



## How to Retain Officiating Talent

*Author: Charlie Obermayer*

*August 15, 2014*

This is the time of year when officials associations, boards and groups around the country start planning for next season, when we come to the table with big ideas about training, educating, assigning and recruiting lacrosse officials.

The biggest topic no one likes to discuss is retention.

Who is coming back and who hung up their whistles? Why? Why did we lose four first-year officials with potential? Why did we lose three of our veteran officials?

Individual officials, leaders and assigners all have a stake in the effort to retain officials and making sure that our population grows in tandem with the sport. Wherever you fall in that spectrum, here are three ways you can help keep officials on the field.

### Individuals

The buck starts and stops here. Before each season, ask yourself, "Do I enjoy doing this?" If the answer is no, then why not? And can you fix it? You need to enjoy this avocation to excel at it.

1. **Know and understand the rules**

The rulebook is your friend. Knowing it will help you focus on other important aspects of the game.

2. **Build a network**

Veteran officials have gone through the growing pains you may experience. Use them to help get through the tough days and celebrate the good days.

3. **Be a mentor**

After your first year of officiating, you are experienced. Find someone behind you and help mentor him or her to your level. You will be amazed at how much better your game gets by doing this.

### Leadership

Association and board leaders are catalysts. You owe it to your membership to provide them with a network of support and education. Officials are only as strong as their local leadership.

1. **Provide a clear picture**

Don't operate in the dark. Encourage questions, comments and feedback from your membership.



2. **Deliver education**

Officials starve for information. Build a strong training and education schedule that meets their needs. Veteran officials still need training, with different needs than newer officials.

3. **Be a leader**

Your group is the foundation on which all officials in your area lean. Do what's right, and don't be afraid to make changes.

**Assigners**

As an assigner, you put your officials in a position to succeed or fail. To retain officials, put them in a position to learn.

1. **Know your personnel**

Every official has strengths and weaknesses. Pair them up to make a complete team on the field.

2. **Understand the situation**

Look at each game individually and how the teams, coaches, players, venue and fans could affect the playing environment. Put the right officials for the situation on the game.

3. **Be aware**

Look for signs of stress, frustration and exhaustion among your officials. Address these issues as they arise. Remove them from a game if they need a break (mental or physical).