



A Stripe's Guide to Convention

Five tips to maximize your experience in the City of Brotherly Love

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The US Lacrosse National Convention, presented by Champion, is one of the most impressive events the organization assembles each year – and certainly the most important one for officials. But it can be overwhelming even for the most seasoned stripes. The convention returns to Philadelphia this month (Jan. 13-15). Here are some tips to keep you on track.

1. Don't travel in a pack.

As an official, you need to know how many people from your organization are attending convention and put together a game plan as a group. Yes, it's a big event and it's more comfortable hanging out with people you know. Don't do it. If there are three people in your group and three sessions for a given time slot, divide and conquer. This way, all the information presented at convention will find its way back to your local board or officials association.

If there are many people from your group attending and you can cover all sessions, spread out inside those sessions. Don't sit with one another, especially if it's an interactive session. As officials, we strive to standardize what we do on the field at the national level. You have to interact with people outside of your region to accomplish this.

2. Hit up the coaches' sessions.

Besides all the necessary sessions and rules interpretations, if there are enough officials from your group, pop into the coaches' sessions. Learning about coaching strategies will help you better anticipate play as an official.

3. Expand your network.

Another reason to use the divide-and-conquer strategy is that convention is about networking. The lacrosse community can be small, close and welcoming. Convention is a time to meet people from different areas, network with assignors, and learn about summer and regional tournament opportunities. We all benefit from out-of-region work opportunities – the best officials can work any game with anyone. The only way to get to that point is to have different partners in different games.

4. Share the knowledge.

Convention is always the start of something – new season, new information and new friends. Bring your findings back to your area, and connect your group to other groups. Oh, and don't forget to grab a cheesesteak on your way home.



'There's No Such Thing as Perfection'

Former NFL official Jerry Markbreit will be the officials' keynote speaker at the US Lacrosse National Convention in Philadelphia this month. Jerry spent 23 seasons in the NFL and worked in four Super Bowls – the most by any referee in NFL history.

Perhaps best known for botching the coin toss in Super Bowl XVII and as the referee in "The Holy Roller" game between the San Diego Chargers and Oakland Raiders, Markbreit will speak to convention attendees Jan. 14 about the ups and downs of his career.

"There's no such thing as perfection. Mistakes happen," Markbreit, now the head trainer for NFL officials, told the Pittsburgh Tribune-Review. "Officials are so hard on themselves. When they make a mistake, nobody feels worse than they do."