

Game Impact

“Don’t get involved in the game.”

“Let the boys play!”

“After the game no one should remember we were there.”

“You need to get this game under control!”

These quotes represent the perspectives of coaches, players, officials, and fans in lacrosse games. Unsurprisingly they contradict one another. Should the crew let the boys play when there are serious safety violations happening? Does the crew want to disappear when two players are bumping chests and about to fight so no one remembers they were there? Of course not.

Imagine officiating like driving a bus with both teams in it, set to neutral, and going down a steep mountain road. If you don’t pump the brakes occasionally the bus will go too fast and crash. If you don’t provide course corrections with the wheel you slam into the mountain face or careen off the side. If you ride the breaks too much you slow the bus down and cause a dangerous pileup behind you. With minor adjustments and awareness of your environment you get to the bottom of the mountain safely.

As the official you will have an impact on every game you officiate. The question is whether you will have a positive or a negative one.

A negative impact includes:

- Walking to position (laziness)
- Making calls from too far away (lacks credibility)
- Snarky comments to coaches; *“Coach it’s only youth ball.”* (unprofessional)
- Never admitting a mistake (arrogance)

A positive impact includes:

- Hustling to where you need to be (hard work)
- Communicating a penalty situation to table and coaches (patience)
- Talking players out of violations when appropriate (wise)
- Making the necessary penalty calls (duty)

Author Bruce Weber states the impact of officiating in a fantastically descriptive manner:

“As an [official] you are neither inside the game, as the players are, nor outside it among the fans, but that the game passes through you, like rainwater through a filter, and that your job is to influence it for the better, to strain out the impurities, to make it cleaner, fairer, and more transparent without impeding it, corrupting it, changing its course, or making it taste funny.”

You have a job to do. Keep the players safe and the game fair. If you do everything you are supposed to do as well as you possibly can then you will have a positive impact on the fans, coaches, players, and the game. Remember that without you there is no game, so step up in every game and do your job to the very best of your ability.

Now that you know you have an impact; change the mentality of the earlier statements:

“Get involved in the game when appropriate.”

“Let the boys play safely!”

“After the game everyone should remember us doing a good job.”

“We keep this game under control!”