



Test Season for WFTDA Implementation of Standardized Name Cues - Proposal

December 2025

This proposal is written using the “[JRDA TEAM NAME CUES PROTOCOL | 2026 Transitional Rollout](#)” plan, with adjustments made to suit WFTDA’s needs. **Please note that the registration procedures outlined in this document are subject to change once the test panel and WFTDA committees are able to review and discuss them. The registration and survey form and instructions will be released in January 2026.**

Purpose and Rationale

The language we use on the track matters. The current practice of identifying skaters by jersey colors in officiating calls has raised serious concerns about equity, safety, and belonging. Many BIPOC Skaters have shared lived experiences where color-based language has caused harm, reinforced stereotypes, or contributed to feelings of exclusion. In addition, Skaters and Officials with color vision deficiencies face practical barriers to clarity and understanding when color is the point of reference. These concerns highlight the need to re-examine how our officiating language impacts members across our community.

In response, and in alignment with WFTDA’s values of equity, safety, and inclusion, this proposal recommends piloting a test period of gameplay to help WFTDA implement a change to the verbal cues. The jersey colors in officiating calls to identify a skater being assessed a penalty, will be replaced by a shortened form of their team name. For example, Officials would reference “Cape - 1211 - PENALTY” or “London - 1002 - PENALTY”, rather than the current cue requirement of announcing Color- Number - Penalty.

The JRDA has already beta-tested team name cues over the last season and will use their 2026 season as a transition season to finalize practices before fully adopting this change in September 2026.

The WFTDA Board of Directors feels that following JRDA's change to WFTDA Officiating procedures is necessary to minimize harm and increase access to our sport, while maintaining clarity and fairness on the track. WFTDA is looking to implement the change at a date to be determined in 2026, and is asking leagues to participate in a test season to adapt JRDA's suggested procedures with WFTDA's own procedures.

This initiative reflects WFTDA's commitment to:

- Minimize harm: Creating safer, more intentional practices that actively reduce harm to BIPOC skaters and increase equity for individuals with color vision deficiencies.
- Listen to membership: Prioritizing member feedback in shaping officiating practices.
- Experiment with accountability: Testing changes in real-world play before broader implementation.
- Collaborate and align with other governing bodies to better impact our sport and provide a consistent experience for skaters and officials.

Test Design

Duration and Implementation

The name cue test will be optional for WFTDA leagues, however, the WFTDA Board of Directors intends to implement the change within the next year, so participation is helpful for leagues and officials to prepare for the change, and to give input on it to WFTDA prior to the implementation date. WFTDA will assess the cues and associated procedures during sanctioned and regulation games and scrimmages from February 1, 2026 through June 15, 2026.

2026 WFTDA Postseason Tournaments, including WFTDA Championships, will use the existing Color-Number-Penalty cues.

A report on the success of the change, and updated WFTDA procedure requirements to implement the change, will be provided to membership by the end of June 2026.

Currently the goal is to implement the change as optional for sanctioned games starting July 1, 2026 (the start of the next competitive season), and then required on a date following WFTDA Championships in October 2026. If we find that we do not have enough participation in the test, there are too many issues with implementation of the change, or

other factors from the test indicate that a change should not happen at that time, the Panel and Board of Directors will adjust the implementation date.

Participants

Leagues and events may opt in voluntarily, and WFTDA asks that they commit to participating for the duration of the test period, and use the cues over multiple games and scrimmages. This suggestion is for the purpose of building familiarity and comfort using the new cues and procedures before making an assessment of the impact of the change. Participating leagues and events also commit to support officials during this time, and to provide early and clear communication of your participation.

Test Panel

The WFTDA Senior Director of Global Programs, Karen Kauffman (Bones) and WFTDA Board of Directors oversight will work with a Name Cues Test Panel to conduct the test and to analyze the results. The Panel may include:

- WFTDA Competitive Play Committee representative
- WFTDA Sanctioning Committee representative
- WFTDA Rules Committee representative
- WFTDA Officiating Education representative
- WFTDA Officiating Certification representative
- WFTDA Tournament Officiating Selection Panel (TOSP) representative
- Volunteer Officials
- Volunteer Skaters

WFTDA Committee Heads are not recommended as participants on this panel. Priority will be given to panelists of color and panelists who speak languages other than English as their primary language.

Education

The Name Cues Test Panel will work with Officiating Education to create training resources to assist officials utilizing the name cues for the first time.

Test Procedures

WFTDA will follow the same procedures as JRDA, with adjustments as necessary to align with WFTDA committee needs and policy requirements. This will allow Officials to find consistency across WFTDA and JRDA events, and for WFTDA and JRDA to share test data and recommendations. MRDA will also be invited to participate in the test.

Test Registration and Assignment of Name Cues

The WFTDA will open a registration form for teams to join the Name Cues Test.

1. When registering for the test period, teams/leagues will submit their suggested team verbal cue(s).
 - a. These should be standardized based on league name, team name, uniform design, commonly used short names, in-division duplicates, etc.
 - i. Colors may not be part of Standardized Name Cues.
 - ii. Numbers may not be part of the Standardized Name Cues.
 - b. Teams/leagues should consider how the suggested cue sounds when being called on the track and what other opponents they play who may have similar names.
2. The Name Cue Task Force will review the suggested short team-name cue for each participating team, and will assign a standard name cue.
 - a. The team should use the same name cue across the season.
 - b. The Panel will ensure that there are no duplicates with other participating teams (both phonetically and in written form) and that the name cue makes sense.
 - c. The list of participating teams and their associated name cues will be publicly published and provided to the WFTDA Sanctioning Committee.
 - d. The cue may be changed if there is an issue with the cue found during the test period.

Game and Tournament Sanctioning

1. Sanctioning will occur per the usual process.
2. The task force will work with the WFTDA Sanctioning Committee to monitor for any games from participating leagues.
3. The task force will ensure that name cues are assigned to both teams.
 - a. In the event that two teams scheduled to play have name cues that are too similar, the task force may choose alternative cues for the duration of the game.
 - b. If needed, uniform colors may be used for one or both team(s).
 - c. If a non-English team identifier is used, phonetic pronunciation will be provided to all participating teams and officials.
4. Prior to the game, the Task Force will contact both team captains and the officiating contact provided to make sure all participants are aware of the test and to confirm the cues to be used in the game.

Game Play

1. During the pre-game meeting, the Head Officials confirms the team identifiers that will be used for verbal cues during the game.
2. The Scoreboard (whenever possible) and Penalty Box Whiteboard should display each team's Standardized Name Cue.
 - a. Note: Placards or tape with the Standardized Team Name Cues displayed are recommended for the back of penalty box chairs as a visual reference.
 - b. Officials may also elect to add the cues elsewhere, such as taping them to clipboards or tabletops.
 - c. Teams should wear their Name Cue taped on their helmet.
3. When referring to a team, assessing a penalty, or addressing a player directly (e.g., in the penalty box) officials will use the Standardized Team Name instead of uniform color for verbal cues.

Examples:

- “Team Name Cue - Number - Penalty”
 - “Team Name Cue - Number - Stand / Done”
 - “Team Name Cue - Number - Report to the Box”
 - “Timeout - Team Name Cue”
4. If uniform color cues are used mistakenly, players are encouraged to leave the track if they know they are being penalized.
 - a. Players should not be assessed additional penalties for failure to leave the track unless the correct team identifier is used.
 5. Head Officials have the authority to revert to using uniform color cues during a game if using the team name cues is jeopardizing the integrity of the event / officiating.
 - a. Slight delays in calls and occasional mis-cues (e.g., using uniform color) are to be expected during adjustment and do not warrant protocol abandonment.
 - b. If the protocol is abandoned, the reasons why and the time of game when this occurred should be noted in the post-event survey.

Post Game Surveys

1. All participating teams and Head Officials will be sent a [post-event survey](#) by the Task Force within 24 hours after the event. If the event is not sanctioned, the participants should use the survey provided upon registration.
 - a. The intention of the survey is to:
 - i. Capture feedback from Skaters, Officials, and league leadership.
 - ii. Assess clarity, efficiency, and inclusivity of calls.
 - iii. Identify challenges or points of confusion.
 - iv. Collect suggestions for refinement before considering full adoption.

- b. Coaches may disseminate the survey to team members and answer on behalf of the team, but individual Skaters are also invited to provide their own perspectives in the survey.
- c. Head Officials may answer on their own behalf, and should also disseminate the survey to their officiating staff so they can offer their individual perspectives.

Success Factors

In order to obtain enough data to assess the change, WFTDA would like to gather feedback from each participating team at least twice during the test period, ideally in the first and second halves of the test period. The more opportunities for testing the cues, the better assessment WFTDA can gain from participants.

In analyzing the feedback received from the test, the WFTDA will consider the change a success based on the following criteria:

1. Reduction in reported discomfort or harm.

Do skaters – especially BIPOC skaters – feel there were fewer moments where officiating language felt harmful, coded, or uncomfortable?

2. Increased sense of belonging and psychological safety.

Did skaters describe feeling more respected, seen, and supported by the language being used?

3. Maintained or improved clarity of officiating communication.

Officials and skaters report that team-name cues remain clear and workable,

4. Successful adaptation by officials.

Officials demonstrate that they can adopt and use name cues over time without significant disruption.

5. Trust and engagement.

Participants feel heard, respected, and represented in the feedback cycle, which is an important success factor in DEI-centered initiatives.

Next Steps

1. Board approval of the test and the test framework. (Nov 16 - DONE)
2. Communication to WFTDA committees about the test and timeline. (Nov 24 - DONE)
3. Communication to leagues outlining the test and search for Panel volunteers. (Dec 15 - DONE)
4. Identification of Panel volunteers (Dec 31)
5. Finalize the survey based on JRDA's survey and feedback mechanisms. (DONE)
6. Finalize the registration form and test materials. (Jan 30)
7. Development of educational materials. (Jan 30)
8. Launch test season and collect feedback.(Feb 1 - June 15, 2026)
9. End-of-season report and publish findings to membership. (Jun 30)
10. Board determination on WFTDA adoption of protocol and timing. (July 15 meeting)