

# **Rules of the UIL Sports Officials Committee**

## Chapter 1

### *Meetings and Procedure*

#### **A. Meeting Schedule**

The University Interscholastic League (UIL) Sports Officials Committee (SOC) shall meet twice a year, with one meeting in the Fall and another in the Spring, the specific dates to be set by the Chair after consultation with the UIL staff.

Typically, the Fall meeting will be held at least 30 days prior to the Legislative Council's annual October meeting and the Spring meeting will be held at least 30 days prior to the annual June Legislative Council meeting. The exact dates of the SOC Fall and Spring meetings will be published annually and as soon as practical after being determined. The SOC may also hold meetings as needed when called by the Chair after consultation with UIL staff.

## Chapter 2

### *Criteria and Process for Recognition of Chapters and Associations of Sports Officials*

#### **A. Definitions - Chapters and Associations; Weekday**

An "Association" is defined as an independent not for profit organization of individual sports officials with a formal governance structure and bylaws who have, among other things, as a common purpose the organization and provision of quality sports officials to officiate team sports at UIL sanctioned games and contests played by UIL member schools.

A "Chapter" is defined as a group of team sports officials that is formally a part of or affiliated with an Association and is tied to a local service area in which the Chapter provides sports officials to UIL member schools and other sports organizations.

An Association is a stand-alone organization and could have one or more Chapters as part of its organizational structure but a Chapter may only be part of or affiliated with one Association. An Association may function as a Chapter in terms of providing and assigning sports officials in a specific local service area.

Both Chapters and Associations should have by-laws or primary governing documents; however, an Association's by-laws should generally control over a Chapter's by-laws.

“Weekday” means any Monday through Friday between 8 a.m.-5 p.m. that is not a state holiday or a day when the University Interscholastic League (UIL) state office is closed as part of its calendar/schedule or in cases of emergency or inclement weather.

## **B. UIL Recognized Associations**

As of September 1, 2014, the UIL has recognized the following Associations:

Texas Association of Sports Officials  
Texas High School Basketball Officials Association  
Lone Star High School Softball Umpires Association  
El Paso Volleyball Officials Association  
El Paso High School Umpires Association

All other Associations seeking UIL recognition must apply to the UIL Sports Officials Committee (SOC).

All UIL recognized Associations should have a process for the formation and affiliation of new Chapters.

## **C. UIL Recognized Chapters**

The UIL recognizes all Chapters that were in existence and in good standing as part of any UIL recognized Association as of September 1, 2014. All other Chapters seeking UIL recognition must apply to the UIL Sports Officials Committee (SOC).

## **D. Criteria for Recognition of Chapters and Associations**

### **1. New Chapter With Recognized Association’s Approval**

A new Chapter of any existing, UIL recognized Association that applies for UIL recognition must first satisfy that Association’s rules and/or process governing new Chapter formation and affiliation in order to seek recognition from the UIL.

If a new Chapter is approved for formation and/or affiliation by a recognized sports officials’ Association, the SOC shall extend recognition to the applicant Chapter if it finds based on the preponderance of the evidence that the applicant Chapter is, when taken as a whole, beneficial to the schools, students and sports officials in the applicant Chapter’s local service area. The applicant Chapter and its affiliated Association bear the burden of proof.

Relevant evidence that the SOC may consider in reaching its determination includes evidence regarding the number of schools in the local service area, the number of officials in question/prospective members, the size of the applicant

Chapter's service area and other travel considerations, number of students and contests/games, projected growth of area, impact on any existing Chapters or Associations, costs as well as any other evidence that is relevant to UIL recognition of a new Chapter.

In no event, shall a recognized Association be required to create a new chapter.

## 2. Recognition of New Association or Recognition of Existing But Unrecognized Association

Existing sports officials' Associations and their affiliated Chapters who are not recognized by the UIL or groups of sports officials who wish to create a new Association (as well as affiliated Chapters) in order to, among other things, serve UIL member schools by providing sports officials for games and contests shall apply to the SOC for recognition.

The SOC shall extend recognition to an unrecognized applicant Association of sports officials (and on a case by case basis, to any of the applicant Association's affiliated Chapters) if it finds by the preponderance of the evidence that the applicant Association is, when taken as a whole, beneficial to the schools, students and sports officials of this state and, on a case by case basis, through affiliated Chapters provides those benefits to the local service area(s) which the Association plans to serve. The applicant Association and its affiliated Chapters seeking UIL recognition bear the burden of proof.

Relevant evidence that the SOC may consider in reaching its determination includes evidence regarding the number of schools being served, the number of officials in question/prospective members, the size of the applicant Association's (and affiliated Chapters) service area and other travel considerations, number of students and contests/games, projected growth of area, impact on any recognized Chapters or Associations, costs as well as any other evidence that is relevant to UIL recognition of a new Association (and its affiliated Chapters).

### **E. UIL Compliance; Required Policies**

All Chapters and Associations that apply for UIL recognition must agree to abide by UIL rules.

#### 1. Non-Discrimination

All Chapters and Associations applying for UIL recognition must have a non-discrimination policy that prohibits discrimination based on race, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, age, disability and veteran status against any member or person who seeks membership.

#### 2. Conflicts of Interest

All Associations and Chapters applying for UIL recognition shall prohibit conflicts of interest by member sports officials. Absent written agreement by participant schools after full disclosure, no sports official may officiate or otherwise work a UIL sanctioned game or contest in which an immediate family member (husband, wife, parent, child, brother, son, sister, daughter, or in-laws) attends, or is an employee of, a participating school.

### 3. Age Limit

All Associations and Chapters applying for UIL recognition should generally limit their membership to persons who are 18 years of age or older.

### 4. Liability Insurance; Directors and Officers Insurance

All Associations and Chapters applying for UIL recognition shall require members to purchase or shall provide adequate liability insurance coverage in an amount typical for sports officials in this state. Either by individual purchase or supplied by an Association or Chapter, all officers of an applicant Association or Chapter must have adequate Directors and Officers (D&O) liability insurance coverage typical for organizations in this state of the applicants' type and size. The SOC may require evidence of required insurance coverage.

## **F. Application to the SOC and Hearing Process**

The following process applies when any Chapter or Association applies for recognition by the UIL through the SOC:

1. Any unrecognized Chapter or Association may apply for UIL recognition by submitting to the SOC no less than thirty (30) days prior to the fall or spring SOC meeting an approved application form along with any and all relevant evidence, including documents, written statements and other tangible items that in the view of the applicant(s) support the recognition of the applicant Chapter or Association. The application form must be properly completed and submitted to the SOC along with all other required information as set out below in order to initiate the SOC's review process. Chapters and associations of sports officials who wish to be recognized by UIL to officiate team sports played in the spring (basketball, baseball, softball, soccer) may only be heard at the SOC's annual fall meeting. Chapters and associations of sports officials who wish to be recognized by UIL to officiate team sports played in the fall (football and volleyball) may only be heard at the SOC's annual spring meeting.
  - A. The approved application form, along with any necessary attachments, shall, when submitted to the SOC by an applicant Chapter or Association, provide the following information:

- a. Name of applicant Chapter and recognized Association that the Chapter is or will affiliate with; along with relevant contact information for the officers of the Chapter and the Association and a copy of the Chapter's bylaws.
- b. Name of applicant Association and the names of any affiliated Chapter(s) along with relevant contact information for the officers of the applicant Association and its affiliated Chapter(s) as well as copies of the Association's and affiliated Chapter(s) bylaws.
- c. Certified copy of minutes of meeting during which vote to establish new Chapter or Association and/or seek UIL recognition took place or other substantially similar evidence;
- d. For applicant Chapters, certification that a UIL-recognized sports officials Association has agreed to the Chapter's affiliation;
- e. Membership list with contact information of sports officials who are members of the applicant Chapter or Association;
- f. Identification by county and school districts of the geographic area that the applicant Chapter or applicant Association and its affiliated Chapters intends to serve (proposed local service area);
- g. Names and UIL district assignment of UIL member schools in the proposed local service area(s);
- h. Contact information for the athletic department(s) of the UIL member schools and any UIL recognized sports officials' Chapters or Associations operating in the proposed local service area(s);
- i. A good faith estimate of the annual number of games or contests broken down by the categories of UIL team sports for which the applicant Chapter or Association intends to provide sports officials;
- j. Certification that the members of the applicant Chapter or Association, if recognized by the UIL, have agreed to follow all UIL rules, including compliance with the required policies, as stated above, that are applicable to sports officials.

- B. On receipt of a completed application form and required attachments, a hearing on the application for UIL recognition shall be set before an SOC hearing panel as soon as reasonably practical as determined by UIL staff.
- C. Notice of the hearing date will be provided to the applicant Chapter or Association at least ten (10) week days before the hearing.
- D. Other interested parties known to the SOC, including all UIL member schools and all recognized Associations and Chapters within the proposed local service area, will also receive notice of the hearing as soon as practicable along with copies of the application form and any other documents or other evidence submitted by the applicant Chapter and/or Association. At the discretion of the hearing panel Chair, lack of notice of the hearing to other interested parties may be grounds for re-setting the hearing.
- E. Subject to special circumstances, all formal communications between the SOC and applicant Chapters and Associations, UIL member school districts, recognized Chapters and Associations as well as other interested parties shall be by email, though hard copies may be made available. Subject to limited exceptions, all persons or organizations appearing before the SOC must provide a valid email address.
- F. An interested party, other than an applicant, that desires to appear at the hearing and address the SOC shall provide written notice of its intent to appear before the SOC at least fifteen (15) days prior to the date of the hearing. Furthermore, an interested party (organization or individual) must, at the time it gives notice of its intent to appear, provide the SOC a list of any witnesses it will ask to testify at the hearing. Along with the witness list, an interested party shall also provide copies of any documents or other evidence that it intends to present to the SOC.

Failure to give timely notice of intent to appear at the hearing or to timely provide a witness list or copies of documents and other evidence may result in the SOC hearing panel Chair limiting or declining to hear testimony or considering evidence from an interested party.

- G. Each SOC hearing panel that considers an applicant for UIL recognition shall have a Chair for the hearing. While formal rules of evidence and procedure do not apply, a SOC hearing panel Chair may limit or expand the time of the hearing and otherwise manage the hearing, including limiting repetitive or irrelevant testimony and other extraneous evidence, for purposes of efficiency and fairness.

- H. A hearing panel Chair may, at his or her discretion, invoke “the rule” and require all persons who intend to testify to be removed from the hearing until such time as they are called to appear before the panel.
- I. An SOC hearing panel shall take testimony from witnesses as provided for in these rules in a question and answer format and review any documents or other tangible evidence presented to the panel. A panel may allow parties to make opening statements and shall provide the applicant Chapter or Association the opportunity to make a closing statement. No witness shall be cross-examined by another person representing another party.
- J. The order of presentation of witnesses and documentary evidence in a hearing regarding recognition of an applicant Chapter or Association shall generally be as follows:
  - a. Witnesses previously named by applicant Chapter or Association;
  - b. If Chapter is already affiliated with Association, Association may present previously named witnesses at this stage or may present in tandem with the applicant Chapter at the discretion of the hearing panel Chair;
  - c. Witnesses previously named by UIL-recognized sports officials’ Chapters or Associations in proposed local service area;
  - d. School officials from UIL-member schools that are located in the proposed local service area;
  - e. Other interested parties, if any;
  - f. Applicant Chapter and/or Association, rebuttal and closing.
  - g. The panel Chair may change the order of appearance for purposes of efficiency and fairness.
- K. The process set out in these rules does not create a property interest or any other rights that a person or organization does not have under law absent this process.

## 2. Precedent Manual

As part of its consideration of requests for UIL recognition of sports officials' Chapters and Associations as well as all other matters on which it holds hearings, the SOC shall develop and maintain a Precedent Manual of its decisions in cases designated as having sufficient precedential value. The Precedent Manual will be composed of written decisions that contain a synopsis of the facts along with the panel's decision and a brief explanation of the basis for the decision in each case that a hearing panel deems to have precedential value.

For cases designated as having precedential value, each written decision must be approved by a majority of the members of the hearing panel that heard the case before it may be published in the Precedent Manual. The Precedent Manual shall serve as a guide for future SOC panels and interested parties when considering the possible outcome of a case.

### 3. Appeal

An applicant Chapter or Association may appeal a decision denying UIL recognition to the SOC as a whole, which shall decide at its discretion whether to grant the appeal and assign it to a hearing panel. The request for appeal must be in writing; must state with particularity the reason(s) for the appeal and be received by the SOC within five (5) week days after the hearing decision is issued. The failure to state with sufficient particularity the grounds for an appeal maybe grounds for the appeal's denial. While new argument may be made, evidence that was not admitted at the hearing may not be presented on appeal.

The process for an appeal shall be by written submission by the applicant Chapter or Association, unless the SOC agrees to hear oral argument. A case decided by written submission means that there is no live hearing and in such cases after reviewing the record from the hearing and considering the arguments submitted, the SOC shall decide the matter by vote under applicable rules.

If an appeal is granted, UIL member school districts and UIL recognized Chapters and Associations that appeared before the SOC during the hearing on the matter shall be allowed to present their argument in the same manner as the applicant Chapter or Association.

In cases where oral argument is permitted, the order of presentation shall be the same as the hearing, however, the SOC may limit the presentations in oral argument to the applicant as well as impacted UIL-member schools and recognized Chapters and Associations. Time limits may be placed on oral argument.

If an appeal is granted, the rules regarding the Precedent Manual apply. The SOC process is concluded upon a denial of the request for an appeal or, in case the request to appeal is granted, upon the issuing of a decision on the appeal. Once

the SOC appeals process is exhausted, no other UIL remedy or process is available.

#### 4. Hearing and Appeal Record

All SOC hearings, including oral argument on appeals, shall be recorded in a standard audio format or by a court reporter. The UIL shall archive the recording or transcript of SOC hearings for a period of time that, at a minimum is consistent with the applicable University retention policy or as required by law.

#### 5. Hearing and Appeal Decisions

After the conclusion of a hearing or appeal (should an appeal be granted), the SOC panel shall issue a brief written decision regarding the applicant's request for recognition as soon as reasonably practicable but in any event within 30 days from the close of the hearing. While each SOC panel is solely responsible for making a decision on the request for UIL recognition by majority vote, a panel may request assistance from UIL staff in drafting, editing and publishing the panel's decision. The same applies in cases where the SOC agrees to hear an appeal.

After reaching its decision in a hearing, the panel shall also decide if the case in question is of such quality that it should be included in the SOC Precedent Manual.

All cases in which an appeal is granted shall be published in the Precedent Manual.