



USA LACROSSE

Instructor Notes

**OFFICIALS
EDUCATION**

**USATM
LACROSSE**



PROFESSIONALISM & GAME MANAGEMENT

MENS OFFICIALS DEVELOPMENT | 2025 SEASON



Instructor Notes

PROFESSIONALISM

OUR APPROACH TO THE GAME

- What is a Professional?
 - "a calling requiring specialized knowledge and often long and intensive academic preparation"
- Lacrosse is "controlled chaos"
- We are the calming factor
- We are unbiased
- We are entrusted to be keepers of the game
- We must respect our role
- WE MUST HONOR THE GAME



Proper
Preparation
Prevents
Poor
Performance

- **PROFESSIONALISM**
- What does it mean to be a professional?
- Are you a professional?
- If not, can you get there?
- Can you treat this avocation with the seriousness and respect it deserves?



Instructor Notes

APPEARANCE

IT STARTS BEFORE YOU GET TO THE FIELD

- First impressions speaks volumes
- Conveys a level of respect for the game, coaches and players
- Is your ref bag ready to go?
- Have you taken inventory?
- Are you in shape?
- Can you "ref with a smile"?



APPEARANCE

- More than just what you are wearing
- How you carry yourself
- How you "appear" to others



Instructor Notes

UNIFORM

DRESS THE PART

Complete uniform

- Match your partner(s)
- Shirt
- Shorts or pants w/ Black Belt
- Socks that cover the ankle bone
- All Black Shoes
- Striped Hat
- Whistle (Fox40 preferred)
- 2 Flags
- 20-Second Timer
- Tape Measure



UNIFORM

- A mis-matched crew looks bad
- Intolerable if you want to get to the next level
- Crew Chief MUST make it clear
- ALWAYS bring everything
- Use Velcro or magnets for various patches



Instructor Notes

UNIFORM

OPTIONAL ITEMS

All Must Match

- All Black Coats
 - OK for extreme weather
- Black Gloves
 - Football receiver gloves are great
 - Wear latex/rubber gloves under to keep hands warm
- Neck Covering
 - A headband worn around the neck can be a great way to block to the cold
- All Black Winter Hats
 - Only in extreme and all must wear



UNIFORM – Optional Items

- Coats should be all black, no striped coats
- Gloves should be worn together
- Limit amount of gear brought to the field
- Have a small bag for your phone, keys, etc



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DOES IT MATTER?

ABSOLUTELY

A properly coordinated crew sends several unspoken messages

- We take our job seriously
- We are prepared
- We respect the work the coaches and players have done to prepare
- We respect our partners
- We respect ourselves
- WE HONOR THE GAME



DOES IT MATTER?

- A neat professional looking uniform instills TRUST and CONFIDENCE in you with the coaches, players and fans
- Remember: "You have to look good to be good"



Instructor Notes

RESPECT THE UNIFORM

WE ARE JUDGED WHILE IN THE STRIPES

We all became officials to make friends and have some fun, but there are limitations.

- Always leave the immediate playing area to have a post-game beverage.
- Do not socially engage with anyone from the teams that you just officiated.
- Have a change of clothes to wear if you do decide to spend some time with your crew



RESPECT THE UNIFORM

- You will be judged while in uniform
- Get away from stakeholders before social activity
- Be careful of what you "say" around others



Instructor Notes

CONDITIONING

THE GAME IS FAST

 <p>Focus on calls, not lack of oxygen</p>	 <p>Keeping up with play</p>	 <p>Be in position to make the right call</p>	 <p>Minimizes Injuries</p>
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← WHY BEING IN SHAPE IS IMPORTANT →



CONDITIONING

- Its easier to make calls when you aren't out of breath
- Helps maintain being in position during the game
- Provides confidence in the coaches and players that you will be in position to make the right call
- Focus on cardiovascular conditioning more than speed
- Start slow and work your way up
- Spring conditioning is different than off-season



Instructor Notes

BEING IN "GAME SHAPE"

THE PLAYERS ARE FASTER THAN WE ARE!

What does "Game Shape" mean?

- Endurance
 - Youth Games (2-3 miles)
 - High School Games (3-4 miles)
 - College Games (5-7 miles)
- Speed
 - Can you keep up with the players?
 - How do you "cheat" if you can't?
- Agility
 - Can you move side-to-side to get out of the way?
 - Can you "yo-yo" as lead or single at GLE?



BEING IN "GAME SHAPE"

- "Lacrosse Shape" is different than getting on a treadmill and jogging for 30 minutes
- Anaerobic conditioning with sprinting and minimal rest
- HINT (High Intensity Interval Training)
 - Raising and lowering heart rate
- "Run and Gun" is the new normal
- Get on a field and practice realistic movements as in game situations



Instructor Notes

GAME SHAPE **THIS IS WHY IT MATTERS**



GAME SHAPE

- Simple Question
 - Could YOU keep up with this play?




Instructor Notes

HUSTLE

EVERYONE CAN DO IT

- You do not have to be fast
- You need to anticipate your next movement
- You need to jog, run and sprint
- Work to be in position even if you are tired
- A whistle should not stop your feet



HUSTLE

- Not everyone is FAST
- We can all hustle
- Do you notice other officials that don't?
- They WILL notice you



Instructor Notes

HUSTLE INTEGRITY

WHAT YOU DO WHEN NO ONE IS WATCHING

- Do you give 100% all the time?
- Do you hustle even when not being observed?
- Do you work hard in JV games?



HUSTLE INTEGRITY

- We have to officiate consistently
- We have to work hard for the game and players



Instructor Notes

THE LITTLE THINGS MATTER

ESTABLISH GOOD HABITS

Be on time
Including the
pregame

Understand
your
importance

Take your
role
seriously

Be focused

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LITTLE THINGS MATTER

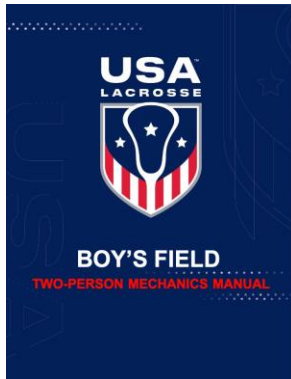
- Habits can be good and bad
- Establish good habits and routines
- Do you job consistently



Instructor Notes

RULES KNOWLEDGE AND APPLICATION

RULES & MECHANICS


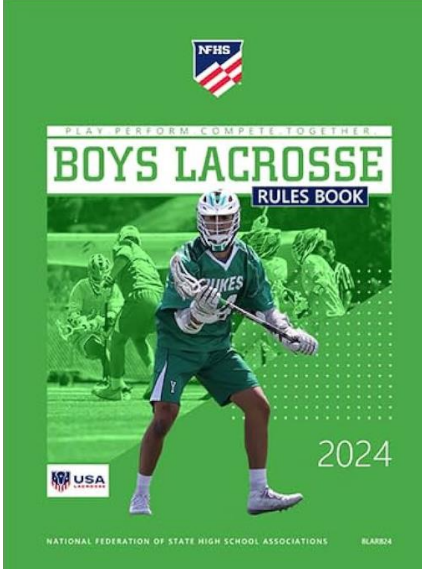


RULES KNOWLEDGE & APPLICATION

- Rules & Mechanics are our primary responsibility
- We have to consistently study and want to improve



Instructor Notes

<h3>RULES</h3> <p>STUDY THE BOOK</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Have multiple copies• Consider getting the app for NFHS• Highlight areas of interest or concern• Review your most common mistakes every game• Be a student of the game 	
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RULES

- Study the rule book
 - Have a copy at work
 - Have a digital copy
 - Have a copy on the nightstand
 - Have a copy in your game bag
- Underline
- Highlight
- Paperclip
- Have topics you review every game
 - Crease privileges/prohibitions
 - Simultaneous fouls
 - Quick restarts
- Be a student of the game



Instructor Notes

MECHANICS

HOW WE DO OUR JOB

- Correct mechanics allow you to be in the best position to see the play
- Make adjustments as the play changes
- Being out of position opens the door for problems on the field and from the sideline
- Keep moving – Don't Kill Grass
- Be on the lines (goal, endline, sideline) when the ball is there



MECHANICS

- 95% of the time if you use the mechanics, you will be able to see what you need to see
- 5% of the time you will have to move to see a play
- Easiest way to have a coach call you out is be not being in the right place on the field
- Be on the lines (goal, endline, sideline) when the ball is there



Instructor Notes

Mechanics

KEY POINTS

- 

Move with the flow of the game
- 

Use purposeful movement
- 

Anticipate play and your next movement
- 

Keep moving to best see the play
- 

Run with your head on a swivel



MECHANICS

- Do not be robotic, move with the flow of the game
- Do not bounce around
- Always ask yourself if the ball changes possession where do I need to be next
- Think one play ahead
- Once the ball hits the ground start moving while watching the play
- Run with your head of a swivel!



Instructor Notes

PREGAME

TIME TO GO TO WORK

- Socialize before the pregame or after the game
- Ask relevant questions
- Have your rule book available
- Discuss the teams playing
- What does this game mean?
- Is this a rivalry game?
- What are the strengths and weaknesses of each team



PREGAME

- The pregame sets the tone for the game
- A solid pregame gets you focused and allows you to cover any topics that will make this game the best you have ever worked
- Interject previous game situations
- Talk about player or team tendencies
- Use film if it is available
- Only bring up penalty situations if they are pertinent
- Don't go down the rabbit hole
- Please do not tell me how many coaches/players you have ejected!!
- Hydrate and use the restroom



Instructor Notes

TABLE AND GAME PERSONNEL

PART OF YOUR CREW

- Who is your table crew?
- Part of YOUR Team
- Scorekeeper & Timekeeper a must
- Responsibilities
- Expectations
- Be helpful to them
- Explain penalties thoroughly
- Limit Distractions (Phones)
- Test Horn



TABLE AND GAME PERSONNEL

The table is part of the official's crew

- Go over responsibilities
- Go over expectations
- Remember they are volunteers
- Help take care of them
- Take time to explain penalties



Instructor Notes

THE SOFT SKILLS

COMMUNICATION IS KEY

- It takes practice
- The comments and questions are generally the same
- Develop your responses and practice
- Answer questions, not statements
- Don't be afraid to say "It's time to move on"



THE SOFT SKILLS

- You cannot do this correctly without practice
- If they escalate, you de-escalate
- Use your inside voice
- Verbal Judo – Have responses for common comments



Instructor Notes

THE SOFT SKILLS

HEAD COACH COMMUNICATION ACTIVITY

Situation

- You have a head coach that has a reputation as a “hot-head” and likes to yell at everything. He has no social filter and typically gets one conduct penalty per game and sometimes a USC. As you are running by the bench as trail and call a loose ball push the coach screams, “What are you doing? Have you ever seen lacrosse? This must be your first game!”
- How do you handle this?



THE SOFT SKILLS

- In this situation, we have not yet reached the level of a foul unless this is repeated behavior
- Get within conversation distance (when possible) and as the coach “Did I miss something coach?”
- Let him respond and simply say “I may have missed that one coach”
- Also tell the coach “You can call me over and I’m happy to explain a call, but I can’t have the comments”
- Use the “Ramp” and penalize if necessary to regain control



Instructor Notes

ASSISTANT COACHES

CAN BE GREAT ASSETS

- You guide the conversation
- Have them be a buffer to the coach
- Remember their first responsibility is to coach the kids and not talk to you
- The Sub Box coach can help with the bench and player issues
- Questions are OK
- Comments are NOT
- If they become a problem, you can take away their right to speak



ASSISTANT COACHES

- Assistant coaches can be great tools for managing the play of the game
- This is especially true when they run the sub box
- Try to connect with one early if you see a head coach getting heated
- If the assistant IS the problem, talk to the Head Coach



Instructor Notes

THE SOFT SKILLS

ASSISTANT COACH COMMUNICATION ACTIVITY

Situation

- You are in a conference game with teams that are similarly skilled. One of them is having a bad game but fighting to hang in there. An assistant coach for the losing team who has been quiet for the entire game is standing at the end of the coaching box when you throw a flag. He says "Come on ref, you have to call it both ways."
- What do you do?



THE SOFT SKILLS - ASSISTANT COACH COMMUNICATION ACTIVITY

- Not a comment that would raise to a flag for the first comment
- Get to the Head Coach immediately, let him know what was said and warn that the next comment will be a flag
- Typically, this is the end of it
- If not, use the "Ramp" and penalize if necessary



Instructor Notes

PLAYERS

YOUR BIGGEST ASSET

- Connect with the players and they will work with you
- Establish a working relationship with the captains
- Faceoff men should be your best friends
- Players are generally embarrassed by poor behavior by parents and coaches
- Use them as first line of intervention when needed



PLAYERS

- Does not have to be captains
- Pick the ones that can be your allies
- Stop talking to them if they become combative
- This is a great time during dead balls and stick checks
- Address them by name or at least number
- Always talk to the goalie

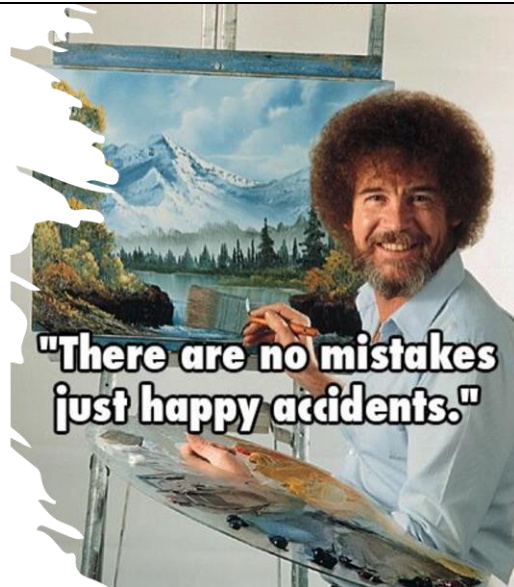


Instructor Notes

MISTAKES

WE ALL MAKE THEM

- How you handle a mistake will determine your credibility with all stakeholders
- Own them, don't try to cover up or ignore
- Admit to a coach when you made a mistake
- Apologize to the coach and players
- Reset the field so no advantage is gained from your mistake
- No make up calls
- Learn from it



MISTAKES

- "Experience is simply the name we give our mistakes"
- They are not fun but are part of the process
- Many of the harder concepts (play on, simultaneous fouls, etc) do not get locked in your mind until you make a mistake in a game
- Learn from it and make them part of your pregame
- Be self-deprecating and share with others
- Learn to laugh!



Instructor Notes

YOUR CREW

LOYALTY IS PARAMOUNT

- Your crew is YOUR team
- Live as a team or die as an individual
- Your partners will make mistakes
- Don't throw them "under the bus"
- Senior officials need to be good mentors
- Let your Crew Chief do their job
- The goal is always to make the SAFE & FAIR call



YOUR CREW

- What are you doing to help each other out
- We are always a unit
- Never sell out a partner to a coach, player, or fan
- The answer should always be "(coach/Assistant/Player) I will talk to my partner about that the next chance I get."
- "He had a different view than you and I"
- Always make the calls that involve player safety regardless of who is in the driver seat



Instructor Notes

GROWTH AS AN OFFICIAL

HOW TO GET TO THE NEXT LEVEL

- What level are you now?
- What level do you want to get to?
- Who can help you get there?
- Be willing to travel
- Be willing to accept all assignments
- Communicate your goals
- Ask for HONEST feedback
- Be willing to ACCEPT it and grow
- Attend a USAL LAREDO Clinic

New Officials -
Year 1-3

- USA Lacrosse Level 1/2
- Youth Games
- High School JV Games

Experienced
Officials - Year
4+

- USA Lacrosse Level 3
- High School Varsity
- Attend LAREDO

College Officials
- Year 5+

- NILOA Tryout
- College Games
- Progress You Grow

International
Officials - Year
10+

- International Selection
- National Team Events
- World Games/Olympics

GROWTH AS AN OFFICIAL

What level are you now?

- Be open with your assignor
- Should you take that next assignment

What level do you want to get to?

- High school
- College
- Pro/International

Who can help you get there?

- Experienced officials/Mentors
- Trainers
- Observers
- LAREDO's

Be willing to travel

Be honest about your abilities



Instructor Notes

PATHWAYS TO SUCCESS

YOUR GROWTH IS YOUR JOB

- Officiating growth is a personal responsibility
- You are competing with your fellow officials for the "Big Game"
- Find a mentor
- Watch high level officials
- Watch other sports officials
- Learn and get better every game
- Accept challenges and setbacks
- Don't blame others

You can choose to be good, or you can choose to be great, but the work to be great happens when no one is watching



PATHWAYS TO SUCCESS

- Create your own path
- Depending on age, you have to return to "learner" mode
- Don't be the smartest in the room, find someone smarter
- Accept where you are and enjoy the time



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Instructor Notes



Please let us know if you have any questions or comments on this presentation.
Thank you for taking your time to develop the next crop of officials!
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