



Know Your Limits

Games suffer when officials overload on assignments. Go for quality over quantity.

Author: Lucia Perfetti Clark

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How many games are too many? This is an important question to ask, whether you are a player, coach, official, league administrator or parent. Think of it in terms of a day, a week, a month, a season and a year. The popularity of lacrosse and its year-round evolution means many participants could do lacrosse 24-7. For players, especially youth players, the American Academy of Pediatrics Council on Sports Medicine and Fitness recommends limiting one sporting activity to a maximum of five days per week with at least one day off from any organized physical activity. In addition, the council suggests athletes take 2-3 months off per year from their particular sport to refresh, let injuries heal and focus on strength, conditioning and injury prevention. There's also the "burnout" factor.

What about the stripes? Out of self-preservation, it's important to block off time to preserve your sanity, rest muscles and be with family. But even for just a day, how many games are too many? Consider multiple factors when answering that question. Is it stop-clock or running time? Is it going to be 95 degrees or 60 degrees? Will there be rest time in between games or are they back-to-back?

During the height of summer tournament season when the sun is blazing hot, I will not work more than three running-time games in a day. On any game I work, I want to bring my best to the field, I want to sprint to get where I need to be regardless of how much lacrosse I have already seen or what lies ahead of me. I know if I schedule more than three games, consciously or subconsciously, I will engage in some form of self-preservation during the games. That's not fair to the players. They are out there giving it their all; I have to bring that same degree of commitment and physical exertion.

There are other reasons I limit myself that are not physical. Especially during the summer when the temperature is hot and some tournaments are played for a trophy, I find that I only possess the patience and emotional stamina to be a good game manager for about three games. If I take on more than that, I risk being short-tempered with a coach or player. My goal is always to bring my best game from the first minute played to the last.

Here at US Lacrosse, we hear of all sorts of summer tournament craziness.

Recently, an official asking to work one of our events said he would take as many games during the day as possible – he would load up to 20.

Quantity over quality? No thanks.



Tournament organizers, coaches, assignors and parents all need to ask how many games are too many. When an official asks to work from dawn until dusk, that's a red flag. He's motivated by a paycheck. Any games assigned to that person will suffer.

Don't be a game hog. Know your limits and self-regulate accordingly.

Besides, there's more to life than lacrosse. There games in a day are plenty. I'm sure there's a lawn at home that needs your attention.