



To: Our Friends in Football and Colleagues in Officiating

From: Darren Hackwood, Associate Vice-President – Officiating, Canadian Football League

Re: The CFL Officiating Academy

I hope this note finds you healthy and well and eagerly anticipating warmer temperatures and another Canadian football season.

I'm writing to tell you about a new initiative and to seek your help in getting it off to a successful start. This year, we're introducing a formal development program for the training of officials to work in professional football in Canada – the CFL Officiating Academy.

The main goal is to target qualified members of amateur football officiating associations and involve them in activities designed to familiarize them with officiating in the CFL.

Other objectives include:

- Establishing a formal method for the identification of prospects to join our officiating staff;
- Developing standard processes for training candidates to work in the CFL.
- Encouraging inclusion and diversity within the officiating community.
- Identifying former pro and high-level amateur players who wish to become officials and aiding their transition from wearing pads to sporting stripes.

This year, it is our intention to invite selected individuals to a CFL Officiating Camp where they will receive formal training on the CFL rules and the standards we employ in enforcing those rules. All members of the Academy will also be invited to attend virtual conferences throughout the year, which will cover various aspects of life as a CFL Official.



Finally, members who live near a CFL city may also be scheduled to work on the support crew at games, to make them more intimately familiar with our protocols, the on-field crews' game day activities, and the speed of our game.

We've already identified a few individuals who we hope will agree to be part of this new program. But we need your help to ensure opportunities to join the Academy are provided to committed, deserving and diverse members of the officiating community.

Participation in the academy will be limited to a 2-year duration for each selected official. The development opportunities are geared towards improving the overall officiating IQ for each official, as such even if the CFL is not the end goal for the official the expectation is they will gain valuable officiating knowledge and experience that can be used at any level and shared with their local association.

Should you have someone you believe would benefit from participation in this program -- someone who has the potential to be a top CFL official in the future -- please ask him or her to contact us. There is no cost to participate. Interested individuals should contact Laurence Pontbriand - Manager, Football & Officiating Development at the following email address: lpontbriand@cfl.ca. Applicants will be expected to have access to game film that our CFL staff can review. Although it is not a condition for selection, we do generally recommend that applicants have some experience beyond the High School level of competition.

We all need to work together – and we all have a role to play – to recruit, develop and identify excellent Canadian football officials. We know you take this obligation seriously and support the career goals of your officials. Still, we would like to recognize, albeit in a small way, the key role your organization will have played in developing one of your officials who joins the CFL ranks through the Academy program, as well as the impact his or her loss will have on your plans. For this reason, if an academy member joins the CFL officiating team, and has completed his or her fourth on-field CFL game, our league will issue his or her amateur association a cheque for \$1,000 in appreciation.



Should you have any questions regarding The CFL Academy, please reach out to Ms. Pontbriand, our lead on this important project.

I want to conclude by thanking you, not only for reading this note and learning about the CFL Officiating Academy, but for everything you do on behalf of Canadian football officiating. There is no game without officials – and there would be no officials without your work and that of your colleagues.

We look forward to working with you on this initiative and other important and innovative ways we can elevate football officiating in this country.

Yours in officiating,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'DH'.

DARREN HACKWOOD (HE/HIM/IL)

**ASSOCIATE VICE-PRESIDENT, OFFICIATING
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