



## Jacks of All Trades

US Lacrosse Junior Officiating Program gives players a chance to see the game from the stripes' perspective

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For this edition of "Your Edge," we caught up with two young officials who have taken part in the US Lacrosse Junior Officiating Program, which recruits and trains current players age 14-18 to don the stripes.

**Nikki Beliveau**

**Age: 17**

**Hometown: Westfield, Mass.**

### **What made you want to become a junior official?**

I was lucky to be part of Western Mass, because we have a very strong junior officiating program. One of my former coaches, Lynn Geiger, is the head of the Western Mass youth officiating program. I was happy to join.

### **What have you learned that you can use as a player?**

I've learned to realize what it's like to be in control of the game and to understand the position referees take. Refing has also helped me improve as a player by knowing what type of play and contact is legal, and what is or isn't going to be called.

### **What surprised you the most?**

Being able to see the game on the field, but not in a player's perspective. The game seems so much different than as a player or sub on the sidelines. Being right in the middle of the action and having complete control of the game is insane.

### **How do you handle difficult on-field situations?**

Maintain a strong head about it. Keeping your confidence and authority on the field is key. Even though I'm a young ref, I'm still in charge of the game and need to manage it. Handling it calmly, not emotionally, as an adult is the best strategy.

### **What's next?**

After playing in college, I plan to stick with refing and potentially become a certified high school or college official.



**Aaron Prescott**

**Age: 18**

**Hometown: Amherst, N.H.**

**What made you want to become a junior official?**

It was a way for me to make some money while also being around a game that I loved. Officiating lacrosse allows me to deepen my understanding of the game so that I can play better for my high school team.

**What have you learned that you can use as a player?**

I have had some rules clarified for me so that I can be more aware while I am playing. It also is a good way to become more self-confident, because you have to stand behind the calls you make.

**What have you learned about yourself?**

I have learned to be more confident in my decisions and in speaking with coaches and other adults. Being a youth official also is a good way to learn how to self-advocate by calling coordinators from nearby towns to get work.

**How do you handle difficult on-field situations?**

When a difficult situation arises, I make sure to think before I speak. I collect my thoughts, communicate with my partner and then communicate with the coach.

**What's next?**

Keep improving. Every time I work, I become better seeing the game and keeping my poise.