end when the game starts, rather, that’s where it begins.



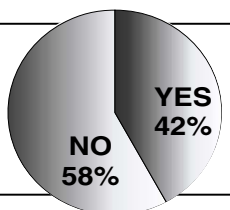
# Great Ways to Reward Sports Officials

*Presenter: Bill Topp*

Officials are urged, even expected, to be more accountable than many other occupations. Is it unreasonable, then, to ask, "What do I get out of it?" There is the satisfaction of a job well done, but do higher expectations call for higher rewards? That was among the issues addressed by the session entitled "Great Ways to Reward Sports Officials."

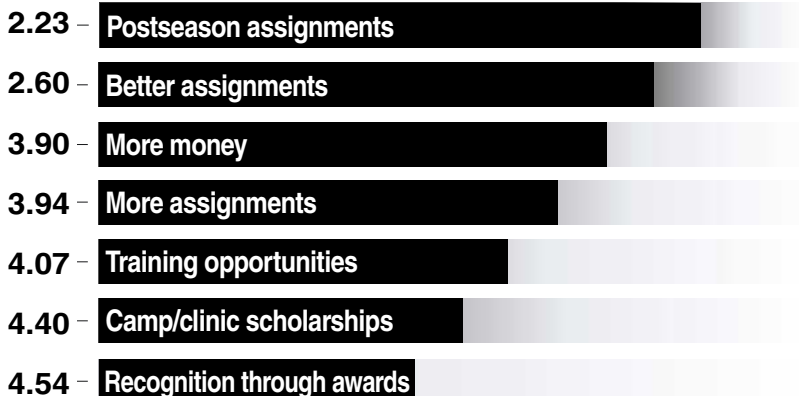
*Referee* Editor Bill Topp kicked off his presentation with the results of a NASO survey that asked many philosophical and practical questions of officials regarding their level of experience and asking for their thoughts on rewards, both intrinsic and extrinsic.

**Do you feel officials generally are rewarded appropriately?**



**Rank order the relative importance of the following methods of rewarding officials.**

(rank them 1 through 7 with 1 being the most important and 7 the least important)



When it came to extrinsic rewards, however, officials responding said that better wages, camp/clinic scholarships and increased training opportunities were the best ways to reward officials.

Most officials (83 percent) believe that more and better rewards would be of “some” or a “big” help in recruitment and retention programs.

So what sort of rewards are officials hoping for specifically? Topp asked the conference attendees to break into groups to brainstorm ideas for officials from various entities. The lists show that rewards for officials don’t have to carry a big price tag to carry big meaning.

Next, the groups were asked to come up with a list of “rewards” from schools and others who use the services of officials. The list reflects not so much what one would consider “rewards” as simple common courtesies and amenities.

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## Rewards From State Associations

- **Longevity Awards** - for every 5 years starting at 20.
  - **State Tournament Medallion** - similar or identical to those the players get.
  - **State Official of the Year** - by sport.
  - **Officiating Halls of Fame** - something being prioritized by NASO.
  - **Test waivers for 3 years of 95 percent+ test scores** - fourth year, no test.
  - **Rookie of Year and Most Improved Official Awards** - candidates nominated by local associations.
  - **State sponsored camps with reduced fees** - certain officials qualify for reduced fees.
  - **Postseason assignments** - have these be more merit based than at present.
  - **Press releases** - recognizing accomplishment by local officials from state office.
  - **Free admission to all games** - state association card works as a ticket.
  - **Improved rating and evaluation programs** - always an issue.
  - **Recognition of high school officials at pro contests/allow high school officials to shadow pros** - certain officials would be selected for this special, one-time event.
  - **Recruiting bonuses** - new members earn their recruiters reduced fees, camp and clinic admission.
  - **Recognition of officials involved in charity work** - Special Olympics, youth leagues, etc.
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## Rewards From Local Associations

- **Rebates or Scholarships for officials attending voluntary camps/clinics** - certain requirements may be expected like holding mini “local” clinic afterward.
  - **Reward mentors** - with certificates, gift certificates, local “freebies.”
  - **Tickets to pro or college games** - perhaps donated by local business or schools.
  - **No dues after certain length of service** - to local association.
  - **Local “Gold Whistle” type award**
  - **Plaques/awards for postseason assignments or longevity** - being done in many local associations already.
  - **Free uniform parts**
  - **Instructors get free banquet tickets**
  - **Local newspaper press releases** - in recognition of a variety of accomplishments.
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## Rewards From Schools

- **Refreshments** - common in many locations, but not all.
  - **Locker rooms** - especially for baseball and softball officials. In addition, having those areas unlocked and ready to receive officials. Shower facilities would also be nice.
  - **Adequate sight supervision and security** - someone who will be readily available to handle problems throughout the game.
  - **Hosts** - someone to direct officials to their area. Again, being done some places, but not all.
  - **Discrete, secure parking** - away from where fans and players will be congregating. Escorts to and from cars was also mentioned.
  - **Map to the school** - especially the first time you go. Some schools will provide one if asked.
  - **Game fee payment before the game starts** - no official likes to “go begging” after a game.
  - **Tickets for family members** - another amenity which is often provided on a “per request” basis already.
  - **Properly maintained facilities** - starting the contest with a meeting to discuss unsafe or unusual playing conditions is never desired.
  - **Competent support staff** - so officials can concentrate on their own duties.
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## Rewards From Assigners, Trainers and Evaluators

- Complimentary banquets
  - Better assignments and postseason assignments
  - Time off when requested
  - Unspecified reward for those officials who help out in emergencies
  - Precise and consistent payroll dates
  - Require veterans to participate in the training process
- 

## Rewards From Partners or Crewmates

- **Honest, constructive feedback** - both asking for it and giving it.
  - **An actual and effective pregame and postgame** - often overlooked when working with a familiar partner.
  - **Help when we're under heat from coaches** - too often, partners turn and walk the other way.
  - **Be on time and leave together** - saves much potential distress.
  - **Share expenses** - particularly travel.
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The lists developed by the attendees are certainly modest and reasonable by most standards. So how can officials take action to see that more of them become reality? Inviting decision-makers to preseason meetings or dinners was one way that seemed to draw the most positive response.

Perhaps a letter on official association letterhead to those involved would do the trick. Often, people don't know what we need or want simply because we haven't asked. When the request comes from the association board, it is difficult to ignore.

As Topp wrapped up the session, he mentioned a popular management book, *1,001 Ways to Reward Employees*. He indicated there are many appropriate ideas in the book that could easily be adopted by or modified to fit officiating rewards.

"Match the reward to the person," Topp paraphrased. "The main argument in this book is we don't often match up to what the needs are for an individual. We have kind of generic ones that maybe we find people to fit, but we don't find rewards to fit the people. It's a pretty important concept.

"What tends to motivate them to perform and to perform at higher levels is the thoughtful, personal kind of recognition that signifies true appreciation for a job well done. It sounds so simple. Those kinds of things go so far in helping people out in getting that psychic income in officiating that we have to have."

## Let's Take Another Look

*Moderator: Bob Still; Panelists: Barry Mano, Dwight Jaynes, Henry Zaborniak, J.A. Adande, Danny Crawford, Jerry Seeman*

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Few people would argue that officials must be accountable to a variety of persons with an interest in a given athletic event. When things go less than smoothly, however, and game officials come under greater scrutiny by the media, they are, at many levels, next to helpless.

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The so-called "Gag Rule" was put into effect supposedly to protect officials from "unfriendly" media inquiries. But has it instead caused harm? What can be done to educate the media about officiating? Should how to deal with the media be a part of officials' training?

To start the session, Bob Still referred to a resolution recently passed by the Louisiana House of Representatives that "urgently request(ed) the National Collegiate Athletic Association, National Football League, National Basketball Association, Major League Baseball, National Hockey League, National Association of Sports Officials and other professional sports associations to provide with respect to recurrent training of and errors committed during an athletic contest by referees, umpires, judges, linemen and other sports officials under their jurisdiction and to publicly acknowledge those errors in a timely manner in order to restore and maintain public confidence in the games."

The resolution, which was signed by the governor and every member of the Louisiana House concludes that organizations responsible for assigning officials "should enforce or strengthen existing rules or develop new or additional rules for the recurrent training of umpires, referees, judges, linemen, and other sports officials under their jurisdiction, and for the retraining, censoring, or dismissing of referees, umpires, judges, linemen, and other sports officials who have a standard record of making inaccurate calls during an athletic contest. These should publicly acknowledge incorrect or missed calls in a timely manner in order to restore and maintain public confidence in the games."

Still asked Adande, a sports columnist for the *Los Angeles Times*, how things got to this point.

"It's not just that the public feels so invested that they believe their team has been wronged," noted Adande, "it's also that they've been

wronged themselves. You see accountability in so many other forms of our society, and I guess people always feel like referees are these nameless, almost faceless people, and then as soon as it's done they walk off and you never see or hear from them again."

Adande said that the one area in which he agrees with controversial coach Bob Knight is when Knight says of officials: "Everyone else is held accountable, but the officials are not."

NBA official Danny Crawford begged to differ. "I think the mistake is that they are not aware that we're held accountable," Crawford indicated. "If we can educate the media about what we go through with our league



**"I think the mistake is that they are not aware that we're held accountable.**

**If we can educate the media about what we go through with our league office to critique ourselves and to answer to our mistakes, you'd be amazed. We're held accountable."**

— *Danny Crawford*

office to critique ourselves and to answer to our mistakes, you'd be amazed. We're held accountable."

Sports talk broadcaster Dwight Jaynes said his callers who mention officiating are complaining. "The problem is games are being watched much closer than they really ought to be," Jaynes maintained. "Every move you make is scrutinized three times over. If it's a pivotal call, a big play, we see it over and over again. We know who makes the call, and we know why. We sometimes don't understand the call. Sometimes they're just wrong calls."

The NFL's Seeman simply sees matters differently. "We've

got to remember that the game is made up of three parts, players, coaches, and officials," noted Seeman. "Believe me, they're all human beings. If you want to talk about percentages of accuracy or things that are involved, I'll take the officials over the other two any time you want to talk about it."

Barry Mano of NASO jumped into the fray by asking the media members on the panel if the type of accountability they were talking about amounted to "a general cleansing in the media," and, if so, does that mean that there then must be some sort of a "public punishment?"

"I guess there is an element of that," admitted Jaynes, "We (reporters)

sit courtside, we know how hard the game is to officiate. It's impossible. What I think we're talking about is the opportunity to have somebody come up and explain (controversial calls). At least tell us what did you see, what did you think you saw. There's a penance in that, I think. It's a penance the players quite frankly don't want to pay."

"It's not necessarily to subject people to abuse," Adande agreed, "but to get your side of the story and to hear from your perspective. Obviously you don't have the benefit of multi-angle replays that we get to see, but from your perspective what happened, why did you make the call that way?"

But if it came down to the media having to learn how officials go about their business, it would be a different story.

Henry Zaborniak, who is an assistant commissioner of the Ohio High School Athletic Association (OHSAA), related that the OHSAA invites members from each of the state's 440 media outlets to officials' meetings with administrators and assigners. He said that out of the 440 invitations, spread out over 30 different areas around the state, perhaps five or six reporters actually attend.

Does that imply that the media simply isn't interested in officiating unless and until there is some controversy? Probably.

That brought the session to the question of gag rules. Do gag rules help defend officials under fire, or do they make matters worse?

"What you're dealing with at the high school level," observed Jaynes, "is the reporter who's been on the newspaper the least amount of time. He's probably the most inexperienced sports guy on staff, because that's where they start a lot of young reporters. So you're going to deal with young people who probably don't know the rules as well as some others."

"I think the fans want reporters to be on their side," added Adande.

In such a situation, a gag rule may well protect the officials from a reporter who simply doesn't understand the situation or who may be getting local pressure.

Zaborniak believes there is yet another problem facing officials at the



**"It's not necessarily to subject people to abuse, but to get your side of the story and to hear from your perspective."**

— J.A. Adande

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high school level: experience.

“Inexperience in dealing with the media is a problem,” he states. “Officials often don’t know how to say what they mean. So having a gag rule is probably a good thing.”

Officials should note that anytime they are facing a reporter, anything they say is considered “on the record” unless you specifically say it isn’t. That can be confusing, especially in smaller locales where the reporter may be a neighbor or friend with whom you speak frequently.

“My rule of thumb is that if I have my notepad out and my tape recorder, then it’s definitely on the record,” clarified Adande.

Another important element officials should keep in mind when speaking with reporters, according to Adande is to “be aware of what reporters are looking for.” If they are simply seeking a rule interpretation or an explanation of what you saw, keep your answer brief and to-the-point. Giving a reporter more than what they asked for is never a good idea.

In Ohio, officials are told “if you talk to the news media, be honest, be short and don’t deal with judgment situations,” according to Zaborniak.

Perhaps the session was best summarized by the NFL’s Seeman.

“Don’t be overly sensitive to the criticisms of the media.” He urged attendees. “You put on a striped shirt, you’re going to be criticized. Time heals. Go out and enjoy every game and everything you’re doing.”



**“What you’re dealing with at the high school level is the reporter who’s been on the newspaper the least amount of time. He’s probably the most inexperienced sports guy on staff, because that’s where they start a lot of young reporters ... who probably don’t know the rules as well as some others.”**

*—Dwight Jaynes*

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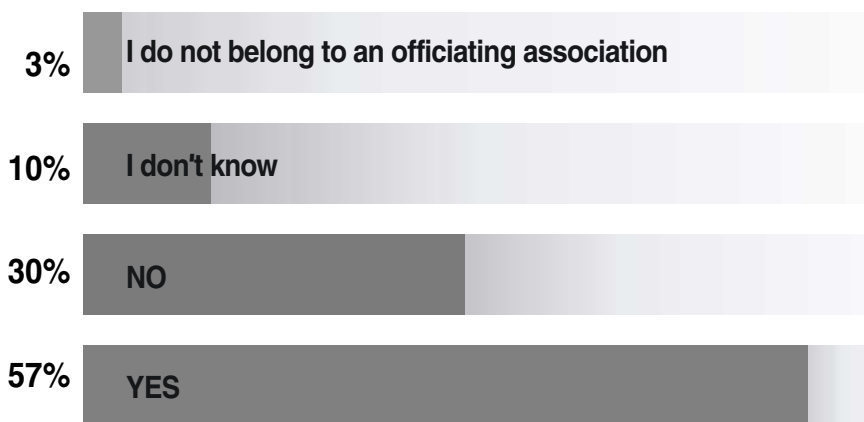
## 24-7-365

*Moderator: Tom Herre; Panelists: Bill Saum, Bob Gardner, Stu Jackson, Julie Ilacqua*

When it comes to officials, many people believe that accountability doesn't stop when the game ends; it lasts 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year. Like it or not, much of the public, and many of those whom we serve, hold us to a higher standard at all times.

It was that realization that caused the Officiating Development Alliance (ODA) to create a Code of Conduct for officials.

### Does your primary officiating association have a code of conduct for officials in place?



Tom Herre, an NASO staffer, led off with a summary of survey responses from NASO members that indicated that 91 percent of responders believed that officials associations should implement a code of conduct for their member officials. That's an overwhelming majority. Yet only 57 percent said that their associations had a code in place.

Bob Gardner, the NFHS chief operating officer, believes that officials desire a code because of their integrity. "All of the reasons for having codes of conduct, all of the reasons for monitoring conduct, and

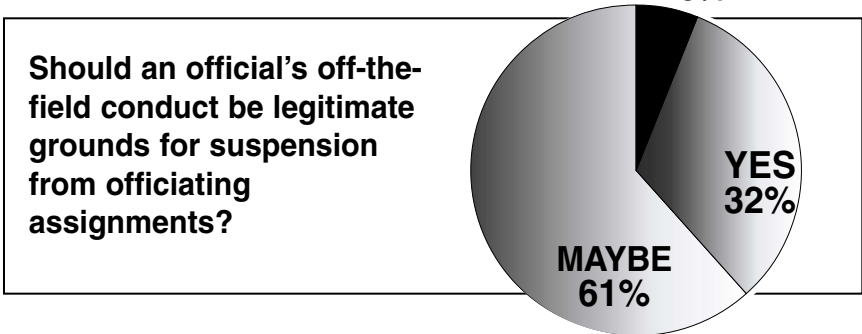
evaluating, and perhaps in some instances having to utilize penalties, get back to protecting the integrity of the game,” he stated, “protecting the integrity of those who participate in the game and those who officiate in the game.”

Julie Ilacqua of the USSF agrees. “(Officials are) the keepers of the game,” she noted. “We’re the ones who make sure that it’s played fairly and within the rules. It’s a very timely (topic).”

In the NBA, officials are required to follow the league code or face stiff punishment. Stu Jackson, NBA senior vice president, stressed the importance of a code especially in professional sports. “We have to be keenly cognizant of the fact that we can’t ever give the appearance that there’s any impropriety amongst officials or our players for that matter, as it relates to the playing of the game,” Jackson said.

But what about lower levels of officiating, where adherence to a code is largely optional? Are there consequences for violations? Should there be? Do officials know what is expected of them?

Most of the survey respondents who said their associations had a code in place indicated that there were either sometimes, usually or always consequences for members who violated the code.



But the troubling issue for code enforcement at some levels at least, seems to be communication. Officials simply may not know that there is a code to which they are expected to adhere, and may therefore be unaware of any penalties.

“I think still clearly the key is communication of what those standards are,” noted Gardner. “Most organizations in my experience have those standards. Where they sometimes fall down is they don’t communicate them clearly and effectively enough.”

“The communication is the difficult part,” Ilacqua agreed. “The

**If your primary officiating association has a code of conduct in place, are there consequences if a member violates the code?**

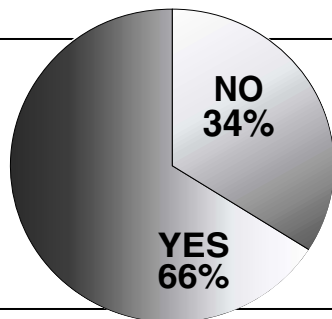


farther down (the level), the more difficult it becomes because then (you need many more people to communicate) the standards and the enforcement of it.”

Perhaps even the small number of code violations could be reduced further by the institution of background checks for officials.

In an era when coaches, scout leaders and church personnel are subjected to extensive background checks, is it appropriate for sports officials to endure the same?

**Should officials be required to undergo background checks as a prerequisite to officiating at college and higher levels?**



If most officials believe they are a good idea, will we be seeing more of them? In the NCAA, at least, it’s already happening. “We sat with the NFL, the NBA, and other professional organizations, then came up with a program of our own where there are four (situations) that would prohibit an official from being selected for the tournament,” said Bill Saum, the NCAA director of agent, gambling and amateurism activities.

Persons convicted of placing bets, being a bookmaker, anyone involved in the accepting of bets or being a runner or involved in a bookmaking operation, or involvement in the outcome of a game or sports bribery case are all cause for the NCAA to reject an official. Last year the NCAA added any felony conviction being cause as well.

If violations to the code occur, what happens? Is there due process for accused officials?

"If we would get a call or information that an official, especially during a tournament, is associating with someone, like with organized crime, we would definitely sit down with that official immediately and conduct an interview and ask questions," Saum revealed. "From there, we would need to get our basketball committee together, and we would have to consult with our coordinator of officials."

At the high school level, the process is, understandably, different. "For the state association, due process would generally involve some kind of disciplinary action taken by the association, and there would be a right of due process," noted Gardner. "Most state associations have in place a pretty formalized structure. It might vary anything from a hearing with the supervisor of officials, up to and including the executive director/commissioner of the state association. In addition, there ultimately may be a hearing with the board or executive committee of that state association."

With all these checks and balances seemingly good and appropriate ideas, how can associations get officials to "buy into" a code?

"(Officials are) no different than people who are not involved in sport," said Jackson. "Hence you're going to experience the same issues that you would out on the street. I guess what I'm leading to is a word of caution in holding ourselves to the higher standard, so to speak, because you set yourself up for disappointment. We're going to have issues, we're going to have improprieties, we're going to have conduct that's bad, the same as every other organization out on the street does."

Another element to "buy in" is coming up with common ground. Certainly, nobody could argue that sex offenders don't belong in officiating. The same might be said for convicted felons. Are there more?

At present, only seven state associations conduct background checks of high school officials, according to Gardner.

"I think it works best when that's done together," observed Gardner. "Make no mistake, there's certain things I think the state association is going to want and going to insist on. Those things hopefully would also be important to the officials associations. But working together is where we get the buy-in on the part of the officials."

## Disciplining Officials — A Guide

Moderator: Jeff Stern; Panelists: Bill Carollo, Marcy Weston,  
Marc Ratner, Steven Ellinger

Is it possible or necessary to develop a set of accountability standards that apply to all officials at all levels?

Jeff Stern, *Referee* associate editor, led the group through a survey conducted online of officials regarding discipline. From the beginning, the session dealt with a subject that is a flashpoint for many officials. If you kick a call, either in judgment or in rule, should you be disciplined?

As you might expect, officials weren't universally warm to the idea.



Stern showed the group the response to the first question: "Should officials be subject to formal penalties for errors in judgment? Overwhelmingly (68 percent) the response was "No."

When the same question was asked about misapplication of rules, officials softened considerably with 28 percent saying "yes" and another 38 percent responding "maybe."

Officials, like those who contract them, seem to agree that there is little excuse for not knowing the rules. Marc Ratner, executive director of the Nevada State Athletic Commission spoke for many. "To me rules knowledge is the most important aspect you're talking about," he said.

"I'm very strong on if you make a mistake judgment-wise, that's part of the game, (but) a mistake in rules is inexcusable."

2003 Super Bowl Referee, Bill Carollo, had a slightly softer view. "It depends on the type of mistake you made, how grave the mistake really is," argued Carollo. "You can set aside a minor rule (misinterpretation, but) I think that you have to be accountable."

Somewhere in between Ratner and Carollo was Marcy Weston, NCAA national coordinator of women's basketball officiating. "I think it totally depends on what the level of the game is, if it's a regular-season game versus a tournament game," she said, "a junior varsity game versus your state championship. I have much more tolerance for judgment errors if you're in the right place, if you're practicing the correct mechanics."

There seems to be more tolerance of mistakes at the lower levels of officiating. But in these times when the importance of even Little League games is often amplified beyond reason, the learning curve for officials seems to be getting shorter all the time.

"Offer help, seek help and take help if it's offered," advises Weston.

While that is good universal advice, can officials expect to one day have a universal standard of performance and discipline that covers all levels of sport?

"I don't think (so)," Steven Ellinger speculated, "because I think at different levels you have different issues. I think we'd have a serious problem with retaining officials (at lower levels). That having been said, I'm not advocating that we have a lot of lax standards for errors in judgment or rules, but I think we need to have a different set of standards and guidelines in effect for (each level)."

"I really don't think it's practical," echoed Carollo. "You can set up some standards, a couple guidelines, professionalism, integrity, that should be at all levels, and define them as you would, but to carry it out and execute it is the real problem."

If officials were to be subject to disciplinary measure for poor calls, who would or should be the body responsible for enforcement? Once again, the issue seemed to boil down to which level of officiating you're talking about.

"Strictly from the high school part it's the local association," opined Ratner. "The commissioner and I would hear those kinds of matters. We'd want to keep it there. We'd try to have some confidentiality."

"I agree that in a perfect world the local association is probably better suited to deal with those issues or deal with a maverick official," countered Ellinger. "But there are some times the local association is not the proper vehicle to deal with it because of local politics or jealousies or other issues."

The session then moved to the topic of officials who do a good job during the game, but who have off-field conduct issues. Can they realistically be held accountable for such behavior?

“We’re facing that issue in Texas now,” noted Ellinger. “I think you have to look at what the off-the-field conduct consisted of. Was it conviction of a felony, did it involve sexual abuse of a minor, was it a driving offense? Often we look at somebody and we don’t like them (for whatever reason), and then we look for reasons to discipline them or to impose some kind of penalty against them. From a local officials association standpoint, they need to make sure that they administer consistently, that they don’t just do it when somebody (feels like it).”

If an official is thought to have either onfield or off-field problems, and discipline is a possibility, what sort of due process should he or she be entitled to?

**Suppose you are a candidate for disciplinary action either because of an on-the-field or off-the-field incident. Are procedures in place in your primary officiating environment to assure that you will be allowed “due process?”**



Although the NFL is subject to a collective bargaining agreement with its officials, it may offer a potential model for local associations. “If we have a situation where there’s going to be discipline toward an official, or an official feels that he’s been treated unfairly within our association there’s a grievance committee,” noted Carollo. “That official can appeal (any action against him). So it’s not automatic. There’s some checks and balances in there. If we discipline an official, whether it’s right or wrong, that person can appeal to the association.”

Where many local associations get into trouble when it comes to



disciplining one of their own, according to Ellinger, is that “first they don’t have well-written bylaws to deal with those things, and then even if they did have them in place, sometimes they don’t follow them.” Consistency of enforcement is the key.

To get that consistency, most agree there has to be a “scale of severity” for discipline. Just what might that scale be? On the low end, all agreed, would be a “talking to” for an official who was, for example, chronically late for pregame. On the high end, for a high school official, you might have suspension or even revocation of association membership.

Regardless of what action is taken, consistency, fairness and due process must prevail. If the problem is on the field, take steps not only to discipline, but correct the problem. Help the official grow.



# A Better Way

*Presenter: Brian Berger*

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What if a controversial call you made in a championship game resulted in a media roast of you and your partners? Or how about if your name was spotted on the police blotter by an ambitious reporter? Would you be able to withstand the barrage of questions, comments and assaults on your character?

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Brian Berger, a public relations specialist, challenged attendees to evaluate how they would handle what, essentially, could be considered a public relations crisis in their officiating career.

As officials, we are conditioned, even trained, to handle controversy on the field. At times, however, that controversy may last beyond the end of the game, or worse, spill into our private lives. Worst of all, our private lives may become the fodder for controversy.

Berger began by pointing out that “establishing credibility and building a good reputation can sometimes take years. Yet, one mistake can tarnish that reputation for life.”

Berger pointed out recent examples of sports-related public relations “nightmares” involving Larry Eustasy at Iowa State, Mike Price at the University of Alabama, Rick Neuheisal at the University of Washington and Sammy Sosa of the Chicago Cubs.

Berger pointed out that when controversy arises, how it is handled determines the length and severity of the crisis. In each of the examples Berger cited, the media was a prominent player. Since media is in the business of selling papers and earning high ratings, controversy can be a gold mine.

Berger pointed out that “news travels quickly and we are in the age of the ‘Gotcha Media.’ Now we have talk radio where stories linger thanks to hosts looking to stir the pot and attract callers. After a game you may have 90 minutes of critique and analysis just from that night’s game.”

The proliferation of smaller-market sports-talk radio stations, along with cable and satellite television make stories live longer than ever before. Add to that the immediacy of the Internet, and you have a recipe for stirring controversy greater than ever before.

So what can officials do to combat the intensity of a controversy or crisis in which they find themselves? Berger presented eight “rules” to remember:

**Rule 1 — Use common sense in an effort to avoid a crisis.** If you are a public figure (and most officials are), you should recognize that the spotlight shines much brighter on you. If you make a mistake, it will be publicized and scrutinized. Don’t put yourself in situations you will live to regret later. Whether it is Mike Price stopping at the strip bar, Larry Eustacy partying with college students, Rick Neuheisel betting on college basketball games, Sammy Sosa using a corked bat or Bill Clinton having an affair with an intern — these are all actions that came back to bite their victims and caused serious image problems. Think before you act.

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**Rule 2 — If a crisis arises, get your arms around the facts quickly and take action to restore credibility.** The faster you can assess the possible damage, the greater your chance of keeping damage to a minimum. Restoring credibility and trust is very important.

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**Rule 3 — Determine who your spokesperson will be in a crisis.** Is it your association, your assigner, the state association, your conference or is it the person actually involved in the crisis? Do you need outside assistance from a PR firm? (Every company should have a predetermined spokesperson in case a crisis or PR issue arises and this person should be media trained so he or she is comfortable with key messaging and being put on the spot during a crisis).

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**Rule 4 — Gather those closest to you as well as those people involved in the scandal/crisis and develop a consistent message that helps to keep the scandal’s embarrassing details under wraps.** Don’t run, but manage your damage control. Berger said, “If I were Mike Price, after I realized I made a catastrophic mistake that could become public information, I would have tried to reach all of the people involved in that scandal including the workers at the strip bar and the hotel staff. I would have tried to convince them to keep their mouths shut and not comment to any media members. Because that did not happen, the damage became worse and more details of the incident came out.”

**Rule 5 — Communicate in a controlled environment.** Determine what your messaging will be and how much you can say. That will largely be determined by how big the problem is and if there are legal ramifications that prevent certain matters from being discussed.

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**Rule 6 — Decide whether or not to be proactive or reactive with your PR plan.** Will the problem go away if you stop talking about it or do you need to issue a statement or have a press conference to admit wrongdoing and hope that by speaking out, the crisis will be defused?

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**Rule 7 — Being honest and showing remorse is always the way to go if you have made a mistake.** The media usually won't chase you if you don't run. Also, we live in a forgiving society, so if you come clean, people will usually give you the benefit of the doubt. If you lie, they will crucify you until your head is on the chopping block.

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**Rule 8 — Keep your composure when a crisis arises.** Getting angry or acting panicked will likely lead to making the situation worse. Try to take a few minutes to clear your head before addressing the media and plan out your key messages.

# What Officials Want

*Presenter: Jim Arehart*

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When one considers the issue of voluntary accountability, which was the essence of the Portland conference (after all, nobody is forcing officials at the lower levels to be accountable), it isn't unreasonable for officials to ask "What's in it for me?" If officials elect to hold themselves to a higher standard of behavior than much of the rest of society, what rewards might they expect or deserve? Further, what help should officials expect from those institutions that utilize their services?

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Those were the questions raised in an interactive breakout session hosted by *Referee* Associate Editor Jim Arehart.

Arehart began the session by presenting results from a survey conducted of officials from around the country.

## Which is the biggest problem where you officiate?



The first question asked, “What is the biggest problem where you officiate?” Forty-nine percent of the respondents said, “Officials aren’t shown enough respect.”

Another question asked officials to rate the importance of various responsibilities institutions governing officiating have to officials. The top for responses were: supporting officials in controversial situations, providing effective training opportunities, providing timely information concerning venue/time changes, cancellations, etc., and giving performance evaluation feedback to officials.

In essence, you could say that what officials want most from those to

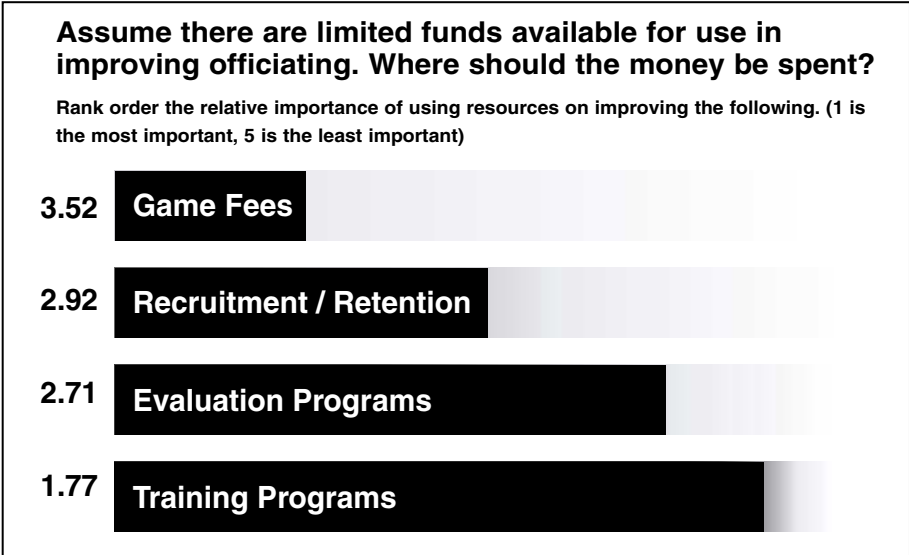
**Responsibilities the institutions governing officiating have to officials.**

Rate each action on a scale of 1 through 5 in terms of importance and priority for action. (1 = high importance and high priority; 5 = low importance and low priority)

- 1.54 Supporting officials in controversial situations
- 1.62 Providing effective officiating training opportunities
- 1.63 Providing timely information concerning venue/time changes, cancellations, etc.
- 1.79 Giving performance evaluation feedback to officials
- 1.95 Establishing safe and private locker rooms for officials
- 1.95 Providing better game-site management support
- 2.03 Establishing fair game fee structures
- 2.11 Ensuring adequate representation for officials in league/conference matters
- 2.41 Making sure that training and administrative requirements are not excessive
- 2.45 Making mandatory-meeting sites conveniently located
- 2.45 Recognizing officials for their achievements
- 2.65 Getting input from officials’ organizations on game assignments
- 2.83 Establishing affordable and consistent uniform requirements
- 2.84 Giving officials consistent access to amenities such as towels, beverages, etc. at game sites

whom they are responsible are things which will help them improve, to be able to do their job better. Money was down the list.

Arehart challenged the conference attendees to break into groups and answer the question “which ‘wants’ are most important?” Beyond that, attendees were asked to tell why those wants were most important and how can we convince institutions that our wants are important and need to be addressed?



The smaller groups came up with an impressive list of “wants” of officials:

- **More training for young officials:** Often, local associations don’t have all the tools or finances at hand that are needed to properly train officials.
- **An open and fair evaluation system:** A common bone of contention for officials around the country, evaluation systems again came under scrutiny. Regularity, objectivity and responsiveness are all crucial issues that are often ignored.
- **Communication on number of games officials will receive:** In areas that use assigners, often new or younger officials don’t have a clear idea of how they’ll be scheduled going into a season. That makes it difficult to plan and train.
- **Accommodation of transferring officials:** An issue for some time, officials want to know that, if forced to move from state to state or even region to

region within their state, they won't be forced to "the bottom of the ladder." Examples of former state championship officials being forced to work a JV schedule in their new state were plentiful.

- **Respect:** A broad issue that applies to every aspect of officiating.
- **More and better evaluations:** Evaluations once every few years simply aren't frequent enough. Also inadequate are evaluations that don't address all aspects of officiating.
- **More and better games:** Let's get rid of the "good 'ol boy networks" once and for all and be fair in how games are assigned.
- **More money:** Have game fees keep more in step with inflation and our costs.
- **Positive officiating environment:** Too often, officials have inadequate or even non-existent dressing facilities and other amenities. Baseball and softball umpires often have to dress in parking lots while trying not to be seen by passers-by.
- **A change in attitude:** So that officials are recognized as a vital part of the game by coaches, players, fans and administrators alike.
- **Communication, respect, support and feedback:** From all of those whom we serve.
- **To be treated as professionals:** Including understanding things from the officials' perspective.
- **Positive recognition:** At least from our local and state associations, but also from those outside those circles.

Again, money was barely a blip on the screen. With budgets, therefore, not in jeopardy, the question was posed: What can we do to get what we want? Again, the groups came up with an impressive list:

- **Be professional:** Look and act like an official; be on time; honor your contracts.
- **Give respect to earn respect:** "Hard guys" don't often have things go their way once the game is over.
- **Promote ourselves:** Let people know what we do to do what we do — in other words, what is our training like? What is our licensing like? What clinics do we attend? Beyond that, communicate those public service activities association members get involved with.



- **Open dialog with school administrators:** Including athletic directors, coaches, administrators, and principals. Perhaps have a social gathering, invite them to attend our meetings, a breakfast, etc.

A long open comment session followed as those in attendance presented ideas that worked for their groups in their areas. Many officials urged open communication with a variety of publics like athletic directors, coaches, parents and perhaps even the public at large as a good method of “opening a door” that will help keep future situations controllable.

Arehart juxtaposed what officials want with the covenant that the assembly discussed at an earlier session. Clearly, what officials want, like accountability in general, is a two-way street.



# Your Legal Rights and Responsibilities

*Presenter: Alan Goldberger*

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The list of persons and entities to whom officials may be accountable can be considerably long. Especially of concern are issues relating to an official's autonomy. Is an official free to turn down a game assignment? Does everyone in your association pay his or her own taxes? Those are questions that must be considered to determine the list of people who can expect certain things from officials.

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Alan Goldberger, an official who happens to be an attorney whose specialty is sports law, addressed the NASO Convention to raise the awareness of those in attendance regarding areas where they may have some overlooked responsibilities.

Goldberger began the session by defining the difference between an employee and an independent contractor. The designation is an important one for officials, especially where taxes are concerned.

"The difference is that officials who are independent contractors need to pay their own income taxes, their own employment taxes and everything that goes with being a self-employed person who never blows a call," mused Goldberger.

"Secondly, officials who are independent contractors generally pay for their own negligence one way or another, and nobody else is liable for their negligence under normal circumstances. Lastly, an independent contractor, has a contractual relationship with whomever engages them."

Officials who are considered employees have things considerably different.

According to Goldberger, employees often can lean on their employers if they are sued in the course of their work. Employees also have taxes taken out of their checks by their employers. Other benefits of employee status include being able to file Worker's Compensation claims, the right to unionize and the right to expect certain minimal working conditions.

From Goldberger's definitions, it was clear that most officials are

independent contractors, but he says the answer usually depends on “who wants to know.”

Further, Goldberger contends that your status can change at virtually any time.

“You can be an independent contractor today, and at seven o’clock tonight you can find yourself being an employee,” he revealed. “Each



**“If you accept game fees from leagues or otherwise fix it so that the officials get paid by you handing or mailing them a check or cash, you may be liable ... for injuries to student athletes or other personal injuries, employment taxes, Worker’s Compensation claims, unemployment claims and benefits, and compliance with all laws that apply to employers ...”**

**—Alan Goldberger**

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factor in an association relationship is another piece of the puzzle, so you need to consider all of the facts of your particular legal relationship when you’re refereeing or when you’re assigning.”

If you are officiating as an independent contractor, get injured, and file a Worker’s Compensation claim, your status will be scrutinized. The same will be true if the IRS audits you, or you file other types of insurance claims.

Another important group with an interest in your “status” as an official is the athletes.

“Injured student athletes will want to know whether you, the incompetent referee who didn’t call enough fouls in a ballgame or let some poor athlete step in a hole in the soccer pitch are the only one they can blame, or if there are others they can blame for their injuries,” he said.

Goldberger noted that if an official has any doubt regarding the independent contractor/employee issue, there are 12 questions he or she can ask to arrive at a conclusion:

1. How are officials assigned? Does the official solicit games, or does an assigner, league or other assign the official?
2. How are officials paid? By whom? When? Are taxes or other deductions taken out? If deductions were made, you'd likely be considered an employee.
3. Does the assigner/employer have the right to control the manner in which the official performs? An employer would.
4. What are the operating modalities of the association? Is the association run like a business?
5. Do the association's bylaws speak to the issue of independent contractor/employee directly or indirectly?
6. Are there contracts or written guidelines between the league and official association involved? A very important factor.
7. Are there laws, administrative regulations or prior agency rulings? Any of them may point the way.
8. Are there league rules concerning officiating and/or modifications to playing rules that relate to officials?
9. Is an official free to reject an assignment? If so, it is usually a sign of an independent contractor.
10. Does the official have other responsibilities outside of refereeing at the site? If so, he or she may be an employee.
11. Is the official a member of an association, or a name on a "staff"?
12. Why would a league or conference want us to be our associations' employees? If we are employees of our association, leagues and conferences may have an extra layer of "protection."

"Associations that take money into their satchels or bank accounts or the back of the station wagon and use that money to pay officials could very well find themselves in the situation where one of those government agencies we talked about or one of their members says, guess what, you are an employer of officials," Goldberger noted.

If that happens, your association better be prepared for a slew of responsibilities and potentialities that few are able to handle, such as — but not limited to — filing reports with the IRS.

"I want everybody if you get nothing else out of this, to take this much back with you," he urged. "If you accept game fees from leagues or otherwise fix it so that the officials get paid by you handing or mailing them a check or cash, you may be liable. You may be liable for injuries to student athletes or other personal injuries, employment taxes, Worker's Compensation claims, unemployment claims and benefits, and compliance with all laws that apply to employers too numerous to mention."

## In Full View

*Presenter: Ed Rush*

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Ed Rush, the NBA director of officiating, presented the final session of the 21st NASO conference. Rush's tasks included finding answers to the questions: Is the modern referee more or less accountable than old-school referees; why did it become necessary for the individual official to become regimented; and does the current level of accountability make it harder or easier to identify excellent officials?

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"We find at our level that the people who are serious about their professional growth, people that are really focused, they want observations, and they cry for feedback on a regular basis. Sometimes we do a good job of that and other times we don't," Rush revealed.

Most officials at lower levels of officiating could readily relate to Rush's assessment. As he addressed the first question of his session: "Is the modern official more or less accountable than old-school officials?" Rush urged attendees to consider the fact that society at large is better informed than ever before due to satellite, computers and other mass media. "The more information people have, the more they want. They are asking 'why' more than ever," noted Rush.

So the answer to the first question, according to Rush, is, "Of course, yes!" These days, the modern high school and college officials have a wide range of persons and organizations to whom they're accountable. Assigners, coaches, conferences, associations, observers and athletes are merely the start of a long list of people who have a vested interest in the performance of officials, and whom, in very tangible ways, can have an impact on an official's career.

Rush believes that accountability doesn't stop for the modern official after the game ends. "The level of expectation for our overall behavior, both on the field or the court, and what we do off the field or the court, the bar is higher than (most other professions). We are in a position where people are looking at us and they're kind of waiting to see what bar do you go into after the game, and how long do you stay, and in what kind of shape are you in when you leave? That's scrutiny. It used to mean absolutely nothing. Your personal life, what happened away from the

field or the court didn't mean a thing. Now there is such a higher level of expectation."

Part of the reason, according to Rush, is that people have more invested both figuratively and literally in the outcome of even youth sports. When the outcome of a high school basketball game may determine if a young man is invited to a prestigious summer league and therefore has a shot at the NBA, game importance is amplified. "When you have families investing the amount of time and the amount of resources into Judy's and Jimmy's growth in the athletic world, there is more at stake," Rush noted.

Moving on to the issue of regimentation of officials, Rush indicated that regimentation also came about as the focus on games increased.

"You have to remember as officials that our real role is to connect with the players on the field and the court. That is what we're here for — the players. So we have to continue to remind ourselves level play is enhanced by a consistent approach from crew to crew. That is about standardizing, and that ties in with accountability. Players must adjust to an opponent's competitive approach. Greater standardization is important. If we approach things the same way, our interpretations are the same, our preparation is the same, we go on the field or the court and the players know what the expectation is, then basically the adjustment is from opponent to opponent, not from officiating crew to officiating crew," noted Rush.

"Standardized signals and mechanics place a focus on the players and not the officials. We say we want (officials) to have purposeful movement. We want you to exhibit strengths. We want to make sure that you reflect an assurance that you know exactly what you're doing in the game. At the same time there's a line. You get to that line and now it brings attention to yourself and then we have now taken the attention away from the game and the players."

Rush pointed out that crew dynamics are healthier when all officials

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**"... Our real role is to connect with the players on the field and the court. That is what we're here for — the players."**



*—Ed Rush*

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have a common approach. “Most sports there’s more than one official, so if you can work together and everybody has the same level of accountability it’s a lot easier,” he said.

Moving on to the final question of his session, “Does the current level of accountability make it harder or easier to identify excellent officials?” Rush believed that the answer was obvious.

“A standardized and consistent level of accountability enables leaders to best identify officiating excellence,” stated Rush. “We have to have standards.”

To that end, Rush presented the conference with a list of categories the NBA under which the NBA scrutinizes its officials:

- **Court presence**
- **Professionalism**
- **Credibility**
- **Game awareness and control**
- **Communication**
- **Team officiating**  
(officiating as a team)
- **Play calling (every single call and non-call will be reviewed)**
- **Make appropriate calls**
- **Accurate calls**
- **Calls that fit the game**
- **Positioning**
- **Fitness**
- **Physically fit**
- **Athletic appearance**

After relating the desire some of his newer officials have for improvement, Rush concluded his session in an inspirational manner.

“I would ask you to be serious about this. You can’t separate evaluation and accountability, because they do go hand-in-hand. Officials will have a greater chance of succeeding if you give them boundaries and direction. Once you have that clearly defined and it comes from within, the percentage chances of you having a highly successful program that improves every year will become greater and greater.”

## NASO ACCOUNTABILITY SURVEY

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In April 2003 NASO conducted an Internet survey of its members who are subscribers to LockerRoom, NASO's monthly e-newsletter. Approximately 2,500 NASO members were surveyed and 697 had responded at the time when the survey results were compiled. The questions were keyed to the topics that are to be discussed at "Sports Officiating 2003," NASO's annual conference. The intent of the survey was to obtain officials' views concerning the various issues that surface in a discussion of "accountability in officiating." The survey results follow. They may also be accessed at [www.naso.org](http://www.naso.org).

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1. What sports do you officiate?

24% Basketball

23% Football

19% Baseball

16% Softball

6% Soccer

5% Volleyball

2% Swimming

1% Track and Field

1% Hockey

1% Wrestling

2% Other(s)

57% Yes

30% No

10% I don't know

3% I do not belong to an officiating association

6. If your primary officiating association has a code of conduct in place, are there consequences if a member violates the code?

16% Always

41% Usually

26% Sometimes

15% Rarely

2% Never

2. What is the primary level of games you work?

60% High school varsity

15% Small college

7% Junior varsity

6% Major college

6% Youth

3% Rec league

1% Freshman

1% Professional

1% Other

NASO has developed a model Covenant with Sports Officials. (Go to "educational material" at [www.officiatingdevelopmentalliance.org](http://www.officiatingdevelopmentalliance.org) to view.)

The Covenant lists responsibilities that organizations and individuals that assign, evaluate or require the use of officials have to those officials. It addresses such areas as non-discrimination, security, limiting officials' liability, and due process for officials.

Questions 7-11 relate to covenants.

3. How long have you been officiating?

39% 20 or more years

14% 15-19 years

23% 10-14 years

16% 5-9 years

7% 1-4 years

1% Less than one year

7. Which of the following best describes your view?

43% Officials owe a lot more to the Game than the Game owes to officials.

12% Officials owe a little more to the Game than the Game owes to officials.

41% Officials owe as much to the Game as the Game owes to officials.

2% The Game owes a little more to officials than officials owe to the Game.

2% The Game owes a lot more to officials than officials owe to the Game.

4. Should officials' associations implement a code of conduct for member officials?

91% Yes

2% No

7% Maybe

8. Should organizations or individuals that assign, evaluate or require the use of officials have some form of a covenant in place?

5. Does your primary officiating association have a code of conduct for officials in place?



81% Yes  
 3% No  
 16% Maybe

9. Do the primary recipients of your officiating services have some form of a covenant with sports officials?

35% No  
 32% Yes  
 33% Don't know

10. Who should be primarily responsible for implementing some form of covenant with sports officials?

37% State or regional governing organizations (e.g., state high school organization)  
 24% Local officiating organizations  
 18% National governing organizations (e.g., NCAA, NFHS)  
 17% Individual leagues or conferences  
 3% National officiating organizations (e.g., NASO)  
 1% Covenants are not necessary

11. Does your state or area have some form of a covenant with officials that applies to you?

36% Yes  
 24% No  
 40% Don't know

12. If you answered "Yes" to question #11, at what level is the covenant applicable?

53% State/area  
 34% Local  
 9% National  
 3% Other  
 1% Don't know

13. If you answered "No" to Question #11, have officials in your state/area tried, but unsuccessfully, to have some form of a covenant implemented?

72% Don't know  
 21% No, we have not tried  
 7% Yes, we've tried but were unsuccessful

14. Which is the biggest problem where you officiate?

49% Officials aren't shown enough respect  
 16% Officials aren't paid enough  
 35% Neither is a particularly significant problem

15. Assume there are limited funds available for use in improving officiating. Where should the money be spent? Rank order the relative importance of

using resources on improving the following. (1 is the most important, 5 is the least important)

1 - Training programs (average ranking = 1.77)  
 2 - Evaluation programs (2.71)  
 3 - Recruitment/retention programs (2.92)  
 4 - Game fees (3.52)  
 5 - Working conditions at games (3.55)

16. This question addresses the responsibilities the institutions governing officiating have to officials. Please rate each action on a scale of 1 through 5 in terms of importance and priority for action. (1 = high importance and high priority; 5 = low importance and low priority)

1 - Supporting officials in controversial situations (average ranking = 1.54)  
 2 - Providing effective officiating training opportunities (1.62)  
 3 - Providing timely information concerning venue/time changes, cancellations, etc. (1.63)  
 4 - Giving performance evaluation feedback to officials (1.79)  
 5 - Establishing safe and private locker rooms for officials (1.95)  
 6 - Providing better game-site management support (1.96)  
 7 - Establishing fair game fee structures (2.03)  
 8 - Ensuring adequate representation for officials in league/conference matters (2.11)  
 9 - Making sure that training and administrative requirements are not excessive (2.41)  
 10 - Making mandatory-meeting sites conveniently located (2.45)  
 11 - Recognizing officials for their achievements (2.46)  
 12 - Getting input from officials' organizations on game assignments (2.65)  
 13 - Establishing affordable and consistent uniform requirements (2.83)  
 14 - Giving officials consistent access to amenities such as towels, beverages, etc. at game sites (2.84)

17. Should officials be subject to formal penalties for errors in officiating judgment?

68% No  
 4% Yes  
 28% Maybe

18. Should officials be subject to formal penalties for errors caused by misapplication of a rule?

34% Yes  
 28% No  
 38% Maybe

19. If a penalty is imposed on an official for an error in judgment and/or misapplication of the rules, should whatever penalty is imposed on that official be extended to the entire officiating crew?

- 3% Always
- 7% Most of the time
- 47% Sometimes
- 28% Rarely
- 15% Never

20. If a penalty is imposed on an official for an error in judgment and/or misapplication of the rules, who should administer the penalty?

- 52% An officiating organization
- 30% The assigning body or individual
- 15% The conference or league hierarchy
- 1% A fellow sports official
- 2% Other

21. Which statement best reflects your opinion concerning dealing with errors in officiating judgement and/or misapplication of a rule?

- 61% Errors are inevitable, a good evaluation system is sufficient to take care of them.
- 34% Serious errors demand serious consequences, but not all errors are serious.
- 5% Get over it. Everyone makes mistakes.
- <1% Any officiating error should be penalized.

22. In general, do you believe the officiating evaluation programs you are personally involved with do a good job of holding officials accountable for their performance?

- 65% No
- 35% Yes

23. Should officials be expected to adhere to higher standards of ethical and moral conduct than the general public?

- 85% Yes
- 15% No

24. Should officials be required to undergo background checks as a prerequisite to officiating at high school and lower levels?

- 61% Yes
- 39% No

25. Should officials be required to undergo background checks as a prerequisite to officiating at college and higher levels?

- 66% Yes
- 34% No

26. Should an official's off-the-field conduct be legitimate grounds for suspension from officiating

assignments?

- 32% Yes
- 6% No
- 61% Maybe

27. Suppose you are a candidate for disciplinary action either because of an on-the-field or off-the-field incident. Are procedures in place in your primary officiating environment to assure that you will be allowed "due process?"

- 40% Yes
- 25% No
- 35% Don't know

28. Should officials be authorized to meet with members of the media in postgame sessions to discuss game situations?

- 61% No
- 13% Yes
- 26% Maybe

29. Do you feel officials generally are rewarded appropriately?

- 58% No
- 42% Yes

30. Rank order the relative importance of the following methods of rewarding officials. (rank them 1 through 7 with 1 being the most important and 7 being the least important)

- 1 - Post-season assignments (average ranking = 2.23)
- 2 - Better assignments (2.60)
- 3 - More money (3.90)
- 4 - More assignments (3.94)
- 5 - Training opportunities (4.07)
- 6 - Camp/clinic scholarships (4.40)
- 7 - Recognition through awards (4.54) (e.g., referee of the year)

31. Classify the impact more/better rewards would have on officiating recruitment and retention programs. They would be:

- 31% A big help
- 52% Some help
- 14% A little help
- 3% No help

32. What is your "employment" status as an official?

- 85% I am always an "independent contractor."
- 6% Usually I am an "independent contractor."
- 7% Sometimes I am an "independent contractor;" sometimes I am an "employee."
- 1% Usually I am an "employee."
- >1% I am always an "employee."

## Sports Officiating 2003 Speaker List

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**J.A. Adande** — Sports columnist for the *Los Angeles Times*.

**Sandy Alderson** — Major League Baseball executive vice president of baseball operations; oversees baseball operations, umpiring, onfield operations and security and facility management; former Oakland A's president, general manager and general counsel.

**Jim Arehart** — Associate editor of *Referee*, responsible for feature stories; active football official.

**Esse Baharmast** — USSF director of advancement and international referee development; former USSF director of officials; retired international referee; worked two 1998 World Cup games; recipient of 1997 MLS Referee of the Year Award; worked 1996 Olympic games; NASO Board member.

**Brian Berger** — Brian Berger Public Relations founder; assists individuals and corporations with public relations, media training, image enhancement, community relations and event management.

**Larry Boucher** — Kentucky High School Athletic Association assistant commissioner and officials' division supervisor; NFHS Basketball Rules Committee chair; former college and high school basketball referee.

**Bill Carollo** — NFL referee; worked 2003 and 1996 Super Bowls and 1988 Rose Bowl; 1999 University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Athletic Hall of Fame inductee; former semi-professional baseball umpire and former major college basketball referee; National Football League Referees Association president.

**Randy Christal** — Major college football and baseball official; worked NCAA Division I-A football national championships in 1997 and 2003; eight NCAA Division I baseball College World Series and the 1984 summer Olympics; NASO Board vice chair.

**Mike Colbrese** — Executive director of the Washington Interscholastic Athletic Association.

**Danny Crawford** — NBA referee; worked games in the last eight consecutive Finals; previously worked in the Continental Basketball Association; former high school baseball umpire; NASO Board member-elect.

**Bob Delaney** — 2003 NASO Gold Whistle Award honoree; NBA referee; frequent lecturer at the FBI Academy and police agencies throughout U.S. and Canada; former board member of the NBA Referees Association.

**Steven Ellinger** — Attorney; small college and high school basketball official; Greater Houston of the Community Associations Institute executive director; *Referee* contributor.

**Ron Foxcroft** — Founder, president and CEO of Fox 40 International; retired NCAA Division I and international men's basketball official; member of the NASO Foundation Trustee; NASO Board treasurer, NASO Education Partner.

**Bob Gardner** — NFHS chief operating officer; NFHS Rules Review chairman; Indiana Sports Corporation Executive Committee member; Indiana Wrestling Hall of Fame inductee; former Indiana High School Athletic Association chief operating officer.

**Alan Goldberger** — Sports law attorney and recognized legal authority for game officials; author of *Sports Officiating: A Legal Guide*; frequent speaker to game officials, coaches, recreation professionals and attorneys; member, counsel and chair of many officials associations; former baseball and football official; worked men's and women's major college basketball; *Referee* contributor.

**Jerry Grunski** — Former small college and high school basketball and football referee and baseball umpire; former minor league football official; former baseball, basketball, swimming and football coach; longtime *Referee* contributor.

**Gary Gullett** — IAABO Rules Exam Committee member; Rock Valley College (Ill.) basketball officiating instructor; high school and college basketball referee; NASO Board secretary and Officiating Development Alliance member (ODA).

**Tom Herre** — Referee Enterprises, Inc. vice president and director of business operations; NASO staff member; former high school basketball referee; Officiating Development Alliance (ODA) member.

**Stu Jackson** — NBA senior vice president, basketball operations; oversees oncourt operations including scheduling, officiating, game conduct and discipline; Competition Committee chair; USA Basketball Senior Men's Basketball Committee chair; former New York Knicks head coach and former University of Wisconsin men's basketball head coach.

**Dwight Jaynes** — *Portland Tribune* president and sports columnist; host of Dwight Jaynes Show, a sportstalk program on KPAM in Portland; four-time recipient of the Oregon Sports Writer of the Year; former baseball and basketball official.

**Steve Keating** — AllSports Officiating (ASO) president and founder; oversees ASO business development, project management and strategic partnership efforts; member of the Collegiate Basketball Officials Association and IAABO.

**Barry Mano** — NASO founder and president; Referee Enterprises, Inc. founder and president; publisher of *Referee* magazine; NASO Foundation Trustee; former major college basketball official; Officiating Development Alliance (ODA) member.

**Howard Mayo** — IAABO Rules Examination and Mechanics Committee member; Portland Basketball Officials Association commissioner; former small college basketball official; rules interpreter for Oregon School Activities Association; former NFHS basketball rules and manual committee member.

**Jerry McGee** — Wingate University president; major college football official; worked 17 postseason assignments and 14 college bowl games; national chairman of the NCAA Division II Football Issues Project Team.

**Joan Powell** — Professional Association of Volleyball Officials president; NASO Board member.

**Marc Ratner** — Nevada State Athletic Commission executive director; southern Nevada commissioner of officials; major college football official; NASO Board member.

**Jack Roberts** — Michigan High School Activities Association executive director; creator and editor of *Interscholastic Athletic Administration* magazine and co-author of *More Than Winning*; NASO Board member.

**Ed T. Rush** — NBA director of officiating; retired NBA referee; worked numerous NBA Finals games; co-founder of Coast to Coast Referee School; former NASO Board chair; Officiating Development Alliance (ODA) member.

**Bill Russell, Ph.D.** — AllSports Officiating founding partner and director of research and development; member of the American Educational Research Association and National Council of Measurement in Education; specialist in quantitative and qualitative measurement techniques, experimental design and statistical analyses.

**Bill Saum** — NCAA director of agent, gambling and amateurism activities; former NCAA representative for agent and gambling issues and former NCAA enforcement representative.

**Jerry Seeman** — NFL officiating consultant; former NFL senior director of officiating; retired NFL official; officiated two Super Bowls and two Pro Bowls; 2001 NASO Medallion Award winner; NASO Board member.

**Jeff Stern** — Associate editor of *Referee* with specific responsibility for football and baseball coverage; high school and college football official; high school baseball umpire; former basketball, wrestling and softball official.

**Bob Still** — NASO communications and development manager and editor of *It's Official*; umpired the NCAA Division III 2002 College World Series; college and independent minor league baseball umpire and high school football official.

**Mary Struckhoff** — NFHS assistant director; NFHS basketball and softball rules interpreter and editor; NFHS Officials Association and Officials Education Program staff liaison; major college women's basketball and former volleyball official; former Illinois High School Association assistant executive director; Officiating Development Alliance (ODA) member.

**Bill Topp** — *Referee* magazine editor with specific responsibility for basketball coverage; high school and college basketball and football official; former major college baseball umpire; 2000 NCAA Division III World Series umpire; Officiating Development Alliance (ODA) member.

**Tom Welter** — Executive director of the Oregon School Activities Association.

**Marcy Weston** — Central Michigan University senior associate athletic director and NCAA national coordinator of women's basketball officiating; Women's Basketball Hall of Fame inductee; current NASO Board chair; Officiating Development Alliance (ODA) member.

**Dave Yeast** — NCAA national coordinator of baseball umpires; Amateur Baseball Umpires Association Board member; worked two College World Series; former Missouri Valley and Conference USA baseball supervisor of umpires; Officiating Development Alliance (ODA) member.

**Henry Zaborniak Jr.** — Ohio High School Athletic Association assistant commissioner; current major college football official; former collegiate women's and men's basketball and retired NFL Europe official; NASO Board member-elect.

## **About the Author:**

Dave Sabaini is a football, baseball and basketball official from Terre Haute, Ind., where he serves as the treasurer of the Wabash Valley Officials Association. Additionally, Sabaini is the head official for the Vigo County Youth Football League in Terre Haute. He is employed as the director of audio operations at Indiana State University. Sabaini's writing credits include *Referee* magazine and *Officials Quarterly*; he also serves on the NFOA publications committee.

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