



## Multi-Sport Stripes Stay Sharpest

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If you find yourself at a lacrosse game this spring, chances are that the officials working the game also put the stripes on for other sports. Many of them officiate football, basketball, soccer and field hockey to stay sharp during our offseason – and because they love their trade.

Folks that have not put on the stripes will never understand how big of an adrenaline rush it can be, whether it's peewee football or college lacrosse. Fans, parents, and coaches have a vested interest in the performance of their teams. As an official on the field, every call you make affects the game. Officials, like players and coaches, love performing under pressure. It's why many officials are former players.

Multi-sport officiating keeps you sharp and gives you different perspectives on how to manage a game. You can only go over the rulebooks, mechanics, manuals and game footage so many times. There's no replacement for game situations that require your focus and ability to make split-second decisions.

As an official, I know what it's like to try to shake off the rust after a long layoff. It usually takes a game or two to feel comfortable again. Lacrosse is such a fast sport with much ground to cover and so many nuances.

Multi-sport officials don't have as tough a time getting acclimated. Sport-specific rules and mechanics might get rusty, but these stripes are already in midseason form in terms of conditioning, handling pressure and managing coaches, players and fans.

Think about how close a basketball official is to the fans during a game. Those fans are right on top of them the entire game. Go watch a high school basketball game this winter. You'll see. You can't replicate that kind of environment with standard offseason resources.

It's about game management. Multi-sport officials can apply different techniques gleaned from other sports. Lacrosse officials associations and boards should encourage members to try different sports in the offseason. They should also actively recruit officials from other sports. Rules and mechanics can be taught. Game management comes from experience.