

Town Hall - Future of Officiating - 2018-08-12

Questions & Answers

Following are Questions raised during the town hall meeting and corresponding answers. The answers are logical transcripts of the ones given in the presentation.

1. “Where does officiating fit with the “for the skaters, by the skaters” mentality of the organization as a whole?”

- a. There currently is a big culture shift, acknowledging that all volunteers, independently of their role, are a big part of WFTDA and the community and that their voices are need to be heard.

“By the skaters, for the skaters” is a crucial value and needs to be held up in every part of the organisation, because it ensures the unique environment that we have in this sport. Created by the athletes for the athletes.

Nonetheless the Officiating Pillar are advocating for being acknowledged as an important part of the organisation and having our voice and vote heard, more than currently.

[Annex: This is part of the larger membership discussion as well. Membership will be spending the next few months talking to members and participants about this as well via our outreach events and focus groups. We invite officials to be a part of those conversations.]

2. “By moving to representative relationship, do we risk losing the ability to get a direct line to leadership?”

- a. This is a very valid question. We need to acknowledge that right now the people that have direct access to the officiating leadership are in the minority.

We are striving for a transparent model with the possibility to directly reach out to us, but also funnel the communication lines to be efficient in a democratic and volunteer set up.

We will continue open formats and conversations like the town hall, where you hear from us directly. It is important to us that you have your voices heard.

After all, the people in the officiating leadership are your peers, people you know and you work with.

3. “Would dues dovetail with the LMS [Learning Management System] payments? Or is it two separate sets of payments?”

- a. We cannot give a definite answer to that right now, as it is an ongoing conversation at the moment. But is our goal to condense costs as much as possible and membership will provide benefits in terms of education, with some free and discount materials.

The officiating pillar will be lobby for a reasonable benefit for these matters.

4. “Is this process of connecting directly to officials the same as WFTDA "Recognition" in a way, or is that a separate part of the Certification process?”

- a. Being a WFTDA (officiating) member is different from being a Recognized (Certified) official. There are no ties to qualification or educational level for being a member. It means that you believe in WFTDA’s mission and are involved in officiating. The membership is aimed to incorporate people from day 1 of their officiating pathway on.

Recognized status is a step in the certification process and asks for a certain level of education.

5. “How will regional reps work with regional trainers from off-ed?”

- a. We are aiming for an overlap and collaboration between those roles. It is an ongoing conversation and we have no answer to it yet.

6. What level of role does this waiver of fees [waive of annual dues] apply to?

- a. This will be clarified once we have the dues system out and will be clearly defined for any volunteer role within the officiating pillar.

7. How do the MRDA and JRDA fit into this new approach?

- a. Within the new structure (see slides 16-21) JRDA, MRDA as well as National Governing Bodies (NGB) will have designated seats in various committees. The basis for filling these advisory or voting seats are defined by MoUs (Memorandum of Understanding) between each organisation and the WFTDA.

8. “Will officiating membership be tied to a particular season?”

- a. We currently are planning on a basis of a financial or calendar year. As the WFTDA overall does not have an enforced season and members can play

sanctioned games every day of the year, we want to have an easily recognizable time period.

9. “Will theory take a back seat from communication with the public in favor of application?”

- a. Theory will be the group that will listen and read into the community to answer the questions. Application will be responsible for creating the actual documents. We will start with a similar set up as Rules Theory and Application, but will review and adapt as needed.

10. “This is Officiating Theory and Officiating Application, right? Not to be confused with Rules Theory and Rules Application”

- a. Yes, correct. Rules and Officiating are different parts of the WFTDA. Officiating Theory & Application are not there to override the rules. They will be responsible to clarify how the game is facilitated based on the rules, e.g. which call to make based on the rules.

11. “What does JRDA seat transitioning to mrda seat mean?”

(Clarification regarding Elected seats on Certification Oversight)

- a. (Mistake in the slides of the town hall. Please see presentation.)
Given our new relationship with JRDA in officials certification, we will be looking at how we structure our Oversight panel to incorporate MRDA and JRDA representation.

12. “If, as a member, I could work playoffs, why do I need to be certified?”

- a. Membership will most likely not be required for working playoffs. As Certification is currently in the process of reopening this and maybe next year there will not be certification requirements for Playoffs. This does not mean whatsoever that they will not come back at some point, when CERT has matured and putting requirements back into place will not mean marginalising qualified officials who are able to work these events.

Being a member of WFTDA is not a recognition of quality of officiating. It is a recognition of participation and a way to gain access to the resources WFTDA offers its members. Membership and Certification are separate things and we will make sure that communication about that is clear throughout the whole process.

13. “This is a new, large system. Is there a plan in place going in to assess the success of the system?”

- a. Right now we are working on getting the channels and committees set up and running, as we have limited resources. Once we have the people we will implement processes to monitor and assess the success of the system. The first thing we are looking at is participation. If we see an increase in involvement from a diverse range of people and people that have not been participating until now we will have already made a big step forward.
If you are interested in monitoring and safeguarding the system directly, consider running as a regional representative.

14. “How would the newly reorganized officiating community participate in decisions made by the WFTDA as a whole? E.g. rules, BoD elections, etc.”

- a. There is no final answer to that question as it is not in the decision of the officiating pillar. This is in the decision of membership in the overall process of membership restructure in WFTDA.

The officiating pillar is lobbying for a stronger and more diverse voice in general votes than we currently have. For example have each region with a vote similar to a league’s vote, to represent individual needs.

15. “How does OffComm envision the manner in which RGBs are going to be created? Will they be organized by WFTDA or will regional Officials be expected to create them ourselves under WFTDA suggested guidelines, or something else?”

- a. Regions will be designated by the officiating pillar in consultation with membership governance and OffEd.

Feedback will be asked through the existing feedback channels, though we recognise these are flawed channels. We will try a larger spread for feedback, but need to respect our current limitation of resources and the need to stay in reasonable timelines. For people on edges of regions we will try and get them sorted to the correct region. We will consult with NGBs as well.

16. “Where will the Job Listings be posted? / How do we apply for these types of jobs/positions?”

- a. Jobs listings will be posted on the [Public Help Wanted board](#) of the WFTDA forum. Application requirements and process will be integrated in the job listings.

17. “Can non WFTDA leagues sponsor their officials at a discount? These leagues have less cash on hand.”

- a. We do not have an answer to this question right now, but are looking into different models of how non-member leagues can support their officials in entering into the program.

18. “When will Games concerns be separated from Officiating concerns, such as stats tracking, which adds burden to game staffing? / When will statistics tracking be separated from game impact action flow?”

- a. Enhancing the sustainability of officiating by reducing the workload during games, e.g. for stats tracking, is something we are already looking into and are actively discussing with Sanctioning and Stats at the moment.

19. “Will OffCom, etc. reach out to leagues to express their role in this? There are leagues that don’t have Official reps because they don’t take the time to approve them even if the officials volunteer.”

- a. Our primary channels within WFTDA will be the forum, both on skaters’ and officials’ side.

If you are currently in a WFTDA league that does not have an Officials Rep at the moment due to communication issues, please contact [crusher\[at\]wftda.com](mailto:crusher[at]wftda.com) and/or [jens\[at\]wftda.com](mailto:jens[at]wftda.com) and we will help you with getting your representation set up.

20. “Are there plans to let certified officials vote?”

- a. We are bound to the bylaws when it comes to voting rights. That said, under the new membership structure certification, league affiliation status (affiliated / independent) does not count into voting. As a member, WFTDA officials will have a vote within the regional structure and thereby how their region votes. Thereby we are aiming to close the gap for non-WFTDA-affiliated, certified officials that currently exists.

21. “Is there a plan for rapid iteration on the lessons from the feedback (on the restructure)?

- a. Yes, we have a certain flexibility in how the restructure will be performed, based on the original OffCom charter, that we are still running on, as well as the empowerment from the BoD as they recognized that it is an important change to make. So we are able to create and change roles during the restructure as we evaluate the process based on feedback, as long as we stay in the democratic structure of the community.

All feedback is valuable, important, and will be heard, even if no direct actions will be taken upon every feedback given. We will make sure that everybody is heard and be transparent about which decisions we make and why we make them. In order to make a change happen we will have to make decisions and it will not be possible to take separate votes on every decision that needs to be taken. If a decision turns out to go into the wrong direction we will reevaluate and change.

22. “How will this restructuring affect those refs seeking certification whose affiliated league only does 4 to 5 games a year, and cannot travel get certified if the application process doesn't open soon.”

- a. The restructure is primarily independent of the reopening of Certification.

Please visit: <https://wftda.org/officiating/certification> and

<https://wftda.org/officiating/certification/process> for the Cert purposes.

The restructure, especially the regional and layered approach we are taking on for the forum, is aiming to enhance the communication within the region, e.g. games and tournaments application, that you might not have had access to in the past.

23. “How big will a region be?”

- a. Based on the 400 WFTDA member leagues, we are currently projecting regions of 20-25 leagues. We are figuring in geographic boundaries and regions, as well as NGB existence or already collaborating regions.

We are dependent on the feedback of people within the regions to make the right call and reflect our community. Please help us with the giving this feedback when you see the calls for it.

The originally defined regions will be reevaluated and might change based on growth and development, especially as the first approach we are taking is based on member leagues but will later be focused on actual officials within the regions.

24. “When will the forum be shut down?”

- a. The forum will not go, but will be completely restructured.

The approach will be a layered setup based on regions. Officials will have writing rights in their region and some general parts, as well as reading rights in the whole forum section for officials. Regional representatives will have writing rights in more general sections. This will ensure that communication is funneled, while every official has access to the same information as well as a transparency of

their representative's work.

If regions are set in defined by geographic boundaries with one language it is encouraged that communication within the region will be in that language.

After the first steps are done, we are also aiming on clustering interest groups and reflecting the needs of marginalized groups within the community, e.g. create spaces for women in officiating, PoC in officiating, officials with disabilities, etc. to ensure they have dedicated platforms and safe spaces for support within the community.

25. “If you do not have an officials rep can you ask someone who is an officials rep for another league to be yours too without been a registered member of your league? / How do non certified officials in non wftda leagues provide feedback?”

- a. We absolutely encourage to give feedback via officials reps and certified officials that you know. We are sure they are willing to help foster our community by passing on this feedback.

First steps of the restructure and something we are aiming for as soon as we have the necessary roles filled, is to provide more feedback channels than we can facilitate right now based on limited personnel.

We recognize that it is hard to get a hold of the information, if you currently are not a member of WFTDA. If you have specific concerns or feedback you can always drop us an email to [crusher\[at\]wftda.com](mailto:crusher[at]wftda.com) and/or [crg\[at\]wftda.com](mailto:crg[at]wftda.com).

All our committees will have designated email addresses, which we will spread via the information channels. Also we are approachable in person, whenever our paths cross.

26. “Is there a plan for allowing skaters to vote on officiating concerns?”

- a. Skater Representatives will have seats on specific committees, like TOSP and thereby vote on officiating concerns.

We also explicitly encourage skaters who officiate, even infrequently, to join the officiating community of WFTDA and have their voices heard.

The forum setup will allow spaces where regional reps and skaters can discuss and interact, aiming specifically to ensure a better place for skaters to discuss rules and officiating than the forum can provide right now. Overall we are aiming for a better collaboration between skaters and officials when it comes to our sport and how it is officiated.

27. “Do regions HAVE to be named geographically? Can like, the region in the Great Lakes region be called “Region Awesome” or something like that? Geography-based names is sooooo boring”

- a. Regions will be named geographically, probably even in a very generic way as “North America 5”, “Europe 6”. Otherwise it will not be possible to manage the technical side and new officials will not be able to understand which regions are the ones next to their own.

We encourage every region to develop their own identity though.

28. “Should I wait to start the certification process until I can get the new game history?”

- a. We encourage you to not wait. The new history is not a requirement for Cert, you can use Version 2 of the history.

29. “Is there an interest in unifying tournament applications, or at least creating a standardized application process, so all tournaments are the same, and not by the host or THR/THNSO (for non post season tourneys?)”

- a. It is something we definitely will look into. Whether it results in the creation of a suggested form, or, which is also a wish that NGBs brought to us, a centralised database for staffing, where games and available officials can be matched. The second being something that needs a lot of investment, but is something we are aiming for on the long run.

30. “In your opinion, what's the best way to start sharing this with our home league's officials and skaters? How do we start onboarding people with this?”

- a. The best way to do is getting everybody in the conversation. Share this presentation and information. Discuss, ask for feedback and bring the feedback back to us. We value all feedback given respectfully and will take it into account. All people involved are working on making things better. Give us the chance and give us your feedback.

31. “Do you have advice on balancing the desire to help outside officials and the need to follow the non-disclosure agreement?”

- a. All information given in this presentation are public and can be shared. We will spread it through various channels as well. Please share it far and wide. Information on this process that will be given on the forum will have notes regarding NDA and in which way they can be shared.

32. “Will the certification patch be changing design to reflect that people have been certified under the new system? “

- a. There will be a new Certification patch. It is in the works.

[Answered by Wishbone Breaker in the chat.]

33. “Any idea on how the NGB could be included?”

- a. This whole plan will be a part of a larger membership restructure for leagues and individuals, that will include a relationship with NGBs.

[Answered by Bones in the chat.]

34. “Will there be anyone to meet at Spain?”

- a. Jens Hötger (Chair Officiating Advocacy & Membership) and Dire Wolff (BoD Oversight) will be in A Coruna for the D1 Playoffs.

On slides 22/23 you can find all the officiating representatives and at which WFTDA events they will be in the foreseeable time.

[If there is an asterisk behind the name, the people are working the events.

Please be respectful to that. Ask them and they will be there for you unless they will let you know otherwise.]