

2019 Rating Program Plan

The purpose of the rating program is to:

1. Evaluate and rank officials in a fair and impartial manner
2. Provide a list of qualified officials to the OCFOA Executive Board for CIF playoff games
3. Provide feedback to officials to help them improve.

Program Overview

The program is very similar to prior years. Officials will be required to submit an application to work playoffs and therefore be rated. The requirements for working playoffs are the guidelines established by CIF. Officials that submit applications for semis/finals will be observed at least once in the field. All applicants will be observed at least once via HUDL or a telecast. Also, these officials will be required to take a rules/mechanics test. Observations include seven categories and will be rated from 1 to 5. A 5 is considered outstanding, i.e. a top-5 official. 4 is considered good, 3 is average, 2 is below average, needs improvement and 1, needs immediate improvement and a discussion of significant issues. The tests will be scored by letter grades where A=4 points, B=3, C=2 and D=1. A bonus point is available for officials who provide service to the organization. Deductions of up to 3 points may be applied for serious, verified officiating errors. After the numerical rating is applied, the RC will vote to break ties with the test score given priority as tie-breaker, although not mandatory.

Rating Committee

The Rating Committee (RC) will consist of volunteers from OCFOA. The desired make-up of the committee will be one representative from each varsity crew for a total of 25 persons and 5 persons at each position. However, depending on the number of volunteers, the actual make-up may vary.

The RC will provide input into the program prepared by the Chairman prior it being presented to the Board. The Chairman will present a draft to the RC at a committee meeting and amendments and changes will be incorporated as agreed upon by the majority of the RC.

Members of the RC will be required to review at least 2 HUDL game films during the first 5 weeks of the season. In addition, RC members will be required to review downgrades identified in other observations.

A select subcommittee of RC members will review telecasts (or other televised games) involving OCFOA officials. Any proposed downgrades from telecasts shall be verified by members of this subcommittee. This subcommittee will also rule on any appeals.

The RC will meet in early October to finalize the ratings. The numerical system may result in ties that the members will break through majority-rule. To prevent overt favoritism or self-promotion, members will not provide input on officials on their crew or at their position.

Application

An application process will be used to identify those officials seeking to work CIF playoff games. This step is necessary because OCFOA does not have the resources to conduct field observations of all

officials. By identifying the officials seeking to work playoffs and are qualified to do so, the Rating Program can prioritize field observations for those officials.

The CIF eligibility requirements for semis or finals are:

- 7 years varsity experience
- 5 years on a crew
- Currently on a crew
- Minimum of 3 years prior to this season working the applicable position (does not apply to Field Judge or Side Judge)

For officials that wish to work Round 2 of the playoffs, they must have 2 years with OCFOA and have been on a crew and at their position for one full season prior to the current year.

All officials will be notified when the application forms are available, but no later than June 1. The application forms must be submitted by June 30. An application to work the semis/finals also fulfills the application for Round 2.

Observations

Observations include both field observations and HUDL/telecasts. Both types of observations use the same system which includes a 5-point scale for 7 specified categories. The observation instructions and rating form are attached. The observer will make notes that justify the rating in each category. All observers should attend the observation training session that will be conducted prior to the season, although this requirement may be waived if an observer has extensive experience.

Field observations will be conducted by former officials (as done in 2018) and volunteers from OCFOA. HUDL observations will only be conducted by the RC members. HUDL reviews of referees, line judges and back judges should only be conducted when an endzone camera is included (or the film shows them adequately). Telecast observations will only be conducted by a select subcommittee of the RC. The Chairman will assign observations, but observers may also volunteer if they notify the Chairman at least two days in advance. Observers may review any number of officials that they are qualified to observe. Any observational notes of officials who did not ask to be rated will be provided to that official using the Observation Feedback form – this information is provided to the official for his information only. Observation information will be input in Jotform.

A rating other than 4 in any category requires specific play notes that justify the rating. Any notes that result in a rating other than 4 will be verified by an RC member if the game is available on HUDL, film, or telecast. Note that some observations from the field may not be verifiable from HUDL, such as clock operation. The Chairman will review all observation reports. He will assign verifications to other committee members as needed. Observations that are not justified as determined by the Chairman and/or the subcommittee, will not be used in the rating system or will be adjusted as appropriate by the Chairman/subcommittee. Once verified, the observation form will be forwarded to the official and his crew chief. The name(s) of the observer(s) will not be included. An official may appeal ratings of less than 4 in any category within 5 days of the rating being emailed. Appeals will be conducted by the Chairman and/or the select subcommittee of the RC depending on the number of appeals. Field and HUDL observations should be completed by week 5 of the season.

Other Observation Feedback

Observational feedback may be provided by any official to any official by using the Observation Feedback form (attached). The goal of this feedback is to provide an official with information that will help the official to improve. The information is strictly between the two officials and will not be reviewed by the rating committee or used in the ratings. The system will be designed to send the feedback directly to observed official. The observer is not required to include his name, but it is highly recommended. The Chairman may review this feedback to ensure that the system is being used appropriately.

Tests

The Chairman will develop rules and mechanics tests for each position to be taken by officials who applied for Round 2 or the semis/finals. The test scores will be ranked and officials will receive a letter grade of A to D with an A = to 4 points, B = 3, C = 2, and D = 1. The tests will be scored on a bell-curve system as used in academia and may allow a "+" or "-" (add or subtract 0.3 points) if the distribution of scores makes that appropriate. The demarcation lines between grades will be dependent on the distribution of the scores. Demarcation lines are not absolute. For example, if all test takers score over 90%, it's possible they could all get A's. The actual grades will depend of the scores of tests. The test scores will be saved as a possible tie-breaker. Other officials may take the test, but their scores will not be used in the rankings. Test results will be provided to the officials.

Bonus Point

A bonus point is available for any official that provides service to OCFOA. This includes work on any committee, instruction at a passing league, instructional presentations and observations of officials.

Deductions

Deductions of up to 3 points are possible. These are serious, verified officiating errors in a competitive game. Any deduction may be appealed by the official. There are so many possible error scenarios that a system to describe every possibility is not feasible. A deduction of 3 could be an officiating error that involved a score in a close game. A deduction of 1 may include incorrect clock operation at a critical time. The significant errors may be seen during an observed game or they could be reported from a game that was not observed. However, the errors will have to be verifiable in order to count in the ratings. The select subcommittee will rule on these deductions.

Final Ranking

The values for field observations, HUDL/telecast observations, tests, bonus and deductions will be summed and rounded to one decimal place. If multiple observations are conducted in either category, those ratings will averaged. For officials that applied only for Round 2, but have had a field observation, that information will be used, otherwise the HUDL rating will count double. Officials will then be ranked with the highest score being #1. The RC will meet and vote to break tie scores, however, no RC member may vote on, or provide input on, any official on his crew or at his position during this process. The final rankings will be provided to the OCFOA Board. Note that the OCFOA Board has the authority to modify the ranking list for CIF playoff games for any reasons that are in the best interests of the Association.

Modifications

If situations arise during the rating process that are not adequately described by this plan, the Chairman and select subcommittee may make modifications or updates that uphold the integrity of the system and are in the best interests of OCFOA.

Observation Instructions

The Chairman will assign observers to a particular game to observe specified officials. However, officials may volunteer to conduct field observations with prior consent from the Chairman. Only ratings committee members will observe HUDL, film, or televised games. Only subcommittee members may rate from televised games. An observer is considered qualified to rate a position if he has worked that position for at least one full season on a varsity crew or he may rate any position if he has been on a varsity crew for at least 5 full seasons. For the two deep flank positions, an observer is qualified if he has worked that position in high school or college, or has been a referee in a 7-man game. Observers are expected to know the current mechanics for the position being rated for any specific issue commented upon. An observer may observe and provide notes for any number of officials, but a rating will only apply to officials who wish to be rated and by observers who are qualified to rate that position.

For 7-man games, officials may still be rated, but the observer should be aware of the mechanics differences from 5-man officiating. The differences mostly pertain to the flank officials.

The rating form has 7 broad categories. Observers will take notes during the game related to these or other topics – either to note excellent or poor officiating. Any ratings other than “good” must document specific issues and the game time or the play number if using HUDL. Observers should not overdo it. For example, citing a lack of judgement on some calls could stretch the limits of credibility for an observer. Observations should be generally broad, subjective evaluations. If, however, something stands out, either good or bad, it should be noted.

The top of the form includes room to list the teams and scores. This information will be used to determine the competitiveness of the game. Observers must understand that officiating should adapt to the competitiveness of the game – for example, in a blowout, fewer calls against the losing team are likely. However, when a game gets too rough, officials should be much tighter calling personal fouls.

Each category should be given a numeric rating of 1 to 5. 5 is outstanding, i.e., a top-5 official. 4 is good, 3 is average, 2 is below average and needs improvement and 1 is poor and the official needs to be informed of his deficiencies as soon as possible. There should be enough information on the form to justify the rating. Ratings other than 4 need to have specific plays or actions to justify the rating. Remember, there is no such thing as a perfectly officiated game. Making a few minor errors does not mean an official should not be rated as good. However, an official should not be rated as good if he frequently fails to use proper mechanics or makes errors. If observers have questions regarding a play, they may either contact the official directly or they may request that the Chairman do so.

The observer shall input the information into the JOTform online within two days of the game. The Chairman will review the ratings and, if needed, will have another RC member review specified plays. Once confirmed, the rating will be forwarded to the rated official and his crew chief. Ratings of less than 4 may be appealed within 5 days of being sent the observation. The appeal subcommittee will review the appeal and issue their conclusion within 1 week.

Contest Date _____ Official/Position _____
Teams/Score (Half/Final) _____ Game Intensity (H/M/L) _____
Rater _____ Field/HUDL/Telecast? _____

Characteristics for Rating Officials

Appearance (posture, presence, uniform, weight) (10%) Rating _____

Hustle/Speed (game flow, get to the spot when needed) (10%) Rating _____

Proper mechanics (25%) Rating _____

Signals (clarity, correctness, consistency) (10%) Rating _____

Judgment (call fouls when appropriate, progress spots, catch/no catch) (15%) Rating _____

Clock Management (crew communication, corrections, out of bounds or not) (10%) Rating _____

Rule Application / Enforcement (20%) Rating _____

Ratings: 5=Outstanding, 4=Good, 3=Average, 2=Below Average, 1=Needs Improvement

Use additional pages, if necessary

Examples of things to note during observations:

Appearance

If an official appears to be significantly overweight, the highest he should get in this category is a 3. If he is wearing an incorrect uniform, such as 2" stripes on the pants, the highest he can get in this category is a 3. An official's demeanor should look confident and in charge of the game, therefore, one's posture should be erect and purposeful. The uniform should be clean and fit reasonably well. Do not downgrade officials for not having 2 bean bags visible.

Hustle/Speed

In this category, rate the official on a relative scale compared with other OCFOA officials at the position. Hustle involves getting to the spot as appropriate, yet not looking hasty. It also includes getting the ball ready for play. Speed is infrequently required from an official, but there are times it is important, such as long runs or passes. Again, this a relative rating and no one expects an official to keep up with a speedy 17 year-old.

Proper mechanics

Mechanics cover a lot of ground. To rate an official, the observer needs to know what they are talking about. If the observer sees something in a game that appears amiss, he should double-check with an authoritative source prior to downgrading the official when he inputs the rating in JotForm. All officials are expected to follow the mechanics manual provided by the OCFOA with any modifications adapted by the Instructional Chair. For this category, mechanics are primarily positioning, but signaling is also an important aspect. Signal clarity, correctness, and consistency are a separate rating category, but the act of making appropriate signals are part of mechanics and if an official is not signaling properly, this category should be no higher than 3. Observers should try to note that the official is looking in the right location – for example, on kicks, most officials should be looking at players, not at the ball.

Signals

As mentioned above, this category rates signal clarity, correctness, and consistency. Officials need to make clear and correct signals. If signals are poor, the rating should be no higher than 3. For referees, the penalty signals and other signals should be those designated for high school football, not college or NFL.

Judgment

Judgment is a difficult category to explain. It includes marking forward progress, determining whether a foul should be called (particularly dead-ball fouls), and enforcement of the restricted area. If citing either exceptional or poor judgement, observers must provide the play number or game time so that it can be reviewed. Judgment will often depend on game situations, but what seem obvious to one official may not be so for others. As these are not black and white criteria, observers should generally give the benefit of the doubt and not downgrade in this category unless the official's judgment is obviously questionable.

Clock Management

This category is mostly black and white. Observers need to know the correct clock status so they may rate officials correctly. The rule of thumb on clock corrections is to fix any error of more than 5 seconds any time in the game and to fix all clock errors in the last five minutes of the half (if it is a close game). Observers should be able to see the crew signal to the referee whether the ball will start on the ready or

the snap. This category should also downgrade flank officials who stop the clock when forward progress was stopped in bounds and the runner was subsequently forced out of bounds, or vice versa.

Rule Application / Enforcement

This category applies to the entire crew, but especially to the referee. Each official is responsible for the calls they make, noting the spot of the foul, and the status of the ball at the time. The referee is primarily responsible for ensuring proper enforcement. The umpire and flanks need to ensure the correct yardage is assessed and the referee should also ensure the ball ends at the correct location. When the game is a blowout, observers should be more lenient. This category may not be possible to rate with many HUDL films, but if a serious error is suspected, the rater should ask the Chairman to investigate further.

Note regarding HUDL reviews

A HUDL film often does not include many aspects of officiating. In those case where it is impossible to rate a category, the rating should be scored as a 4.

Note regarding televised games

When reviewing a televised game, do not be persuaded by the announcers – they are often incorrect. Also, do not use slow motion replays that show a tough call was incorrect – if you need a slow motion replay to see it, then we cannot expect perfection from the officials. However, obviously blown calls need to be cited and the official rated accordingly. Televised games will likely be tougher on those officials, therefore when rating these officials, try to compare them with other high school officials, not with an unrealistic expectation of perfection.

Deductions

Deductions of 1 to 3 points are possible for verified significant officiating errors. If observers see any significant errors, they should report these to the Chairman, including the time of the play and/or play number in HUDL.

Ratings: 5=Outstanding, 4=Good, 3=Average, 2=Below Average, 1=Needs Improvement

Instructions for Other Observations

Any official may provide feedback to any other official using the Observation Feedback form (below). Officials may request that officials they work with provide this feedback, or an official can provide unsolicited feedback. The feedback may result from direct observations or review of HUDL or televised games. The goal of this feedback is to provide an official with information that will help him or her to become a better official. The feedback should be provided in a professional manner, that is, it should be framed as positively as possible. This information is strictly between the two officials and will not be used in any way by the Ratings Committee. The official providing the feedback will complete the form and it will be sent directly to observed official. Including the observers name is optional. The Chairman may review these submittals to ensure the system is being used appropriately.

Observation Feedback Form

Name of Official Observed _____ Date _____

Teams / Level _____ Observer _____

Source of Observation (Live, HUDL, Telecast) _____

Feedback that may be useful for official
