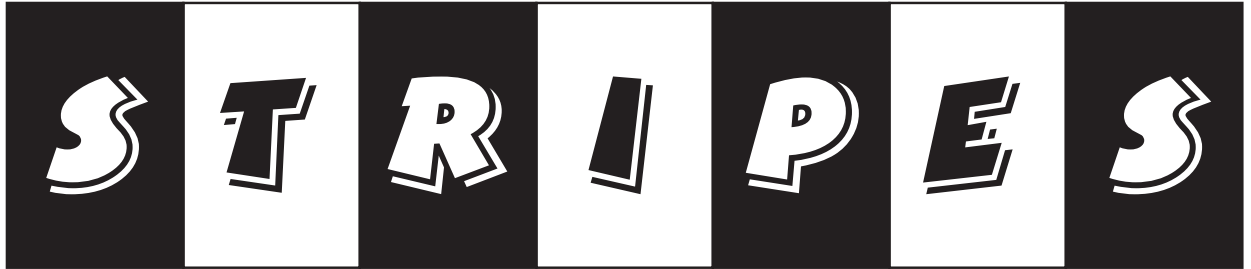




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The official newsletter of the Men's Division Officials Council

From the editor: The best laid plans

Sometimes you have great intentions and great plans, but reality gets in the way.

Case in point: about halfway through the production of this issue, my hard drive crashed. Not a little crash with a few files affected, but everything completely gone. I was confident that I'd be back up and running in a day or so, and my most recent backup was only two weeks old. Sure, I'd lost some stuff—including a few short *Stripes* submissions—but not too much. Or so I thought.

It turns out that it was much harder to get things running again than I expected. I found most of my software CDs, but one suite of programs was an upgrade, and it insisted on seeing the CD from the previous version, which I couldn't find. I finally ended up purchasing the old version on eBay for \$20.

There were a number of other complications, and by the time I had everything running again, I was officiating almost every day and was behind in my assigning duties.

So, while my intent was—and is—to publish roughly monthly during the season, this issue is a little late, and I apologize. And I've invested in an extra hard drive to use as a bootable backup, which I didn't really want to spend the money on but which is ultimately cheap insurance.

It occurs to me, though, that we sometimes have similar situations in officiating: we think we're doing everything we're supposed to be doing, and still somehow things get away from us. When that happens, the best we can do is handle the situation in front of us, get by as best we can, try to learn

from it, and move on.

Part of avoiding these situations is realizing when they're likely to come up. John Bistowski's excellent article "Officiating a Blowout" will help prepare you to handle these kinds of games and to avoid the ugly incidents these games can be prone to. Part 3 in the "Game Management" series addresses communication, among other things, which can also help you avoid problems in your games.

Other articles include John Feegel's interview with Eric Evans, Ned Dibble and Nick Gianaris's piece on youth officiating, and short article by Clint Bond about Honoring the game. Without their contributions, this issue would be even further behind schedule.

Harold Buck
Stripes Editor



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E-mail

Electronic mail is the primary method that US Lacrosse and the MDOC use to contact you, and having a valid e-mail address on file is the only way to receive this newsletter. If your e-mail address changes, be sure to let us know by e-mailing membership services at epiper@uslacrosse.org

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Bob the referee had a player fall into his leg during the game and had to be carted off the field. He was taken to the hospital, given an MRI, and sent home. On the way, he ran into a player from the game.

Player: Mr. Official, you look awful. Is it bad news?

Official: Yeah, the doctor says I can't ref.

Player: So, I guess he's seen you in action, then?

Quick Tips

If you have short officiating tips that can be explained in a paragraph or so, send them to lax.ref@comcast.net with the subject line "Quick Tip." We'll work them in as space allows. Be sure to include your name and city so we can give proper credit.

Game Management

Part 3



by Harold Buck

This is the third in a series of articles about game management in men's lacrosse. It will eventually be adapted for use with the US Lacrosse Level 1 and 2 Training Manual. If you have additional suggestions or ideas about game management, please send them to lax.ref@comcast.net

The play-on

Proper use of the play-on technique is important for proper game control. Many newer officials have a hard time remembering when to use the play-on, and so some of the nuances of its use for game control are lost on them. It is important to understand the reason the play-on exists in order to apply it in a way that helps your game management.

The main idea behind the play-on is that it allows play to continue so that a team that is on the receiving end of a loose-ball technical foul can continue play without being disadvantaged. It has the added feature of improving the flow of the game by reducing the number of whistles.

For example, suppose B1 pushes A1 from behind during a loose ball, and then A1 immediately scoops up the ball and has a clear path to the goal. Blowing the whistle for the loose-ball push actually disadvantages Team A; if

you stopped play, you'd just be awarding them possession, which they already have, and that clear path to the goal is not going to be there when the play restarts. Furthermore, even if there hadn't been a clear path to the goal, allowing play to continue means there's one fewer whistle blown and the game keeps moving. This is what the play-on was designed for.

However, consider a different situation: in a loose-ball scrum with 8 players, B1 pushes A1 from behind. If you allow play to continue and A1 scoops the ball, he's likely to get the ball checked right out of his stick, so in this case it makes sense to kill the play fairly quickly. Here, you do not disadvantage Team A with a quick whistle. (However, it does make sense to call "play-on" followed by an immediate whistle, since this communicates that you know it's a loose-ball technical; if you whistle without calling the play-on, there may be people that think you're doing it out of incompetence rather than by a conscious decision.)

How long you wait before blowing the whistle on a play-on is a key aspect of game management. Some guidelines:

- The lower the level of play, the shorter the play-ons should be.

A newer official on a youth game might want to not use them at all. At lower levels of play, players are much more likely to get hurt during loose-ball scrums, so it makes sense to end those plays as quickly as possible. In fact, during loose-ball scrums at low levels—and often in higher-level games where play is starting to get out of control—you should be looking for any technical foul you could possibly call to get the ball off the ground. While people may accuse you of making a "picky" call, letting the loose-ball scrum continue too long can be hazardous.

- At higher levels of play, in most cases a play-on shouldn't be allowed to continue for more than a few seconds, and less if it's obvious that the fouled team will not have an advantage if they gain possession. If you let the play-on continue for too long, you risk having the other team commit a personal, and then you have simultaneous fouls and confusion over why a player has to serve time for a loose-ball technical foul.
- If the ball pops out of the scrimmage area and it seems likely that a player from the fouled team will be able to

track down the ball and scoop it uncontested, you can allow the play-on to continue for quite a bit longer. However, if the player seems to be trying to delay scooping the ball to take time off the clock, blow the whistle and award possession.

- North-South play-ons are better than East-West play-ons, and play-ons in the attack half of the field are better than play-ons in the defensive half of the field. What would a fouled team rather have: a nice clean restart with all players five yards away or uninterrupted possession of the ball at that moment? What advantage have you given a player who scoops up a loose ball during a play-on right on the sideline surrounded by three defensemen? You must decide.

General rules about communication

Communication is an essential part of game management. By communicating with the coaches and players, you can often diffuse problem situations before the game gets out of control.

When you communicate, you need to be professional. Even if some of the coaches and players are good friends of yours, you should be formal (e.g., “Coach” or “Coach Smith,” not “John”). If you are overly familiar with one coach, the other coach may have the percep-

tion that you will favor that team, and even if you don’t favor one team, creating the perception that you are is detrimental to your ability to manage the game. (In a perfect world, you would probably never



Proper use of the play-on is a key aspect of game management.

be assigned to a game involving coaches or players you were friends with, but in some areas of the country it is an unavoidable problem).

Before, during, and after the game, you need to try to limit your communication to either the job at hand or to inconsequential matters. Making polite small talk with the coaches or captains during the pre-game is fine, and it makes them view you as a person in addition to being an authority figure, which can aid in game management. However, talking about game strategies, speculating about who is going to win the game, or talking about your late-night partying regime can only work against you. It’s hard to get into trouble for what you didn’t say.

Once the game starts, focus on what you need to communicate to

manage the game and no more. One official was being berated by a coach for missing a slashing call and the official responded, “Well, you probably wouldn’t have scored on the man-up anyway!”; whether or not that is true, the official has no business making a comment like that, and the comment angered the coach enough to make the rest of the game difficult to control. It is also critical to avoid sarcasm; it is unprofessional and often misinterpreted by coaches. In fact, a large percentage of complaints about officials result from such misunderstandings.

This is not to say that you can’t use humor. Humor is a great way to diffuse tense situations, although you need to be extremely careful. Try to observe the kind of humor used by experienced officials and learn from it, and remember that not everyone is a comedian. The types of humor that seems to work best are self-deprecating humor (focused on yourself) or humor based on some aspect of the situation external to the players, coaches, and officials (for example, focused on something happening off the field).

Compliance through cooperation beats compliance through coercion every time. Saying “Guys, I need your help here. Could you please move back a couple of feet and get behind that line. Thanks a lot, guys. I appreciate it” is a lot more effective than “Get back or I’ll flag you!!!”

When you are faced with a verbal

conflict, be sure to keep your voice level under control. If a coach screams at you and you scream back, you look bad, but if the coach is screaming and you're talking in a normal voice, the coach is the one that looks bad. Also, be aware of non-verbal communication: the way you say things and your body language while you're saying them often carry more weight than what you're saying. Even when you aren't talking, your body language communicates to everyone watching, and having a clean, neat, well-fitting uniform is important.

Finally, you want everyone involved in the game to have the perception that the officials know what they are doing and are impartial. If there is a sense that the officials are biased or incompetent, players may be tempted to take matters into their own hands. One fellow official says, "The perception of competence can be generated by the official's appearance, demeanor, use of good mechanics, confidence in making calls, and reactions to game issues. And, of course, nothing beats actually being competent."

Communication during the game

A tremendous part of game management involves communicating with coaches and players during the game. If you can manage them using your voice rather than your whistle and flag, you're on the way to becoming a great game manager.

First of all, you can keep the coaches from becoming frustrated by talking with them during dead

balls and—when appropriate—during the game (normally, when play is live, you'll only be able to speak with the coaches if you're the trail, and even then that can be difficult in a two-man game). The rules don't require you to address questions from the coaches (except at the end of halftime under NCAA rules or during a coach's challenge under NFHS rules), so some officials make the mistake of refusing to talk with them at all. However, if a coach has a respectful question about why you called something, answering it can keep the lines of communication open, maintain the coach's level of respect for you, and prevent frustration. Also, if you've made a difficult call—whether because it involves a poorly-known or -understood rule or because the play was close—letting the coach know why you

Compliance through cooperation beats compliance through coercion every time.

made the call can achieve the same thing. The coach may not seem particularly interested in your explanation, but that's often because they're embarrassed about not knowing the rule better.

Some people believe that on a controversial call it is better to leave the person who made the call on the far side of the field or even rotate him over to the far side. Actually, it is better to have him come over as soon as possible and "clear with air" with a quick explanation to the coach rather than to let the situation fester.

A common complaint of coaches is that you aren't calling the game "even." The time-honored response to this is, "Coach, our job is to keep the game safe and fair, not even." We often call more fouls on one team than the other, usually because one team is *committing* more fouls!

You can also try to keep the players in line by talking to them during the game. There is an important line here: you can talk to the players to try to keep them from committing fouls, you can make general comments to both teams, but you can't *coach* the players.

"Coaching" usually refers to making comments that specifically benefit one team over another. For example, if you're the wing official on a face-off and one of the players has his foot across the wing line, saying "Blue 57, get your foot behind the line," that can be construed as coaching since it's obviously a comment designed to prevent a player from a specific team from committing a violation. However, saying "Gentlemen, make sure you're behind the line" is a general comment to all players—and can even refer to players behind the restraining line in addition to the wing line—so it isn't coaching. If the player steps back behind the line so you don't have to call the foul, that's good game management.

There are many other instances where communicating with players is good game management:

- If player B1 is getting close to being called for a slash, you can tell him "Get stick! Stay off the shoulder!" If you don't,

there's a good chance he'll keep escalating the checks to see what he can get away with.

- If player gets pushed from behind, tripped, or slashed by his own player, yell, "Red, 24, that was your teammate!" This lets the player know you saw what happened and it wasn't a foul; since the player didn't see what happened himself, if you don't say something he's just going to seethe about you missing the call and maybe start playing out of control.
- If a player or team is hitting late, a warning to the effect of "Green, 42, you're getting close to a late hit! Don't take that penalty" can be effective, especially if it's within earshot of his coaches and teammates, who will likely be happy to reinforce that message.
- Positive reinforcement is also useful: "Number 48, I really appreciate how you throttled down after he passed the ball so I didn't have to call a foul!" Since the players often perceive that their interactions with officials are predominantly negative, anything you can do to change that perspective helps you manage the game. Be public with praise and private with criticism.
- When a player does something wrong and you want to correct that behavior, whether or not you penalized it, try appealing to his ego. For example: "Number 24, you're too good of a player to need to take a cheap shot like that." This should be done quietly, preferably so that

only the player can hear, to avoid "calling out" the player in front of the other players.

Some of these situations may seem close to coaching, but the distinction is that you're trying to talk the players out of committing personal fouls. While a coach could get mad if you're helping a team avoid technical fouls resulting in a change of possession, it's hard for him to get mad at you for trying to protect his players.

It's also much harder for a coach to get mad when he hears you warn a player, sees the player ignore the warning by doing the same thing again, and **then** getting a flag for it. He's still not going to be happy about being man down, but at least he'll feel that the flag didn't come out of nowhere.

An often-overlooked means of communication is through body language. Coaches and players will zero in on a referee who has the "Deer in the Headlights" look, who slouches when making calls as if unsure of himself. Conversely, they get irritated with the "gun-slinger," who peers in to the play with arms wide and ready to sling flags. Stand tall, relaxed, and have the attitude that you can handle whatever presents itself.

Thanks to the crew from the LacrosseForums.com Lacrosse Rules and Officiating forum, who provided numerous suggestions for this article. Special thanks to Eric Evans and Rod Korba, who provided numerous suggestions and revisions to an earlier draft.

Write for Stripes!

Stripes is for MDOC members, but we also want it to be written *by* MDOC members! Please submit:

- Game situations and rules/quiz questions.
- Articles about officiating principles.
- Articles about specific men's officials.
- Photos and graphics relevant to officiating.
- News from your area.
- Articles about training or recruiting techniques or programs.
- Amusing anecdotes about officiating.
- Humor pieces, jokes, and cartoons.
- Letters to the editor.

In short, if it has to do with men's lacrosse officiating or will be of interest to men's lacrosse officials, send it in.

All submissions we use will be credited, and—for feature articles and significant contributions that we use, or even for several smaller ones—we'll send you a "Stripes" T-shirt.

Send submissions to
lax.ref@comcast.net

REFFING SHORTS

NFHS rules updates

These updates come from Kent Summers, NFHS Rules Editor.

The penalty for illegal cleats would fall under Rule 5-5, "Use of Illegal Equipment."

The procedure to follow should the host school not have an adequate number of lacrosse balls with the NFHS Authenticating Mark:

- a. Play the contest with the balls supplied with no penalty
- b. Notify the state high school athletic/activities association and/or local supervisor/director of athletics and they will deal with the situation to prevent future problems.

Shock Doctor "Gravity Mouth Guard" not legal for NCAA or NFHS play

There have been many questions regarding the Shock Doctor "Gravity" mouth guard, which is designed to be worn over the lower teeth instead of the upper teeth.

According to Kent Summers, NFHS Rules Editor: "The Shock Doctor Gravity mouth guard does not meet the specifications rule 1-9-1c nor the requirements on page 83, Points of Emphasis, in the NFHS Boys Lacrosse Rule Book. Thus, it

would not be allowed for play under NFHS rules."

NCAA Secretary-Rules Editor Chuck Winters states: "On page 19 of the 2007 NCAA Men's Lacrosse Rules Book para. 3 it clearly states the mouthpiece must cover all upper-jaw teeth. If the Shock Doctor Gravity Mouth Guard does not cover the upper-jaw teeth, it would not be legal for NCAA play in 2007. The mouth guard could be submitted to the NCAA Rules Committee for it to review during its annual meeting this summer."

Note that players are technically not prohibited from wearing this mouth guard, provided they are also wearing a legal mouth guard that covers all upper teeth.

MCLA Championship officials selected

The following twenty officials have been chosen to attend the MCLA Championships in Frisco, Texas this year:

Steve Adamick - WCLL
 Gary Alabaster - WCLL
 Don Balch - SELC
 Keith Denebeim - WCLL
 Pete Fleury - SELC
 Dana Friend - CCLA
 Hank Friedman - RMLC
 Ed Giambalvo - SELC
 Ashley Gorham - LSA
 Dave Hague - WCLL
 Aaron Koransky - PNCLL
 Joe Lachat - RMLC
 Frank Lynch - RMLC
 Tim Markham - GRCL
 Mark McInnis - PCLL
 Kevin Morris - UMLL
 Anton Schulzki - RMLC
 Jim Shaw - GRCL

Greg Simon - WCLL
 Jeff Thompson - CCLA
 Bob Duggan - NAA
 Eric Rudolph - Assistant NAA

Call for US Lacrosse convention speakers

The 2007 US Lacrosse Convention—held in Philadelphia from January 10–13, 2007—featured the most successful program ever for men's lacrosse officials. However, the MDOC Training Committee is always looking to expand and improve the offerings. If you have suggestions for seminar topics or speakers, or if you have a topic you'd like to present, please contact lax.ref@comcast.net by May 25, 2007.

US Lacrosse COC Newsletter 3/28/07

Warren Kimber requested that the following memo to coaches by USILA President Kevin Corrigan be sent to all COC Officials.

Coaches,

Four weeks into this season and a number of things to report.

We have received an unusually high number of reports regarding instances of misconduct and unsportsmanlike behavior on behalf of coaches and players. To date we have already surpassed the number of suspensions from last season. These incidents will (and must) continue to be called, and when necessary, appropriate and subsequent suspensions based on the USILA's Code of Conduct must apply.

Please make sure the language of your players is in accordance to NCAA rules. Numerous incidents of player and coach language violations have been reported, but not flagged. Please know that the officials are being instructed by Warren Kimber to penalize this violation, so be forewarned.

Close games mean that every call may be more intensely scrutinized and potentially more important. Officials are working to do the best job they can, and, it should be noted, are also being held more accountable for their performance than ever before. Your evaluations, along with the observer program and the scrutiny of the DAA's and Warren Kimber, allow for a balanced evaluation of the officials....so please continue to fill out your evaluations....they do make a difference in time but only if coaches take time to fill them out.

Given the increasingly competitive nature of games at all levels, we, as coaches, are responsible for assuring rule and sportsmanship compliance from our teams. Thanks for your continued efforts in this area.

Membership discount on NCAA championship weekend tickets

US Lacrosse is providing its members with the opportunity to experience 2007's best men's and women's college lacrosse by providing discounted tickets to the 2007 NCAA Men's and Women's Lacrosse Championships. Members can save up to \$12 per ticket for the 2007 NCAA Men's Lacrosse Championships, held May 26-28,

2007 at M&T Bank Stadium in Baltimore, and can purchase all-session passes for \$10 per ticket for the 2007 NCAA Women's Lacrosse Championships, held May 25-27 on Franklin Field at the University of Pennsylvania.

To find out more about how you can purchase discounted tickets to the 2007 NCAA Men's Lacrosse Championships, please e-mail info@uslacrosse.org.

"Vail Shootout" LAREDO

The dates for the Vail Shootout Lacrosse Referee Development program have been announced. The clinic will be held on Tuesday, June 26, in the evening. Tournament games will be held from June 27-30.

LAREDO participants should plan to arrive in Denver no later than the afternoon of June 26 to be in Vail for the clinic that evening. Participants may leave Vail Saturday afternoon, June 30 (for Denver departures Saturday evening) or Sunday morning (Denver departures late Sunday morning or early afternoon).

For more information on the Vail Laredo program, contact Training Committee Chair David Seidman at "davidseidman@mac.com".

Memo to USILA/COC officials

The following memo was sent to USILA and COC officials by NCAA National Coordinator of Officials Warren Kimber. It may be useful to COC officials who did not get the e-

mail and to high school officials who officiate under NCAA rules.

We've completed four weeks of our fifteen week 2007 season and from the first face off to date it looks as though on any given day anyone is capable of beating anyone. As predicted this is going to be the most competitive season across all three divisions.

While this is exciting for all involved some of the plays are causing serious concerns. In this short time span there appear to have been more unsportsmanlike fouls and more ejections than in previous seasons. Prior to 2007 the control exercised over unacceptable language has been exemplary on your part. Unfortunately, however, this year we're hearing the use of bad language on the part of coaches, team personnel and players. Clean it up, now! The current mechanics employed on the face off play are detecting more violations which appear to be called. Several observations deserve attention. When you are on the wing line, move a little closer to the center line, as close as half way up the line as the player positioning will permit you to. Your responsibilities there are to see that the wing players are behind the restraining line and to also support the face off official on placement of the players crosses and movement of the players.

If a coach questions you on a violation of a face off player omit saying "it's not my call" try "I'll watch for it coach." Also remember that repeatedly committing the same technical foul can result in an unsportsmanlike conduct foul. One call like that in all probability

would stop those violations.

There are reports of face off players literally grabbing the ball with their gloved hand and directing it to a teammate by rolling it out. While this maybe extremely difficult to detect, again one such call for unsportsmanlike conduct, one minute full time serve would be a deterrent to recurrences.

Several of the unsportsmanlike calls have occurred after the final whistle has been blown ending the game. It is requested that when that whistle is blown the trail official go to the table verify the score and pick up any belongings of the crew and join the other members of the crew at the center of the field. When the players have huddled at their respective benches, you can then leave the field for your locker room. Your responsibilities remain in place until you are off the field and in your locker room.

There have been a number of relatively low scoring games which have been dominated by extremely tough, tight defenses. Defense dominated games are much more difficult to officiate because the possessions are longer and the intensity is greater. When your in one of these games they require a greater deal of your attention to each and every play. Just think about that and discuss the possibilities of those types of games during your pre-game preparations.

Training for assignors

There are many manuals, guides, books and web pages devoted to

helping officials improve themselves to become better referees.

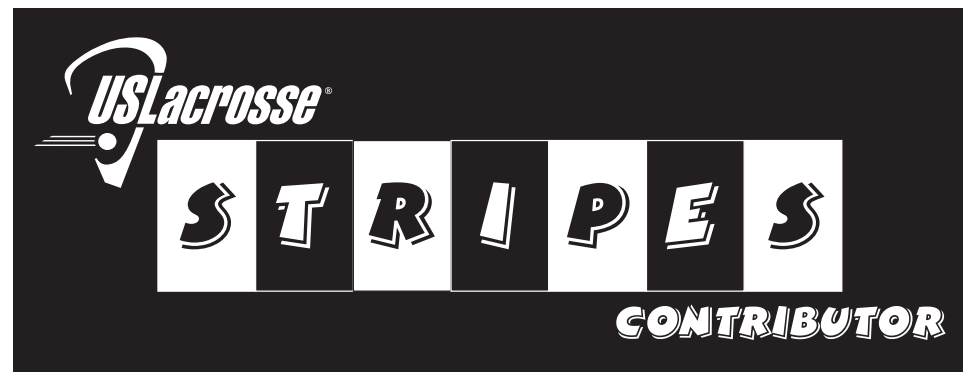
These publications often are designed from tried and true practices that have worked throughout the years and are therefore a standard for others to learn from and emulate. However, for those of us that assign officials to game, we have very little to fall back on.

Assigner's have no book or web content to help guide us in our task of assigning game officials. Most of us learn our trade by trial and error, or if some of us are lucky enough, from an old assigner who passes his experience on to us. On the surface, it may not seem like that big a concern. How hard can it be to assign games; just see who is available on a given day and put them on a game, right? As many veteran assigners will tell you, it isn't that simple.

There are many pitfalls in assigning, and if you are not aware of

what they are, you could step right into one. With that in mind, the MDOC Training committee has developed a Best Practices Guide for Assigners. This guide was designed for assigners to use when devising game assigning strategies. This is not intended to be exhaustive or mandatory, but is intended to supply the assigners with some ideas that others have found helpful. By trying to follow these courses of action, you may be able to; 1) Achieve a solid foundation to base your assigning decisions on; 2) Reduce the number of complaints you receive from your officials or coaches about the assignments; and 3) Take steps to minimize and help mitigate the potential claims or complaints against you in your role as an assigner.

If you would like to receive a copy of this guide, please e-mail a request to Andre Sanders at "aloa_assigner@yahoo.com".



Stripes "Dri-Release" Contributor T-shirts are now shipping. Are you getting one?

Reverse Quiz

This issue, we decided to shake things up a little with a reverse quiz. In the usual quiz, we tell you the situation and you provide the ruling. In a reverse quiz, we give you the ruling and you have to figure out the particulars of the situation that resulted in the ruling. The answers are the same for NCAA and NFHS rules.

1. Team A scores a goal, and the team B coach immediately requests an equipment check of the player that scored the goal. The officials refuse.
2. After a clear by team A, the official looks back into team A's defensive end of the field and finds that team B only has two players there. Team B is at full strength and is not in the process of subbing, yet the official does not call offside.
3. Team B has possession in the attack area, calls for a timeout, and calls for a double horn and a crosse count. The officials acknowledge that team A has 5 crosses in the game measuring 52–72 inches long, but they refuse to assess a penalty against team A.
4. The period ends with team A defending the goal on the south side of the field. The next period begins with team A defending the same goal.
5. The officials and teams arrive at the game site. The officials inspect the field, and then instruct the official scorer and timer that A1 will begin in the penalty box, serving 3:00 non-releasable, and that they will begin with the official scoreboard reading 1-0 in favor of team B.
6. B1 attempts to throw the ball back to goalie B2 to start the clear. B2 misses the pass and the ball completely passes through the plane of the goal and hits the back of the net. Team A is not in the crease, is not offside, and does not have too many men on the field. The whistle had not blown to stop play, nor had horn blown to signal the end of the period. The officials immediately signal no goal.
7. Goalie B1 is standing in his crease. A1 fires a shot, and B1 bats the ball away with his hand (but he does not grasp the ball or otherwise withhold the ball from play). The lead official correctly calls B1 for illegal touching and awards the ball to team A.
8. Goalkeeper B1, who does not have possession and is out of the crease, runs toward the crease to chase down a pass from defenseman B2. B1 gets one foot in the crease and then catches the pass. Instead of starting a 4-second count, the official correctly blows the whistle immediately and awards the ball to the defense, 20 yards laterally from the goal.
9. A1 and A2, who are both legally on the field, hand their crosses to each other during a live ball while A3 is in possession. The official calls illegal procedure on team A and awards the ball to team B.
10. Defenseman B1 passes to goalkeeper B2, who is inside his crease. As soon as B2 catches the ball, the officials blow the whistle to stop play. (There are two answers.)

Have a good quiz question or an interesting game situation? Send it to lax.ref@comcast.net, and be sure to include your name, city, and district. Please specify whether your quiz covers NFHS rules, NCAA rules, or both.

Officiating a Blowout

by John Bistowski

It's the third quarter of a lopsided game, and the team that is down by a double-digit score has just gone offside on the far side of the field (away from the benches). The player realizes his mistake and gets back on the proper side of the field before anyone can notice.

Anyone, that is, but you.

You are the trail official and have the play covered. What do you do? Do you penalize the player and his team for a play that will have no bearing in the game? Do you put his team man-down for thirty seconds (defensive offside), or take away a potential scoring opportunity (offensive offside) when his team is down by 10 or more goals?

The answer to these questions could be both yes and no. The player did commit an infraction and by rule and he should be penalized. But what advantage did he gain? Will it affect the outcome of the game?

More than likely the play in question will be inconsequential to the final outcome. If that's the case, then where is the need to stop play and add more fuel to the burning emotion of the losing team's head coach, fans, and players? Maybe the right call is a non-call.

But if a game is out of reach for one of the participating teams, we have to ask ourselves: when should a potential call be overlooked and when should it be made?

"First and foremost, the official must remain objective in officiating the game despite the score," says San Diego County Lacrosse Officials Association director of training, Tim McGarry. "Many times, officials allow for subjectivity to set in and lessen the fouls called on the team being overwhelmed. But making the necessary calls and keeping the game under control should always remain the objective."

Objectivity vs. subjectivity: it's a part of game management that can cause officials to walk a fine line. We're taught in our training sessions to officiate the game—not the score. This is particularly true when the fouls are of the injurious nature. A slash is a slash whether the score is 2-1 or 20-1.

"It is important [to call penalties] as the game continues, even as it gets more and more lopsided," offers McGarry, a COC clinician and a high school coach. "Out of frustration, the losing team may start to commit more fouls, particularly personal fouls—ones of

the unnecessary roughness, slashing and unsportsmanlike nature." In short, McGarry is stating that we must keep the players safe no matter what the score.

Don't let late hits, slashes or unnecessary roughness go uncalled if the game begins to take on an overtly physical nature. The rules allow for officials to call unnecessary roughness on a player who commits an avoidable, deliberate or violent act, even if the body check was otherwise legal.

One way to counteract potential physicality and prevent it from overwhelming a game of this type is through communication.

McGarry says, "A helpful way for officials to control a game is to provide preventative measures by way of communication to the players. Keep them focused on playing the game according to the rules and in a sportsmanship-like manner.

"Additionally, keep the line of communication open with the coaches. There may be times where it's prudent to suggest to the coach of the superior team that he can keep the score respectful by employing various methods of ball movement and substitutions.

“As for the coach of the team getting blown out, keep a finger on the pulse of his disposition—as he goes so goes his players. He may have concerns that go beyond the score. Protection of his players is paramount if the superior team is greater in size and strength to his players. Communicate. Let him know you understand the situation and you will do your best to keep the game under control in both the physical aspect and particularly in terms of sportsmanship.”

Another method to employ in these types of games is to use the rules to your advantage. Penalty adjudication in men's lacrosse allows for penalty time to be served in one-, two-, or three-minute increments for personal fouls. This is a tool that officials would be wise to use whenever necessary. The thuggish player who already has committed two or three personal fouls and is obviously trying to ruin the game experience for his opponents is an easy target for a three-minute time-serving penalty. An unsportsmanlike call in addition to the unnecessary roughness call on this player can serve multiple purposes: It can lock that player in the penalty area for a substantial amount of time and get him one personal foul closer to fouling out of the game.

This method, in conjunction with communication, can be a very effective tool if the nature of the game begins to get rough around the edges. An official's timeout for an impromptu meeting with both coaches could be in order. Use the opportunity to offer a polite, yet stern warning that excessive physical activity will be subject to two or three-minute penalty calls.

Another utensil in an official's toolbox is the game clock. Federation rules (NFHS) allow for a running clock in the second half of a game when the score differential is 12 goals or more. McGarry suggests using this rule to your advantage.

“Slow the pace of the game down when the clock is running,” says McGarry. “Don't be in such a hurry to get the ball back up to the



photo by Justin Wetterer

If you don't do a good job managing blowout games, things can quickly blow up in your face.

center X for a face off. Take your time, but don't walk. Get to your positions, work your cards, and eat up time counting players. Be deliberate. Look to your officiating partner and then go to the face off.

“Same for out of bounds on side lines and end lines. Ignore the quick restarts. A situation that calls for a quick restart in a very competitive game is not necessary in a game with a running clock. Ultimately, time will run out, and

the clock will be your best friend here.”

McGarry speaks from experience. Like everywhere else, the game of lacrosse is growing at a prolific rate in Southern California, and because of this rapid growth, one-sided affairs are inevitable. The newly formed varsity program just won't have the skill level or wherewithal to compete with the schools that have been playing the game for 10, 20, or even 30 years or more.

It's a fact: every official is bound to have at least one “dog” of a game on his schedule. Just because it is not one we're looking forward to working doesn't mean we show up just to collect a game fee. It's these types of games where we actually earn our pay, and if you'll pardon the cliché, earn our stripes.

Keep the game clean and keep the participants safe.

Some things to remember:

Felony vs. misdemeanor.

Injurious/personal fouls must always be called (felonies). Fouls that are technical in nature (misdemeanors) can be judged in terms of the principle of advantage/disadvantage and ignored if the situation warrants.

Communication. Preventive officiating starts with talking to the participants letting them know you haven't lost interest in the game. You are the authority. Maintain that edge.

Check your six. If you think a

certain player is taking liberties with his opponent (the cheap slash or butt end to the gut) behind the play when the action is up field, sneak a peek behind you, or maybe slow down your pace when transitioning from the lead position to trail. Keep 'em honest.

Not a rush job. The clock is your friend. If it's in running mode take your 20-second timer out of the game. No need for delays of game after a goal, a time-serving penalty, or a sideline out of bounds. Be deliberate and mechanical when restarting the game. Every tick of the clock is one less second that you have to worry about a hard foul or further embarrassment taking place in the contest.

Maintain control. In competitive games, we try to be invisible. We want the players to dictate the outcome without anyone noticing us. But in a blowout, we need to step to the fore. Keep control of the participants: try to keep the superior team humble and in check. Encourage the lesser team with an "atta boy" or a "nice play" to keep them focused on play of the game rather than their frustration. And don't let the fans feed the fire. The loud-mouthed lout who bellows, "C'mon ref, let 'em play!" after you make a call needs to be addressed and quieted either by you or through site management personnel.

A bad game doesn't mean it has to be a bad experience. You're there to manage it. Make it a point to do so.

Honor the Game

by Clint Bond

Ask ten different people who play this game and you'll probably get ten different answers as to what it means to "Honor the Game." Every so often, though, the honor in the game just appears—often, when you least expect it.

Recently, I was fortunate enough to officiate a game between two well-coached, well-behaved, spirited high school teams. One of them will probably be the state champion this year. These are longtime rival, and many of the players know each other.

The game was a one-goal loss to the visitors. It wasn't that they didn't try. Some goalie saves were the kind that takes your breath away. Play was valiant. But as it has a habit of doing, time ran out for one team.

I was the single side, and—as I made my way across the field to leave—I encountered one of those sights you wish everyone could see. Amidst the celebration of the winning home team, a losing visitor had dropped to knees in defeat. He buried his head in his gloves as if to block out the celebration around him. There, at a spot about midway between the top of the box and midfield, this losing player was surrounded by

home team players jumping and bumping. Just to make sure everything was on the up and up, to make sure celebration and defeat did not clash, I slowed my departure. From that crowd emerged a lone home player who stepped and knelt next to the loser. The winner wrapped an arm around the shoulders of the loser. And as their helmets touched, I know something was said. The losing player's head was nodding and I thought I detected just a slight lean into the winner.

I didn't get to hear the words. They weren't meant for me anyway. It was a moment between two young warriors with a common bond called lacrosse. As quickly as all this happened, they rose together and went their own ways.

You never know when the honor in this game will materialize. Players, coaches, officials and fans come in all shapes, and sizes and ages. Sometimes the honor is nothing more than a coach or parent being patient with a youthful player. Other times its moments like I've shared in this article. Still others are...well...they are for you to find and to cherish.

Honor the Game!

Reverse quiz answers

Questions are worth 10 points each. We'll let you award yourself partial credit if you think you deserve it.

1. The goal was in overtime. The game is over, and by rule no check may be requested.
2. A1 ran out of bounds to avoid going offside. This is not a violation as long as he immediately returns to the field.
3. One of these crosses is a goalie crosse, which doesn't count against the total number of long poles allowed.
4. It's overtime, and that's the goal they ended up with after the coin toss.
5. No penalty allows the officials to award a goal, so the only possible explanation is that the officials have arrived to complete a suspended game (e.g., for a thunderstorm) when the score was 1-0. The 3:00 non-releasable penalty could be a carryover from before the game was suspended or it could be due to, say, illegal goals at the make-up site.
6. There was a flag down for a foul by Team A. (Note that



“There was a play-on for a foul by Team A” is not correct here; because Team B had possession outside the crease, there could not be a play-on in effect.)

7. Though the goalie was in his crease, he batted the ball while it was outside the crease cylinder. The goalie may only bat the ball when both he and the ball are inside the cylinder.
8. Goalkeeper B1 and defenseman B2 were having a little fun leading the fast break and were in their offensive end. B1 stepped in Team A's crease, and the ball was correctly awarded to the defense: Team A.
9. Either A1 or A2 is the goal-

keeper, and the exchange created a situation where one of the players was either not legally equipped to play goalkeeper or not legally equipped to be a field player.

10. Either B2 caught the ball in his hand—which is illegal touching for any player, even the goalkeeper—or B2 caught the ball in his crosse after it had broken the plane of the goal.

Basic Quiz Scoring:

≥ 90	Other forms of social interaction besides lacrosse officiating exist.
70–89	You have the ability to think outside the (attack) box.
40–70	You get the idea, but you need to learn the exceptions to the general rules a little better.
20–39	Perhaps you need to spend a bit more time on the regular quizzes.
< 20	Answering “official's error” to every question is not the right approach.

District Governor Reports

If you have a news item or announcement for your district, please submit directly to your district governor, who will send them to the newsletter as a single report from the district.

District 1

MA, ME, NH, RI, VT, CT
Dave Pinciario
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District 2

Upstate NY
Jim O'Hara
johara4405@hotmail.com

District 3

CT, NJ, NY, PA
Robert Lynn
buzzlynn@verizon.net

District 4

DE, MD, NC, VA, *Washington, D.C.*
Charles Baber
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Local official associations have begun to meet to review new rules and play situation in preparation for the upcoming session. The associations are responsible for training new officials and improving the knowledge of existing members as they progress to more competitive games. Here are highlights from some of the local groups:

NVLOA

8 new applicants and a total of 65 officials The association has 1,200 games scheduled working in northern Virginia.

District 5

AL, FL, GA, MS, NC, SC, TN
Eric Rudolph
erudolph@bellsouth.net

In District 5 we continue to have tremendous growth of lacrosse. Next year we will have 2 or 3 new Varsity college teams. The Southeastern Lacrosse League now has 28 teams, and we have had several college clubs formed who are playing games amongst themselves and with SELC teams and may apply for membership next year.

On the high school and youth level we are seeing even more growth. We are having new high school teams start in areas we where we have not had teams and thus no local officials. In addition the growth at the youth level is tremendous. Many high school players have been trained as officials to help with those games, but we still need more. This is great for the growth of the game, but it means we have to struggle to recruit, train and retain officials. In some cases we just do not have enough trained officials to handle the games the way we would like. So please continue to recruit new officials.

If you know of any candidates let you local trainers or organizations know of their interest so that we can get them involved.

District 6

IL, IN, KY, MI, OH, PA, WI, WV
Rob Quinn
District6Governor@hughes.net

District 7

IA, KS, MN, MO, ND, NE, SD
Bob Schulte
bobschulte@msn.com

District 8

AR, LA, OK, TX
Clint Bond
clint.bond@comcast.net

Jim Carboneau made a trip to Texas in February. He officiated several games in the Dallas area and conducted a clinic in Houston.

A mini-Big 12 tournament was held in the Dallas area in early March. Colorado State, Texas A&M, Texas and Missouri participated.

Last year the Southwest Lacrosse Officials Association for the first time had a father and son crew work a varsity high school game (Clint and Brady Bond). This year the SWLOA has another first. A mom and her son worked as a crew on a youth game (Susan and Hudson Seidel). Hudson also plays

for Plano West varsity squad.

Two USILA varsity contests were played in the Dallas area. On March 14, Geneseo-SUNY and Springfield were scheduled to play at the Episcopal School of Dallas. On St. Patrick's Day, March 17, Holy Cross and Navy will meet at SMU's Ford Stadium. It is an honor for the SWLOA to provide full crews for both games.

District 9

CO, NM, UT, WY
Hank Friedman
friedman@newmex.com

A Colorado COC official has set up a new website this year to act as a clearing house for all things officiating. The address is: <http://rmloa.org/>. This site cover officiating from the youth to collegiate level. It also contains links for obtaining officiating gear.

The following District 9 COC officials have been selected to work the MCLA National Championships in Frisco, TX this May. Hank Friedman, NM; Joe LaChat, CO; Frank Lynch, UT and Anton Schulzki. Congratulations to all and good luck in Texas!

District 10

AZ, CA, HI, NV
Gary Alabaster
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District 11

AK, ID, MT, OR, WA, BC
Fred Zensen
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From the 4/21 Grand Rapids Press:

Jeffrey P. Sides 6/13/56–04/20/07

Jeffrey P. Sides, of Caledonia Township, Michigan, died on April 20, 2007 at Spectrum Health, Blodgett Hospital in Grand Rapids, MI. He was born June 13, 1956 to Jack and Eileen Sides in Indianapolis, IN. He married Pamela Todd in 1990 in Coldwater, MI. He is survived by his wife, Pam; mother, Eileen Sides of Indianapolis; brother, Jay (Amy) Sides of Oakland, CA; sister, Nancy (David) Starke of Manhattan Beach, CA; mother-in-law, Leila Todd of Allen, MI; and brother-in-law, Bill (Judy) Todd of Coldwater, MI. He is also survived by five nieces, Molly and Katie Starke, Maureen and Audrey Sides, Dawn (nee Todd) and Jeremy Whitford, and one nephew, Tim Todd.

Jeff was employed since 2000 at Dematic Corp. of Grand Rapids in the Software Applications Group as a software project lead. He is a former resident of Dayton, OH and of the Silicon Valley in California working in the defense industry.

He was a certified MHSAA boy's and [COC and] CCLA men's lacrosse official, an APICS Certified Program Manager, and PMI Certified Project Management Professional. Jeff graduated in 1974 from Pike High School in Indianapolis, IN; Purdue University in 1979 with a BS in Industrial Management and from the University of Southern California in 1984 with a Master of Science in Systems Management. Jeff greatly enjoyed the sport of lacrosse and served as an official for the past nine years. He was a huge fan of Purdue University football and basketball as well as auto racing.

Services for Jeff Sides will be held at the George White Funeral Home, Quincy, Michigan on Monday, April 23 at 1:00 p.m. with interment following in the Allen Cemetery. Visitation is scheduled Sunday, April 22 from 3:00 to 7:00 p.m. and Monday from 11:30 a.m. until time of the service.

Memorials for Jeff may be made to the US Lacrosse Foundation or charity of one's choice. Memorials for Jeff may be made to the US Lacrosse Foundation or to the charity of your choice.

From JimBo Bousson: I was truly saddened by the news of the passing of Jeff Sides. I remember sitting with him at GVSU in 2001 when we took our first proctored COC test together, monitored by Evan Carlson. I cant believe how sudden and painfully it has hit me. I thank God for all the contacts I have made in the lacrosse family and how much I have learned from all of you. When ever a friend passes it is fond to look back on the good times and cherish them as the reality check comes in and shows us all how fragile life really can be. Jeff and I car pooled often for many CCLA games and meetings at ND. My sympathies go out to Pam and all of their families and friends mourning a great loss. So if I never said thank you for helping me out in my lacrosse career I say it now. As a gesture of his memory I as the president of BLOA the Kentucky association will make a contribution to US Lacrosse in Jeff's memory. I encourage all the associations Jeff's life had touched to do the same. He had touched us all as a raf'n partner, an assignor, and a friend.....Play On Jeff!

NFHS

Coach's Challenge Mechanic

Under NFHS rules—but not NCAA rules—a head coach may challenge the application of a rule. However, the NFHS rules do not specify a mechanic for how this procedure is to take place. What follows is a recommendation from the SOC Mechanics Committee for a workable mechanic; this mechanic is included in the *MDOC Level 1 & 2 Training Manual*. Please consult your local officials association to determine whether this procedure will be adopted in your area.

Only the application of a rule during the last live-ball play may be challenged, not the judgment of the official or whether a call was missed. The assumption will be that the officials have applied the rules correctly unless the coach can convince them otherwise. The official will not be asked to prove that the call is correct or to find the rule in the rulebook. The procedure is as follows:

- The coach waits for the whistle to end play and requests a double horn. If play resumes before the double horn, no challenge can be made.
- The referee and both head coaches enter the table area. If the coach does not convince

the referee that an error has been made—or if the call cannot be challenged—the challenge is ended. It is expected that the conference will not last longer than two minutes.

- The officials will confer privately if necessary. The referee informs the coaches of the decision, which is final. If the coach continues to argue, a conduct foul or unsportsmanlike conduct foul may be assessed.
- The official will either correct the situation or charge the coach with a time-out. The challenging team may use the remaining time in the time-out, if any. The officials will then blow the whistle to summon the teams to the field and start the 20-second timer.
- If the challenge is denied and the coach had no timeouts, a technical foul will be assessed (either possession or a 30-second time-serving penalty), and play will restart immediately.
- No challenge can be made once the game ends. Unless there

has been a timekeeper error, no adjustments are made to the game clock regardless of the referee's ruling.

Examples:

- Player A1 was not wearing arm pads, and the official assesses a technical foul. Coach B challenges, claiming the correct call is a non-releasable personal foul, and the officials agree. Team B is not charged with a time-out and play resumes immediately.
- Attackman A1 interferes with goalie B1 during a loose ball. The play-on ends, and the officials award the ball to Team B in the alley. Coach B challenges the ruling, stating there should be a free clear. The coach is incorrect, so the officials charge Team B with a time-out.
- The officials call a slash on B1. Coach B challenges, stating that there was no foul because B1 did not hit the opponent hard enough for a slash to be called. Since this is an issue of judgment, not rules interpretation, the officials charge Team B with a time-out.

An interview with **ERIC EVANS**

by John Feegel, Jr.

Eric Evans began officiating high school lacrosse in Vermont in 1985. Since then, he has achieved almost everything a lacrosse official could hope for, including officiating state high school championship games in Vermont and Massachusetts, officiating the NCAA Championship Game at both the DI and DII level, and officiating European and World Championship finals.

He has also been involved in numerous behind-the-scenes activities such as holding posts in his local officials association and in various positions within the US Lacrosse Men's Division Officials Council (including a stint as the secretary of the International Officials Committee and his current position as the secretary of the Collegiate Officials Committee). He has been a clinician for the Vail Lacrosse Referee Development Program (LAREDO) since 1999, including a year as the head clinician, and has been a presenter at the US Lacrosse Convention. This July he will begin a two-year term on the NFHS Rules Committee, representing District I.

Finally, he's written extensively on lacrosse, including pieces on the history of New England lacrosse officiating and the history of the



International Lacrosse Federation World Championships.

MDOC Secretary John Feegel, from Virginia, recently sat down with Eric for a short interview.

John Feegel: What is in your travel bag? Since you do MLL to NCAA and traveling is more challenging than ever, what do you always bring along

Eric Evans: Each year I travel with less. Always carry the stuff you need to officiate with you on the plane as carry-on. If not, it'll end up in some place like Baltimore.

JF: Do you perceive differences in play and officiating styles between districts?

EE: Not really. I know in District 3 they like to spend minimum time, as the trail coming up, in the box. The reasoning is that little line violations/leaving early are trifling and assistant coaches can't complain because you are not there to be yelled at. On the other hand, the teams have paid for three officials and you can be a soothing presence in the box as the teams sub. Your two partners out on the field can handle the game because the offensive team is just playing ring-around-the-rosy until their personnel is all out there.

JF: How does international play compare with NCAA?

EE: No horn in ILF play. All subs on the fly. The box (or "gate" as it is sometimes called) in ILF play gets more interesting as players try to "pick" one another going on and off. International games are called more closely and tightly than NCAA games. This is sometimes a shock for American players and referees in their first international games.

JF: With the U-19 World Game

officiating try outs scheduled for this 12-14 July at UMBC, what would you “coach” the hopeful high school and collegiate zebras?

Get a copy of the ILF rules then make a list of 25 major differences between ILF and NCAA rules. Get a copy of the ILF mechanics. Get a tape of an international game where lots of “stuff” happened and study it. Finally, as you do a high-school game after you have studied the ILF rules and mechanics, think about each game situation that happens and how you would handle it differently under ILF rules/procedures. In essence you are doing two games at once in your mind. At the tryouts themselves, watch, watch, watch as many other games and referees as you can to pick up pointers.

I went to the U-19 Tryouts at Hofstra in 1998. I met Tom Sutton there. At the end of the tryouts I thought we had both done pretty well. Well, we weren't even on the alternates list! That was discouraging, but I came back in 2001 for the World tryouts with a vengeance and made it, as did Tom in 2005 for the 2006 World games. We both ended up working the Final (2002 and 2006, respectively). So sometimes you have to get on the radar screen first.

JF: When you are paired with a young unknown official, what about him, or her, first impresses you as the game begins?

EE: To have him or her say, “I want pointers before, during, and after the game. You will not hurt my feelings.”

JF: What is your worst officiating



bad habit?

EE: I have a very hard time “counting ahead” on offside. I have enough trouble counting three attackmen and four D-men back.

JF: What is your face-off command, or initial comment? Do you tell them what you are looking for?

EE: “Guys, keep up the good work. Keep the sticks straight up and wait for the whistle.”

JF: How much does physical conditioning play in your pre-season preparation?

EE: A great deal. I confirm my wife's observation that I am obsessed with officiating by doing sprints on Christmas morning.

JF: Tell about a particular injury.

EE: Never been injured, knock on wood. I do, however, tend to get run over on the field more than most officials because I pinch in too closely to the crease.

JF: What calls would you like seen enforced more regularly?

EE: I think slashing needs to be revisited. I think we let too much go at all levels of play.

JF: As an official, what does “game management” mean to you?

EE: It means making the game: Safe. Fair. Fun. When the game is out of reach for one team and they are getting grumpy because they're on D all the time, then that team is going to get a few more of those 50-50 technical calls to at least put the ball in their stick for a bit. You keep calling the personal fouls, of course; it's the small loose-ball technicals I am talking about here.

JF: I am avoiding asking you who you admire watching as an official. Understandably this would omit a deserved individual. However, is there someone, perhaps now retired, who you want to acknowledge as a great official?

EE: Although I have only worked with him a few times, I like watching Tom Abbott from Syracuse referee. Great presence on the field. He can move and run. Unflappable. Seems to be enjoying himself.

JF: Since 2003, you have either been a Vermont/Western Massachusetts rules interpreter or on the NFHS rules committee. What areas are you most interested in? Any rule changes you'd like to see?

EE: In the summer of 2007 I will join the NFHS Rules Committee. I am not as big a rule geek as Harold Buck, but I am close, so I look forward to clarifying the areas that

need clarity and keeping the NCAA-FED rule differences to a minimum.

JF: How many games do you call each spring?

EE: Thirty or so college games and an equal number of high-school games. No youth games.

JF: For a noon game, when do you eat? Any special meal?

EE: I try to have something in moderation before the game, no matter what time of day. Ain't much body fat on my chicken legs, so I tend to get cold easily on an empty stomach. When we had the crew system a few years ago I worked with R Dave Berman and Bruce Crawford and David, bless his heart, liked to dress as warmly as I do.

JF: One role you have not listed on your lacrosse resume is assignor. Is there a reason?

EE: After being on the receiving end of late-night phone calls during the season from the assignor(s), my wife has two words for me should I ever consider being an assignor: Divorce Court.

JF: Do you get nervous before big NCAA playoff games? How do you use this predicable emotion to help you concentrate better? Was there a particular try-out or game that most unnerved you with anxiety?

EE: I get nervous before every game. You have to juggle three thoughts in your mind at all times: what has happened earlier in the game, vis-à-vis calls; the play right in front of you now; and what

might happen in the next few seconds. If there was one game that was particularly nerve-wracking, it was probably Princeton at Brown, 2002. Winner claimed the Ivy-League title and a berth in NCAAs. Bill Tierney pacing up one sideline and Scott Nelson doing the same for Brown. Very interesting....

JF: LAREDO played an early role in your development back in the mid 90's. Can you offer a few thoughts on its usefulness?

EE: I wanted to move up the officiating ranks. The lacrosse officiating world wasn't coming to me on Putney Mountain, Vermont, so I had to travel to learn more and be seen. In 1997 and 1998, that meant Laredo. I went to the Texas A&M one and to Vail.

JF: Any call you have never made?

EE: How about flag down for an attackman running through the crease chasing a D man clearing the ball?

JF: Jazz? Classical? Blues? Rap?



Country and western? Easy Listening? Talk radio? Gospel? Heavy Metal?

EE: Doo-wop street corner harmony. Early rock-n-roll.

JF: Family?

EE: My lovely bride, who puts up with my obsession.

JF: Where did you go to college?

EE: Dartmouth. We had freshmen teams then. We lost to Brown 30-0. Where was the Game Management when I needed it?

JF: Tap a maple tree?

EE: I thought surely we tapped birch trees. Oh, that's right, we only do that when the Virginia tourists come by.

JF: As people who have seen you present at US Lacrosse Conventions will attest, you have a terrific sense of humor. Can you think of instances where this has helped you on the field?

EE: Around refs I know, the banter gets going pretty well. Around refs I don't know, I am "that quiet guy from way up north somewhere." Since I invariably get in hot water with my wit sometimes, I never joke with the coaches.

JF: If you could offer one piece of advice to young lacrosse officials, what would that be?

EE: Find a good mentor and pepper him with questions. I had one in David Hague. Rumor has it he had to move to California to escape all the questions I had when I was starting up.

Beginner's Corner #2: Goalie Interference

Few areas cause more confusion among coaches and players than goalie interference. The **only** time goalie interference results in a free clear is when it occurs when the goalie has possession in the crease (or on the legitimate follow-through of the goalkeeper on a clearing pass; this is explicit under NCAA rules and is normally interpreted the same way under NFHS rules).

Remember that goalie interference can only be called when the designated goalkeeper is involved and not with any other clearing team player. Also, a clamped ball is not in possession since a player cannot cradle, pass, or shoot with the ball clamped to the ground.

If the ball is in the crease and the goalie checks an offensive player's stick, that is not interference. However, if the goalie is scooping or raking and that action results in contact with an offensive player's crosse, that is interference. Also recall that no player's stick can ever be checked unless that player has possession or is within 5 yards of a loose ball; viola-



photo by Justin Wetterer

Contrary to popular belief, loose-ball goalie interference does not result in a free clear.

tions of rule are covered by *regular* interference.

The following table details the rulings based on whether the ball is loose or in possession and where the contact occurs.

	Ball is loose	Ball is in possession
Goalie in crease; contact with goalie crosse occurs <i>outside</i> the cylinder of the crease	No foul.	Play-on. If the goalie does not run the ball out of the crease or complete an outlet pass, award a free clear.
Goalie in crease; contact with goalie crosse occurs <i>inside</i> the cylinder of the crease	Play-on. If the goalie does not gain possession of the ball within a few seconds, award possession to the defense outside the attack area.	Play-on. If the goalie does not run the ball out of the crease or complete an outlet pass, award a free clear.

DEVELOPMENTAL

OFFICIATING

By Ned Dibble and Nick Gianaris

Many of our colleagues aspire to the Big Game. They want to rise up the ranks and be the guy who gets the call when the name colleges and championships need officiating. This is admirable, but it's not our objective. Some of us who officiate do it not only because we love lacrosse, but because we can also contribute the most to its growth by spending our time working with youth players.

Officiating accomplished players is like sending flowers to your wife on Valentines Day. College laxers and wives are already as committed as they're going to get, so the whistles and roses are just routine maintenance. Officiating new players is like sending flowers to a new love. The upside of each action is infinite! You're helping something of value to blossom. In our minds, being a part of bringing in and along the next superstar—or even the next kid who grows up to coach and officiate the next generation—is more important than making sure that kids who already have the addiction play a clean game.

Officiating the little kids takes a different basket of skills than most experienced refs have acquired. You're an ambassador of the game to the parents, a partner to the coaches, a teacher to the kids, and hopefully you're part of the spark

that ignites both a love and a respect for the game in the kids you officiate.

Let's take a closer look at these challenges, one at a time.

Ambassador of the game

At least in California and Michigan, most parents of young lacrosse players are new to the game as well. One mom described her response to first game as a parent as "horrified and thrilled at the same time." Never forget that lax moms, and sometimes dads, are the engine that fund and agitate our game. Nurturing that demographic is a tremendously fruitful way to advocate for the game.

Especially during a one-man game, we make a practice of heading straight for the parents at halftime and introducing ourselves. "Hi, I'm (state your name), and I'm the one who's trying to keep your kids safe from each other. If there are any new lacrosse parents here today, I'll be happy to answer any questions you might have." Explaining the rules to someone else is not only helpful to the parents, but it also helps you to solidify your own understanding of the rules. As a rule of thumb, dads will want to know how to recognize a slash or a cross check, and moms

are, well, totally unpredictable. One eminently sensible young mom wanted to know why we shouted "play on" just before stopping the game. Wasn't that rather misleading? Another suburban mom, after hearing an explanation to her husband about what is a legal check and what is a slash, asked "So why do I see bruises on the back of my son's calves when he comes home after a game?"

The most important thing here is to be approachable. We don't mind at all if parents start asking about calls. We *want* them engaged. We *want* them to feel like part of the community. And, in many cases, parents say they are surprised that we came over to talk with them and that the officials are actually "very nice!"

One skill many officials seem to share is the ability to store the whole game in short-term memory. The same resonance of detail that enables refs to chat with each other after the game about "that loose ball push behind the cage in the fourth" as if it had just happened also allows us to meet blue #5's parents in the parking lot after the game and recall some highlights of #5's game. The mom is impressed by how attentive and professional the officials are. The dad is convinced that his kid must have superstar written all over him to

have caught the refs eye and starts figuring how much sooner he can retire if junior gets a lacrosse scholarship. The kid is encouraged and proud to have been noticed in front of his parents.

Assigners also use youth games to train new officials, and we typically see a veteran official paired with a novice for a 2-man game. Usually the emphasis is on mechanics, but this is also a fantastic time to make officiating fun for the new ref. The veteran can set a great example by explaining that the young players the new referee is officiating today are the same kids that he or she will see when that official moves up the ranks to varsity games. This will give the new official additional motivation to work with the youth players, their coaches, and their parents in a positive fashion.

Partner to the coach

These are four words you never thought you'd see strung together in an issue of Stripes. However, there's a lot that goes into a successful day with the young'uns that is never a part of officiating more advanced players. Most of the rules and mechanics that we're taught are developed for skilled players, so we'll summarize our observations for the mechanics of "developmental" lax officiating.

It's still important to arrive early, but for different reasons than those for advanced players and programs. Youth lacrosse often gets the leftovers when fields are assigned, so check the field not only for safety issues, but to make sure that all the lines are there and

that the goals are properly assembled and their nets are intact. As parents and fans begin to arrive, make sure that they set up "spectating" positions at least 6 yards from the sideline and ask them to share that rule with other parents as they arrive.

Take more than a moment to meet the coaches. In other words, do more than certify them and find out who their captains and in homes are. Make sure that they know that you appreciate the effort they're putting in coaching a team, and that you're hoping to work with them in developing game skills in their team. Remember, youth team coaches are usually newer at their jobs and are volunteers, so they will appreciate your help and feedback.

Keep in mind that many youth level coaches are recently-graduated college players, often with a staff of aggressive football dads. The relationship between college teams and their officials is often adversarial, and is certainly not generally one of mutual cooperation, but that's their most recent experience. Often, even though you've explained your intention to work constructively with the coaches to educate the kids on how to play within the bounds of safety and fairness, the game starts and after a few minutes of awkwardly stumbling play, the rookie coach will have pointed out a dozen slow motion pushes, inadvertent brushes to helmets, cross check holds, and group trips—none of which were a safety issue or had a prayer of gaining any advantage.

It's for these reasons that you make sure that the coach understands

that your first priority is safety and that there will be plenty of minor and inconsequential infractions that both coach and official will see and both will ignore in interest of keeping the game moving and fun for the kids. If this becomes a distraction during the game, call the coaches together in the scorer's box and explain that if you had whistled every infraction the coaches had so graciously pointed out, the kids would have spent 30 seconds playing, 5 minutes sorting out who picks up the ball and who runs where, and we would have bored and discouraged kids thinking that games are way less fun than practices. Point out that the coaches will help their team more by yelling instructions to the players rather than the refs, as the refs aren't going to listen anyway. We've also found that a large dollop of 'advantage gained, advantage lost' in one's officiating decisions helps one decide what to flag and what to overlook. There's also the recognition that whatever a first-year player who can neither catch nor throw does is inevitably a disadvantage to his team.

Particularly at the beginning of the season, you'll find that a lot of kids are unfamiliar with lines on the field because they're new to the game and/or they've been practicing on a small, unlined field. The coach has probably been working on fundamental skills and perhaps some rudimentary plays, and stuff like restart mechanics and the offside rules might not have been thoroughly gone over.

It helps to offer to take the kids on a quick pre-game tour of the field, and most coaches are happy to have the help. If you don't, you'll

find kids want to stand just out of bounds like they've been taught to do in soccer and basketball on restarts after an out of bounds, and you'll spend valuable time shouting, "Step inbounds, please!" Also, teach them what "outside of the box" and what "5 yards" means in context of restarts. Ignorance of this can cause long delays while you usher kids into the alleys for restarts. Remember that whatever you don't teach them before the game, you'll be teaching them during their game time.

Teacher to the kids

Remember that you're there for the kids. There is a general officiating rule about not "coaching" the players, but that stands only in modified form when officiating new players. It's never our job to help kids with off-ball movement and recognizing an open pass, but we can help them understand what they did wrong when we call their number. We can take a little longer to help teams organize themselves for a proper restart. We can ask kids who come out for a face off if they've ever done it before, and take the time to instruct them on the fundamentals of taking a face if they haven't. We can try to be more verbose on our calls, not only to help the kids know what is going on, but to help the parents and coaches as well. For instance, when a shot goes over the end line, we are used to pointing in a direction as we whistle the ball dead. This clarifies nothing to the uninitiated. The practice in developmental ball is to whistle, then declare: "That was a **shot!** Blue was closest to the ball at the point and time it went out of bounds!"

Then point and shout "Blue ball!" If you tried to give this much explanation in a Varsity game, you'd be pilloried for slowing the game down, but for brand-new players it's appropriate.

When we officiate lacrosse games, we want the players to have a sense of dignity and respect for the game, and this starts at the youth level. Many times kids who aren't captains will come over and share opinions ("That guy pushed me. Otherwise I wouldn't have missed that pass that went out of



Teaching good sportsmanship starts in youth lacrosse.

bounds!"), data ("#25 isn't wearing his mouth guard. Isn't that a fast break for us?"), and questions ("If he turns his back right before I hit him, is it still a penalty?"). Our normal response is to either tell him to talk to his coach or respond laconically with "I'll look for it next time." These are players that we will see at the JV and Varsity levels in only a few short years, and we should emphasize with them that they should not loudly complain about a call and they should address us properly.

But a fifth grader may also be

looking for some feedback from you as an official, and in developmental lax, it's wise to spend a few extra seconds to explain to a youth player why a certain call was made, or even a pointer on how they should play the game so that they do not get called next time. Not only will this improve the young athlete, but they will gain an appreciation and love for lax and will have more fun, and will learn to respect the officials. In addition, the feedback from the player back to the team and the parents about your positive attitude will gain their respect as well. We don't want young players to view us in an adversarial way, but rather that we are working with them to help them learn the game from our perspective of managing the game and enforcing the rules.

So the next time you are officiating a youth lacrosse game, think about the fact that you have a great opportunity to make a positive impact on the development of two teams worth of young players, coaches, and parents. The dramatic national growth of our game of lacrosse extends well beyond Michigan and California, which means that there is a need to help new programs become more familiar with the traditions and the play of the game. With this in mind, we will continue to help make lacrosse the great game that it is.