Non-Skating Official Guides: Penalty Lineup Tracker

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Introduction

The Penalty Lineup Tracker is arguably the broadest off-skates officiating role. The PLT is responsible for

- recording a single team's lineup each jam, including any Star Passes that occur;
- tracking entries to and exits from the Penalty Box;
- recording the type and number of penalties for each skater on their assigned team;
- confirming with the Penalty Box staff as each skater approaches and reaches the foul-out threshold.

Because they are stationed in the center of the track and highly mobile, the PLT may also play supporting roles, such as communicating changes to the score table and penalty box. The PLT's broad responsibilities mean that the role requires excellent game knowledge and track awareness, the ability to complete complex paperwork under stress, and good communication skills. The PLT role is a good one for the Head NSO.

The PLT role combines the older Penalty Tracker (PT) and Lineup Tracker (LT) roles. These roles are rarely staffed today; a full complement of one PT and two LTs is more difficult to staff than two PLTs.

The Penalty Lineup Tracker's paperwork satisfies two specific requirements to sanction a roller derby game:

- Per Rules 5.1 and 5.2, the officials must be staffed to track:

  ◦ Which Skaters have been assessed how many penalties, and which have been served

  ◦ Which Skaters are not allowed to skate (for example, due to expulsion, fouling out, or having a Jam called for their injury)

- Per the WFTDA Sanctioning Policy, sections "Game Requirements for Sanctioned Games" and "Score Reporting and Games Data Requirements", the officials must be staffed to track the data required by the Statsbook sheets
  ◦ Penalties
  ◦ Lineups

Hence, the Rules require tracking of penalties, and the Sanctioning Policy requires tracking of both penalties and lineups. The Penalty Lineup Tracker role is a good illustration of a near-universal convention about how to officiate in a way that meets the rules and standards.

PLTs work in the center of the track. They can move freely.

Resources

- The Rules of Flat Track Roller Derby
- WFTDA Statsbook Manual
- WFTDA Officiating Procedures
- WFTDA Officiating Cues, Codes, and Signals
- WFTDA Sanctioning Policy
- WFTDA Online Learning: Intro to Penalty and Lineup Tracking Training for Officials
- JRDA Rules, Casebook, and Code of Conduct

Equipment

The only equipment used by the PLT is a clipboard and pencil, unless ePLT is being used.

PLTs can work in face masks.

The Basic Routine

The Penalty Lineup Tracker is active throughout the game, but moves between multiple aspects of the role.

During the Lineup Period

As your team lines up for the jam, record the player numbers in the Lineup section of your paperwork. Follow the guidance in the Statsbook Manual to complete the paperwork correctly. This guide defers to the Statsbook Manual and does not cover the basics of the Penalty Lineup Tracker paperwork.

Make sure you're aware of the notation for less-common situations. If the team does not field a pivot, make sure to mark the *noPivot* box for the jam. Mark the box for any blocker not fielded with "n/a" to be clear that it wasn't simply *missed*, but actually not fielded. If you do miss a skater, mark a "?".

While you record the lineup, ensure that the players on the track are eligible to skate:

- Any skater whose injury alters the flow of the game (including a jam being called for injury, which is recorded on the PLT paperwork, as well as penalty box substitutions) must sit for three jams before playing again. (See Rules 1.2).
  - If the same skater's injury alters the flow of the game more than once in the same period, they may not skate for the rest of the period.
  - Keep in mind that the skater must *sit for three full jams*. So, for example, if a skater's injury results in Jam 13 being called off, they are eligible to skate again in Jam 17, but *not* in Jam 16. They must sit for the three full Jams 14, 15, and 16.
- Skaters whose numbers are not on the roster, or who are wearing incorrect numbers, should not be allowed to skate.
  - Enforcing this rubric is mandatory for sanctioned games, for which charters must be submitted in advance. Your local convention may permit some flexibility for non-sanctioned games.

Only the PLT's paperwork tracks this information. You hold the primary and nearly sole responsibility for this duty, as other officials are unlikely to remember the specific timing of injury-related stoppages or have access to the full roster.

Ensure that any players *required* to be on the track are in fact on the track:

- At least one Blocker from each team.
- Exactly one Jammer from each team.

- Any skater who is in the queue to report to the Penalty Box, in the position in which they're required to report. The Penalty Box Manager signals this status by holding up their white board.

The Jam Timer and referees should also be watching for signals from the Penalty Box Manager, but you are most likely to have a yes-no answer as to whether queued skaters are on the track.

If there is an issue with the skaters on track (or missing from the track), advise the Jam Timer and Head Referee. The jam should not start and a penalty may be assessed.

If the jam does start when it should not have started, it may be called off immediately and transition into an Official Time Out. Consult with the Head NSO and the other officials whose paperwork or software tracks jam numbers (the Scorekeepers, the Penalty Box Timers, and the Scoreboard Operator) to ensure that you're all in sync with the jam number. In most cases, the jam that should not have been started will be struck from the sequence.

See also Officiating Procedures 6.1.1, which specifies that a jam started in error should be allowed to conclude naturally in a situation where a queued skater is not lined up. The jam started in error *must* be whistled dead if an injured skater returns to play too early.

During the Jam

Capture Penalties, Entrances, and Exits

Listen for whistled penalty calls. As you hear each penalty, record it in the Penalties section of your paperwork, as described by the Statsbook Manual.

Acknowledge each penalty call you hear. Conventions vary: some PLTs echo the entire call, while others call "Got it!" You can also echo the hand signal to ensure the referee and all onlookers know what penalty was caught. Acknowledging calls lets referees know their penalty was accurately caught and that they do not need to seek you out after the jam. It also allows onlookers who may or may not see the referee to observe the penalty call.

As skaters enter and exit the Penalty Box, record these events in the Lineups section of your paperwork, as instructed by the Statsbook Manual.

If you can do so without impacting your own duties, you can also support your other PLT by supplying information they missed, or echoing penalty signals for them while they are occupied. In some regions, a role called the Penalty Wrangler may provide this support. Some Jam Timers also support

PLTs by helping catch information. Communicate with your inside-track crew and get a comfortable rhythm set up.

Handling Missed Information

Sometimes, you may only have a portion of the information you need for a call. A Forearm was called in Turn 2, but you couldn't see or hear the skater's number. Or Black 84 reported to the box, but you didn't see the call. Or an OPR called "White 949, cut!" but gave the hand signal for a Direction penalty. Or three penalties were called at once, and you're not sure which one goes with which skater.

Write down what you have. You can go ahead and record a penalty and box entry with a "?" code, or make notes in the margin of your paperwork. Get down what you can as quickly as possible so that you do not fall further behind as the jam continues. If you can observe missing information, like a skater's number as they sit in the box, do so. Then, when the jam ends, go to the referees. Tell them what information you have and what you need. ("Who had the call on Black 84 in Turn 3? I need the penalty.") If you're aware of where the penalty was called, such as by a jam referee or an outside pack referee, go directly to the relevant official.

If you need to, you can call an Official Time Out to stop play until you gather all of the required penalty information and are sure your paperwork is correct.

To be effective in this duty, you must know the penalty cues and signals. Make sure you're completely comfortable with the WFTDA Officiating Cues, Codes, and Signals document.

Capture Star Passes

Like Scorekeepers, Penalty Lineup Trackers need to record the Star Passes of both teams. Star Passes are entered only in the Lineups section of the paperwork. See the Statsbook Manual, pages 19 and 20, for examples of the notation.

The reason for capturing Star Passes for both teams is that Lineups data is entered into the Statsbook with a single row representing the data for *both* teams in each jam. Recording the other team's Star Passes ensures that jams continue to "line up" horizontally when entered into the Statsbook.

While your paperwork looks like this, during a Star Pass for your own team:

Jam	noPivot	Jammer	Box	Pivot	Box	Blocker	Box	Blocker	Box	Blocker	Box
10		34		98		465		12		82	
SP	X	34		98		465		12		82	

when entered into the Statsbook, it'll look like this (abbreviated to one blocker to show the structure more clearly). Note how the data for a single jam occupies a full row, with one team on the left and one on the right.

Jam	noPivot	Jammer	Box	Pivot	Box	Roster	Jam	noPivot	Jammer	Box	Pivot	Box
10		34		98			10		002		21	
SP	X	98		34			SP*		002		21	

If a Penalty Lineup Tracker misses the Star Pass, the result rapidly becomes confusing:

Jam	noPivot	Jammer	Box	Pivot	Box	Roster	Jam	noPivot	Jammer	Box	Pivot	Box
10		34		98			10		002		21	
SP	X	98		32			11		999		21	

In this situation, the data for Away Team's Jam 11 is conflated with the Home Team's Star Pass in Jam 10. Further jams will continue not to line up correctly, until the situation is corrected by the Head NSO or stats crew.

If you do miss a Star Pass, it's not the end of the world. Make a margin note in your paperwork so that this is easily caught. It's generally not a good idea to try to erase and rewrite much data after the fact.

Record Injuries

If a jam is called due to injury, make sure that the player whose injury caused the call-off is marked with the "3" code as instructed by the Statsbook Manual. You'll use this notation to ensure that this skater does not line up until they've sat out for their required 3 jams (see under "During the Lineup Period").

You may use the nonstandard cue for "called due to injury" by making finger guns and touching the tips of your index fingers together in a horizontal line, to ensure this information is relayed to the score table. Referees may also use such cues to communicate to you.

If you're unsure whether a jam was called due to injury or not, ask the referees.

Communication with the Penalty Box

The Penalty Box needs to know when a double penalty occurs so that they sit the skater for the right amount of time. The Penalty Lineup Tracker and the referee assessing the penalty will often both signal this. Use the cue defined in the Cues, Codes, and Signals document (page 3), and ensure that the box staff acknowledge the signal before you proceed.

Most double penalties, though by no means all, are an initial penalty followed by either an Illegal Procedure or a Misconduct for an illegal exit. As you're watching the penalty call, you can often anticipate double penalties by observing the skater's exit.

Because foulouts are incredibly impactful on the game, the Penalty Lineup Tracker and the Penalty Box staff invest considerable effort to verify penalty counts. During play, the Penalty Lineup Tracker should signal to the Penalty Box when each player reaches five, six, and seven penalties. The signals used are widespread but not formally documented, and consist of a hand placed over the chest with five fingers extended (five penalties), one finger extended (six penalties), or two fingers extended (seven penalties / foulout). See also the discussion below about verification during stoppages of play.

In many cases, the Penalty Box Manager will be responsible for receiving and acknowledging this signal, because they are likely to have their heads up while Penalty Box Timers may be focused on their clocks. However, it's fine for any Penalty Box official to acknowledge the signal, and crews vary in their preferences.

If your counts do not line up with the Penalty Box, call an Official Time Out and use this time to resolve the discrepancy. Because penalty counts are highly impactful, it's justified to pause play until you're clear.

When a foulout or an expulsion does occur, make sure it is marked as such on your paperwork.

In many cases, you will be the official best positioned to communicate that a substitute is or is not required to serve the balance of a penalty after a foulout. The Penalty Box Manager or Timer should provide you this information, but you're typically much more mobile than they are and can either directly tell the team to send a substitute or delegate a referee to do so.

It's possible to handle a foulout with substitution without a stoppage of play (during the lineup period following the jam in which the foulout occurred) if the penalty management officials are proactive and the team responds

quickly. If necessary, ask the Jam Timer for an Official Time Out to get a substitute seated.

Play Stoppages and End-of-Period

During timeouts and Official Reviews, as well as after each period ends, verify your penalty counts with the Penalty Box Timer for your team. During play stoppages, you can choose to verify the total count (i.e., "I have 3 total penalties for this half"), or go down the roster and confirm penalties by skater, based on how much time you have available and how complex the gameplay has been.

At the end of a period, you should always verify the penalty count for each skater individually. You may choose (depending on your local convention and your crew expectations) to verify more data, such as when the skater entered for each penalty and which penalties involved a "Sat Between Jams" entry. The author of this guide feels that verification beyond the penalty count per-skater is rarely worth the effort. Check with your Head NSO if you're unsure about expectations.

At halftime, follow the instructions in the Statsbook Manual to prepare your paperwork for the second period.

Once you've verified your penalty count with the Penalty Box Timer for each period, provide the total penalty count to the Head NSO, who enters it on the IGRF.

If you have time, you can also verify Star Pass counts with the other Penalty Tracker and a Scorekeeper. Bear in mind, however, that the primary impact of Star Pass agreement on paperwork is after the game when the Statsbook is being prepared. Make sure to get your penalty counts and other duties taken care of first, because they have immediate game impact.

There is an unofficial signal: touch your head with one hand, and hold up a number of fingers to indicate the star pass count. If you want to use a signal convention, talk to the scorekeepers before the game to ensure you're on the same page.

Paperwork and Operational Nuances

Penalties versus Box Entries

The PLT paperwork makes more sense when you understand that it is the fusion of two older forms of the paperwork, for the Penalty Tracker and Lineup Tracker roles. Those older forms are the source of the two distinct ways in which penalties are recorded on the PLT paperwork.

The left-hand side of the PLT paperwork tracks *lineups,* and comes from the old Lineup Tracker position. In lineup-tracking mode, you record *box entries and exits*. Your concern in this mode is not when the penalty was assessed (or even how many penalties were assessed), but in when the skater physically entered and exited the penalty box. Your paperwork here aligns with the Penalty Box Timer's, which also records entries and exits.

The right-hand side of the PLT paperwork tracks *penalties*, and comes from the old Penalty Tracker position. In penalty-tracking mode, you record *penalties assessed*. In this mode, you care about what kind of penalty was assessed and the jam in which it was assessed, but not when it was served.

As a result of these distinct rubrics, you may record the same event in different jams on the left- and right-hand side of your paperwork, and you may have different numbers of entries on those sides as well.

Imagine that Black 34 receives two penalties in Jam 10, a Back Block and an Illegal Procedure for failing to leave the track. By the time Black 34 reaches the Penalty Box, the jam has concluded (they sit between jams). You'd record that event like this:

Jam	noPivot	Jammer	Box		Pivot	Box		Blocker	Box		Blocker	Box		Blocker	Box	
10		34														
11		34	S													
12		34	$													

Roster			Penalties								FO/EXP
34	B	I									
	10	10									

Notice that the event is shown in Jam 10 under the Penalty Tracking side, but Jam 11 under the Lineup Tracking side (with an "S" indicating the skater sat between jams). Further, the double penalty is shown on the Penalty Tracking side, but the Lineup Tracking side records only a single box entry.

Marginal notes can help you keep track of double penalties, so that your count of box entries can continue to align with the count of penalties recorded. This is a useful self-check to ensure that you don't miss any data entry.

Substitutions in the Penalty Box

There is no special notation for a substitution in the penalty box. Simply record the new skater's number in the appropriate box as a *continuation* of the previous penalty (not a new box entry).

ePLT

"ePLT" refers to using a tablet to complete Penalty Lineup Tracker data entry. The tablet is linked to the CRG Scoreboard software, meaning that data is integrated with the entries of the Scoreboard Operator.

Even in a venue that consistently uses ePLT, you should always be prepared to execute PLT responsibilities on paper. Technology fails; batteries drain; tablets get lost or broken.

This section isn't a complete guide to ePLT, but intends to highlight significant differences for skilled paper-based PLTs. For more information, review the CRG Scoreboard documentation for Lineup Tracking and Penalty Tracking.

Coordinating with the Scoreboard Operator

Because ePLT is connected to the scoreboard, some data entry overlaps with the Scoreboard Operator:

- Jammer numbers
- Pivot numbers
- Star Passes

ePLTs only enter their own Star Passes.

Coordinate with the Scoreboard Operator on how these data will be entered so that you don't trip over one another or overwrite existing data entry.

User Interface

When you record a penalty, you'll tap the Penalties section of the UI and select the penalty code. Then, use the Box button next to the skater to record both the entry and exit event. The button will change color to show you what state the skater's trip is in. The software will construct the "-", "+", "S", and "$" codes for you.

Tap in the paperwork section to mark "n/a" for a skater who's not fielded. Note that the touch target is quite small; make sure you hit the correct cell.

The ePLT screen uses color and boldface extensively to denote information. While it presents a total penalty count for the game, no penalty total by period is presented. If you verify with the Penalty Box Timers using the total count for the period, make sure to count second-period penalties manually.

Be aware that the order of operations is important. Data that you enter by hand in the paperwork, such as whether a skater entered the Penalty Box betweeen jams, is *inferred* by the software. Aim to preserve the chronological order of events as you enter them.