

MENTOR RESOURCE GUIDE



DISCUSSION FRAMEWORKS

A practical website resource for mentors supporting officials, leaders, and future officials.

REAL OFFICIATING. REAL TALK. REAL IMPACT.

PURPOSE OF THE MENTOR GUIDE



Built to help mentors lead meaningful, consistent, and productive conversations.

This guide gives Under The Stripes Network mentors a clear structure for discussion, reflection, development, and accountability. It is not meant to script every conversation. Instead, it provides a professional framework mentors can use to help officials think, grow, prepare, and lead with confidence.

Mentor Role

Listen first, ask strong questions, share experience when helpful, and guide officials toward better decision-making.

Session Goal

Create a safe, professional space where officials can discuss game situations, challenges, goals, leadership, and growth.

Network Standard

Every mentor conversation should reflect integrity, respect, education, confidentiality, leadership, and care for the game.

Mentor Mindset

- Guide more than you lecture. The best conversations help the mentee discover the answer, not simply receive it.
- Keep the focus on growth, not embarrassment. Correct mistakes while protecting confidence.
- Ask questions that connect rules, mechanics, communication, professionalism, and leadership.
- Follow up with action steps so each conversation leads to measurable development.

CORE CONVERSATION FRAMEWORK



Use this simple structure for mentor meetings, check-ins, and development discussions.

Phase	Purpose	Mentor Prompts
1. Connect	Build trust and understand the official as a person.	How are things going? What has been the biggest win since we last talked? What has been challenging?
2. Reflect	Help the official evaluate recent games or situations.	What happened? What did you see? What did you do well? What would you handle differently next time?
3. Teach	Add guidance, rules knowledge, mechanics, communication tools, or leadership insight.	What rule or mechanic applies here? What options did you have? How could communication change the outcome?
4. Apply	Turn the discussion into a practical development plan.	What is one thing you will focus on in your next game? What will success look like?
5. Follow Up	Create accountability and continue growth.	When will we check back in? What do you need from me before your next assignment?

DISCUSSION TOPIC BANK



Mentors can choose topics based on the official's experience, season timing, and development needs.

Game Preparation

Pre-game routine, uniform standards, crew communication, rules review, travel preparation, mental readiness.

Rules + Judgment

Rule knowledge, advantage/disadvantage, consistency, philosophy, and understanding the spirit of the rule.

Mechanics

Positioning, angles, signals, rotations, dead-ball mechanics, clock awareness, and crew coverage.

Communication

Tone, body language, dealing with coaches, explaining decisions, listening without losing authority.

Game Management

Preventive officiating, conflict resolution, escalation, bench control, sportsmanship, and emotional control.

Professional Growth

Goal setting, evaluations, feedback response, networking, assignment readiness, and leadership development.

MENTOR QUESTION FRAMEWORKS



Open-ended questions create the strongest development conversations.

After-Game Reflection Questions

- What was the biggest decision you made in the game?
- What play or moment stayed with you after the game?
- Where did you feel most confident?
- Where did the game test your communication or positioning?
- What feedback did your partners, coaches, or assigner give you?
- What is one adjustment you will make next game?

When Mistakes Happen

What did you see? What information did you have? What would help you recognize that play faster next time?

When Confidence Drops

What part of your game is still strong? What is one controllable thing you can focus on next assignment?

When Growth Is Visible

What made that improvement possible? How can you repeat that preparation and mindset?

SCENARIO-BASED DISCUSSION MODEL



Use real or sample situations to strengthen judgment, communication, and leadership.

Scenario Area	Discussion Focus	Sample Mentor Prompt
Coach Conflict	Professional response, boundaries, tone, and escalation.	What could you say that is short, clear, and calm while still protecting game control?
Missed Call	Accountability, recovery, crew support, and next-play mindset.	How do you acknowledge internally, reset quickly, and avoid letting one play become three plays?
Close Ending	Clock, score, crew awareness, pressure decisions, and presence.	What must the crew know before the final two minutes? Who has what responsibility?
New Official Growth	Confidence, mechanics, rules study, and assignment readiness.	What is one mechanic and one rule area you want to improve over the next two weeks?
Sportsmanship	Preventive officiating, warnings, penalties, ejections, and documentation.	What signs tell you a situation is escalating, and what can you do early?

SUGGESTED MENTOR SESSION FLOW



A 30-minute structure mentors can use for calls, virtual meetings, or in-person check-ins.

0-5 Minutes | Check-In

Ask how the official is doing personally and professionally. Start with trust before correction.

5-12 Minutes | Recent Game Review

Discuss one recent game, one key moment, and one lesson from the assignment.

12-20 Minutes | Development Topic

Choose one focus area: mechanics, communication, rules, judgment, preparation, or leadership.

20-26 Minutes | Action Plan

Set one specific goal for the next assignment or next week.

26-30 Minutes | Encouragement + Follow-Up

Close with encouragement, confirm the next step, and schedule the next check-in if needed.

MENTOR STANDARDS + BOUNDARIES



Protect the mentee, the mentor, the network, and the integrity of the game.

Mentors should create a space that is professional, respectful, and growth-focused. Conversations should support learning and confidence without becoming gossip, public criticism, or personal attacks.

Mentor Do's

- Keep conversations confidential unless safety, policy, or organizational reporting requires escalation.
- Do not publicly criticize officials, coaches, schools, associations, or assigners during mentorship discussions.
- Avoid giving advice outside your knowledge, training, or authority. When needed, direct the mentee to an assigner, supervisor, rules interpreter, or appropriate leader.
- Focus on development, accountability, preparation, and professionalism.

Mentor Boundaries

- Use respectful language and protect the dignity of every person involved in the sport.
- Do not promise assignments, ratings, promotions, or outcomes that are outside a mentor's control.
- Encourage mentees to study rules, attend training, seek evaluations, and build healthy relationships in the officiating community.
- Document agreed-upon action steps when helpful for follow-up.

MENTOR CONVERSATION WORKSHEET



Use this as a quick guide for notes, next steps, or website download content.

Conversation Area	Notes / Questions
Current Focus	What is the official currently working to improve?
Recent Game Moment	What specific play, conversation, or situation should be discussed?
Strength Observed	What did the official do well that should be reinforced?
Growth Opportunity	What is one area that needs attention, practice, or study?
Action Step	What is the one clear assignment before the next check-in?
Follow-Up Date	When will mentor and mentee revisit the action step?

FINAL REMINDER

Mentorship is about building officials, leaders, and the future of the game.



The strongest mentors help officials feel seen, challenged, prepared, and supported. Every discussion should move the mentee closer to confidence, consistency, professionalism, and love for the craft.

Real Officiating. Real Talk. Real Impact.

Under The Stripes Network - The Stories Behind The Calls

