

## Mentee Information

US Lacrosse is proud to introduce you to the Lacrosse Officials Mentor Program: an opportunity to share with you the advanced training that will enhance your game, further your career development, help you to understand the culture and the character of the sport, and provide the fellowship that will integrate you into the community of lacrosse officials who help to make this such a great sport.

Your first few years in the sport are often crucial to your progress upward through the ranks of lacrosse officiating. Even if you have played this sport before, it is inevitable that there will be many dimensions of lacrosse officiating that take time to adjust to. The depth of the rules; the appropriate judgments; the proper mechanics; communication with your partner(s), coaches, and athletes; your presence on the field; and your awareness of games situations—all of these layers of the game will slowly come together with the gradual experience that you gain.

Additionally, your assignor will make every effort to schedule games for you that are appropriate for your level of experience within the game, and to team you with more experienced partners. In some parts of the nation, this vertical integration into lacrosse officiating can be accommodated. But in other parts of the country, where the sport is growing rapidly at the youth level, it may not always be possible to schedule you with an experienced partner. On occasion, you may end up doing some contests by yourself. This is where you mentor can make a significant difference in terms of helping you to rapidly upgrade your performance as a lacrosse official.

Your mentor is an experienced official who has made his or her time and knowledge available to you, in order to ease your transition into the sport. The relationship between you and your mentor is an interaction that you should carefully cultivate. Please read the US Lacrosse Mentee guidelines to gain a variety of insights into how to construct this relationship, so that you can maximize your opportunity to learn from your mentor.

An important component of the Lacrosse Officials Mentor Program is the evaluation of mentors at the end of the season, and the construction of feedback to assignors or program directors, regarding the strengths and weaknesses of our mentors. Mentors must discharge their obligations well, in order to remain in the mentoring program. On the following pages you will find detailed Mentee Guidelines for young lacrosse officials to follow.

## **Mentee Responsibilities**

Mentoring is a training issue. When reduced to its essential function, mentoring is “*the process of getting the most out of your mentor*” so that you can adapt to your officiating role with greater ease.

### **You are in control of this relationship.**

- If mentoring succeeds or fails, it will be largely due to the effort and the energy that you expend on the relationship.
- Remember, you need the information, the perspective, and the experience of your mentor in order to improve.

### **Don't disappear on your mentor.**

- Check in with your mentor when you have questions that require his or her expertise. This should be once a week.
- If you don't have questions about the games that you are doing, then you're not growing in this process.

### **Follow your mentor's “ground rules” very carefully.**

- Establish what it is that you want to accomplish with your mentor. How will the relationship work?
- Call only during those hours designated by your mentor for taking your questions.
  - Keep your questions brief and to the point.
  - Ask for clarification when necessary, but refrain from appearing to disagree with the advice provided.
- Be courteous with your mentor. No one likes a rookie with an attitude.
- If a “cooling off” policy is established by your mentor, do not violate these procedures.
- Listen carefully to what your mentor is saying, and how this advice fits into the larger picture of officiating.

### **Take an interest in your mentor's life outside of lacrosse.**

- Learn the names of your mentor's spouse/significant other, and children (if any).
  - Your calls may interfere with family time.
  - Introduce yourself to the family. Be efficient and be polite.
- Learn what your mentor does for business, and what his or her hobbies are.

### **Find a place where you can concentrate on your discussion without distractions, for the length of time agreed upon.**

- Give your mentor your undivided attention.

### **Be humble with your Mentor, for you have much to learn.**

- Your attitude will have everything to do with how far you go in officiating.
- Be someone who people want to help with their questions and problems.
- Work to see the big picture regarding how your decisions and actions may have impacted the game.
- Try to find patterns in what your mentor is saying. These reveal tendencies that you may be developing

### **Be prepared when you call your Mentor.**

- Look up the rules that you have questions about.
  - Don't ask your mentor to do your research for you.
  - Use your Mentor for the kinds of questions that require experience and judgment.
- Write down the specifics of the dialogue that you want to initiate.
- Your mentor's time is precious, be clear and concise in your dialogues.
- Learn to listen without taking offense to criticism. Find the constructive intent in what your mentor says.
- Consider "*sleeping*" on the "*personal dimensions*" of the problems you have encountered.
- Do not argue with your Mentor. You may not agree with everything that you hear, but listen to the content rather than the tone, and try to learn from the information provided.
- Remember, your Mentor is trying to make you a better official.

### **Ask questions about the intangibles (that's why you have a mentor and a rule book).**

- How do you handle pressure?
- What are the signs that a game is getting out of control?
- How do I mesh with my crew and support their efforts?
- What should I be doing during dead ball situations?
- What officiating equipment should I purchase?
- Where should I be positioned during various situations?
- How do I manage coaches and spectator/fans?
- How do I conduct myself after the game?

### **The culture and the character of a sport are difficult to define. Pursue information that extends your knowledge of the unique customs and character of the game.**

- What role does the model official fulfill in the game?
  - What is the relationship between officials and youth athletes?
  - What is the relationship between officials and youth coaches?
  - What is the relationship between officials and youth spectators and fans

- What boundaries do officials have in influencing player character on the field?
  - How do you teach and officiate at the same time, and when is it appropriate?
  - What informal tools are at my disposal to control conduct on the field?
- How do officials communicate with the players?
  - When is it appropriate to joke with them and when is it inappropriate?
  - How do I encourage technical skills as opposed to physical skills?
  - How do I draw the line between acceptable and unacceptable team individual and team behaviors?
- How do top officials communicate with the coaches?
  - How do I channel and control, enthusiastic assistant coaches?
  - How do I recognizing and diffusing potential conflicts with coaches?
  - How do I listen to coaches, but not get trapped in an ongoing dialogue?
- How do I teach lacrosse leadership skills on the field?
- How do I verbally reward those behaviors that foster sportsmanship and camaraderie?
- How do I verbally discourage self-centered acts that place the individual above the team?
- Using the internet to prepare for games.
- Among athletes, how do I promote officiating as a profession within the game?

**Arrange your schedule to observe your mentor officiating at least one game. See if you can attend the pregame conference between the officials on the crew.**

- Arrange to meet with your mentor after the game and ask questions.
- If you can work together on a game, arrange to have dinner, or at least share some postgame time away from the site.
- Your feedback will be more meaningful if your mentor can work with you.
- Say thank you (profusely).