



Assign Me Some Harmony

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Assigners have a difficult job, dealing with countless schedule changes, bad weather complications, and injured officials. Assigners also find themselves in the difficult position of having to work for coaches and leagues, but also advocate for the officials they assign. To say they have to be diplomatic is an understatement. I am constantly being asked to assist groups or individuals with assigning issues. US Lacrosse does not oversee, regulate, or credential assigners, but here are some tips that will lead to a better relationship between assigners and officials' organizations.

1. Elect the assigner. It can go a long way to achieving a balance of power between the assigner and the assigned. The assigner has a lot of power over officials. In the words of Stan Lee, "with great power comes great responsibility." The easiest way to hold an assigner accountable is to have this position be democratic in nature. If the organization is not structured like that, then set up some kind of check and balance on the assigner position and a grievance process for officials that have legitimate complaints. Additional insurance is available through Bollinger.
2. Consider having the assigner be a non-active official. More-established sports use this model to avoid conflicts of interest as assigners are often caught in the middle of disputes between unhappy coaches, administrators, and officials. The assigner should understand the local rivalries, officials, and coaches.
3. Use ArbiterSports.com or some other assigning software, and consider the auto-assign function. The work in using auto-assign is that every official is ranked, and the games are also ranked, and then rules are added (best practices like not sending an official to one school too much, or working with one partner too often).
4. Be as transparent as you can. People often assume an injustice because they do not have all the information. Officials could better understand the complexity of the assigner's job if assigners posted their entire schedules. People would see the method to their madness.

Assigning is a complicated puzzle. Good assigners and assigning practices improve officiating and officials organizations. Hopefully these tips and lead to more harmony for all.



Beyond The Rules by David Seidman

For an official, there is no substitute for knowing the rules. There are plenty of details in the rule book that come into play in every game. For example: Red #21 scores a goal, and then it's discovered that he's missing a piece of required equipment. Does the goal stand?

However, once you get beyond the details any rule book of any sports can be boiled down to three concepts:

1. **Safety:** If it's unsafe, it's more likely a foul. Examples: high hits, late hits, slashes and cross-checks.
2. **Advantage/Disadvantage:** Is a player or team taking an unfair advantage or putting their opponents at an unfair disadvantage under the rules? If so, it's a foul. Example: A push on the back – even a little one – that causes a player to miss a ground ball is a foul. Another is offsides, where an advantage is gained by playing with too many men on the active side of the field (Playing with too few players is not a foul – unless the late substitution creates an unfair advantage.)
3. **Call the Obvious:** The foul that everyone in the stadium sees, and knows that you see. Example: The early substitution or offsides that may not create an unfair advantage, but takes place right in front of you. In this case, you need to call the foul in order to maintain your integrity. Everything else is bunk!

Our job, as officials, is to keep the game safe, fair and fun. And then, to stay out of the way. And the answer to the above question: the goal stands, and the player serve.