



## Thankful for Change

*Author: Lucia Perfetti-Clark*

*April 3, 2014*

Gratitude journals seem to be all the rage on Facebook. As I wrote this in late January, gearing up for my season as a college women's lacrosse official, I began to think about what I'm grateful for: change.

Change comes with each new lacrosse season. Change is something people typically do not like. Even if you don't mind it, it usually is difficult. As officials, we know the rules change at least slightly every year, and I've used this space before to urge you to embrace those changes.

This year, things are more personal for me, as I have gone through some big changes that are going to affect my lacrosse season.

I had a baby in November, and I found myself physically getting ready for the season on a much shorter than normal timeline. I hired a new personal trainer for preseason preparation. Every time I get ready to meet with a new trainer, I'm nervous. Will I like him as much? Will she push me as hard as the last one? And then I realized that every trainer I have used has been different — and awesome — in his or her own way.

Why do I dread starting the new relationship? All of my personal trainers have given me new ideas and methods. I have been a different person with different goals each time, and they have given me their best and helped me prepare to attain those goals.

New year, new season, new trainer — can't stop, won't stop.

Notable changes for the 2014 NCAA women's lacrosse season included a new procedure requiring scorers to drop their sticks after a goal for a discretionary stick check, a revised rule allowing defenders to move through and/or occupy the goal circle and an experimental rule limiting teams to three players each between the restraining lines during draws.

Officiating some preseason scrimmages, I realized what I like about rule changes is the puzzle. Coaches are figuring out how to win with new strategies, and as officials, we're trying to figure out how to implement the rule in a way that is safe, fair and in the spirit of the game.

This is a dance. We have to see the players and strategies develop, and then we have to talk to each other, the coaches and the players to ensure fair play. We're figuring it out together, and this is really fun. Before anyone starts keeping score or playing for a record, we're all outside in winter weather, scrimmaging, scheming and talking lacrosse.



If the rules never changed, preseason would be really boring. We'd be out there getting ready to go through the motions. Instead, we're out there breaking new ground together. It's exciting and fun.

Since there's a baby in the house, and he is the first, my husband and I have been dealing with change every day of our lives since he arrived. What that means for me this lacrosse season is that my game schedule is different from years past. There are fewer games, more blocked days, and my travel will be much closer to home.

I could look at this and be disappointed, but the reason for the change in my schedule brings me such joy. I look at the pared-down schedule and say, "Every game day is a championship day."

Whether you're an official, player, coach or fan, every lacrosse season tells a different story. I look forward to riding the wave of changes through Memorial Day.