

Goal Setting

Officiating is a demanding hobby that requires officials invest significant amounts of time, effort, and their own money in order to improve. Many officials express a desire to get better in different ways:

- *If I attend a clinic I'll improve.*
- *If only my assigner recognized how good I was I wouldn't just be working youth games.*
- *I have to get better if I'm ever going to get to the college ranks.*

As a group, officials are consciously and unconsciously concerned with getting better games, and the most common way officials determine their qualifications for those better games is comparing themselves to other officials. This is necessary otherwise you would never know how you rank amongst 100 other officials. Assigners also have to rank officials because it doesn't work to have two low-ranked officials working one of the most competitive games in an area. How then do you move up the ranks and earn those so-called "better" games? Establish specific, measurable, agreed, realistic, and time-bound goals.

Otherwise known as [S.M.A.R.T. goals](#), they follow a model allowing for regular self-evaluation across a period of time. The desire to get better is a fine desire to have, but it is too vague to be of any use. Officials all want to get better because they will not get the big games without improvement, but without a clear goal with defined and achievable objectives they might as well be searching for a black cat in a dark room with no flashlight. They will constantly dance around getting better without ever really making progress because they never set aside time to choose things to work on.

To truly improve S.M.A.R.T. goals are needed, and because officials have different goals at different stages of their careers we will explore the goals of three officials.

Mark, the 2nd year official

This official made all of his rookie mistakes and came back for another season. After a steady amount of youth and junior varsity games he wants to make the jump to Varsity assignments but has trouble using the play-on correctly. What is a good S.M.A.R.T. goal for Mark?

S – To employ the play-on mechanic successfully in all relevant game situations.

M – Record in officiating notebook each correct and incorrect use of play-on after each game.

A – Double-check with partners after each game to see if his notes are correct.

R – Other officials employ this mechanic correctly, so it is possible to do.

T – Accomplished by the end of the season.

Now Mark has a roadmap to successfully employing the play-on mechanic.

Johnathan, the 6th year official

This official has steadily risen in the ranks of his association and has been to the playoffs the last three years with two consecutive trips to the semi-finals. He will likely get a championship game assignment, but his problem is a tendency to over-call a game. What is a good S.M.A.R.T. goal for Johnathan?

S – To loosen up on the field and be less officious in the first quarter of games.

M – Keeps track of flags thrown in post-game journal and game context for each penalty.

A – Informs more experienced partners about his goal before each game; asks for post-game critiques.

R – He is in control of the flags he throws.

T – Achieved before the playoffs so his penalty threshold is more appropriate for that level.

Now Johnathan can pinpoint the games where he threw flags he wanted back and identify why he chose to throw them to avoid those reasons in future assignments.

Ed, the 25th year official

This official is near the end of a long career and has some physical issues that restrict his mobility. He enjoys watching games and especially enjoys helping new and newer officials improve. What is a good S.M.A.R.T. goal for Ed?

S – Become a [Certified Observer](#) and observe twenty games by the end of the season.

M – Establishes a number of games to observe.

A – Discussed with his assigner that he cannot cover the field well, but can give good advice.

R – Understands his physical limitations and that he has experience to share.

T – Twenty games means at least 40 officials benefit from Ed's observing by the end of the season.

Now Ed has clear and defined objectives that he can strive to reach to help mentor other officials.

Kerry Fraser in "[The Final Call: Hockey Stories from a Legend in Stripes](#)," was asked what his favorite game to work was. His answer? **The next one.**

Every game you work is an opportunity to advance your skills. Some games you may only see a little bit of improvement and in others you will wonder what happened to the official you used to be. Writing down your top three or four S.M.A.R.T. goals before the season begins puts you in great shape to achieve something you can measure. When you achieve one of your goals you reinforce that it is possible to get better, but only if you take the time to plan.

Check out the next page for a S.M.A.R.T Goal template.

Men's Officials Training Group (MOTG)

Name: _____

Date: _____

Reason goal is important to me: _____

Step	Concept	Description
<p style="font-size: 48pt; text-align: center;">1</p>	<p><u>S</u>pecific What do you want to achieve as an official? A good statement explains the what, why, who, where, when, and what of a goal. If you are vague you will find it hard to achieve it because there is no clear definition of success.</p>	
<p style="font-size: 48pt; text-align: center;">2</p>	<p><u>M</u>easurable Tracking progress is essential to determine if you are on target to achieving your goal. A good statement answers the question how or how much. How will you know when you achieved your goal?</p>	
<p style="font-size: 48pt; text-align: center;">3</p>	<p><u>A</u>greed Your goal must be relevant to your association or the game. Use officials that are at a stage in their career that you can base your goal on. This is a great way to engage a mentor in helping you reach your goal.</p>	
<p style="font-size: 48pt; text-align: center;">4</p>	<p><u>R</u>ealistic Your goal has to stretch your current abilities otherwise you won't be sufficiently challenged. Ensure that by achieving this goal you will have changed something about your on-field performance for the better.</p>	
<p style="font-size: 48pt; text-align: center;">5</p>	<p><u>T</u>ime-Bound Goals need time limits. Otherwise you can always put them off to the side or worry about something else. With a deadline you establish when you will have achieved the goal. Don't worry; you can always modify the deadline if appropriate.</p>	