

Non-Skating Official Guides: Scoreboard Operator

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Table of Contents

- Introduction
 - Resources
- Equipment and Positioning
 - Custom Keyboards
- The Basic Routine
 - Working with Scorekeepers
 - Starting and Ending Game Play Segments
 - Documenting Jammer and Pivots
 - Ensuring Clock Time Is Accurate
 - Display Team Timeouts, Official Reviews, and Official Timeouts
 - Dealing With Scoreboard Problems
- JRDA-Specific Rules

Introduction

The Scoreboard Operator (SBO) is the communications officer of the game. The Rules require that

Critical game information must be displayed in a manner that is highly visible to Teams, Officials, and spectators.

The scoreboard operator is the official responsible for upholding this requirement. They receive data from the Scorekeepers, the Jam Timer, and their own observations, and update the scoreboard display for participants.

What is displayed on the scoreboard is always the official information for the game, per the Rules. As such, the scoreboard operator is a required part of all Regulation and Sanctioned games. They're responsible for making accurate and timely updates, and for understanding the rules governing when changes can be made to the game score and timing.

The scoreboard often plays a further role after the game: data entered into the scoreboard software becomes the starting point for the Statsbook that is submitted to WFTDA, MRDA, or JRDA to complete sanctioning requirements.

The role of SBO is defined by the combination of WFTDA Rules and Officiating Procedures and the software or physical hardware used at each venue. This guide focuses on defining the role of the scoreboard operator as part of a crew of non-skating officials, including communication, validation, and how the rules require the scoreboard to be operated. It deliberately does not cover the fine details of operating the CRG (Carolina Rollergirls) Scoreboard, which is reserved for separate resources.

Resources

- The Rules of Flat Track Roller Derby, especially section 1.4.
- WFTDA Officiating Procedures.
- CRG Scoreboard Wiki. CRG is by far the most popular, and perhaps the only, scoreboard software you're likely to encounter in the wild. At present we defer to CRG documentation on how to operate that program.

Equipment and Positioning

Typically, the SBO works from a computer running the scoreboard software (which is almost universally CRG Scoreboard). In some venues, a different software or even a mechanical scoreboard solution might be in use. The requirements of the venue may dictate where the SBO and scorekeepers are seated.

The ideal placement for the SBO is between the Scorekeepers, with the Scorekeepers seated on the same side as their team is on the scoreboard controls. If the scoreboard displays the Red team on the left and Blue team on the right, the Red Scorekeeper should be seated to the left and Blue Scorekeeper to the right of the SBO. This group of officials is often called the score table. Venue constraints may affect the setup of the score table.

The SBO should also be in a position to clearly see the infield, as well as being able to see the scoreboard display(s) to validate that it is working throughout the game. It's ideal to be positioned behind the jam line so that the SBO and scorekeepers can observe jammers lining up.

Custom Keyboards

For venues using the CRG software, it is useful but not required to have a purpose-modified keyboard with scoreboard shortcuts pre-planned. Some scoreboard operators enjoy deeply customizing and optimizing their keyboards for this use. All input during the game can be input via mouse or touch screen, but the dedicated keyboard may help speed up most basic tasks. The guide for using the CRG software will dive into the process of

assigning shortcuts in greater detail, and every SBO has their own preferences on how to set their keyboard up.

If you want to build such a keyboard, there are a few considerations to keep in mind:

- A mechanical keyboard with replaceable key caps is ideal for this purpose.
 - If you cannot print your own key caps labels, your keys should at least be marked in a way that you can identify what each function should be.
- A simple USB keyboard will be much cheaper and is less likely to have connection problems when switching between multiple computers than a wireless wireless keyboard.
- Both teams will need a shortcut key for most if not all of these inputs at a minimum
 - Team Time Out
 - Official Review
 - Star Pass
 - Lead Jammer Awarded
 - Calling Off the Jam
 - Loss of Lead
 - Injury
 - 1-4 Trip Points Awarded
- Additionally, there should be a set of shortcuts for Official calls as well
 - Official Timeout
 - Start the Jam
 - End Jam (medical or safety call offs by officials)
 - Unstart Jam
 - Un-Timeout
- Keys should be large enough or spaced far enough apart to avoid fat fingering inputs.

The Basic Routine

During gameplay, an SBO's primary duties, in order of priority, are:

Working with Scorekeepers

During a typical Jam, the Scorekeepers should be focusing on their respective Jam Referee and Jammers, and calling out key events as they occur:

1. Initial pass completed
2. Lead Jammer awarded
3. Points as earned on each pass
4. Star Pass, Loss of Lead or any Jammer penalties
5. Jam called off or ended naturally by the Jam Timer

The SBO should echo these calls to the Scorekeeper as they are entered into the scoreboard, both to confirm the information and to acknowledge the call. If the SBO notices an event while the Scorekeeper is distracted (making corrections to paperwork, tracking a Star Pass, unable to see the Jam Ref, etc.), the SBO should confirm the event with the Scorekeeper before inputting it into the system.

Between Jams, the SBO and Scorekeepers should confirm with each other that the Scorekeepers and scoreboard agree on the point total and that any Star Passes during the prior Jam were recorded.

Corrections to the *displayed score* **must** be entered before the end of the following Jam, so a missing 4-point trip in Jam 16 must be entered before the end of Jam 17. In the final two minutes of gameplay, corrections may only occur until the *start* of the following jam. See Rules 3.5. If the displayed score is correct, but a scorekeeper made an error in their paperwork, they may correct that error at any time. However, an inaccurate displayed score may only be corrected from paperwork as described.

In sanctioned play, discrepancies between the Scorekeeper paperwork and what is displayed as the official score must be accounted for and reported to WFTDA along with the Statsbook. The scoreboard operator and scorekeepers should be prepared to provide a detailed accounting of what led to the discrepancy to the Head NSO, who will complete Score Offset paperwork.

Starting and Ending Game Play Segments

The scoreboard operator cues to scoreboard to show jams, lineup periods, and stoppages of play (timeouts and official reviews) as signaled by the Jam Timer and the skating officials.

Whistles and verbal cues that mark derby events *take time*. Events begin at the end of their signal, not counting echoes and confirmation. The scoreboard should be updated to reflect these changes in game status accordingly.

- Jams begin when the Jam Timer whistles and gives "dropping hand/waving flag" hand signal.
- Jams end on the final whistle of the first instance of the 4-whistle cadence to call off a Jam.
- Timeouts and Reviews likewise begin at the end of the 4-whistle cadence to halt the clock.
- After any timeout/review, if there will be another Jam it must begin within 30 seconds of the rolling whistle.

While it is the duty of the Jam Timer or Skating Officials to initiate these signals, the SBO must be aware and ready to update the scoreboard. But the SBO should also try to avoid anticipating events and mistakenly starting/ending a jam or calling anything but an Official Timeout in order to avoid confusion.

Additionally, most of the information in the WFTDA or JRDA Statsbook will be indexed against a Period and Jam number, which officials typically verify against the scoreboard as they complete their paperwork. Mistakenly starting/ending Jams will cause confusion and requires a great deal of effort to correct, so the correct Period and Jam count must be displayed at all times.

May 2024 Updates to End of Period/End of Game Procedure

In May 2024, WFTDA released a revision to the rules informing how end of play should proceed.

As either Period ends, officials should be on alert for requested Official Reviews or team timeouts. After the final Jam of a Period, officials should allow for a minimum of 30 seconds to allow for a final Official Review to be requested before officially calling the Period as complete.

At the end of each Period, the Jam Referees and Scorekeepers should sync up to confirm that all points for the final Jam were recorded, and the SBO should then confirm this information is accurately displayed on the scoreboard. At the end of Period 2, the SBO should confirm that the scores are accurate before confirming the Official Score via the scoreboard.

Documenting Jammer and Pivots

If the venue is using electronic Penalty and Lineup Tracking (ePLT) devices, it is possible this task will be handled by the Penalty and Lineup Trackers as

part of their duties. If not, at the start of each Jam the Scorekeepers should observe who their Jammers and Pivots will be. As these positions are identified and noted on the score sheet, the SBO should also input this information into the scoreboard so it can be displayed for announcers and attendees.

Note that this is not a rules-required function. After the game, this information will be compared to the Penalty and Lineup Tracking paperwork to validate Lineup and Star Pass information in the Statsbook before it can be submitted. Failing to enter correct Jammer and Pivot data into the scoreboard does not risk sanctioning or violate the rules, but may impact the Head NSO's statsbook completion. Discuss any issues with the Head NSO.

Ensuring Clock Time Is Accurate

The official Period, Lineup, and Jam clocks are what is displayed on the scoreboard. The Jam Timer's stopwatches are considered to be backups. It is critical that the SBO keep the official clock accurate and in sync with the Jam Timer.

There will always be some natural drift between the signals from other officials and the SBO. A fraction of a second is frequently gained or lost at the start and end of every Jam due to normal human reaction time, user error, other tasks diverting attention, or normal delays in the scoreboard input/software. Expected events that interrupt the "normal" flow, such as timeouts, reviews and injuries may cause more of a drift. The Head Non-Skating Official can determine what an acceptable limit is based on each game, but any variance between the official time and the Jam Timer's backup should be weighed for its impact and the official time adjusted accordingly. For regulation or sanctioned games, anything more than 1-2 seconds should be considered impactful enough to warrant pausing gameplay between Jams to make the correction.

Before the game starts, discuss with the Jam Timer how they will signal desired clock adjustments to you during stoppages of play. It's a good idea to also agree on a signal for "all good"/"no change".

See WFTDA Officiating Procedures, section 3.

For discussion of clock management from the other side of this relationship, review our guide to Jam Timing.

May 2024 Update to Clock Management

In May 2024 WFTDA released revised rules that clarify that the Period clock should stop when a timeout/official review is REQUESTED, not when it is AWARDED. For example, consider the following scenario:

- Period 1, Jam 18 ends, both teams leave the track and begin returning to their respective benches and the scoreboard immediately enters a 30-second Lineup phase before Jam 19.
- When the Lineup clock on the scoreboard reports the time is 3 seconds into the Lineup, Red team captain uses both the "O" hand signal and verbal call to REQUEST an Official Review.
- Due to both teams' skaters taking the track and obstructing the view, neither the Jam Timer nor any infield Referee initially see or hear the Red captain.
- An Outside Pack Referee moves to their start-of-Jam position near the Jam Line and sees Red captain signaling, and so immediately signals a 4-whistle cadence to stop play and echoes Red captain's call for an Official Review
- Head Ref echoes the whistle and call to AWARD the Official Review while they signal to both teams' captains and coaches to join them in the infield.
- Jam Timer proceeds to signal for Official Review and points to the Red bench to signal which team requested the review.
- The SBO initiates a Red Team Official Review in the scoreboard software, freezing the Period and Lineup clocks. The Lineup clock is stopped showing 11 seconds had elapsed during the Lineup phase.

A total of 8 seconds passed between the captain's request and the Official Review being awarded. Under the new revision, after updating the scoreboard to reflect an Official Review for the Red team but before gameplay resumes the SBO should also restore the time lost while the Red captain was trying to get officials' attention. The exact amount of time restored to the clock should be confirmed by the Jam Timer, Head NSO, and Head Ref before being communicated to the SBO. The restored time should be placed back on the official Period clock prior to the start of the next Jam.

Display Team Timeouts, Official Reviews, and Official Timeouts

In addition to having all game clocks displayed correctly, the SBO is also responsible for confirming all timeouts and reviews requested are allocated from the appropriate team, and that the scoreboard shows the correct number of remaining reviews and timeouts for each team.

Any medical, safety, or operational issue should result in immediately calling off the active Jam and starting an Official Timeout to address the problem.

Whenever a team timeout or review is requested, the Jam Timer or another non-skating official should initiate signaling from the Pivot Line on the track, and **MUST** maintain visual signaling for the type of timeout and who requested it until the SBO can update the scoreboard to show the correct reason gameplay was halted. Once the scoreboard is updated, the visual signaling can be deemed optional until the rolling whistle is completed to resume play.

When coming back from any timeout or review, the SBO should allow the timeout counter to continue running. The Jam Timer is required start the next Jam within 30 seconds of their rolling whistle, but it is not required to end the timeout and manually start a new Lineup phase.

Dealing With Scoreboard Problems

Like any piece of technology, the scoreboard will occasionally malfunction. This may mean a dry erase marker runs out of ink, or the SBO needs to click the "Unstart Jam" or "Un-Timeout" buttons to roll back to the correct game state, or this may require the SBO to be ready to fallback to a purely manual dry erase board and markers while rebooting the scoreboard laptop.

Whenever problems do arise, the SBO should immediately assess to determine the level of impact the fix will incur. Minor issues, such as an accidentally started/ended Jam or Timeout, a missing trip on the current or previous Jam, or missing Lead Jammer/Star Pass info that can be addressed without impacting game play should be corrected in situ as quickly as possible. If the Jam Number is displayed incorrectly, make sure to update the Scorekeepers (and the PLTs and Penalty Box if possible) on the correct Jam Number.

For larger issues, such as correcting game clocks, the scoreboard partially hanging or crashing, keyboard not responding, or larger corrections from Scorekeeping, the SBO should signal for an Official Timeout between Jams to address the problem. Like any other timeout, the Official Timeout does not technically begin until the end of the first 4-whistle cadence to signal a timeout.

JRDA-Specific Rules

JRDA play introduces two rules that change the structure of the game in specific circumstances: Sudden Scoring and Injury Continuations.

If you are operating the scoreboard for a JRDA game, ensure that the scoreboard software (and *version* of the scoreboard software) in use supports these JRDA rules. For CRG Scoreboard, version 5.10 or higher is required.

The JRDA Rules provide detailed guidance on how to execute Sudden Scoring or an Injury Continuation in CRG. Make sure you're familiar with the situations in which these rules might be invoked, and how to execute them in the scoreboard.