



Consistency in Officiating: What Every Ref Needs to Know

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Why are some calls made in some games and not others? What are some of the challenges of enforcing a new rule? Those questions aren't unique to lacrosse, but that doesn't mean we can't address them.

As officials, consistency is one of the traits we should strive for, in part because it's something coaches and players need. You can understand their frustration when a given check not whistled during the majority of a game is whistled for the first time in the last three minutes.

Some thoughts on consistency in our craft:

Inside the Game: Pregame and Partner Awareness

We are the third team on the field, and as that team we have to have a good understanding of how our knowledge and judgment matches our partners' knowledge and judgment. We should respect each other's calls, but we have to know that the coach sees our action as a group and not just as an individual. It's not OK to pass on a call you know your partner would have made if he/she was standing where you are.

While we strive for consistency across games, consistency within a game in the first step to this—and a much more attainable goal. Be aware of what your partner is calling, especially with body-contact fouls. Know that it's important to be on the same page. Angles are everything. If some calls seem too harsh or not harsh enough, discuss it and figure out what everyone is seeing.

Inside the Day: How Many Games is Too Many?

It's time to put the days of working 4-8 games on a single Saturday or Sunday behind us. Sure, the game fees are nice, but if you're working this many games, there is no way you are as good in the last half of the day as you were in the first half of the day.

Tell the assignor that you can only work X number of games for a day or a tournament. If the demand for your skills is this high, then it's time to get out there and start recruiting and training new officials.

Inside the Season: Film is Your Friend

Making a judgment call in real live game time is a lot more difficult than watching it 10 times in slow motion. However, film will help you see if you were consistent from start to finish, if you were on the same page as your partners, if you got screened on a play, or how the coach saw the play unfold compared to how you did.



Film study is important for improving individual and team consistency within games and from game to game. Study the film to see how true you are able to stay to your understanding of the rules while you meshed with your partners.