



The Lone Ranger: Don't be One!

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The idea that a single person can handle anything is a disaster waiting to happen when it comes to officiating lacrosse.

One official per game should never be a planned occurrence, regardless of the level of play. While both rule books recommend that two officials be used per game, it is not a mandate. It will take the entire lacrosse community to make safety a priority and demand that two officials per game becomes the standard.

Having a single official on a game creates an illusion of safety where there is none. Assigning single officials to games – perhaps the cheaper route – also gets those officials into bad habits like ball watching and not covering their sidelines. It gets players into bad habits because they try to get away with more garbage. Well-officiated contests help players learn the rules. It's important they have proper game coverage so they don't mistake illegal play for legal play just because the game only had one official.

There are a lot of other options out there, like coordinating with other teams and assigners to have double- or triple-headers, making it possible for two officials to cover multiple games. Leagues and coaches need to work with their local assigners to schedule appropriately. If there are not enough officials for a day, then simply having a practice is more beneficial to all involved than having an unsafe contest.

Supplying enough officials to cover the games is not just the responsibility of the local official's board or organization. If your area wants to add teams, then part of that process needs to be recruiting new officials. Parents, players, coaches, officials – let's all work together to eliminate single-official games in the upcoming season. If you witness one, ask some questions and get involved. Let's work together to keep the game safe.

There is No I in TEAM – Stick Together

Corny as the saying may be, it goes for officials too. Some coaches will try to engage officials in a game of manipulation I like to call divide and conquer. They do this by only criticizing or riding the junior official on the crew, and only speaking or addressing the most senior official on the crew. Don't play into this. As a crew, make sure the coaches know that everyone in stripes that day deserves professional and fair treatment. Back each other up by having conversations with coaches as a crew. We are the third team on the field. Always help your teammates first.