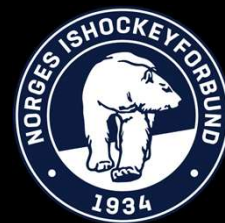


Development of on-ice Officials The Norwegian Ice Hockey Association

This presentation describes how NIHF, a medium sized MNA, has built a long-term, structured officiating development system.



In this
presentation we
touch base on
different topics

Who we are and our **reality**

How our **system** is built

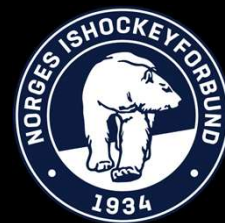
How we **recruit** and educate referees

How we use **tournaments and coaching**

How organization and **continuity support
quality**

Our **international cooperation** and IIHF
integration

Key numbers, results and future focus



Numbers showing the scale of our system.

Population: 5,6 million

Licensed players: 14,000

IIHF ranking: 12

Licensed referees: 330 /30 female

Regions: 6

Volunteers in officiating: 35–40

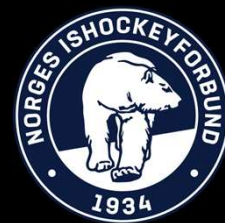
Employees focusing on officiating: 1,5

Football licensed players: 378.000

Handball licensed players: 146.000



Areas with organized activity



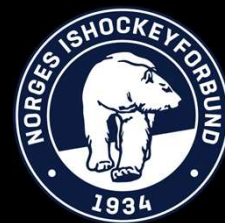
Reality

- Norway is a small / medium hockey nation
- Large geographical distances
- Travel can be a challenge

This makes structure, efficiency and long-term planning essential.

We try to rely on quality, structure and people instead of volume. Therefore, every activity is used as a development arena.

Who we are



NIHF is responsible for all officiating activity in Norwegian ice hockey, from the grassroots - club levels to international competitions.

Our referee department covers recruitment, education, assignment, coaching, evaluation, equipment, administration and international cooperation.

All resources, tools and information are gathered in one transparent system at www.hockey.no.

Organization and Continuity



Our referee program is led by a officiating committee and a dedicated federation staff.

Continuity in people and philosophy has been crucial for success.

Development takes time, and stability creates results.

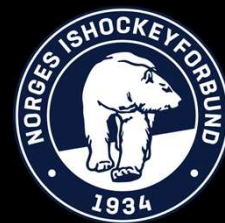
Our Philosophy



Our referee philosophy is based on development rather than control, coaching rather than “punishment”, and long-term thinking rather than quick fixes.

We believe trust, transparency and stability create better officials and better people.

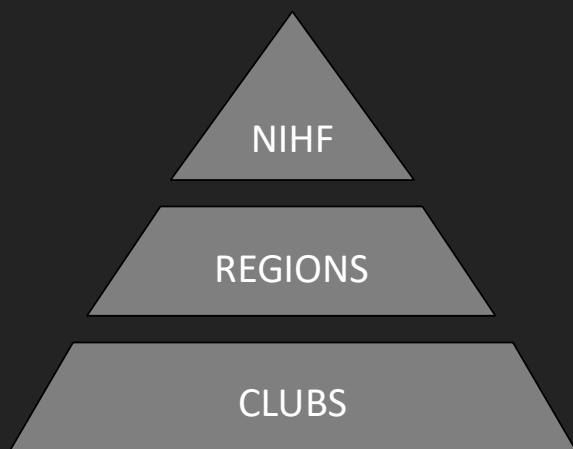
We also believe that knowledge must be shared.



Clear three-level structure

Most recruitment and first education starts in the clubs. Regions and the federation support, facilitate, educate and follow up.

This clear role division creates and are securing responsibility and stability for our activity.





Recruitment is the foundation

Clubs are responsible for recruiting, educating and assignments of officials for games up to U13. All activity at this level is strictly regulated by Norwegian law to ensure safety and positive environments.

Young officials are paid from day one, and games come quickly, or at the same day as education to create motivation and belonging.

We are also trying to have young officials at all 3 on 3 cross ice games.



Clubs are required to take responsibility for referee development.



Each club must register responsible persons and must register a minimum number of officials per team. If not, sanctions apply.

This ensures that recruitment is not optional – it is part of club responsibility.



Keeping our young officials

Focus on Retention is as important as recruitment.

We focus on fun, friends, belonging, early success, support and backup.

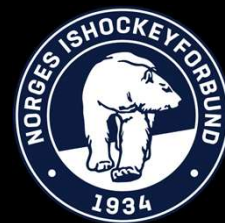
Experience shows that officials who stay for 1–2 years often stay for many years.

Abuse is taken seriously and actively addressed.

We are educating at the grassroots level every year in every club with youth activity. Unfortunately, the way society is, we also lose many every year. Our goal is to keep at least 1-2 at each club for next season. If we can manage to do this, we are at good numbers after a couple of years.

The officials that are active for 2-3 years normally stays in the game for several years

One of the BIG motivation for the clubs to join this is that they are saving lots of costs on milage and other

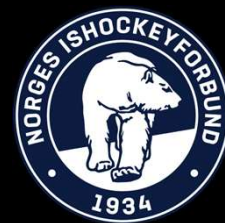


Education and Courses

All officials follow an education path.

This includes classroom education, seminars, rules education, physical and theory testing.

Seminars for our top levels are changing over to taking care of their own learning – no teaching

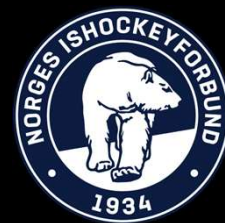


Six-Level Development Model

We follow a six-level development model based on an older IHF framework.

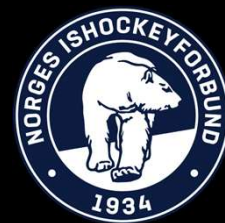
The levels range from club to international officials, with clear expectations and progression criteria at each level.

This creates transparency, motivation and predictability.



We are struggling with the number of female officials!

Extra seminars are set up to try creating an environment for trust, stability and belonging.



Some tournaments give us the possibility to have classroom sessions



Tournaments - International exchange



Tournaments are in general one of our most effective development tools.

They provide many games in a short time, close coaching follow-up, immediate feedback and strong learning environments.

They are used at club, regional, national and international levels.

In many cases, tournaments are combined with international referee exchange.

Tournaments are normally created mixed referee groups, cultural understanding and knowledge sharing in real game situations.

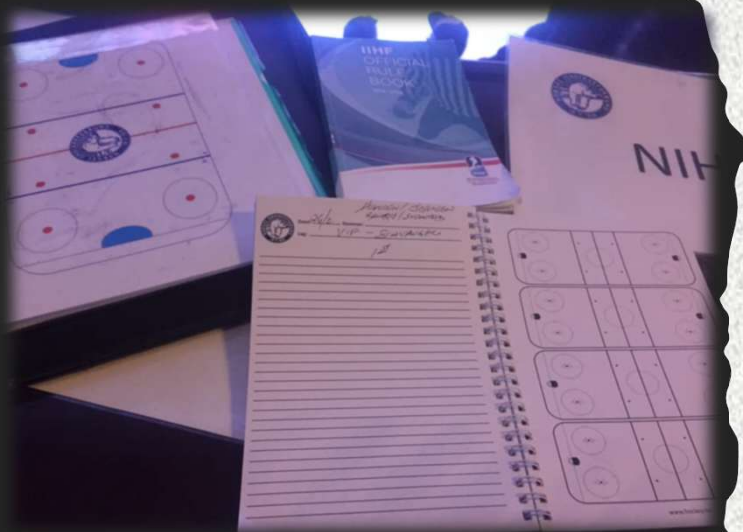
We strongly believe this is one of the fastest and best ways to develop officials.

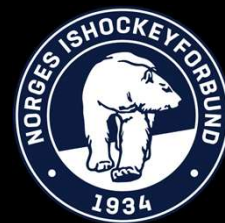


Coaching is the engine of our system.

Coaches are present at tournaments and games, provide immediate feedback, work with individual development plans and build trust-based relationships.

We coach for learning, not control.



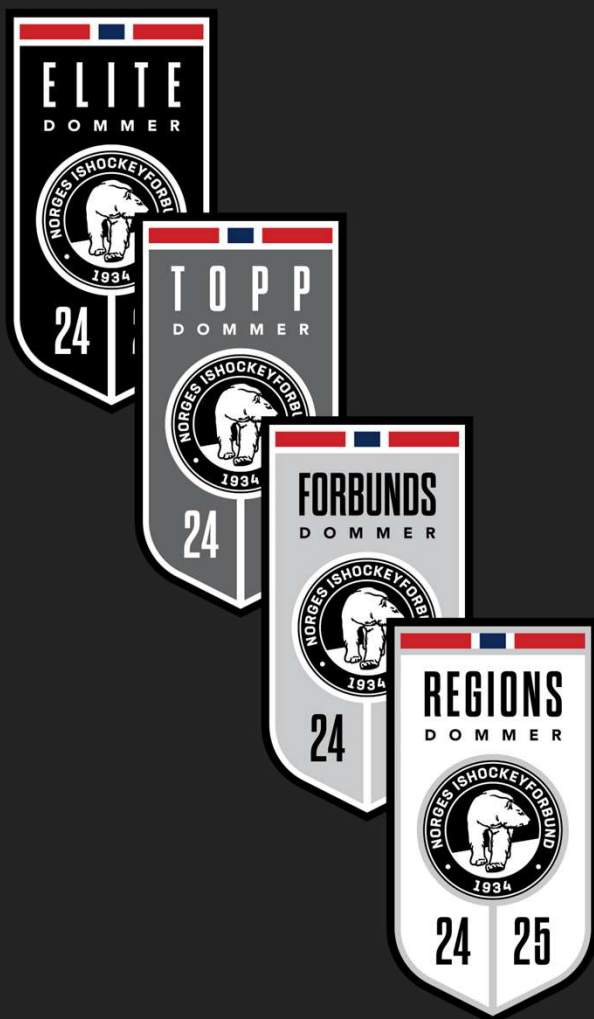
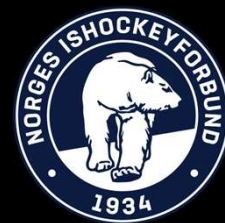


Adding Value Beyond the Game

We add value through coaching and mentoring programs, development camps, fast-track programs, coaching education, free equipment for young officials, recruitment campaigns and anti-abuse initiatives.

Female development is supported through dedicated projects such as 'This Girl Can', Exchange and others.





Building the Referee Team

Belonging and identity are essential.

Logos, branding, jerseys, camps, social media, local groups and national gatherings create pride and retention.

Webshop including complete officiating equipment and other essentials

Referees must feel like an important part of Norwegian hockey



Norwegian ice hockey has also taken seriously the need to include our officials.

One of these initiatives is in our top league and their recognition of Pride Week, an important effort to show that ice hockey is a sport for everyone.

For the officials, this means that they are included as part of the whole – NMA and League. They participate by wearing custom jerseys, participate in campaigns and other activity.

Our impression is that they truly appreciate this type of inclusion

International Cooperation



International exchange is a core part of our development strategy to create our next elite officials.

We cooperate with various of nations. It can be league or national team exchanges, coaching and more in total sharing experiences.

Exchanges can be one-way or two-way.



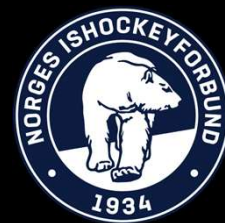
SHL



Our cooperation with Sweden is especially important.

One of the top hockey nations, shares knowledge, provides access to top leagues and supports our program with knowledge that is important for our whole program.

This has been extremely valuable over years



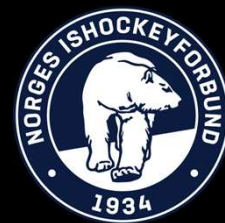
IIHF

Participating at seminars and meetings are essential, and important.

Two Norwegian referee coaches currently work at IIHF championships.

This brings international standards, updated methods and direct knowledge transfer into our national system.

This, together with our national program, enables our assigned officials to perform at a higher level at their IIHF championships.



Where are
we now, are
we seeing
results?

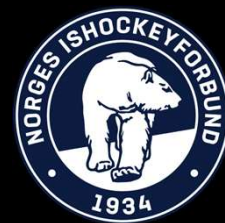
Long-term work is producing results

We do have an ok number of officials,
retention is stabile

More referees reach a higher international
level

Coaching competence is stronger

International trust has increased



Future Focus

Our focus going forward is to strengthen our existing program.

Extra focus right now is on

- Female program
- Coaching – all levels
- International cooperation

Development of the the next generation never rests.

- **Is this easy? No.**
- **Is it a lot of work? Yes.**
- **Is it fun and motivating? Absolutely.**
- **Thank you for listening!**

