



***US Lacrosse Men's & Women's Divisions
Officials Councils***
**Play Book for Recruiting &
Retaining Officials**

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US Lacrosse Men and Women's Divisions Officials Councils' PLAY BOOK FOR RECRUITING & RETAINING LACROSSE OFFICIALS

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FORWARD and ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The recent explosion in participation at the youth level of the sport is a wonderful development for lacrosse, but has also created a situation that threatens to side-track the growth of the men's and women's games: a surging need for more qualified officials. Recruiting and retaining lacrosse officials is a task that faces the entire lacrosse community and requires a community effort to accomplish.

US Lacrosse, its chapters, coaches, parents, athletes and lacrosse officials must work together to meet this challenge.

The recruiting strategies offered in this play book involve many dimensions of the lacrosse community and acknowledge that there is no single "magic formula" that will be successful in generating 100% of the qualified men's and women's lacrosse officials needed. More than likely, your recruiting campaign will require a number of diverse strategies, catered to the specific needs and strengths of your community. It is hoped that this document will contribute significantly to an ongoing, nationwide recruiting and retention campaign. Sharing this type of information nationally will help us to move forward together and avoid having to "reinvent the wheel."

Over the years we have learned that innovations come from every part of the country, not just established areas of the game. This play book is a living document and is not set in stone. Over time it will be as good as the input we receive, so please honor the game by sharing your ideas with us to improve this document and make it more relevant for everyone. To contact us, please e-mail umpires@uslacrosse.org or officials@uslacrosse.org.

Compiling such a guide was not a simple task, and it is appropriate to acknowledge the collaboration and effort that went into this document. We honor these individuals not only for their contributions to this play book but for all that they do for the game. Rod Korba, Men's Division Officials Council (MDOC) Past Chairperson and current MDOC-Youth Officials Committee (YOC) Chairperson of Wooster, Ohio provided great project leadership on the development of this document. Women's Division Officials Council (WDOC) Chairperson Priscilla Anderson of Mount Upton, New York also provided valuable input. Gene Brown from Austin, Texas provided an extensive framework for many of these strategies and wrote copy to accompany many of the pages in this book. John Hill of Braintree, Massachusetts shared a number of his successful recruiting efforts in Eastern Massachusetts. US Lacrosse staff members Jennifer Allen, Debbie Black, Erin Brown, Tracey Cantabene, Katherine Clark and Jody Martin all contributed to the development of this guide.

US Lacrosse also recognizes and thanks the National Association of Sport Officials (NASO), the research and publications of which served as important references and resources in the play book's development. We encourage you to utilize this helpful organization, which can be accessed through www.naso.org.

And lastly, thank YOU for your commitment to the support and growth of lacrosse! Good luck and have fun!

INTRODUCTION

HOW TO USE THIS PLAY BOOK

Recruiting sports officials is a challenge that faces amateur athletics nationwide. The National Association of Sports Officials (NASO) recently conducted research among 30 different amateur sports organizations and found that 90% of the organizations were experiencing officials' shortages. Recruiting lacrosse officials is only a piece of the equation: retaining the officials that you identify and train is critical for long-term success.

More than likely, your recruiting campaign will require a number of diverse strategies—working simultaneously—to generate the qualified men's and women's officials that you need. This *play book* has been formulated to assist you in developing your own *game plan* for recruiting and retention. Feel free to combine these strategies to develop a recruiting campaign that is right for you.

Some Points to Consider

Develop an overall strategy first, put some thought into the process of how to deliver the strategy and stay focused. Start with a plan. What do you want to accomplish? What is your goal? What are your resources? How will you retain the officials that you recruit?

Select three or four strategies (pages from the play book) and adapt the material generated from those strategies to fit each level of your plan.

Establish and communicate a reliable way for people to contact you, whether an email address, voice mail box, website, P.O. box or home address, or all of the above.

Get the message out to the public. Once the circumstances are understood, people will be more likely acknowledge the need for more officials and show genuine interest in officiating.

Keep in mind: "People do not care how much you know until they know how much you care."

Today's recruits are technologically savvy, digitally enlightened, and visually literate individuals. Take advantage of using an array of methods for communicating with them.

Officiating and coaching groups should collaborate in drawing people to the sport of lacrosse. There is a shortage of both groups and combined resources and efforts can go a long way.

Fundraising may also be a part of your recruiting and retention efforts, in order to support local training programs or to sponsor "scholarships" for officials to travel to training clinics

Results will not always come quickly. Stay the course and continue to modify and monitor the progress of the strategy before changing your campaign.

Evaluating These Strategies

Each of these recruiting strategies has been assessed for you. The "*Level of Success*" rating scale is from 1 to 5, with 1 as the most effective and 5 as the least effective recruiting strategies. The "*Return on Investment*" rating scale is an estimate of a cost-to-effort ratio. These ratings are also from 1 to 5, with 1 as the most cost effective, and 5 as the least cost effective recruiting strategies. Results will vary among different areas.

Some strategies are low success—low cost.

Level of Success: 5

Return on Investment: 1

Others are high success—high cost.

Level of Success: 1

Return on Investment: 5

Obviously, high success—low cost strategies (1—1) are the most effective to follow.

RECRUITING OFFICIALS

SECTION I **Organizational Resources** (Utilizing existing organizations)

CHAPTER 1 Recruiting through Your US Lacrosse Chapter

Level of Success: 1
Return on Investment: 1

A chapter of US Lacrosse is a regional affiliate of the national organization, lead by volunteers from the lacrosse community. A chapter unifies, promotes, and manages the many aspects of men's and women's lacrosse in its geographic area. Each chapter serves as a conduit to the national headquarters of US Lacrosse and has the authority to conduct business that conforms to the approved requirements outlined in the Chapter Agreement and Guidelines. As it is required for all lacrosse constituent groups (coaches, officials, players at every level of the game) to participate in the chapter through board member representation, officials in your area should already be involved with the chapter initiatives, making it the most logical place to start with recruiting.

The US Lacrosse chapters have grown in direct response to the regional or local need to promote and support the sport. Promoting the growth of the sport means having an awareness of the challenges facing the men's and women's games, from publicity for sport to the cost of equipment and from safety issues to finding qualified coaches and officials. Perhaps no group is more acutely aware of the shortage of officials than your US Lacrosse chapter. After all, the sport cannot gain momentum if there are not enough officials to work the games. Thus, in the US Lacrosse chapters, you have a strong and dedicated ally to assist you in recruiting and retaining your officials.

How can you work together—US Lacrosse chapters and officiating groups—to assist each other? The regional chapters of US Lacrosse may have useful resources at their disposal that officiating organizations and umpiring boards may not: membership rebate dollars from the national organization, interested patrons of the game, and access to communication with all local US Lacrosse members. The chapter's regular communication with its membership should consistently include information on becoming an official. The chapter can also provide officials' information at any events it hosts or attends. This diverse body of lacrosse supporters has contacts and resources that men's and women's officiating groups normally lack: different points of contact that take men's and women's officials outside of their normal channels. This is a "force multiplier" that extends your direct and indirect recruiting strategies to a wider group of people than officials might not otherwise contact themselves.

The chapters are also in direct, regular communication with US Lacrosse headquarters and therefore have the latest information and access to programs that may help with recruiting officials. Chapters also qualify for special opportunities, like discounts and resources from national US Lacrosse partners. For example, chapters can apply for a Workshop Grant from US Lacrosse partner Positive Coaching Alliance (PCA) – “transforming youth sports so sports can transform youth.” The grant brings a PCA representative to your community to conduct a clinic offering character-development tools for coaches and strategies for positive relationships between coaches, players, officials and fans.

Be sure to communicate regularly with the chapter board to convey the need to recruit and train officials or coaches to help the sport grow. Choose some strategies from this play book that do not overlap. Perhaps the chapter has better resources to pursue a video PSA on cable television. Perhaps the chapter resources are connected in your regional or local area, in ways the men's and women's officials are not. Use these resources to "piggy back" your recruiting efforts!

SUGGESTION #1: Visit the “Regional Chapters” section of the US Lacrosse website (www.uslacrosse.org) for a complete list of chapter contacts. Network with chapters around the country for ideas. The ‘Chapter Finder’ feature allows you to enter a zip code to determine which chapter that area falls into.

SUGGESTION #2: Start an area wide database of players who have graduated from scholastic programs and move off to colleges or jobs. This database can be extremely effective for staying in contact with people and encouraging their further contributions to the game.

CHAPTER 2

Recruiting through Other Sport Organizations

Level of Success: 2

Return on Investment: 3

The National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) a.k.a. the "Federation" is your best resource to determine which high school officiating groups are operating in your state. The active members of the NFHS are the 50 state high school athletic/activity bodies, plus the District of Columbia. There also are affiliate athletic/activity members, including groups in the U.S. territories, Canada and other neighboring countries.

You can find web sites for all 50 of the NFHS state organizations at www.nfhs.org/members.htm. The Federation requires that all 50 state high school associations conduct mandatory rules interpretation meetings for the coaches and officials in each of their separate high school sports. Thus, on most of the 50 web sites you will find the dates, times, and locations of these mandatory rules meetings—listed by each separate sport—along with the names, addresses, and phone numbers of the key personnel for each officials organization, in the state you are interested in. Given this information, not only can you find the time, date and location for the mandatory Alabama High School Federation wrestling rules interpretation meetings in each part of the state www.AHSAA.com/coaches/rulesclinicsschedule.asp, but you can also find information on every officials' organization in the State of Alabama. At the very least, you will be able to e-mail the appropriate individual at the State Federation Association and request this information.

Find the organization that supports the local high school sports officials and forge a relationship with the leaders. This relationship will hopefully lead you to a large number of sports officials who are interested in a second sport. For example, the Texas Association of Sports Officials has an active roster of 13,000 officials across the state of Texas. By posting an announcement in their quarterly, direct mail campaign, this organization should yield a number of qualified recruits.

Another approach is to arrange for a brief presentation at the beginning of one of the pre-season training sessions that many states require for certification in a particular sport. The US Lacrosse Men's Division Officials Council (MDOC) has a training video that has been specifically designed so that the first 60 seconds of the video can serve as a "commercial" for lacrosse officiating. Not only does this opening provide a dynamic introduction to the training tape, but it can also be used to illustrate the excitement of lacrosse officiating at the highest levels of the men's game. The Women's Division Officials Council (WDOC) also has a video that can be used as an "icebreaker" to your presentation(s). Be aware that the calendar year for officials' training in other sports may vary dramatically from your training timetable: basketball often begins its pre-season training in September and October and soccer begins in July and August. Lacrosse officials' training takes place at different times around the country, from the fall through the spring. Wherever you are located, though, making a year-round commitment to recruiting officials is sure to pay off!

Finally, if any of your local officials work more than one sport and are Federation members, you have wonderful contacts for other officials' associations. Use these connections to your advantage. A final point to keep in mind is that over 10,000,000 kids played varsity sports last year. The average high school has 22 athletic teams and each of those sports requires officials: go find them!

Sample copy of a brief 3-minute presentation before an officiating organization

Thank you (**name of the person who introduced you**). My name is (**your name**), and I am a lacrosse official.

The (**name of your organization**) is looking for new officials. (**Men's/Women's**) lacrosse is a high energy (**contact**) sport, played primarily in the spring, that resembles a combination of basketball and (**ice or field**) hockey being played on a soccer field. Athletes use their lacrosse sticks to throw, catch, shoot on goal, and pick up the ball, which spends very little time on the ground.

I'd like to share with you a brief video clip that illustrates some of the action that is typical of the game of (**men's/women's**) lacrosse [roll 60 seconds of tape].

As you can see, it's a pretty dynamic game. Recognized by both the NCAA and an increasing number of individual states, lacrosse is one of the fastest growing sports in the country. Our training programs are clear, concise, and designed to quickly give you the knowledge, skills, and confidence that you need. Our mentoring program will team you up with an experienced lacrosse official who can answer all of your questions and help guide you throughout your first season. As you become qualified, advancement comes quickly. Lacrosse officials earn game fees that are highly competitive with referee fees in other team sports. There is always a need for officials because lacrosse is played year round. Interested individuals should contact me at (**provide your information**).

Are there any questions? Thank you!

CHAPTER 3

Recruiting through Colleges and Universities

Level of Success: 3.5
Return on Investment: 2

College students are great candidates for officiating. Although transportation may be an issue, many college students have their afternoons free and are interested in flexible part-time work.

Most colleges and universities in this country have a recreational or intramural sports program. This is an opportunity for students to participate in men's and women's athletics on a non-varsity level. All of these intramural sports need qualified officials, and interested students can earn some extra money by officiating intramural contests. On campuses where these programs are particularly competitive, instruction is often given to intramural officials on the rules of the games that they officiate. Students who have experienced the "baptism of fire" in intramural sports, and who persevere in officiating, are certainly prominent candidates for US Lacrosse training and officiating - especially if they can get back-to-back assignments on the Saturday and Sunday afternoons, when intramural events are not normally scheduled at colleges and universities. You may find a number of intramural officials who would be interested in officiating at a higher level and/or for better pay outside of campus.

The National Intramural & Recreational Sports Association (NIRSA) has a strong presence on many large college campuses—especially those schools that offer degrees in Sports or Parks and Recreation Management. On large campuses (where the Director of Intramural Sports and the Intramural Staff are normally NIRSA members) there is often more demand for intramural officials than there are students willing to undertake these responsibilities. The Intramural Director at a local university may be reluctant to support your request(s) to identify officials to work youth, middle school, or sub-varsity lacrosse games if they do not have sufficient resources to cover their own intramural leagues. However, it never hurts to ask, and you can also consider approaching schools with smaller intramural sports programs, which may have more students would be interested in outside officiating opportunities.

Also, target universities with club lacrosse teams, whose participants would have a particular interest in lacrosse as a sport to officiate. They will serve as a great resource for recruiting their peers on campus, including those currently officiating intramural programs. Another option is to place the US Lacrosse officials' recruiting brochures (see Chapter 10) in and around the intramural office bulletin boards or in the hands of the students/intramural officials.

Once you have the interest, hold a training clinic near by or even on campus targeted at students/intramural officials.

Sample paragraph announcement to post to intramural officials:

US LACROSSE OFFICIATING CLASSES BEGIN! The **(name of your location)** officials association will hold officials training classes at **(training site)** located at **(address of facility)**, on **(date of training)**. No experience necessary—will train you to national standards. Earn **(current fee)** for youth games and **(current fee)** for high school games. Work afternoons and weekends—double headers possible. License and membership is good anywhere in the country. Contact **Joe/Jane Volunteer** at **(123) 555-1212**, or e-mail **jvolunteer@computernet.com** for more information. College students welcome.

Exposing college upperclass men and women to officiating the sport may incline them to continue officiating after college, or for players, to get started when their college playing days are over. This is an investment that is well worth making.

SUGGESTION #1: Compile a list of all colleges and universities in your immediate area. Build a list of the Intramural Directors and inquire about intramural officials training and the existence of club lacrosse.

CHAPTER 4 Recruiting through Community Organizations

Level of Success: 3
Return on Investment: 2.5

Whose job is it to recruit and retain lacrosse officials? It's everyone's job to accomplish this task, from coaches, to parents, to athletes and to officials. The National Association of Sports Officials (NASO) suggests that it isn't just the responsibility of the lacrosse community, but the whole community in general. We concur!

Everyone wants to see kids play sports at the scholastic and youth levels. That means; parents and the local School Board, retired people, the VFW and the American Legion, the YMCA, the Chamber of Commerce, the Department of Parks & Recreation, the Rotary Club... the list goes on. Your target group for assistance with the recruiting and retention of sport officials is everyone who thinks that sports contribute something to our society. Here is where the promotion of sportsmanship needs to take place: at the community level.

Partnering with a non-sporting community group may be one of most promising of the untapped areas for recruiting officials. Officials provide a community service that touches the general public and all citizens who value the benefits of athletic competition. If you partner with other groups, such as United Way, the results could be very impressive. Individual involvement is very important to furthering our cause of recruiting more officials, but if you can also find ways to raise more funds to recruit, the organization will grow.

Contact the group's leadership and propose a brief meeting to discuss the role of athletics in your community and the service that officials provide. If the sport is growing in your area and the need for officials is high, remind the leadership that without more officials a danger exists that young people will be denied an opportunity to engage in this wonderful sport. Point out that having more qualified officials can help to prevent or address issues such as poor sportsmanship by educating the fans and providing more order on the field. Communities do not like negative labels and the criticisms such as: "Those people from Sweet Apple are whiners," or "The fans from Smallville are horrible," which embarrasses a city or town. Arrange to make a brief presentation to the body of this organization, and suggest ways that you can work together to improve the reputation or standing of the community. Other sports organizations will benefit from your efforts and actions.

When you speak to these groups, make your presentation in partnership with coaches or parents. This projects a unified front, and demonstrates "within-sport solidarity" on issues like sportsmanship. In your presentation (see Chapter 2), be sure to bring along brochures and schedules, and invite these community leaders to a game. Many of these organizations are geared to community service, and may be looking for community problems to tackle.

Your town or city's division of parks and recreation is another great candidate for partnership. Parks and recreation department administrators are already acutely aware of the shortage of officials in many team sports. Any efforts that you can make to address this ongoing challenge will benefit them, too! Placing brochures in and around the parks and recreation facilities would be a simple effort on your part. Going a step further to partner with the parks and recreation department to recruit and train officials would give a great deal of credibility to your request to meet with local community organizations.

SUGGESTION #1: Develop a list of all recreation facilities and organizations in the area (YMCA, recreational centers, parks and recreation departments) and contact them in the off-season so you can develop a "campaign" to meet with a number of these service organizations. In this fashion, you can get on the monthly calendar of these organizations, well in advance of your recruiting timetable.

SUGGESTION #2: When you make a presentation to these groups, be certain to bring plenty of business cards and circulate a sign-up sheet for anyone who is interested in participating. Contact these individuals immediately after your presentation and follow up on their interest in your project.

CHAPTER 5
Recruiting At-Large in the Community

To reach a wide and somewhat targeted audience, acquire lists of community members who may be interested in officiating or helping you to identify interested others.

- Roster of local club players and affiliates
- Roster of local college players and alumni
- Roster of local high school players and alumni
- Roster of all booster club members from area high schools
- Roster of coaches from local areas
- Roster of officials from local and state areas
- List of primary, middle school and secondary schools, with the name of the principals
- List of local sports organizations
- List of city/county parks and recreation fields, and recreational facilities
- A list of the members of your local Board of Education - these are key people to get to know

One additional, less targeted approach for reaching the community at-large is to work with local shopping malls or other public community locations and set up an information table. One group has been able to gather 135 names of potential officials within a 5 week period.

SECTION II USING MEDIA RESOURCES

(Interfacing with media outlets)

CHAPTER 6 Recruiting with Newspaper Ads

Level of Success: 3.5
Return on Investment: 4

You can secure free, on-line ads in the community section of a regional/local paper. These can be cost effective and draw numerous inquires. The key is to remain consistent and run the ads several months in a row.

If you place column ads, try to locate the nearest local/community paper that provides details about high school and college sports. For example, the Dallas Times Herald is a large paper with expensive ad costs. But the Grapevine community paper, located in the Dallas Metroplex, has a highly success sports section because local teams are performing well in the area. Free ads are available; it may just take time to locate the person who can give you the details you need in order to take advantage of the ad space.

Once you get free ad space, never miss running an ad! Target officials who work sports with opposite seasons from lacrosse: basketball, volleyball, football and soccer are good places to start. Other groups to consider are business and community driven organizations, such as Boy Scouts, Rotary, and the Fraternal Organizations (Lions Club, Elks & Moose)

Develop a list of local newspapers, university/college papers, community papers, ad flyers, etc. with contact names and/or sports editors

Position an ad year round when possible, especially when other sports officials are out of season

Begin your ads early. If your lacrosse season begins in March, training may begin in December, so you will want to begin your ads in October or November. If you are running special all-day training sessions, weekend days may be more successful but may require more advanced planning for participants.

SAMPLE NEWSPAPER COPY

"One-Line" announcement to appear in the "community" section of a local newspaper (trim as necessary).

LACROSSE OFFICIALS NEEDED! Great sport. Great pay. Great exercise. No experience necessary...will train to national standards. Opportunities for travel. Call (123) 555-1212.

Short paragraph announcement to appear in a "Sports Activities" column:

*LACROSSE OFFICIATING CLASSES BEGIN! **(Name of your local chapter or association)** will hold officials training classes at the **(name of your town)** **(name of your facility)** located at **(address of facility)**, on **(date of training)**. No experience necessary—will train to national standards. Opportunities for travel. Contact **Joe/Jane Volunteer** at **(123) 555-1212**, or e-mail jvolunteer@computernet.com.*

Longer "special interest" article to appear in Sports Section of newspaper.

*(**Name of your group**) is looking for new officials. (**Men's/Women's**) lacrosse is a high energy (**contact**) sport, played primarily in the spring, that resembles a combination of basketball and (**ice or field**) hockey being played on a soccer field. Athletes use their lacrosse sticks to throw, catch, shoot on goal, and pick up the ball, which spends very little time on the ground. Recognized by both the NCAA and an increasing number of individual states (as an NFHS sanctioned sport), lacrosse is one of the fastest growing sports in the country.*

As the sport expands, there is a tremendous demand for lacrosse officials at every level of the game. In the last decade, there has been a 60% increase in the number of teams playing at the youth, high school, college, and club levels of the sport. Lacrosse officiating is terrific exercise and wonderful camaraderie, and the training programs are clear, concise, and designed to quickly give you the knowledge, skills, and confidence that you need. US Lacrosse provides its members with all of the materials needed to learn the rules, mechanics and techniques of officiating. Our mentoring program will place you with an experienced lacrosse official who can answer all of your questions, and help guide you throughout your first season. As you become qualified, advancement comes quickly. Lacrosse officials earn game fees that are highly competitive with referees in other team sports, and the opportunities for travel abound.

*If you have never played lacrosse before, we welcome the opportunity to train and work with you. If you are a parent who wants to develop a better understanding of the game, we can help you make a significant contribution to the sport. Local officials' training begins in a few weeks with the season running from (**month**) to (**month**). Interested individuals should contact **Joe/Jane Volunteer** at (123) 555-1212, or e-mail jvolunteer@computernet.com.*

CHAPTER 7

Recruiting with Newspaper Feature Stories

Level of Success: 3
Return on Investment: 3

The strategy of using newspapers to promote lacrosse officiating is most successful when you are able to run a feature story that has a "plug" for contacting your local officials organization. Often, newspapers are hungry for stories that move beyond the beat writer's normal responsibility of providing scores and statistics. Newspapers need to have an "angle" that they believe will attract readers to their pages. If you look at the type of feature articles that newspapers run in your local area, you'll get some idea of what you can stress as an interesting topic, in your attempt to "pitch" your story line. Don't forget the "Community" section of your paper. Frequently this section will run a sports feature, if the angle of the story deals with strengthening "community roots" and contributing to the diversity of the community.

Within the weekly and yearly calendars there are also heavy and light days for sports news. Tuesday and Thursday are light sports days. Friday, Saturday, Sunday and Monday are often filled with sports stories or their coverage. The beginning of the summer (April, June, and July) are great times for planning feature sports stories, as are October, February and March. But in some areas these months may be out of sync with the optimum time to train officials. Avoid the overlap of professional sports seasons, particularly November-January. Light days in late January or early February may be your best bet if you still have time to train new youth officials for your season.

Successfully "pitching" a topic to a newspaper may be challenging, especially when you are involved with what is often considered a minor sport. Sportsmanship issues are always a good angle, but be wary of trying to attract people through negative publicity. Promote the growth of the sport. Here are some statistics that you might use:

- ✓ *There are currently over 135,000 youth lacrosse players*
- ✓ *Over 2,000 high schools play men's lacrosse, and over 1,800 high schools play women's lacrosse*
- ✓ *Nearly 500 colleges play men's lacrosse and nearly 400 colleges play women's lacrosse*
- ✓ *US Lacrosse, the National Governing Body for the sport, has nearly 130,000 members*
- ✓ *Jim Brown was a two sport All-American in football and lacrosse*
- ✓ *At the 1932 Olympics in Los Angeles, the United States won the only gold medal awarded in the sport*

Can you get a piece dedicated to someone's efforts or accomplishments within the sport? How about an odd angle like: "The oldest active goalie in the country," an unusual commitment by a parent or official balancing between a job and community involvement." Someone who "rediscovers the game" after many years away. Perhaps this is someone in your local area who played the game long ago, but was unconnected to the sport until your efforts began to promote it locally. Be sure to check with all local teams so that officiating can be referenced in the feature story. If you are conducting a local community event, such as a blood drive, make sure that all officials are wearing their stripes to the location and that someone takes a picture of the event and forwards it to the newspaper. The key is to make the event unique and appealing to the paper's readership.

Provide as much information as possible such as names, addresses, phone numbers and possible points of contact in writing a story. Make sure to anticipate the key questions: What?; When?; Where?; How?; Why?; and How Much? Writing a sample copy might send the paper the wrong message, but a story outline or abstract might be helpful.

SUGGESTION #1: Construct a Media Kit. Have someone involved with your program create a packet of information that includes local and national information, your program's history, points of contact, brief profiles on the key members of your organization, mission statements organizational goals, past records, where successful graduates have gone, etc. Highlight organization members who may have strong local name recognition, include pictures and articles of community service programs that the organization or its members belong to, and include content or pictures that emphasize the fun that we have helping youth and young adults grow as individuals. Make certain to provide phone numbers and e-mail addresses as point-of-contact (POC) information.

SUGGESTION #2: Keep a list of local newspapers and community papers in your geographic area, along with the name of the key sports writers. Invite these people to your post-season banquet. That's where they'll get a feel for your program, which may reap dividends for you next year.

CHAPTER 8
Recruiting with Public Service Announcements (PSA) on Cable Television

Level of Success: 1
Return on Investment: 3

The Federal Communication Commission requires that all cable companies provide local access opportunities to the communities that they serve. As a result, the cable companies have set aside air time to provide public service programming and public service advertisements, commonly known as "Public Service Announcements" (PSAs), about issues and events in the local community. In most cases, these announcements are free, but require you to provide the message content and to "qualify" your announcement as public service oriented. These are highly successful recruiting venues because of the ability to showcase the sport and get your message to a large audience.

Contact your local cable company for details on how to prepare the ad. Often, you may have a choice between running a "video classified ad" that is just written text, or an "action ad" that is like a mini-commercial, complete with written text, still or video imagery, and voice-over narration. There are two points that are important to this strategy: 1) the production of the actual video segment; 2) the creation of an accompanying repository (such as an e-mail address or telephone answering machine) to collect information, or record the inquiries of interested parties.

Just as newspapers will provide you with a "word count" and restrictions on classified ads, cable companies will provide you with similar ad length and content requirements for their "classifieds." However, video "action ads" are more complicated. You are normally on your own to produce these, and although they are not complicated to create, you must have the ability to work with compatible technical standards in order to hand the station something that is "broadcast ready." If your cable company will allow "action ads," inquire about the required format (Beta, VHS, digital), length (in frames), the need for "color bars and tone", "academy leader" (the ten-second countdown), and copyright issues (the images that you select must be private images under your control, or in the public domain).

You might find a fair amount of production expertise in the people in your US Lacrosse chapter or local league program. Laptop programs like *Final Cut* will allow you to take digital game footage, transport it into your computer by a fire-wire connection, edit the images, add sophisticated graphics and sound, and export a finished digital copy. Many businesses, colleges, universities, and (in some cases) high schools, are developing these capabilities; individuals may also be available who are looking to build their portfolios through an internship or community service opportunity. Investigate the resources available in your community and think creatively!

SUGGESTION #1: View the National Sports Officials Association sample PSA under "Community Relations" at www.naso.org. All you need is QuickTime 3.0 and you can see a sample of an excellent PSA.

SUGGESTION #2: Approach some of the people that you know who take photographs or videotape the lacrosse games in your area. Because men's and women's officials try to work around the fringe of the "action," it is often difficult to get good shots of referees at work. Ask these people to occasionally train their cameras on the officials in order to generate images that show the dynamics of the game and the excitement of officiating. Develop an archive of quality photographs, slides and videotape that you can use in a number of graphics related applications.

CHAPTER 9 Recruiting with the Web (Internet)

The Web is one of the most effective ways to reach niche groups of people. The lacrosse community needs to reach to all officiating communities via the web.

A. Web Advertising

Level of Success: 2

Return on Investment: 2

Placing ads (or banners) on a Web site can produce unexpected benefits for your organization. On a daily basis, web sites are being visited in record numbers. With an effective web strategy that targets popular web sites in close proximity to your geographic area, an organization can increase the number of potential members.

Some good websites to consider might be those of associations that service officiating groups, equipment suppliers who service the sport, parks and recreation organizations, community organizations (the Chamber of Commerce, school boards, high schools, booster clubs, bulletin boards), church organizations and health clubs. It may take a little time and effort to get permission to link to these sites, but the advantages will outweigh the efforts required.

An effective strategy will consider the following types of web variables: determine whether to post your advertisement to "free" or "pay" sites; determine what type of ad to post to these sites; determine how often the ad will run; determine if you will post at sites visited by sports minded consumers, at sites that receive a high volume of traffic from all types of consumers, or both; determine traffic patterns/numbers for the web sites (for pay sites, this is a must); find "pay" sites that are tied to the local community (ask for a free public service announcement spot similar to what the cable companies offer). Free sites are numerous; therefore you may want to locate a directory of sites or visit the local community library and have a librarian assist you in identifying those sites with high volumes of traffic.

Your ads or banners should be simple and direct. The advantage is instant access. By clicking onto your ad or banner, you can route an inquiry directly to an e-mail form, or even to a web site that your US Lacrosse chapter or officiating group maintains. You should have a media kit or related recruitment information that can be downloaded by interested parties. Your web site content should consist of informational dialog or downloadable documents to help draw the interested party in to the organization.

There are probably resources in your US Lacrosse chapter, or even knowledgeable students athletes, who can show you how to place ads or links on the web that might increase your reach into the local or regional area. Take advantage of these opportunities!

SUGGESTION #1: View the banners on various commercial web sites. The hyper text mark-up language (HTML) can be easily accessed and modified to meet your needs. Contact local web sites who might be willing to carry your banner.

SUGGESTION #2: Visit the National Association of Sports Officials (NASO) web site (www.naso.org) to get some ideas about how to present your information.

B. Web Hosting/Presence

Level of Success: 2.5

Return on Investment: 3.0

If your US Lacrosse chapter or area league maintains a local website, much of your work is done. Chapter websites are linked the US Lacrosse national headquarters website, so your exposure will be widespread. Designate an individual to communicate with the chapter's website coordinator to be sure the officials' page is in tact and maintained regularly.

A web site can be a very useful resource for recruiting officials. A web site doesn't have to be complicated with flashy animation or video clips in order for it to serve recruiting purposes. It must simply be easy to navigate and both clear and up-to-date on information. Potential recruits may visit the site several times before deciding to

leave contact information. You want to leave the perspective candidate with the impression that your organization is vital and constantly engaged in new activities. Information should include details about officiating in your area, training schedules, dates and times of clinics, rules updates, and points of contact for seeking information. Add highlights of members who may have strong local name recognition, pictures and articles of community service programs that the organization or its members belong to, and content or pictures that emphasize the fun that we have helping youth and young adults grow as individuals. Post a downloadable media kit as a Public Display File (PDF).

As a last resort, you can develop a new web site. If you are getting started on the web, and you are not sure of how to proceed, there are many resources available to help you. Today, many high school students have web-authoring skills and you are sure to find a number of people in the community with experience. Web-authoring programs like *Dreamweaver* can help you construct simple pages quickly, and many on-line tutorials are available to help you with web authoring skills.

US Lacrosse continues to add resources and information to the officials' section of its headquarters website (www.uslacrosse.org). The Canadian Hockey Association (CHA) offers some great examples of online officials recruiting (www.canadianhockey.ca). The Central Ohio Basketball Officials Association (COBOA) also has a very dynamic web site at www.coboa.com. This is elaborate interactive site demonstrates the power of information on the World Wide Web.

SUGGESTION #1: Challenge some of the athletes connected with your programs to help you compile information to pass along regularly to the administrator of the chapter or league website or to help construct a site if necessary.

CHAPTER 10
Recruiting with MDOC/WDOC Officiating Brochures

Success: 2

Return on Investment: 2

The US Lacrosse Men's Division Officials Council (MDOC) and Women's Division Officials Council (WDOC) have co-produced a unique recruiting brochure. It is a tri-fold handout with women's recruiting information on one side and men's recruiting information inverted on the opposite side. US Lacrosse has posted a color, public display file (pdf) of this information on the US Lacrosse web site www.uslacrosse.org. This digital file can be downloaded to a color printer so that you can print as many of these documents in color as your recruiting needs dictate. You can also download these digital images to a black and white printer for less expensive black and white copies. Original copies of the recruiting brochure exist in limited quantities and may be able to be supplied upon request.

FEATURES: In addition to a dynamic description of lacrosse officiating and the national training programs available, each brochure offers contact information, including room on the final panel for a local stamp. When these brochures are posted on bulletin boards as "fliers," they should have a local point of contact (phone number or e-mail address) where interested parties can follow up by contacting your organization. Place interested parties in contact with the US Lacrosse officials' councils; the respective e-mail addresses for men's and women's officiating are listed on the brochure, officials@uslacrosse.org and umpires@uslacrosse.org. This will work particularly well in places around the country that have local teams but long-distance points of contact for officiating.

DISTRIBUTION: Recruiting brochures can be placed in a host of different locations. A key to this type of campaign is finding individuals that can help deliver the brochures to places that possible recruits may frequent (sports facilities and places with community bulletin boards).

A starting list might include: local recreation centers, sporting goods stores, athletic centers, health clubs, college campuses, high school teachers' lounges, elementary and middle school teachers lounges, grocery stores, shopping malls, churches bulletin boards, community learning centers, sporting good stores, and at other sporting events and stadiums. You can also distribute these brochures and flyers at community events. Locate the events that draw large attendance and ask to be a part of the event. This can be very effective with non-sporting events as well as sporting events. One example is to set up a table at a local shopping mall and pass out flyers to customers.

SUGGESTION #1: Keep track of where people found these brochure to help saturate those areas in the future. This will help you to target your resources most effectively. Share this information with others.

SECTION III

Personal Resources

CHAPTER 11 Personal Recruiting (Face-to-face contacts)

Level of Success: 1
Return on Investment: 1

Face-to-face contact is the most effective form of recruitment that an organization can utilize. People will make decisions to join your organization based on your excitement and commitment to the cause in which you are involved. A brochure, web site, poster or piece of mail can not deliver the enthusiasm or excitement that an individual can deliver in a face-to-face conversation. All officials should remain in continued contact with friends, coworkers and associates. Invite them to watch games that you are officiating or invite them to go watch a game with you. This type of interaction will bring recruits your way. Always mention your avocation and ask people if they would like to get involved. Constantly probe friends and acquaintances for possible contacts.

In developing this "sales pitch" remember to touch on the following points:

Officiating is investing into the community. Sports give youngsters something to do.
Lacrosse is a very popular sport that is growing in leaps and bounds.
There is a major need for officials at the lower levels of the game.
It's great outdoor exercise...and it pays well.
You can "pick your schedule" in terms of the amount of games you want to do, and how far you travel.
Training is clear, concise, and designed to quickly give you knowledge, skills, and confidence.
Mentoring programs team you up with an experienced official who can answer all your questions.
It's the best seat in the house for some great action on the field!

People go where they are invited and stay where they feel welcomed and appreciated. Only face-to-face contact can provide this personal touch. Close the sale!

SUGGESTION #1: Anticipate having to address any problems associated with officiating (see Chapter 16). For each of these barriers to officiating, construct a response that you can use to keep people interested during your face-to-face recruiting "pitch."

SUGGESTION #2: Make a list of acquaintances that you would want to see outside of your job requirements. These are the people that you would like to spend more time with if you could and who would make great partners with whom you could work.

SUGGESTION #3: Offer to see a game together and sit in the stands to explain how the game is played.

SUGGESTION #4: Have some of the lacrosse parents in your local chapter sponsor a get-together for potential officials and coaches. This can be a wonderful way for prospective participants to hear first-hand the appreciation and value placed on their future contributions to the sport.

CHAPTER 12 Targeting Groups

Level of Success: 2
Return on Investment: 2

A current US Lacrosse Hall of Fame official is fond of saying that only one person in a thousand had the prerequisite skills and determination to be a successful sports official. Although this claim is often offered in praise of the accomplishments and commitment of lacrosse officials, it also underscores an important point. If officiating is a job that not many people are qualified for—then where do we find the qualified people?

First, we must consider the characteristics of great sports officials: self confidence, the courage of their convictions, a desire to serve others, leadership abilities, determination, guts, and the ability to make pressure decisions and handle pressure situations. Where is the pool of potential applicants who have these traits, and is it worth targeting those groups? In a word—yes!

Certain groups may be likely to share these prerequisite characteristics. A number of vocations come to mind, and many of these are in the service sector of society. Police officers and fire fighters are uniquely qualified to serve in the arena of sport: they are used in pressure situations and they know how to apply a set of laws or rules to the behavior of a group of people. Military personnel—including men and women on active duty, reservists, and those in the National Guard—are all accustomed to the discipline and the importance of rules, and the application of those standards to individual and group performance. Health and fitness advocates are not only in great shape, but they also have a set of values that embrace discipline and performance. Groups like the Fellowship of Christian Athletes embody service, discipline, and devotion. They too would have the propensity to see the job of officiating as valuable and essential. Teachers have always made stalwart officials, because they are used to handling young people in encouraging ways, they understand the role of discipline, and they have the potential for free afternoons to pursue extra-curricular activities. Other groups to target are athletic directors and board of education members for the schools in your area. These individuals have a vested interest in strong athletic programs with good officiating groups. They can be valuable conduits to other potential recruits.

SUGGESTION #1: Make a brief presentation to these types of "productive groups," or find a way to leave some recruiting materials in their hands.

SECTION IV
Coaches as a Resource
(High school and college contacts)

CHAPTER 13
Recruiting Youth Officials through High School Teams

Level of Success: 2
Return on Investment: 2

Youth programs in Texas and Florida have often been officiated by a combination of one experienced official and one trained high school player working together to cover games. This program has filled much needed officials positions while giving high school players a chance to fulfill school requirements and get a taste of lacrosse officiating. An in-depth knowledge of the rules also contributes to making these high school athletes better performers on the field.

Out of necessity, and out of the demand that higher-level coaches make to have their games staffed by the most experienced officials, assignors may be unable to place experienced officials on a youth game. Frequently, one official is all that can be spared to do these games, and just as frequently, that will be a rookie official who is asked to do a contest as a single-person crew. This places everyone in a difficult – and potentially unsafe!– situation. Yet, one-person games have unfortunately been a reality in many parts of the country. It is in this type of situation that the trained high school aged officials can make a significant contribution to the growth of the game.

Start by exposing players to officiating at an early age. Early exposure to officiating will strengthen them as players, give them a sense for the decisions that officials have to make, and give them an idea of how they can stay involved once they stop playing. Above all else, praise the efforts of these individuals. Young people today like to do what their friends are doing. So, if you recruit one student organization member, one athlete, or one campus leader—and you get him or her to enjoy officiating—then he or she will bring friends along. Coaches can also assist in this process by understanding and reinforcing that the official is an integral element of the game, not a barrier to a successful game. It's difficult to get athletes to think about officiating if the coach continually criticizes the officials on and off of the field.

In Texas, high school coaches nominate players who demonstrate the prerequisite maturity to become lacrosse officials. The local US Lacrosse officials' organization trains the high school players. Thanks to the interest shown by the coaches, the quality of these rookie officials has been high. Youth league organizers have been very pleased with the program and want to increase its usage.

The only problem is in getting these athletes out of practice. However, if youth games are scheduled in ways that maximize the availability of officials, then it would be possible for certified high school aged officials to work youth games on Saturday mornings and play in high school games on Saturday afternoons (see Chapter 19). Given this type of cooperation, high school aged officials can be successfully mentored by senior men's and women's officials during these youth events.

SUGGESTION #1: Work with area schools to set up a program to allow volunteering as a lacrosse official to fulfill students' community service requirements.

SUGGESTION #2: Set up a scholarship program for young officials who will be attending college.

SUGGESTION #3: For more details on existing high school training programs, visit www.uslacrosse.org for current US Lacrosse chapter contact information.

CHAPTER 14
Appealing to and Keeping in Touch with Graduating Players

Level of Success: 2.5
Return on Investment: 1.5

Recruiting graduating seniors to the officiating ranks is one of the most self-supporting activities a coach can perform. The more qualified people who enter the officiating ranks, the better officiating becomes on a whole. Also, with more qualified officials, more young athletes will have an opportunity to play the game and subsequently to continue in college; plus, incoming players will be better educated about the rules of the game. Even if high school and college coaches do not see the fruits of the efforts for a few years, every contribution to the officiating pool helps the growth of the game, which ultimately affects the quality and popularity of lacrosse at the higher levels of the game. Think of the increase in new officials that would be generated by having every varsity and collegiate and coach in the country embrace this letter writing campaign!

Even once student-athletes have graduated and moved on, coaches' and others' efforts to remain in contact with them can serve as a benefit down the road. Those who do not have the time or interest in officiating immediately after graduation may find the right time a few years down the road; continued contact with former players may draw them back to the game. Remember to collaborate with your

US Lacrosse chapter, which will always have an up-to-date US Lacrosse membership list with age/category denoted and a local database of contacts. Many individual high school programs and NCAA schools have an "alumni database" that is used for soliciting contributions to the program once the players have graduated.

SUGGESTION #1: Have coaches write personal letters to each of their players to request they "give back to the game" through officiating and/or coaching (see example on next page).

Sample letter to be sent to graduating seniors:

Dear **(Name)**.

(Date) - end of the season)

*It has been my privilege to coach you on the **(organization name)** lacrosse team. Together, we have shared some demanding experiences and many good times, and it has been a rewarding experience for me to have witnessed your growth as an athlete and as an individual.*

*But today, as you move on to bigger challenges and greater opportunities in your life, I'd like to ask you to consider one last favor—one last request from a coach to **(his/her)** athlete. If you have enjoyed your experiences in this sport, I ask you to consider the "putting something back into the game" that provided so much to you.*

As you reach this milestone in your career, it is appropriate for you to reflect back on the wonderful times that you have had. Yet, you may not have always been aware of number of people who contributed behind the scenes to make your athletic experience a memorable one. Certainly you can see the contributions of the coaching staff, trainers, managers and parents who have supported you over the years. But then there are the people who maintained the field, who coordinated your game schedule, who ran the booster to help fundraise for your program, who made dozens of phone calls to make certain that everything ran smoothly. It requires the contributions of a community of people to make a successful lacrosse program.

There are two especially important groups in this community: officials and youth coaches, who share your love of the sport, and without whom the sport could not grow. Without youth coaches, you would not be where you are today. Without officials, none of the games you have played could ever have taken place. Their jobs are crucial and their numbers are in short supply. They—and the sport—need your help.

*I encourage you to take the skills and the knowledge that you have acquired, and, at a time in the near future, return them to the game through officiating or coaching. Put some support back into the sport! Feed your devotion to lacrosse and honor the game that has honored you with its unselfish investment of time and energy. By this, you would honor **(organization name)** lacrosse.*

I look forward to keeping in touch and supporting your efforts to coach or officiate now or in the future. Remember, it's the biggest gift that you can give to yourself....and to the sport!

~Coach

CHAPTER 15
Collaborating with College Coaches to Establish Recruitment/Training Programs

Level of Success: 1

Return on Investment: 4

In some cases you may even have the opportunity to set up in-depth officiating courses in the community with the help of a university. College coaches may or may not have the time to offer an academic class in lacrosse officiating during the fall or spring semesters of the academic year, but they can be valuable resources to help facilitate the teaching of the courses around the country.

Virtually every college and university in this country offers some type of continuing education program, or non-traditional classroom experience. Most of the courses are taught in the evenings and are taught by people in the community with the appropriate qualifications for teaching an extension course. You can utilize the coaching staff's knowledge of the academic curricula on their campuses and their access to classroom facilities to arrange for others to teach these courses. Whether these officiating classes are run as credit or non-credit courses, pass-fail courses, continuing education courses, tutorials, independent studies, extension courses, practica, adult education, or alternative college courses, they will be an opportunity for students to take courses in lacrosse officiating and for active lacrosse coaches to help in the implementation of these educational opportunities.

Coaches may be particularly interested in helping because there is a distinct advantage to having their own athletes understand the rules comprehensively. Educated players make better players! Also, lacrosse coaches know that teaching "playing" and "non-playing" students how to become lacrosse officials is an opportunity to help raise the local area's overall standard of officiating. This is particularly true in areas where the scholastic or youth levels of the sport are still in the development phase.

To allow a coach to best assist you from "within the institution", planning must take place months before the course is offered. This way information may be included in registration materials and the maximum number of students can be recruited. Such an investment will definitely help the sport immediately and will come back to help the coaches in years to come.

SUGGESTION #1: Compile a list of all colleges and universities in the area that have lacrosse programs, with the names and phone numbers of the coaches. If you volunteer to teach the classes, will they help you to set up the course and provide some interested students?

RETAINING OFFICIALS

Section V Officials' Development

(Areas of emphasis within officiating organizations)

CHAPTER 16

Understanding and Considering Potential Reasons to Quit

Level of Success: 1

Return on Investment: 1

Retention is an important consideration in the effort to recruit new officials. If we can't retain the individuals that we recruit, we are defeating our own best intentions and efforts. Similar to the recruiting of lacrosse officials, the retention of lacrosse officials is a task that requires an entire community of people to accomplish.

To understand how to retain officials, it is important to look at the reasons for officials' attrition. Through a series of comprehensive "exit interviews," conducted among the 60 state high school associations nation wide, the National Association of Sports Officials (NASO) has assembled a list of the key reasons why officials leave the sports that they officiate.⁸ This attrition represents an enormous loss of time, energy and resources for an officiating organization. As the game expands, the loss of these critical resources becomes more significant.

Poor sportsmanship (combined spectators, coaches, and players).....	22%
Poor sportsmanship (spectators).....	16%
Career demands.....	14%
Difficulty in advancement.....	13%
Family demands.....	11%
Poor sportsmanship (coaches and players).....	7%
Prohibitive costs.....	4%
Advancement (new responsibilities).....	4%
Assignor/Association conflicts.....	2%
Low Pay.....	2%
Other.....	5%
Travel, lack of training, medical reasons.....	0%

*See NASO Special Report "How to Get and Keep Officials—NASO Conference 2001", p. 26. <http://www.naso.org/rprt.htm>

These statistics paint a disturbing picture. When given the choice of indicating the type of sportsmanship problems that plague officiating (spectators, players and coaches, or both) a full 45% of officials blamed *some level of sportsmanship* as the key reason that they left officiating. Another 25% cited either *career demands* or *family demands* as the most important reason they stopped officiating. A final group of 11% cited *difficulty with advancement* as the most important reason they stopped officiating. Focusing on these three explanations for attrition can account for 83% of the reasons that sports officials have traditionally failed to re-register in their organizations/associations.

If the results of this survey are surprising to you, it may be due to misperceptions people have about officials and why they do the job that they do. Even in corporate America, members of management tend to attribute the following "job satisfaction" priorities to workers: 1) Pay, 2) Time-off, 3) Benefits, 4.) Working conditions - yet consistently, workers surveys across the nation identify the following "job satisfaction" priorities: 1) Sense of worth and appreciation for a job well done, 2) Relationships with co-workers, 3)

Working conditions, 4) Pay. It's clear how important 'quality of experience' is to employees of every kind! See Chapter 22 for some suggestions on creating a positive work environment for officials and others.

CHAPTER 17 Establishing Organizational Professionalism

Level of Success: 1

Return on Investment: 3.5

At the backbone of all successful officiating organizations is the professionalism with which they treat their responsibilities and their members. A favorable experience with a well-organized and responsive organization is likely to positively influence his or her decision to continue an officiating career.

Seven positive things a local association can do to increase its professionalism and retention:

1. If you want a professional organization: Be a professional yourself. Set an example. Be prompt with your correspondence, be organized and on time with your meetings, assignments, feedback, praise, etc. Be fair. Be open. Be honest. If you want integrity from your officials, then practice integrity with them.
2. Communicate! Stay in touch with people. Nothing is better than being "in the loop." Give the information to the entire group. Even in the off season, let people know what is going on. Send holiday greetings, remember husbands' or wives' names when you call, recognize birthdays. Network with—and talk to—everyone in your organization.
3. Build camaraderie. People are the best part of the officiating experience. When your schedules allow for it, talk over the game with your partner at a location away from the game site. At meetings, recognize the accomplishments of others. If you have the opportunity, watch a separate game with a novice official. Talk him/her through all of the things that you see in front of you. Ask questions. Listen carefully. Host an-end-of-the season function for spouses and families. Let them know how much they matter!
4. If they are interested, place your new members on "higher level games." Don't place them in over their heads, but allow them opportunities to succeed at a different level.
5. Provide positive and negative feedback to new officials. When offering criticism, proceed and follow that criticism with praise.
6. Help your mentees. Call them even if you haven't worked the most recent games together. Find out how they are doing. Keep them "pumped up!"
7. Train to the ability levels— Make certain that veterans get material that is interesting to them to keep them interested in attending your meetings.

Five Positive Characteristics of Professional Officiating Organization

1— Tolerance for Change:

Has the ability to develop and implement an organizational vision which integrates key US Lacrosse program goals, priorities, and common values. Inherent to strong officials' organizations is the ability to balance change and continuity—to continually strive to improve officiating service and standardize officiating performance.

Encourages creative thinking and innovation within the context of national officiating standardization.

Displays initiative, effort, and commitment. Influences others toward a spirit of service to the game

Is self-motivated. Pursues self-development. Seeks feedback and opportunity to master new knowledge.

Deals effectively with pressure; maintains focus and intensity and remains persistent, even under adversity; recovers quickly from setbacks.

Moves from paternal/maternal (old boy/gal styles of management) to professional management.

2— Provides Leadership:

Has the ability to design and implement strategies which maximize officiating potential and foster high ethical standards in meeting the organization's vision, mission, and goals.

Provides leadership in setting the expected performance levels for lacrosse officials.

Inspires, motivates, and guides others toward performance objectives.

Empowers people by sharing responsibility and authority. Makes responsibility commensurate with authority.

Promotes quality through effective use of assessment tools (e.g., establishing performance standards, and taking action to reward, counsel, or retrain as appropriate).

Fosters commitment, team spirit, pride, trust, and group identity; takes steps to prevent situations that could result in unpleasant confrontations.

Resolves conflicts in a positive and constructive manner and takes disciplinary actions when other means have not been successful.

Hires from within.

3— Results Orientated:

Has the ability to stress accountability and continuous improvement.

Keeps current on rules, mechanics, practices, and procedures in technical areas of officiating.

Exercises good judgment in structuring assignments and balancing the interests of clients with the goals of the organization.

Identifies, diagnoses, and consults potential or actual problem areas relating to organizational goals.

Sets program standards, holds itself and others accountable for achieving these standards; acts decisively to modify standards to promote the quality of officiating

Helps employees develop new skills. "Your job is to train your replacement."

Involves younger officials in the decision making processes

4— Financially Accountable:

Has the ability to acquire and administer human, financial, and information resources in a manner which instills trust and accomplishes the organization's mission.

Oversees the allocation of financial resources, identifies cost-effective approaches, establishes and assures the use of internal controls for financial systems.

Manages the budgetary process, including preparing and justifying a budget and operating the budget under organizational procedures.

5— Builds Cooperation/Coalition:

Has the ability to explain, advocate and express facts and ideas in a convincing manner and negotiates with individuals and groups internally and externally. Has the ability to develop an expansive professional network with other organizations and to identify the internal and external politics that impact the work of the organization.

Represents and speaks for the organization and its work (e.g., presenting, explaining, selling, defining, and negotiating) with those inside and outside the organization. Makes clear and convincing oral presentations. Listens effectively and facilitates an open exchange of ideas.

Establishes and maintains working relationships with internal organizational units. Approaches each problem situation with clear perception of the organization's goals.

Develops and enhances alliances with external groups and finds common ground with a widening range of constituent groups.

Works in groups and teams, conducts briefings and other meetings; gains cooperation from others to accomplish goals, and facilitates "win-win" situations for everyone involved.

Considers and responds appropriately to the needs, feelings, and capabilities of different people in different situations, is tactful and treats others with respect.

CHAPTER 18 Providing Training and Clinics

Level of Success: 1

Return on Investment: 1

To employ and retain great officials, sound training is essential. Training must be provided to prepare them for their initial assignments and instill a base of knowledge for them to build upon with experience. If you can convey the right philosophy and instill the right attitude, you can provide them with enough information to enjoy their experience and hunger for more.

Getting started: Who are the best people to conduct this training? Select your best communicators and train them well to be trainers. US Lacrosse provides thorough training programs for men's and women's lacrosse that include manuals and videos to enhance the educational experience. The Men's Division Officials Council (MDOC) Level 1 Training Manual and the Women's Division Officials Council (WDOC) Curriculum and Training Handbook and Umpire's Manual contain the core curriculum materials for your introductory training. Your trainers should be trained from these materials and build their lessons plans accordingly.

There are many ways to present a training curriculum, but the basic formats normally fall into two main approaches: 1) Intensified training (teaching the novice curriculum in a short period of time), and 2) Extended training (spreading the novice curriculum over a longer period of time).

The advantage in intensified training is its economy. A clinician can travel to one site, and over the course of one (or possibly two days), cover all of the necessary material to complete the classroom portion of the curriculum. Additional Advantages: These include lowered presentation costs, less time dedicated to training, the ability to offer quality training in developing areas, the ability to import trainers with superior presentation skills, the possibility of having teams offer a scrimmage as part of the training session, and the concentrated investment of the people undergoing training. Many novice officials cannot afford to invest a number of hours per week, or a series of weeks to participate in extended training. Major Disadvantages: Although the training is intense, it is often difficult for new officials to absorb all that they learn in a short period of time. In addition, your novice officials do not have the opportunity to build rapport with the people that they train with, and if you miss the intensified training dates, you are generally out of luck. The important component of on-the-field training may also not be possible with an intensive training schedule.

The advantage in extended training is its quality. There is so much for new officials to learn— from rules, to mechanics, to interpretation—and the normal attention span of adults is about 35 minutes for these types of presentations and breaking the material down into discrete blocks of time helps contribute to the mastery of the materials. In this regard, 2 hours per week, over 6 weeks, is a far better training environment than 12 hours straight. On-the-field training represents a similar advantage if you can extend the number of exposures over a longer period of time. Additional Advantages: Critical thought, reflection, and incubation may all occur from week to week. Generally speaking, this ability to absorb the information over an extended period of time aides significantly in retention of the information. Additionally, you can build a much stronger sense of rapport among people that train together, and if you miss a session within the curriculum you have not missed the entire course. Major Disadvantages: The cost of training generally increases, especially if facilities have to be rented over a period of a few weeks. Some individuals' participation in the training may be precluded by the inability to commit to a long term training schedule. Additionally, you must train with the personnel that you have on hand. It is not feasible to import special trainers for multiple training sessions.

Periodic or focused clinics are also extremely helpful, especially for officials who are undergoing re-certification and do not require exposure to the initial curriculum. Clinics build a sense of community

among officials and give everyone the opportunity to re-focus their efforts and re-sharpen their skills. There is always something new to learn in lacrosse officiating, and annual clinics or play-days are the ideal format to gather the organization together and insure that everyone receives the new rules, interpretations, and mechanics in a consistent manner. Take care to pack your clinics with innovation and include information that appeals to many different levels to attract the most participants.

Suggested Curriculum

1—Classroom Instruction:

If possible, the curriculum should include twelve (12) hours of classroom instruction. It is preferable to spread this out over six sessions, which allows for the incubation of ideas and the reflection on the course content. Refer to the Women's Umpire Curriculum and Training Handbook or Men's Level 1 Officials Training Manual for a complete list of topics that must be covered in training. The basic content areas, as covered in the manuals:

- Pre-game preparation/general information and guidance
- A rules review with special emphasis on new rules and interpretations
- A mechanics review with emphasis on new and standardized mechanics.
- A comprehensive test

2—Field Instruction:

If possible, the curriculum should include two field clinics of 2 hours in length hours to supplement the classroom instruction. This should be four hours of observing/participating in actual scrimmages.

Have the newer officials shadowing a crew on the field. This allows for the officials to get a sense of movement and body position, while listening to a running commentary on what to watch for.

More experienced officials should have access to sidelines or "in the stands" critiques of their work.

3—Assessment/Evaluation of Officials (see Chapter 19):

Assessment is an ongoing evaluation program to determine the qualification of officials in your organization, identify strengths and provide guidance for areas of weakness.

Each official be evaluated twice during the season by an association evaluator.

Wherever possible, evaluations should be in writing and delivered in a post-game synopsis.

CHAPTER 19

Providing Evaluation and Feedback

Level of Success: 2

Return on Investment: 4

The ultimate purpose of an evaluation system is to provide feedback to individuals so that they can improve their performance regarding the specific criteria under evaluation. To begin, assessment should be balanced. Input should be balanced between coaches, crew members, and evaluators in the stands so that the officials get the most objective and insightful feedback on their performance. A constructive evaluation system can enhance performance of the officials significantly. The challenge is in getting coaches and officials to use the evaluation of the men and women on the field in a positive manner. In this scenario—everyone wins. Coaches and officials have constructive input, which reduces the frustration on the sidelines and on the field.

Difficulty in advancement has been reported as a reason that officials do not renew their high school officiating memberships, and this is often tied to the lack of useful or meaningful feedback. In almost all sports officiating, the 80-80 rule seems to apply—by the end of the first season in stripes, 80% of the people can acquire about 80% of the knowledge that is necessary to become a very good sports official. If those officials stay with their sports, they will become about 90% efficient within the next 5-6 years. After that, the learning curve gets very steep, very quickly. Some lacrosse officials have been calling the game for 20 years and have only acquired 96%- maybe 97% of the skills, knowledge, and techniques necessary to rise to the very top of the game. Officials may not realize what that last 3%-4% of the skills, knowledge, and techniques consists of! They want to improve—they just need appropriate feedback in order to do so.

It is not difficult to have an efficient and effective evaluation system, even if you have a shortage of officials. However, it is difficult to eliminate officials based on performance when you don't have enough officials to cover your games. The focus of evaluation should be to keep your people and help them improve. Constructive criticism builds people up... it seldom tears them down.

To conduct a post-game evaluation, you may want to begin by asking questions. Why did she make the call that she made? What did he see that you didn't? Where was she looking? The greatest evaluators never tell you what you should have done... they tell you what your options were, and let you decide what was the best course of action. People seem to learn more when they can reassess what their choices were. When conducting a critique of someone's ability, be sure to start and end with positive comments.

SUGGESTION #1: Download NASO's free officials' evaluation form: <http://www.naso.org/modevalform/>.

CHAPTER 20 Implementing a Mentoring Program

Level of Success: 1

Return on Investment: 3

Officials that quit after only a few years sometimes cite the fact that they did not feel connected to the core group of officials or did not have opportunities to officiate higher level games. Mentoring programs can help new and young officials gain confidence on the field and for taking on higher level games. Mentoring can help make certain that these officials have a conduit to increase their knowledge of the game. Use your older and more experienced officials to mentor the 'rookie' officials and help them to grow. Remember that not everyone wants to mentor, and not everyone would be good at it. The best mentors are probably your best communicators. Identify the people in your organization who are the most approachable and the most knowledgeable.

When mentoring officials, consider these recommendations:

Keep your expectations clear....tell them what is going to happen to them.

You don't have to do every game with your mentee, but you should have a conversation once a week. The idea is to get people through the tough spots and to reassure novice officials that the mentor has probably made the same mistake at some point.

Also 'mentor' regarding issues that are not covered in the rules, the mechanics, and the communication on the field, such as:

- The balance between what the rules state, and the judgment that is used when interpreting the rules.
 - This part of the officiating rubric is defined under "advantage/disadvantage."
 - The area called "officiating irritants" or the things that officials do that annoy coaches and players.
- The importance of safety and how it is interpreted in the context of aggressive play.
- The difference between enthusiasm and taunting.
- How players like to take advantage of the rules.
- Understanding the intimidating position that officials can sometimes be in and how to overcome apprehension.
- Dealing with pressure:
 - When games tighten up.
 - How and where to throw your flags.
 - The four kinds of whistles, and what they communicate about you.
 - How to work your way through various situations on the field
- Getting it right
 - The crew concept: Understanding your role on the crew and the purpose of the crew.
 - When to reach across the field and help your partner...and when not to.
 - Covering the field for your partner(s) without 'over officiating.'
- How to communicate with the players...when to joke with them and when not to.
- How to communicate with the coaches.
- Getting support from the table (scorekeepers and timers).
- Teaching leadership on the field.
- Using the internet to prepare for games.
- How to adjust your officiating to the weather conditions.
- How conditions affect play and performance.
- Staying dry or keeping warm.

A strong mentoring program supplements the formal training. Along with practical suggestions, advice, and a review of situations experienced by the new official, mentoring process can take years off of an official's training and inspire that individual to pursue officiating with renewed enthusiasm.

SECTION VI Cooperation and Administration

(Working together for maximum efficiency)

CHAPTER 21 Smart Scheduling

Level of Success: 2

Return on Investment: 3

There are two components to scheduling: 1) cascading assignment schedules, and 2) weekly game schedules. Why are these considerations for retention?

Cascading Schedule:

Because most officials are busy with other jobs or activities, advance notice is especially important for them to arrange availability and balancing their time. College games are generally assigned officials first, followed by high school games and then youth games. Additionally most schedulers (district or local assigning authorities) need 45 days to plan (2 weeks to build a schedule of tentative assignments, 2 weeks to mail them out and get initial feedback feed back, and 2 weeks to confirm the scheduling results). So, the sooner the games put on the schedule for one level, the sooner the others may be confirmed and both assignors and officials will have the lead time they need. You can see how this plays out in the examples below. Please note that the examples listed reflect the average start dates for the various levels. These dates may vary by climate/region of the country.

Current Scheduling Deadlines (30 day cycle)

Though some NCAA Division II and Division III teams do not complete their schedules until January, Division I lacrosse programs have pushed their scheduling back to October for the purposes of printing all of the scheduling and promotional materials. Completing college scheduling by 01 October in turn assists in the recruiting and retention of youth lacrosse officials.

	<i>Game Scheduling completed</i>	<i>Assignment Schedule Completed</i>	<i>Season Begins</i>	<i>Lead time for officials</i>
NCAA	01 January*	01 February	15 February	15 days
Scholastic	01 February	01 March	15 March	15 days
Youth	01 March	01 April	01 April	00 days*

Proposed Scheduling Deadlines (45 day cycle in October)

	<i>Game Scheduling completed</i>	<i>Assignment Schedule Completed</i>	<i>Approx Spring Season Begins</i>	<i>Lead time for officials</i>
NCAA	01 October.	15 November	15 February	90 days
Scholastic	15 November	01 January	15 March	75 days
Youth	01 January	15 February	1 April	45 days*

Weekly Schedule:

As the game schedules are built, it is recommended that to take advantage of the short supply of officials, the games of different levels are held on different days of the week. This is especially helpful in areas where a limited number of officials are available. The following weekly calendar be employed for maximum efficiency:

Monday	Youth Level Games
Tuesday	High School Games
Wednesday	College Level Games (USILA and US Lacrosse Intercollegiate Associates
Thursday	Youth Level Games
Friday	High School Games

Saturday	College Level Games (USILA and US Lacrosse Intercollegiate Associates) High School Games (after college season ends or if sufficient lacrosse officials are available) and youth games (if held in the mornings).
Sunday	Post Collegiate Club and Youth Level Games

CHAPTER 22
Collaborating to Create a Positive Environment for Officials and Others

Level of Success: 2

Return on Investment: 3

Preventing problems from the start is much easier than correcting negative encounters. It is the responsibility of the entire lacrosse community to help maintain a fun and respectful environment for the game of lacrosse, and cooperation can go a long way.

1. **Positive Coaching Alliance (PCA):** Through a national partnership with this non-profit organization, US Lacrosse is reinforcing the importance of “honoring the game” to make the lacrosse experience an enjoyable one for all participants – including officials. PCA offers workshops that reinforce balancing winning with fun, respect and character-building as an important part of the game. Encourage your local league organizations to participate in a workshop (chapters and leagues can receive grants and discounts through US Lacrosse) and even consider providing a workshop courtesy of your officials’ organization. Visit the PCA website, for more information and resources, www.positivecoach.org.
2. **Meeting and communication:** Early on, plan a schedule to meet regularly with representatives of each group to discuss and agree to a set of guidelines for the season. Each participant should sign a pledge or code to commit him or herself to these guidelines (visit www.uslacrosse.org for the Youth Council’s Code of Conduct). Once you’ve established communication with players, coaches, parents and fans, continue it throughout the season. Have regular meetings to recognize successes as well as issues that come up regarding participant behavior. Encourage questions and suggestions. Address issues as they arise so that problems are corrected and solutions may be presented in a timely fashion to maintain a positive environment for your officials.
3. **On-field strategies:** Consider the following success innovations some programs have use for proactive on-field management:

Placing spectators on the opposite side of the field from the team benches

Requiring that "site administrators" help to circulate “honor the game” materials and assist officials with identifying and addressing unsportsmanlike fans

Providing officials with the power to terminate games in which unsportsmanlike fan behavior exists

Encouraging officials to terminate games in which unsportsmanlike behavior exists on the sidelines.

Partnering with parent, coaches, athletes and fans to provide an athletic experience that honors the game

With some advance planning, creating a reinforcing environment that encourages officials to come back may be easier than it seems!

SECTION VII Material Resources

CHAPTER 23 Maintaining a List of Frequently Asked Questions and Answers (FAQs)

Consider creating a list of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) that address common questions regarding officiating in your community. Include teams and coach contact information, meeting dates and times, web or local resources for obtaining officials' uniforms and equipment, and answers to any other questions your new officials may ask. Supplement your packet with contact information for US Lacrosse as a resource for national officials', coaches' and athletes' programs. Here are some questions and answers to include:

Where can I get information about/register for the US Lacrosse Membership Program?

Visit the US Lacrosse website (www.uslacrosse.org) for details on membership and its many benefits, from access to programs and events, to *Lacrosse Magazine*, to discounts, to insurance and more. US Lacrosse headquarters are located at 113 West University Parkway, Baltimore, MD 21210 and can be reached by phone at 410-235-6882 and by fax at 410-366-6735.

Is there a national training program for officials?

Yes – US Lacrosse offers instructional programs for officials at all levels of the game, for both men's and women's lacrosse. Contact umpires@uslacrosse.org for women's lacrosse and officials@uslacrosse.org for men's lacrosse.

What resource materials are available to me through US Lacrosse as I become an official?

Note: The US Lacrosse Online Gift Shop can be accessed through www.uslacrosse.org.

US Lacrosse Women's Division Officials Council (WDOC) Training Materials:

Umpire's Manual

The interpretation and council policy book for all WDOC officials, also suggested for coaches as an interpretation manual. Available through US Lacrosse Online Gift Shop.

Umpire Curriculum and Training Handbook

The training curriculum guidebook provided to local umpiring boards, which conduct US Lacrosse women's umpire training.

Official Rules for Girls' and Women's Lacrosse

Published by US Lacrosse, the rulebook that governs all levels of women's lacrosse play. Available for purchase through the US Lacrosse Online Gift Shop.

Stars and Stripes – Rules and Umpiring Video

An instructional video for umpires, also of interest to coaches and players. Available for purchase through the US Lacrosse Online Gift Shop.

US Lacrosse Men's Division Officials Council (MDOC) Training Materials:

Officials Training Manual

This document is the training manual for MDOC Youth Officiating Committee (YOC) officials training. Available only through US Lacrosse training (each trainee receives a copy).

The Third Team on the Field: Men's Officials Training Video

The training video that complements the *Officials Training Manual* and covers major rules interpretations, 2-man mechanics and officiating philosophy. Shown during US Lacrosse officials' training and also of interest to coaches and players. Available for purchase through the US Lacrosse Online Gift Shop.

Mechanics Manual

A resource for higher-level US Lacrosse officials and official trainees, offering guidance on 3-man, 2-man and 1-man mechanics.

NCAA Men's Lacrosse Rulebook

The rulebook that governs college level play in the United States. Available for purchase through the US Lacrosse Online Gift Shop.

National Federation of State High School Association (NFSHSA) Men's Lacrosse Rulebook

The rulebook that governs high school play, accompanied by the US Lacrosse Boys' Youth Rules. Available for purchase through the US Lacrosse Online Gift Shop.

SUGGESTION #1: Prepare this material for inclusion in your media kit and update this information often.