

**Athletics Canada**

# Officiating Pathways Optimization

Final Presentation

May 2025

By: VantagePoint Sports Consulting



**VantagePoint**  
Sports Consulting



# Agenda

**Background & Approach**

**Current Process Audit**

**Feedback from the Officiating Ecosystem**

**Recommendations**

**Appendix**



# Background & Approach

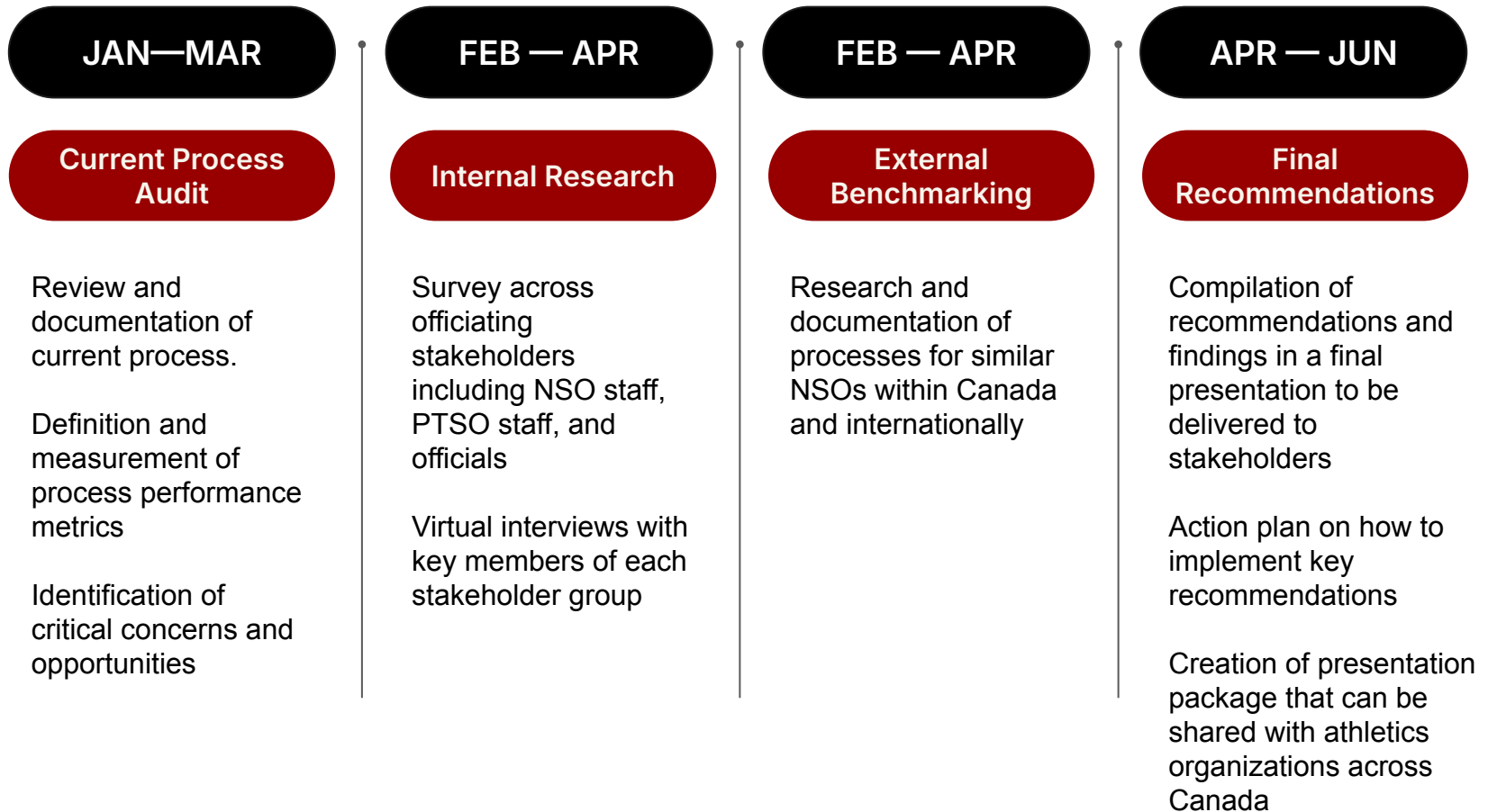


# Project Overview

<b>What?</b>	Review and generate recommendations to optimize the officiating pathways process in Athletics	
<b>Why?</b>	<b>Who?</b>	Athletics Canada Provincial Branches Athletics Officials across Canada
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Officiating is essential to the integrity and success of athletics</li><li>• More than 1000 officials across Canada; number has remained stagnant as membership grows</li><li>• Current officiating pathways lack clarity and transparency</li><li>• Primary objective to increase the number of officials while enhancing consistency and quality</li></ul>	<b>How?</b>	Improved & Modernized Pathways Effective Communication & Consistency Clear Performance Metrics Resourcing & Governance
	<b>When?</b>	Stakeholder Survey: Jan 2025 Stakeholder Interviews: Apr 2025 Final Recommendations: Jun 2025



# Project Timeline





# Current Process Audit



# What the data says

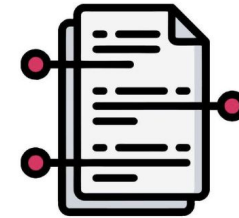
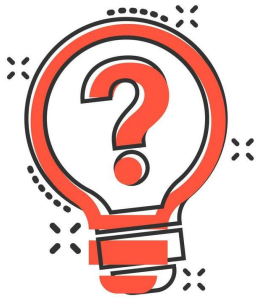
Level 3+ Officials					Avg Tenure in Role (Years)	
	2023	2024	YoY Delta	YoY %	2023	2024
<b>Unique Officials</b>	500	506	6	1.20%	9.37	9.18
<b>1</b> BC	114	127	13	11.40%	8.05	7.62
AB	94	91	-3	-3.19%	6.21	5.93
SK	57	62	5	8.77%	12.75	13.42
MB	36	37	1	2.78%	11.38	12.01
ON	105	93	-12	-11.43%	10.01	9.25
QC	44	46	2	4.55%	10.25	10.11
NB	30	29	-1	-3.33%	11.56	12.42
PE	3	3	0	0.00%	5.12	6.13
NS	12	13	1	8.33%	9.30	9.65
NL	5	5	0	0.00%	17.59	18.59

**1** YoY the number of level 3+ officials has stayed relatively flat; however we are seeing significant declines in Alberta (-3%), Ontario (-11%) and New Brunswick (-3%)

**2** While the average tenure of officials is decreasing, we still see a high average tenure across the country of 9 years



# What we found



## Process Complexity and Poor Usability

Unnecessary **complexity**, **lack of information** where needed, and **broken / missing functionality** in the onboarding process results in a **poor experience** for both new and graduating officials

## Inconsistent Processes

**Out-of-date process documents** for registration and qualification of officiating levels, **varying costs** by province, **different training requirements / vendors** by province

## Multiple Sources of Information

Multiple sources of information with **varying credibility of data** led to **confusion and inefficiency**, making it difficult for officials to have **one central source of truth** for resources.



# Feedback from Officiating Ecosystem



# Officiating Ecosystem Survey

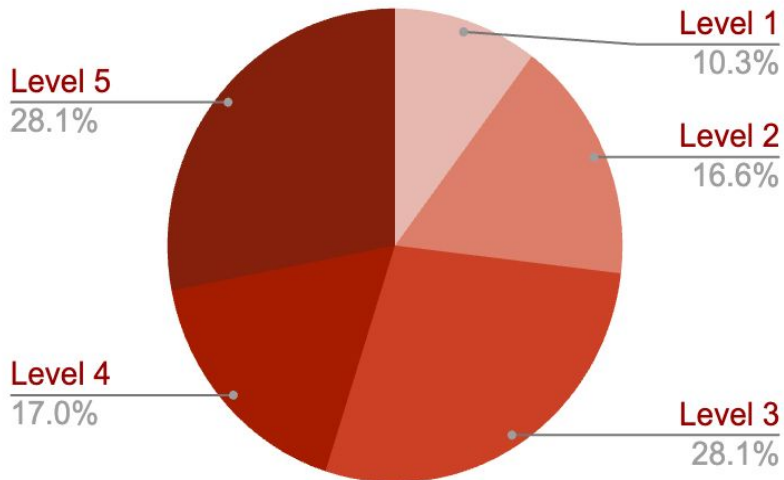
- Stakeholders across the officiating ecosystem were surveyed in March 2025
- Respondents included officials/referees, NOC members, PTSO staff members, BOCs, and AC staff
- 312 officials completed the survey across the country with representation from every PTSOs except for the Yukon

Province	Officials	Total
AB	57	61
BC	90	93
ON	64	67
MB	16	17
NB	13	15
NS	15	16
QC	27	37
SK	26	27
NL	2	3
PE	1	2
NT	1	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>312</b>	<b>339</b>



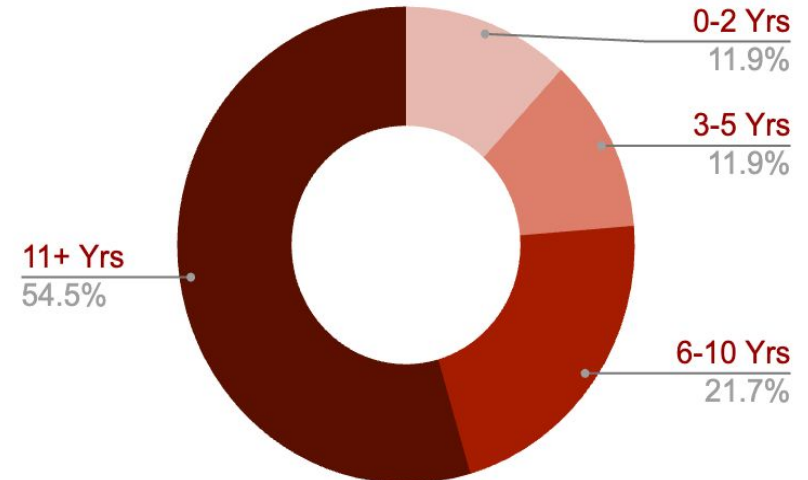
# Who responded?

*All levels of officiating were represented in the survey*



*This included 11 World Athletics certified officials*

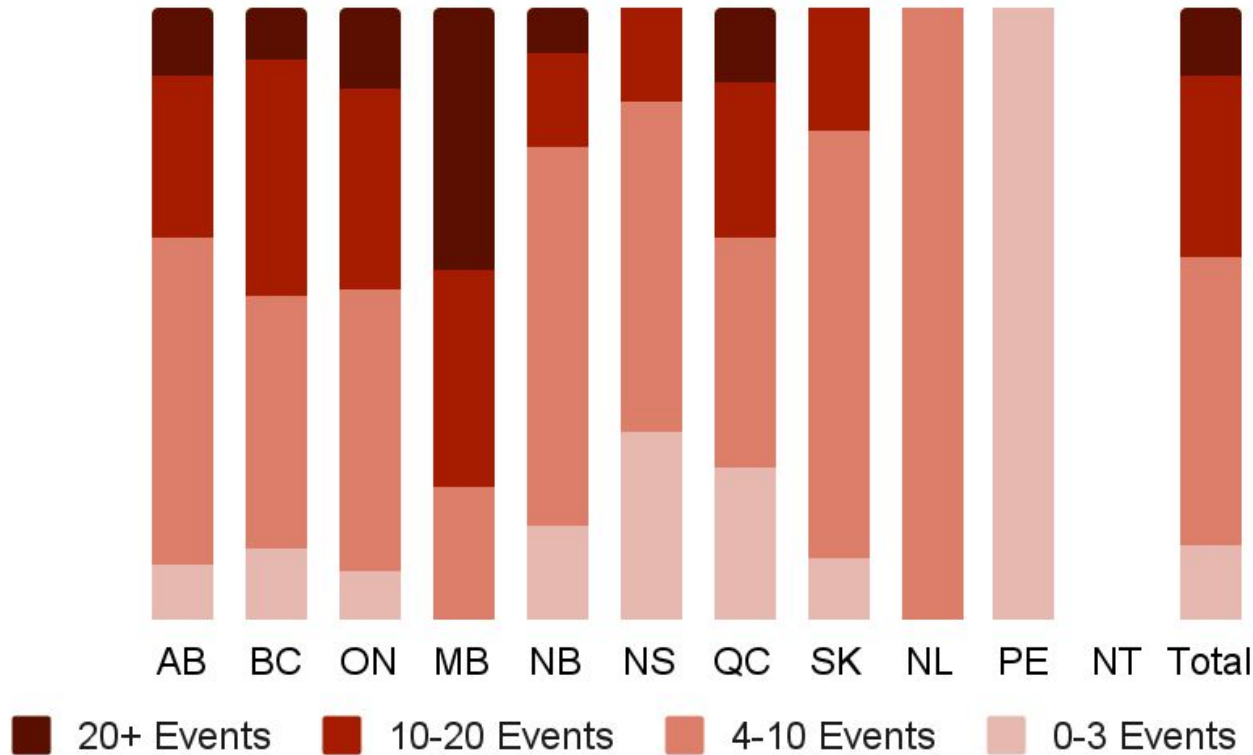
*Respondents skewed significantly towards long-tenured officials*



*All tenure buckets still were represented in the survey*



# How active are these officials?



*40% of officials participate in 10 or more events each year; 12% of officials participate in less than 4 events*

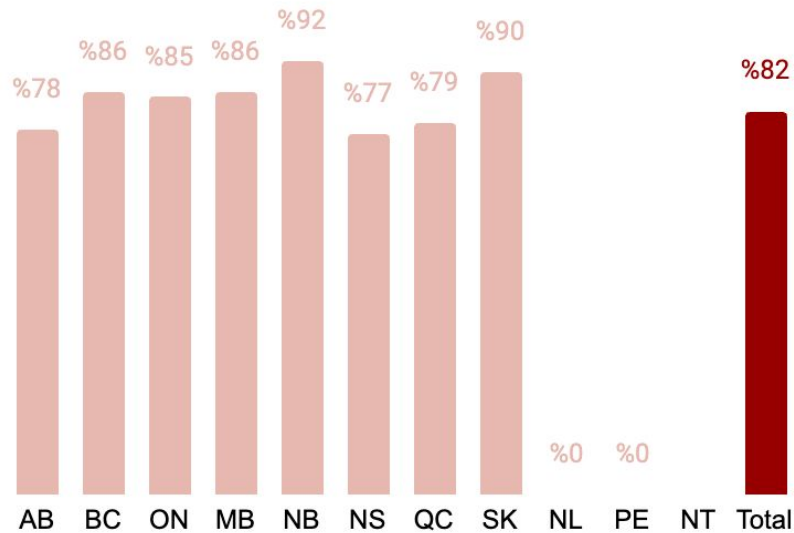
*Officials in Manitoba were the most active; while officials in the atlantic provinces were the least active*

*What frequency do you officiate in any capacity?*



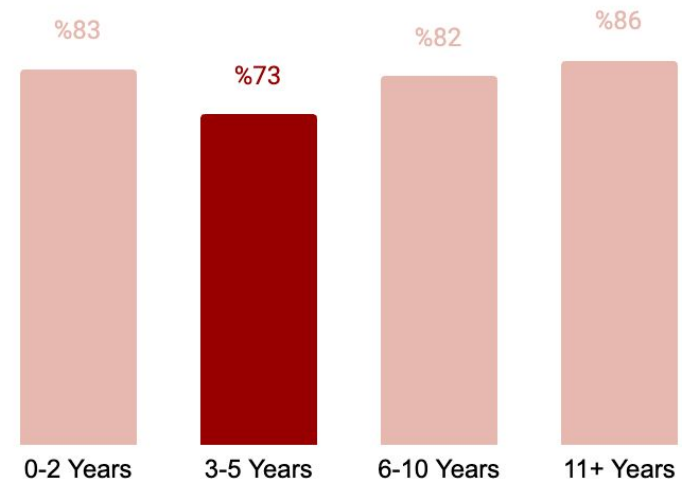
# Satisfaction with Officiating

**82% of officials were satisfied with their overall officiating experience**



**Officiating satisfaction was highest in NB and SK, lowest in AB, NS, and QC**

**Lowest officiating satisfaction was reported in 3-5 year tenured officials**



**Highest officiating satisfaction was reported in 11+ year tenured officials**

*How satisfied are you with your experience as an official?*



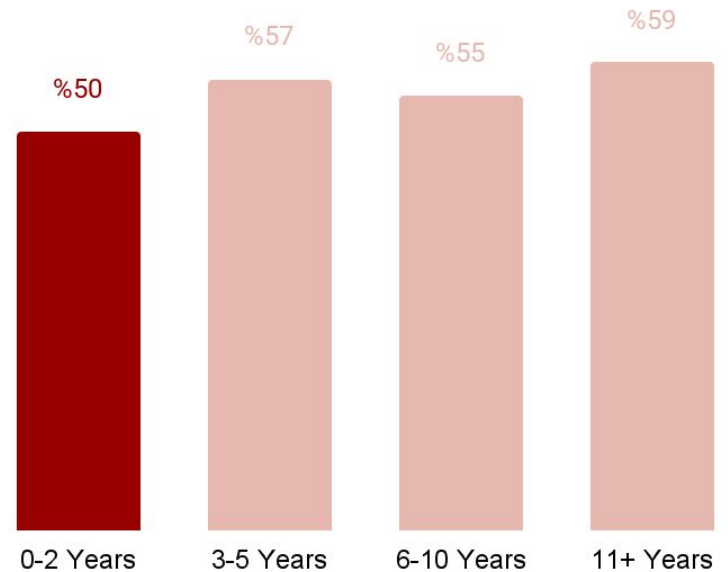
# Satisfaction with Pathways

**Satisfaction with officiating pathways was reported much lower at 56%**



**Pathways satisfaction was highest in SK; lowest in ATL + QC**

**Pathways satisfaction was lowest among low tenured officials**



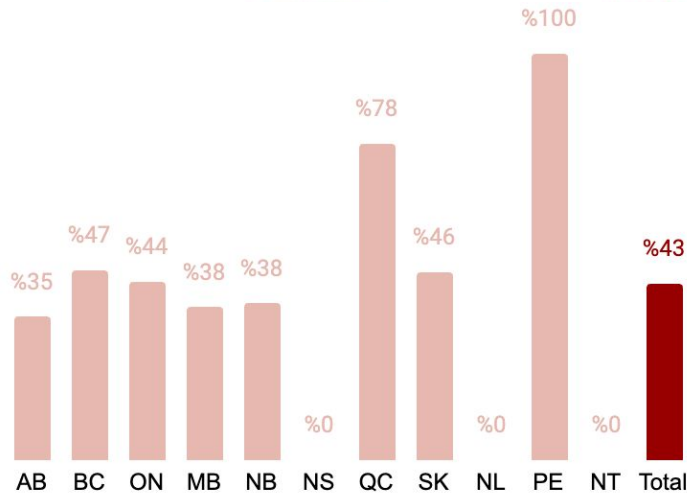
**All tenure groups reported lower than 60% satisfaction**

*How satisfied were you with your pathway to becoming an official?*



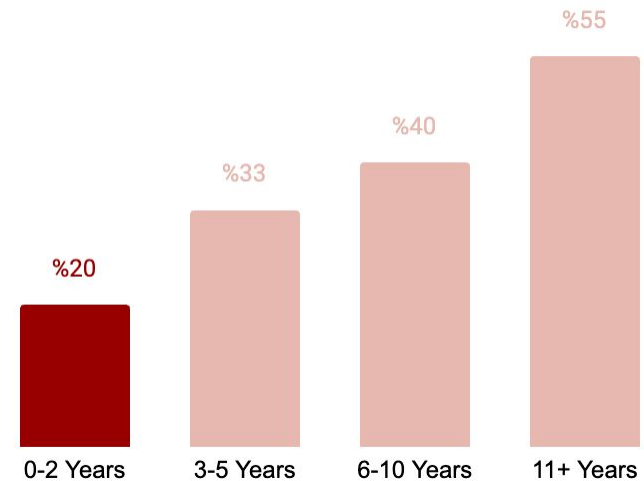
# Familiarity with Pathways

**Only 43% of officials reported being familiar with the officiating pathways**



**Familiarity varied across provinces but was lower in the western provinces**

**Only 20% of low-tenured officials reported being familiar with pathways**

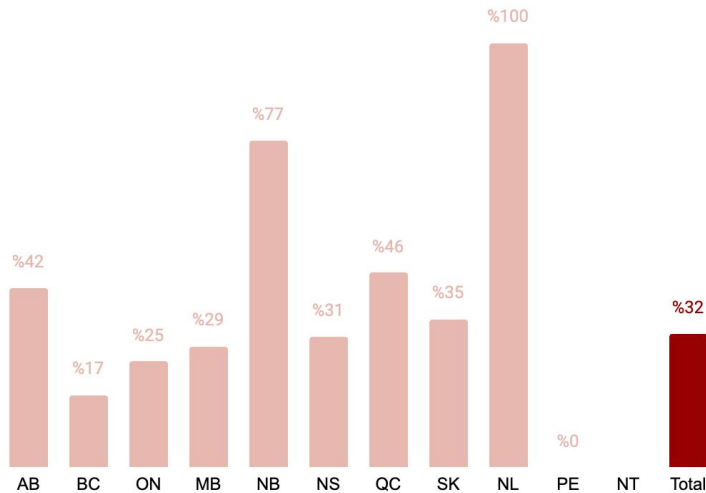


**Pathways familiarity significantly increased among higher tenured officials**

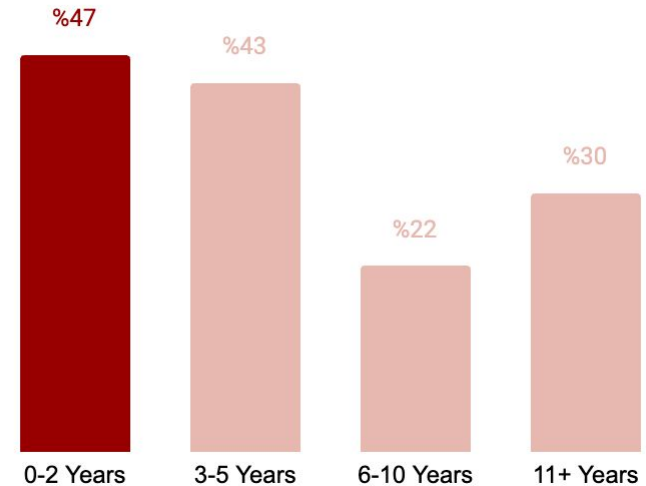


# Difficulty with Resources

**32% of officials reported difficulties accessing officiating resources**



**Low tenured officials reported having more difficulty accessing resources**



**Officials in Alberta and Quebec reported higher levels of difficulty**

**6-10 years officials reported the lowest level of difficulty**

*With regards to the resources available to you, in the form of things like guides, manuals or training documents, how easy are they to find?*



# Factors impacting Retention

*“What factors would encourage you to continue officiating and stay involved in the future with officiating?”*

## 1. More Training Opportunities

**31%**

of Officials identified training opportunities as a factor impacting their retention as an official

*“More **training opportunities** in different technologies and systems that are now available and **expected for officials to know.**”*

## 2. Shorter Competition Days

**26%**

of Officials identified shorter competition days as a factor impacting their retention as an official

*“The **longer competition days are not possible** if the local team is small. For longer competition days **there needs to be more officials** so people can take shifts.”*

## 3. Monetary Compensation

**25%**

of Officials identified monetary compensation as a factor impacting their retention as an official

*“For me, if I have **monetary compensation I can be active more.** I am doing part time and more at weekends so, **it is not very easy for me** to schedule my program for officiating”*



# Key themes from responses

*“What made you want to become an official?”*

## 1. Giving Back

**48%**

of officials were motivated by a desire to contribute often as a way to repay the sport for their past involvement or benefits received.

*“It feels good to be able to give back to a sport my daughter and I have both loved and got so much out of.”*

## 2. Personal Connections

**36%**

cited their own history as athletes, coaches, or fans of track and field as a reason for becoming officials, often to stay connected to the sport.

*“I was previously an athlete in the sport and this was an opportunity to give back.”*

## 3. Supporting Athletes

**21%**

Respondents wanted to help athletes succeed, develop, or compete fairly, often emphasizing young or new athletes.

*“Wanting to help support the development of the sport of track and field which has been a huge part of my life.”*



# Key themes from responses

*“What has made you stay in officiating?”*

## 1. The Relationships

**45%**

The friendships, sense of community, and positive interactions with fellow officials were most of reasons for staying in officiating.

*“The group of officials as an organization are some of **the most welcoming and supportive people** I’ve ever worked with.”*

## 2. Enjoyment of the role or sport

**38%**

Many respondents stayed because they found officiating fun, fulfilling, or intellectually stimulating, often tied to their love for track and field.

*“It works my brain, **utilizes my organizational skills** and allows me to stay active while enjoying it”*

## 3. Supporting the community

**28%**

A desire to contribute to the sport or and the community, often as a continuation of earlier motivations, kept respondents engaged.

*“Sense of pride helping athletes reach their goals and a **service to the community**. Fellowship with other officials.”*



# Key themes from responses

*“What do you need to be supported as an official?”*

## 1. More Training and Mentorship

**28%**

Respondents emphasized the need for accessible, ongoing training and formal mentoring to guide them through the pathway and improve skills.

*“I need **access to training and mentors**, and access to officiating at more national level events.”*

## 2. Better Communication

**25%**

of Officials call for clearer, more consistent communication from NOC, Branch Staff, and Athletics Canada.

*“There should be more transparency **less favoritism.**”*

## 3. More Officials and Volunteers

**19%**

Respondents noted the shortage of officials, requesting recruitment efforts, more volunteers to reduce workload.

*“I would like to have the governing organization take a **more active and aggressive recruitment program.**”*



# Key themes from responses

***“How can the officials pathway in Canada be improved? Are there elements that are outdated / can be modernized?”***

## 1. Increased Transparency

**26%**

Respondents called for clearer, more accessible information. Emphasizing transparency in decision-making and progression

*“Be clear, consistent, transparent and accountable with respect to requirements, timelines, decision-making and record keeping.”*

## 2. Enhance Training and Resources

**24%**

Suggestions for more accessible, standardized, and modern training options, such as online modules, videos, and workshops.

*“More online content in the form of videos explaining how to do things, documentation, better training, more training, more organization.”*

## 3. Streamline the Pathways

**20%**

Respondents criticized the pathway as overly complex, advocating for fewer levels, faster progression, and reduced bureaucratic hurdles.

*“There are too many levels currently. We should have 4 levels tops.”*



# Key themes from responses

*“Have you encountered barriers in the officiating pathway?”*

## 1. Lack of mentorship & Guidance

**25%**

Stated insufficient mentoring, lack of guidance, advancement processes, lack of support to understand requirements for moving up levels.

*“No support for me to get insights or exposure to **requirements or processes for moving up.**”*

## 2. Evaluation Delays and Access Issues

**23%**

Challenges in scheduling evaluations, finding evaluators, or getting evaluations approved, often due to administrative bottlenecks.

*“**Biggest barrier is finding evaluators, and setting up opportunities to be evaluated.**”*

## 3. Lack of Transparency

**21%**

Cited unclear processes, outdated rules, or lack of communication about how to advance, including requirements for credits, levels

*“Lack of **clarity** in steps; lack of **clarity** re who could be a supportive mentor.”*



# What can we learn from other NSOs?



## Standardization Drives Efficiency

NSO's have implemented **training and evaluation frameworks across their regions**, reducing inefficiencies and enhancing clarity in official development.



## Incentivize for Participation

Benchmarking against other NSOs reveals that many **offset the financial burden on officials** by offering travel subsidies, uniform stipends, and event-based honorariums.



## Digitize to Remove Barriers

Organizations are adopting digital platforms to **manage certifications, provide virtual clinics, and track official credits**. These tools are especially beneficial in geographically dispersed regions.



# Key Recommendations



# Major Issues in Officiating

## Recruitment

- Low visibility of officiating roles
- Aging official population
- Regional inequities

## Advancement & Evaluation

- Outdated or Unclear Pathways
- Perception of Gatekeeping
- Inconsistent Evaluation Standards

## Retention

- Poor working conditions at meets
- Limited recognition or support
- Disconnected community

## Governance & Culture

- Lack of transparency in NOC
- Poor ecosystem communication
- Negative or exclusive culture



# Key Recommendations: Evaluation & Advancement

**Recommendation: Clarify the roles of each level in the officiating pathways to meet the needs of athletics in Canada**

*The National average time in Canada to become...*



**High School Teacher**

**4 - 6 years of education and training**



**National High Performance Hockey Referee**

**4 - 7 Years of training and experience**



**Practicing Medical Doctor**

**10 - 12 Years of education, training and experience**



**Level 5 Official**

**10 - 15+ years of education, training and completed evaluations**



# Key Recommendations: Evaluation & Advancement

**Recommendation: Implement minimum officiating level thresholds for events to be sanctioned**

Type of Event	Sanctioning Body	Official	Chief	Ranking Eligibility
Local Meet / School Meet	Prov/Terr Branch	Level 1	Level 2	Not Eligible for Rankings
Provincial Meet / Championships	Prov/Terr Branch & World Athletics	Level 2	Level 3	Eligible for AC & WA Rankings
International Meet (e.g NTFT) / National Championships	Prov/Terr Branch & World Athletics	Level 3	Level 4	Eligible for AC & WA Rankings
World Championships / Olympics	World Athletics	Level 4	Level 5	Eligible for AC & WA Rankings



# Key Recommendations: Retention

**Recommendation: Standardized event guidelines with working conditions guidelines**

***All events must be able to adhere to these minimum requirements by January 1st 2027.***

***Events that do not meet minimum requirements will not have their results recognized by Athletics Canada***

Event Guidelines	Requirement
<b>Shift Times</b>	Shifts shall be no longer than 8 hours per official, per day. Each 8 hour shift should have two 15 min breaks and one 30 min lunch ( <i>Championships may be an exception</i> )
<b>Shelter</b>	Mandatory shelter for all anticipated weather (sun, rain, wind etc)
<b>Hydration &amp; Food</b>	Readily available hydration at all times as well as snacks that are nutritious, energizing and accommodate dietary and allergy concerns
<b>Travel</b>	Must be covered within reason to arrive and leave the event safely.
<b>Standard Uniform</b>	Officials should be provided one uniform, per year, to officiate events regardless of level



# Key Recommendations: Governance & Culture

**Recommendation: Implement clear and transparent governing principles for NOC**

## Transparency, Fairness, Effectiveness

### Defined Mandate & Target "Customer"

Athletics Canada should **clearly state and document NOC's mandate** and who they are meant to serve. Its critical to ensure members of the officiating ecosystem are **aware of these principles.**

### Outlined NOC Member Roles

NOC should have **clearly defined roles** that members will serve as during their term. Role assignment should be up to the Chair. The **Chair should be elected by NOC members.**

### NOC Accountable Objectives

NOC should have **clearly stated objectives** which ladder up to the NOC Mandate. These objectives should be the mechanism AC uses to **hold NOC accountable** to.

### Term Limits

NOC Members and Chair should have **term limits and term renewal limits** as defined for Athletics Canada Board Members in the bylaws



# Key Recommendations: Governance & Culture

<b>NOC Mandate</b>	To lead, support, and unify the development and delivery of officiating in athletics across Canada
<b>Target Customer</b>	Athletics Canada
<b>NOC Objectives</b>	Recruitment & Retention Training & Development Evaluation & Advancement Sanctioning & Events Mentorship & Community
<b>NOC Member Roles</b>	Chair AC Officials Coordinator: In charge of events, sanctioning, communication WA / WPA Rules Coordinator Recruitment & Retention Coordinator Training & Development Coordinator Evaluation & Advancement Coordinator Mentorship & Community Coordinator



# Key Recommendations: Governance & Culture

## Pathways Ownership: Who owns what?

	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
Training & Course Content	Athletics Canada				
Leading & Hosting Clinics	Provincial / Territorial Branches			Athletics Canada	
Evaluations & Upgrading	Provincial / Territorial Branches			Athletics Canada	



# Key Recommendations: Governance & Culture

**Recommendation: Develop a NOC scorecard to be used to measure results and drive accountability**

Objective	KPI	
<b>Recruitment &amp; Retention</b>	Number of New Officials Number of Officials Leaving Average Tenure of Officials	Annual Survey to Officials <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Overall Satisfaction</li> <li>- Pathways Satisfaction</li> <li>- Engagement</li> </ul>
<b>Training &amp; Development</b>	# of Level 4 & 5 Clinics Held # of Level 1,2,3 Clinics Held (Province)	
<b>Evaluation &amp; Advancement</b>	# of Evaluations Completed # of Officials in L4+ # of L2 / L3 Officials (Province)	
<b>Sanctioning &amp; Events</b>	# of Sanctioned Meets by Province # of Sanctioned Meets by World Athletics	
<b>Mentorship &amp; Community</b>	# of Active Mentors # of Officials with an Active Mentor	



# Next Steps & Questions



# About Us

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We offer analytical solutions to help solve the top problems facing your sporting organization. We leverage learnings from industries where analytics have provided massive transformational value for decades and apply them to sports issues. We take sporting organizations on “the analytical roadmap”, providing simplified solutions to tackle the low hanging fruit driving immediate value, while educating key stakeholders on advanced analytics that will keep organizations ahead of their competitors for years to come.

**Player Evaluation:** Player Segmentation and Benchmarking, Player Development Curves, Player Rating and Scoring, Performance Prediction and Decisioning

**Membership Strategy:** Membership Forecasting, Membership Tactic Optimization, Membership Insight Generation, Qualitative and Quantitative Market Research

**Business Operations:** Process / Workflow Optimization, Cost Assessments and Reduction Opportunity Identification, Financial Modelling and Forecasting

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# Appendix



# Other Recommendations



# Other Recommendations: Recruitment

Recommendation: Athletics Canada to launch national recruitment campaign for volunteers and officials



1

AC to own development and distribution of officials recruitment campaign



2

Content with call to action to be shared on AC socials, and at AC events



3

Branches can repurpose campaign content to drive local and regional campaigns



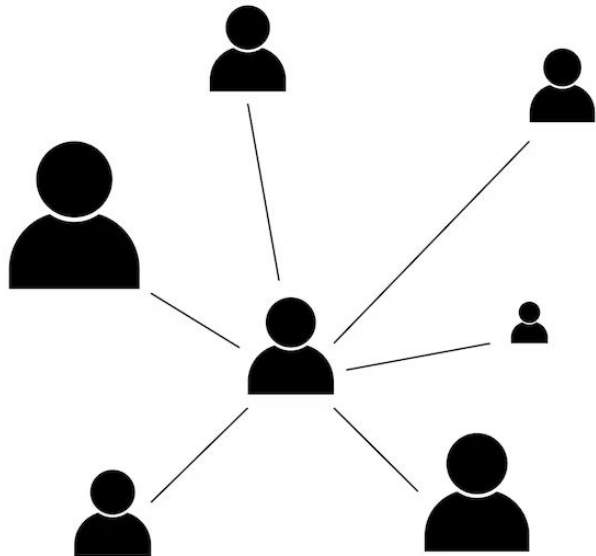
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The Athletics Calendar can be leveraged to drive recruitment through pop-up kiosks



# Other Recommendations: Recruitment

**Recommendation: Establish regional officials communication roles to drive local and regional outreach**



**Each province should have a regional officials coordinator who will be...**

1

A full time member of the provincial branch

2

Coordinate regional volunteers, and drive local outreach

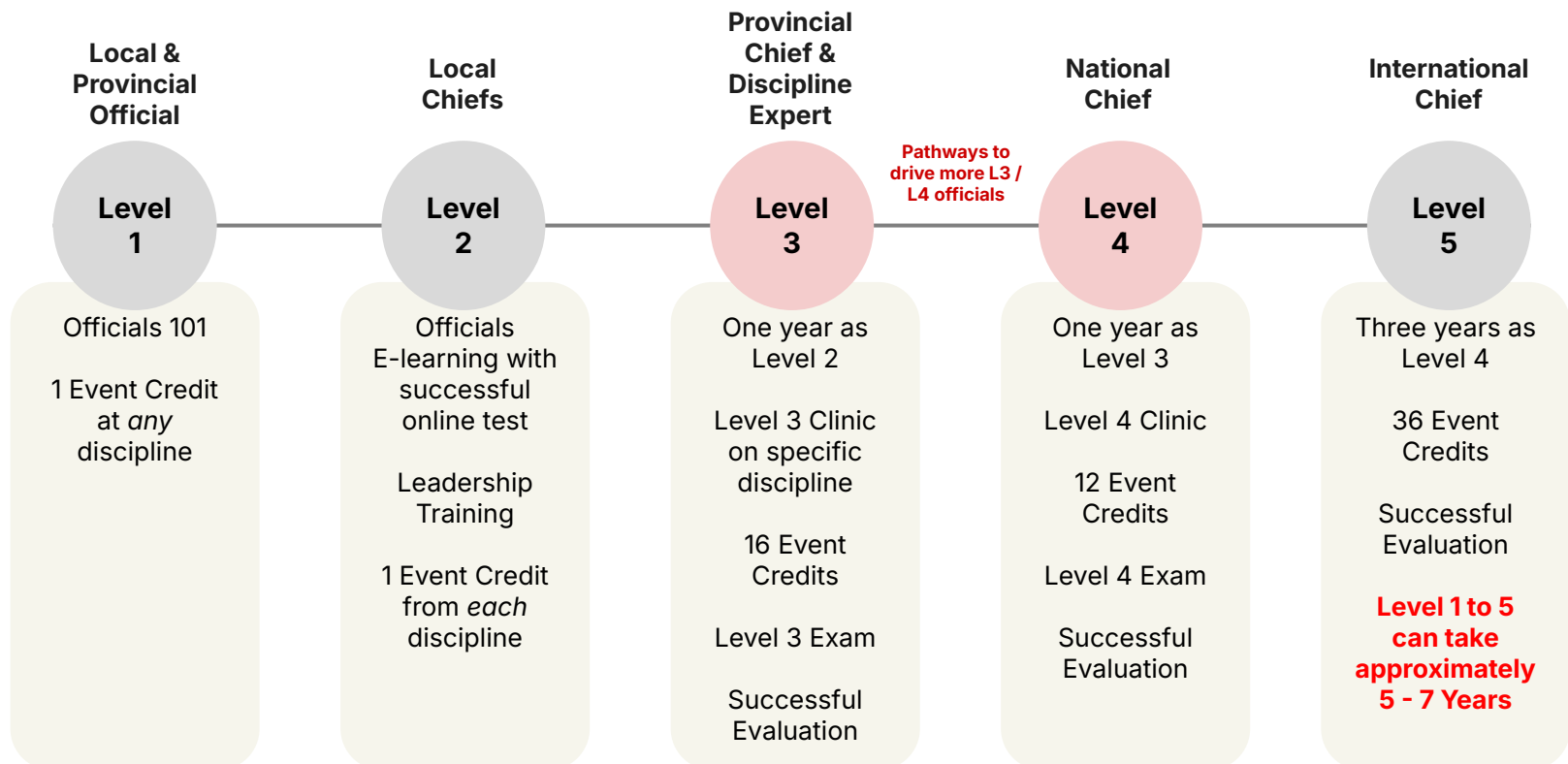
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Accountable for recruitment, retention and event staffing within the province



# Other Recommendations: Evaluation & Advancement

Recommendation: Clarify the roles of each level in the officiating pathways to meet the needs of athletics in Canada





# Factors impacting Retention

*“What factors would encourage you to continue officiating and stay involved in the future with officiating?”*

Theme	0-2 Years	3-5 Years	6-10 Years	11+ Years	Total
Increased recognition	26.67%	13.33%	32.73%	15.22%	<b>16.35%</b>
Monetary compensation	40.00%	26.67%	41.82%	23.19%	<b>25.00%</b>
More training opportunities	70.00%	40.00%	40.00%	31.88%	<b>31.09%</b>
Shorter competition days	16.67%	40.00%	30.91%	40.58%	<b>26.28%</b>
Nothing, I am totally satisfied	3.33%	16.67%	10.91%	18.84%	<b>9.29%</b>



# Other Recommendations: Evaluation & Advancement

Recommendation: Standardize evaluations and evaluation timelines, provide detailed feedback to officials being evaluated



+



+



## Timeline Adherence

Once requirements for progression to next level, An evaluation **must be provided within 12 months.**

## Standardized Feedback

During the evaluation process, **feedback callouts will be standardized** at every level, **ensuring consistency and clarity**

## Simplified Rubrics

Evaluation rubrics **will be reviewed, refreshed and signed off on annually,** to stay consistent and up to date



# Other Recommendations: Retention

**Recommendation: Formalize officiating mentorship pathways and opportunities across the country**



## Mentorship Opportunity

Tenured / senior officials can **significantly improve the experience** of a junior official through **formal mentorship and guidance**



L3, L4, L5 officials required to have at least 1 assigned mentee at a lower level



Minimum email / phone call every 2 weeks discussing opportunities and challenges



Mid-term report to be completed by both parties to ensure program is driving value



In-person / social meetups for mentor-mentee pairings where possible / budget permits



# Other Recommendations: Retention

Recommendation: Rebuild the culture of community amongst the officiating ecosystem





# Other Key Recommendations:

**Evaluation & Advancement:** Subsidize clinics and travel for smaller provinces to develop regional officiating capacity

**Evaluation & Advancement:** Incorporate leadership training around team management and crisis resolution into level 3+ clinics

**Retention:** Introduce tiered recognition programs with mandatory minimum provincial nominations

**Governance & culture:** Establish a consistent, regular communication mechanism for outlining decisions, results, and recognition of officials



# Officiating Best Practices from Around the World



# Comparing against the World

Dimension	USATF (USA)	UK Athletics (UK)	Athletics Australia	Atletiekunie (Netherlands)
<b>Certification Levels</b>	3 (Associate–Master)	5 (Assistant–Level 4)	5 (Level 0–4 + Invite Level 5)	4 (C–International)
<b>Requirements</b>	Membership, SafeSport, exams, experience	DBS, CPD, logs, feedback	Registration, experience, World Athletics modules	Courses, exams, experience
<b>Training Provided</b>	Clinics, online modules, mentorship	Courses, webinars, Athletics Hub	Online, workshops, mentorship	Courses, practical, mentorship
<b>Costs to Officials</b>	\$30–\$200+	£10–£100	\$0–\$200+	€20–€150
<b>Incentives / Pay</b>	\$0–\$200/day + travel stipends	Volunteer; £50–£100/day (nat'l)	Volunteer; \$50–\$150/day	Volunteer; €0–€100/day
<b>Standardization</b>	Moderate (regional variations)	High (UKA national standards)	High (AAOES framework)	High (central curriculum)
<b>Process Complexity</b>	Low	Low	Low	Moderate



# Comparing against the World

Dimension	JAAA (Jamaica)	Kenya Athletics	RFEA (Spain)	Athletics Canada
<b>Certification Levels</b>	3 (Local–Intl)	3 (County–Intl)	4 (Regional–Intl)	5 (Level 1–5)
<b>Requirements</b>	Minimal, informal advancement	Basic training, experience	Courses, exams, renewals	SafeSport, exams, experience
<b>Training Provided</b>	Ad hoc workshops	Workshops, meet learning	Courses, mentorship	Workshops, online training
<b>Costs to Officials</b>	\$0–\$100	\$0–\$80	€20–€120	\$20–\$150
<b>Incentives / Pay</b>	Volunteer; modest stipends	Volunteer; \$20–\$50/day	Volunteer; €50–€100/day	Volunteer; modest stipends
<b>Standardization</b>	Low (inconsistent across parishes)	Low (regional variation)	High (national framework)	Low (inconsistent across provinces)
<b>Process Complexity</b>	High (informal, network-based)	High (resource limitations)	Moderate (admin heavy)	High (inconsistent processes)



# Key themes from responses

*With over 900 unique answers across 5 key questions, themes were grouped and identified to reflect the current sentiment towards officiating.*

## Positive Themes

Reflect the heart of officiating—community, relationships, and personal growth.

**Supporting Athletes & Community:** Core motivation to help athletes and give back.

**Camaraderie & Connections:** Friendships sustain commitment.

**Enjoyment & Passion:** Fuels ongoing involvement.

## Negative Themes

Stand out as systemic issues, practical hurdles and perceived challenges

**Lack of Transparency/Clarity:** Unclear pathways erode trust.

**Favoritism/Bias:** Perceptions of exclusivity hinder fairness.

**Evaluation Barriers:** Delays and subjectivity block progress.

**Financial Burden:** Costs deter participation.