

2015 Assigners' Summit

Final Report

US Lacrosse

2/20/2015

Table of Contents

Introduction	2
Hot Topics in Assigning Discussion Summary	3
Discuss how you use assigning to develop your officials and retain them and move them up the "ladder". Come up with three to five strategies.....	3
Discuss how you set fees, and the challenges you face.....	4
Discuss assigning tournament. On your poster list a column for challenges and a column for solutions to those challenges.	7
Discuss how you have handled situations that involved angry coaches and/or administrators.....	9
Certification for Assigners.....	12
What are the essential skills/competencies should assigners demonstrate?	12
What should the requirements be for becoming a certified assigner?	13
Would you charge a fee for your certification program? If no, how would you fund it?.....	13
What benefits would you give to assigners that achieved certification? How would you fund these benefits?	13
What ongoing education would you require for certified assigners (i.e. re-certification)?	14



What would be the value or benefits to the lacrosse community by having a national certification program for assigners? 14

Additional Comments: 14

Conclusion/Next Steps 15

This report summarizes the table discussions from the 2015 Assigner Summit and outlines the next steps for US Lacrosse in its ongoing efforts to educate, connect and provide value to lacrosse assigners committed to excellence in the game and a quality experience for the players.



2015 Assigner Summit Round-Table Discussion Summary Report

Introduction

On January 23, 2015, US Lacrosse hosted the third Lacrosse Assigners' Summit at the US Lacrosse National Convention. Over 90 men's and women's game assigners attended, representing all regions of the United States.

The objectives of the summit were as follows:

- Provide an update on US Lacrosse initiatives related to assigners
- Learn from each other and discuss issues in assigning today
- Discuss requirements for certification of assigners and related benefits

To facilitate discussion, attendees were seated in heterogeneous groups of eight based on geographical dispersion and game representation. For session 1, they were given four discussion topics that were of broad interest to the assigners surveyed prior to the summit. They were then asked to share their discussion on paper that was posted around the room. The topics were:

- Discuss how you set fees, and the challenges you face.
- Discuss how you have handled situations that involved angry coaches and/or administrators.
- Discuss how you use assigning to develop your officials and retain them and move them up the "ladder." Share three to five strategies.
- Discuss assigning tournaments. On your poster list a column for challenges and a column for solutions to those challenges.

For session 2, they were given the topic of certifying assigners and asked to answer questions related to this concept. These were also shared. The questions asked were:

- What are the essential skills/competencies assigners should demonstrate?
- What should the requirements be for becoming a certified assigner?
- Would you charge a fee for your certification program? If no, how would you fund it?
- What benefits would you give to assigners that achieved certification? How would you fund these benefits?
- What ongoing education would you require for certified assigners (i.e. re-certification)?
- What would be the value or benefits to the lacrosse community by having a national certification program for assigners?

Below you will find the compiled data from the discussions at each table as they transcribed onto the posters. When provided, the number of the table is indicated. Please note that we did not attempt to decipher meaning from the notes, just to compile the words provided from each table per the prompts given.

Hot Topics in Assigning Discussion Summary

Discuss how you use assigning to develop your officials and retain them and move them up the “ladder.”.Come up with three to five strategies.

1. Experienced Assigner(Table 3)
 - a. Shadow during pre-season games
 - b. Work with experienced ref on their games
 - c. Have observers come to see how they are doing
2. No Experience(Table 3)
 - a. Go to training classes
 - b. Shadow game during preseason
 - c. Work with experienced ref on MS & Youth games
 - d. Go to Play day-Rating Session
3. Evaluation point rankings must add up to a certain score (Table 3)
4. Charge league a development fee to pay for training/Conventions/Observations (Table 3)
5. Mentorships (Table 3)
6. Observe when possible (Table 3)
7. Assign with better officials (third official) (Table 3)
8. Use on sideline (Table 3)
9. Talk to lower level Assigners (Table 3)
10. Work with your local training program (Table 3)
11. Geography is a challenge-Officials not in the right place (Table 3)
12. Approach teams/associations to identify candidates (Table 3)
13. Mentoring program (Table 3)
14. Include experienced officials in the discussion (Table 3)
15. Fall Ball-Open up to younger Officials Shadows(Table 2)
16. Challenges: (Table 2)
 - a. Communicating opportunity
 - b. Get buy in for officials to volunteer time
 - c. Getting good trainer
 - d. Refs only want upper level games
 - e. Scheduling everyone wants to play on the same time
17. Solutions: (Table 2)
 - a. Charge for non-compliance of community service requirement
 - b. Train the trainer/train the rater session
18. Assign new guys/women with officials who can help them develop
19. Observers
20. On-field training assignments

21. Keep some officials away from newbies
22. Peer rating in Arbiter
23. Never Assign two new officials to a game together
24. Mentoring program; First five games (Table 11)
25. Never two newbies; always with returner (Table 11)
26. Paired with instructors mid-season to provide feedback to first year officials (Table 11)
27. Pool of experienced officials to pair with newbies (Table 11)
28. Use youth umpire program as training ground (Table 10)
29. Stay in touch with youth refs after they graduate (Table 10)
 - a. Refer to other areas
 - b. Contact at end of spring semester regarding summer tourneys
 - c. Encourage, encourage, encourage
30. Give youth umpires good experience (Table 10)
31. Assign youth refs to work with good officials early in career (Table 10)
 - a. Develop good habits early
 - b. Enhances experience
32. Officials are put on game with top level official then they evaluate (Table 9)
33. Officials are paid a higher fee if they have been requested by the school (Table 9)
34. Officials are put on three man games to be mentored (Table 9)
35. Mentoring of the official is critical (Table 9)
36. Pair with senior officials (Table 8)
37. Protect them/ encourage them to take some challenging games (Table 8)
38. Go watch them (Table 8)
39. Lots of communication (Table 8)
40. Mentoring (Table 8)
41. Before season, referees have to pass physical test (Table 1)
42. Bball recruitment, then football (Table 1)
43. Mentorship with strong referee (Table 1)
44. Set stretch goals to get to better games (Table 1)
45. Deduct JV fee and get referee evaluation; new referee and experience referee (Table 1)
46. Youth Referee, experience referee see all youth season. Four meetings pre-season/During Season (Table 1)
47. Experienced Referee work B game with new Referee, ten work varsity game with three referees, New Referee stays to watch experienced Referee (Table 1)
48. Service fee, Injured Referee to evaluate (Table 1)
49. Self-Evaluation, evals go to trainer, Assigner, training leader (Table 1)

Discuss how you set fees, and the challenges you face.

1. MS/HS Preset (Table 10)
2. Youth Discussed (Table 10)
3. Tournament \$1 a minute plus potential travel fees (Table 10)

4. Assigner Fees (Table 7)
 - a. In ME, Major conferences decided to pay a standard fee for assigning for all sports, HS (Table 7)
 - b. TSLA in TN pays assigning fee. Teams pay into TSLA fund (Table 7)
 - c. NE Ohio charges assigning fee to each school (Table 7)
 - d. MO gets \$6/game for youth, MS, JV, V
 - e. MA, bills league or school exact same across all sports
5. Challenges (Table 7)
 - a. Getting Paid!!!!
 - b. Esp in a timely manner!
6. Third Party Sets Fees (Table 1)
 - a. Some with officials input
 - b. Some set without negotiation
7. Officials assign determines fees (Table 1)
8. Individual Assigners negotiate fees (Table 1)
9. League and LOA/Officials group negotiate (Table 1)
10. State organization sets fees (Table 1)
11. Fee differences (Table 1)
 - a. By schools (Public/Private)
 - b. By gender
 - c. Assigning fees
12. Schedule Changes (Table 1)
13. Will Officials withhold services if fees are not reasonable (Table 1)
14. Assigning fees (Table 1)
15. Supply of Officials (Total/Location) (Table 1)
16. Overlapping assigning (Table 1)
17. 5% of fees, paid by home team or tournament (Table 4)
18. HS Association – set rate per team (Table 4)
19. Youth-per game fee (Table 4)
20. \$5 per game (Table 4)
21. MCLA - \$75 per team and \$10 per game plus \$10 for non-weather reschedule (Table 4)
22. \$8 per assignment (One official per site per date) for leagues and tourneys (Table 4)
23. \$5 V/ \$3 JV for HS regular season/playoffs paid by officials (Table 4)
24. Flat rate from schools per team (V/JV/Freshman) (Table 4)
25. Game Fees
 - a. Need Results of National survey fees
 - b. What do Assigners get paid?
 - c. Tournaments-compare what others do.
26. Assigner (Table 11)
 - a. Per game basis game
 - b. Schools vs board payment

- c. 1 to 2 times per season pay
 - d. Contracts vs no contract
 - e. Who negotiates official fees?
 - i. Assigner vs board
 - f. Who do you bill?
 - i. Schools vs leagues
27. Wash State – State does not govern group , not sanctioned (Table 9)
28. 6.7% of game fee of the officials game fee (Table 9)
29. 6.5% paid by the Referees out of game fees deducted from pay sheet(Table 9)
30. State public school AA sets assigning & ref game fees (Table 9)
31. \$125 per team V and Youth \$100 per team JV(Table 9)
32. Game fees (Table 9)
- a. \$71/ Official V 2 man
 - b. \$65/Official V 3 man
 - c. \$56/Official JV 2 man
33. Prorated hourly rate for tournaments game fees(Table 9)
34. \$8 per game assigning fees for tournaments (Table 9)
35. \$4 per game pay rate fees for tournaments (Table 9)
36. Flat fee per official per game (Table 9)
37. 8-10% assign fee(Table 9)
38. All admin fees from flat fee (Table 9)
39. Schools pay the Assigner fee negotiated by the Assigner, each one 8-10% (Table 9)
40. Flat rate per game \$3 official (Table 9)
41. Flat rate per tourney \$45-\$60 (Table 9)
42. Percentage 5% per game fee (Table 9)
43. Summer 10% of total fees \$5-\$10per game fee-Flat rate (Table 9)
44. Some set by state association, league, or by Assigner (Table 8)
45. By level/and or by level of official (Table 8)
46. Flat fees for entire season (Table 8)
47. Money per assignment, How much assign? (Table 8)
48. Assigning fees (Table 2)
- a. Who pays them?
 - b. Bulk vs per game
 - c. Charged to officials or schools
49. Officiating fees (Table 2)
- a. How do you set fee?
 - b. Travel fees?
 - c. How do you pay
 - i. At field
 - ii. School pay
 - iii. Bulk pay

- A. LOA
 - B. Ref Pay
 - C. Treasurer
50. Service fee to schools or Assigners; portion games fee for Assigner and other money goes to admin (Food, Room, Rental-Hotel and field/dome space) (Table 1)
- a. Youth - \$6/Game (All levels); \$3 to Assigner
 - b. HS -\$4/Game for Assigners
51. Arbiter fee paid by Assigner (Table 1)
52. MI Pay days (Mini-JAM)- No charge for Assigner (CRAZY☺) (Table 1)
53. Charge membership fee for Arbiter Fees - \$3/Ref (Charging the Ref to work?) (Table 1)
54. Percent of fees based at game fees (6% of total fees) (Table 1)
55. NC: Assigner Fees (Table 1)
- a. \$125/Varsity Team
 - b. \$100/JV Team
 - c. \$75/Youth Team
 - d. HS allows Assigner fee to each Ref
56. MN/CO: \$30/team, No money from Schools, All comes from Refs (Table 1)
57. Concerns (Table 1)
- a. Fees
 - b. Angry coaches
 - c. Development
 - d. Tourneys

Discuss assigning tournament. On your poster list a column for challenges and a column for solutions to those challenges.

1. Not allowing tournaments to “Customize” game play rules without good reason (and never safety rules)
2. Challenges (Table 7)
 - a. Lots of Referees
 - b. Assigning fees
 - c. On highly popular days
 - d. Rules!
 - e. Getting schedules on time
3. Solutions (Table 7)
 - a. Schedule on off days
 - b. Use U-15 rules across board
 - c. Get schedules earlier
4. Rules in writing
5. Assign backup official (Paid)
6. Need schedules well in advance (2-3 weeks)
7. Late schedule change problems (additional fees?)

8. What is the Bad weather policy?
9. Central horn?
10. Pay policies
11. Communication
12. Ref pay/Check at field/mailed checks
13. Travel fees
14. Established fee structure
15. What if tournament canceled?
16. Assigner Does not pay or employ officials
17. Challenges (Table 9)
 - a. Not officials trained
 - b. Scheduled are too tight only 5 mins
18. Solutions (Table 9)
 - a. Start early getting people ready
 - b. Leave more time between games
19. Create pool of best available officials (Table 8)
20. Reward those who have been doing the games all season (Table 8)
21. Work with other Assigners if they cross areas (Table 8)
22. Charge \$10/team; \$4 to Assigners/\$6 to Assign to NA (Table 1)
23. No Tourney fee; Assigner get 6% comes out of Ref-Fees earned (Table 1)
24. Lower Ref Fees (Table 1)
25. Flat Assigner fee (Table 1)
26. Charge Tourney Teams Assigner Fee, and Refs don't get charged (Table 1)
27. If teams drop, full game fees are still charged w/l 24 hours (Table 1)
28. Too many games in one day (Table 1)
 - a. Change game times and date
 - b. If short refs, sometimes only 1 ref at non-varsity games when shortened season
29. Rule variations (Table 4)
 - a. Get a rules document in advance
 - b. Do not allow excessive modifications
30. Fees (Table 4)
 - a. One fee for all tournaments
 - b. Publish the rates
31. Supply of Officials (Expanding size) (Table 4)
 - a. Work with tournament organizers
 - b. This is tough-Many tournaments are fundraisers for profit
32. Challenges (Table 2)
 - a. Out of area bringing officials in
 - b. Cost standardization
 - c. Too many games, not enough officials
 - d. Officials wanting to work too many games

- e. Call standardization
- 33. Solutions (Table 2)
 - a. Require Assigner to use some local officials
 - b. \$1 per minute
 - c. Limit number of games per official
 - d. Meeting with officials rule interpret evaluation
- 34. How many games/day? 4-6 hours
- 35. Subs-How to guarantee
- 36. Senior Ref Needed
- 37. Payment for Rainouts and canceled games
- 38. Assigner Challenges (Table 11)
 - a. Officials wanting to work games straight thru then leave
 - b. Complaining about pay
 - c. Bad communication with tournament director
- 39. Solutions (Table 11)
 - a. Higher pay to build break in
 - b. Negotiate earlier / Board negotiate
 - c. Constant follow-up

Discuss how you have handled situations that involved angry coaches and/or administrators.

- 1. Don't respond for a day (Table 7)
- 2. Send me the video (Table 7)
- 3. If issue better hear from ref first (Table 7)
- 4. If actual issue, deal with ref if it is ref prob, if it was coach then contact AD (Table 7)
- 5. Complete evaluation forms (Table 7)
- 6. Keep Refs off games when/after coach complaint
- 7. 24 hour cooling period Before taking complaints
- 8. Ask for Full Game film
- 9. What is the process (Table 2)
 - a. Direct communication with coach or vice AD
 - b. Formal document for complaints
 - c. Is the team formally sponsored by the school (Club vs Varsity)
 - d. Identify a single contact per team
 - e. Who employs/pays the Assigner
- 10. Handle complaints by the Assigner or local board (Table 2)
- 11. Do you modify assignments based on complaints (depends) (Table 2)
- 12. 24 hour rule no evals or emails, or calls from coaches within 24hrs (Table 10)
- 13. Coaches must put complaints in writing (Table 10)
- 14. If Coach is wrong, pull Eval (Table 10)
- 15. Be approachable and willing to listen to them, then take action (Table 8)

16. Prepare your officials not to engage in the events on the field, tell them to tell the coach to call the Assigner (Table 8)
17. Let coaches know when you will get back, to them with an answer (Table 8)
18. Allow a cooling off period (Table 8)
19. Smart assigning- "Fortune teller ball" (Table 8)
20. Assigner (Table 11)
 - a. 24 hour rule-wait, then take call
 - b. Put it in writing, examples
 - c. Send video if possible
 - d. Online forms for good & bad
 - e. Knowing the coaches
21. 24 hour Rule
22. Communicate with officials- let's hear from you first
23. Submit via email
24. Liaison's committee/Officials supervisor
25. Complaint procedure
26. Video submission policy
27. Blacklisting for season
28. No Blacklisting (But we might avoid sending official there for officials sake)
29. Re-Educate coach about rule
30. Videos need to be in context
31. Coaches must go through AD's / AD's then make call (Table 9)
32. 24 hour rule from coaches no calls are returned/taken until this period has passed (Table 9)
33. Starts with official training them handling on the field (Table 9)
34. Use Arbiter evaluations to handle
35. Work with Ad's to Ad's talk to coaches (Table 1)
36. Remote areas (Table 1)
37. Use Arbiter to have coaches do online evaluation of Refs and this is reviewed (Table 1)
38. Use Arbiter and set up different areas of rating (Rules Knowledge) (Table 1)
39. Formal Grievance goes to AD; no one can "Black Ball" Refs (Table 1)
 - a. MN allows coaches to black ball 2 refs
 - b. All others do not allow black balling
40. Communication from coaches and review video for review of areas to cover (Table 1)
41. Hard copy coaches Eval of game refs (Table 1)
42. Coaches must sign a code of conduct (Table 3)
43. Coaches may block 3 officials (Table 3)
44. 24-48 hour cool off period before reporting concerns to Assigners (Table 3)
45. Arbiter Eval to file concern from coach (Table 3)
46. Assigner will attend the next game to Eval coach (Table 3)
47. 24 hours rule (Table 2)
48. Send through local board and not assigner with complaints (Table 2)



49. Grievance policy(Table 2)

50. Evaluation tab on Arbiter (Coaches/Officials) (Table 2)

Certification for Assigners

What are the essential skills/competencies should assigners demonstrate?

1. Fair assignments
2. Competitive game fees
3. Timely assignments
4. Operate within a framework (legal)
5. Essential Skills/Competencies (table 7)
 - a. Organizational skills
 - b. Communication skills
 - c. Knowing your officials strength/weaknesses
 - d. Computer literate
 - e. Patient & Flexible
 - f. Fair & Unbiased
 - g. Know the game
6. Assigners should be (table 8)
 - a. Organized
 - b. Efficient
 - c. Unruffled by change
 - d. Accept a code of ethics
 - e. Follow USL rules & be a member
 - f. Approval of league or local board
7. Skills
 - a. Fairness
 - b. Organization
 - c. Detail oriented
 - d. Knowledge of teams and refs assigned
 - e. Chemistry between teams and refs to assign
 - f. Arbiter knowledge
 - g. Planning abilities
8. Have three to five years officiating experience (table 3)
9. Computer skills and access (table 3)

What should the requirements be for becoming a certified assigner?

1. Complete Assigning tool training
2. Complete training class
3. Must complete Women's Officials Certification process prior to certification training(table 2)
4. Implement Women's Officials Certification process for the men (table 2)
5. Practices/procedures of L.O.A. Experience with sport, preferably as official rules knowledge ability to evaluate or gather data on officials
6. Assigner should have to take and pass USL test with 80% (table 7)
7. Online training
8. Code of Ethics training
9. Board-Recommended Candidate based on diplomacy, fairness, etc
10. Background check
11. Active membership of LOA (table 3)
12. Work closely with LOA trainers (table 3)
13. Assign only sanctioned tournaments (table 3)
14. All tournaments should be sanctioned (table 3)

Would you charge a fee for your certification program? If no, how would you fund it?

1. No, use US Lacrosse Membership
2. No cost to Assigner, benefits all involved so USL dues should cover the cost
3. No annual fee, small application fee
4. A minimal fee – under \$75 (table 7)
5. Yes, but subsidized by USL with Recognition benefits, discounted USL Membership, insurance benefits
6. Tournament directors signup with US Lax sanctioned fees & certified Assigners (table 3)
7. All kids pay USL then USL pays tournament directors (table 3)

What benefits would you give to assigners that achieved certification? How would you fund these benefits?

1. At least what NASO provides
2. Marketing to tournament organizers
3. Obtain Additional Insurance, Liability, D&O
4. Assigners Insurance included with certification (table 10)
5. Insurance
6. Arbiter discount
7. D&O insurance through the fees (table 7)
8. Identify qualified Assigners & give qualified protection (insurance) (table 7)

9. Member of USL (table 7)
10. Member of local board in good standing (table 7)
11. Current, retired or injured official (table 7)
12. Online course on USL for Arbiter (table 7)
13. All subjective measures (table 8)
14. Insurance is necessary (table 8)
15. Tournaments are more relevant for this (table 8)

What ongoing education would you require for certified assigners (i.e. re-certification)?

1. Annual training sessions
2. Annual certification exam
3. Any changes from year before- Updates in materials (table 7)
4. Online modules on specific topics
5. Assigners host webinars at monthly and quarterly, on an annual basis

What would be the value or benefits to the lacrosse community by having a national certification program for assigners?

1. Show competency, fairness, professionalism
2. Gives Integrity
3. Matching Officials to level of play
4. Assigning rather than “covering games with buddies”
5. Communication/Organization/ Problem Solving, understanding needs of tourney/abilities of Officials
6. Consistency across nation, mentors to help newer Assigners recognition of this accreditation on USL website

Additional Comments:

1. Can US Lacrosse create demand from Leagues & Tournaments to make Assigner Certification worth it?
2. How do you decertify and Assigner? (table 8)
3. USL needs to promote certification to national/state leagues
4. USL needs to have website/page to show USL certified Assigners where you can check certification.
5. Consistency is needed.
6. Look to men and women best practices combine them if needed for best product.



Conclusion/Next Steps

Following the summit, US Lacrosse deployed a follow-up survey to attendees. We have reviewed this valuable feedback and are using this in addition to the results of the summit to guide our next steps in US Lacrosse's continued journey to provide education, connection, and value to lacrosse assigners everywhere.

In 2015 our first step was to compile the discussion notes from the summit and disseminate it to participants and also review summit evaluation survey.

We are also in the process of moving most of USL's online assigner content to a web page in the [US Lacrosse/ Arbiter Sports Central Hub](#) so it is more convenient for USL member assigners to access and more easily updated by our officials' training staff. We have also created a [Google+ community](#) for USL assigners to provide a forum for discussion and to share relevant information and news as it relates to assigning.

In 2q 2015 we will convene an assigner certification task force which will engage in reviewing the needs analysis, discussion summaries, stakeholder surveys and research that has been done in preparation for developing a best-in-class certification program for assigners through US Lacrosse. Several summit attendees indicated their interest in being part of this group and we will be reaching out to them as a first step. We also hope that this program will also launch in close conjunction with US Lacrosse's event sanctioning program which is also being piloted in 2015 for full roll-out in 2016.

We will also review the Best Practices Guide, solicit suggestions for revision, and make any applicable updates.

Finally, we hope that by the 2016 US Lacrosse National Convention we are able to share with you the outcomes of the task force efforts and recommendations for certified assigners, and bring you further educational and networking value at this event based on the feedback you provided. If you would still like to provide summit feedback, you may do so [here](#).

As always, feel free to contact your USL officials' education staff at officials@uslacrosse.org with thoughts, questions, or comments.