



Regular Self Evaluations

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“A certificate does not make you certified. Attitude, performance, commitment to self and crew – these and a certificate make you certified.” - The Quotable Zebra.

Self-evaluations are about as popular as getting a root canal. None of us really want to spend time writing down our flaws and weaknesses over an entire season, but if you commit to evaluating yourself after every game, you will see improvement over the course of the season that you might have missed otherwise. You'll also see what you consistently mess up, which is far more valuable than noting what you do really well or just saying: “Yeah, I did just fine.” Effective use of the US Lacrosse observation forms can be an important tool in helping you zero in on what you are doing well and what you need to work on. Your strengths and your weaknesses will change as you grow and mature as an official, but if you are upfront and honest with yourself in postgame self-evaluations, you will get a much clearer sense of where you are and what you need to do to get better.

Jim Carboneau, outgoing Chair of the Men's Officials Training Group (MOTG), and Lee Spitzer, current volunteer on the MOTG helped me revise the US Lacrosse Level 2 and 3 evaluation forms (now available on the [Central Hub Men's Resource Page](#)). US Lacrosse requires an official observation to certify an official at each level and when an official is moving up to a higher level. Joe Cronin, a LAREDO Clinician, and I tested the new forms out while observing officials at the Level 1 LAREDO in Boise, Idaho earlier this season. The forms were designed to emphasize written observations with a cleaner visual display of what the official does and does not do well, but I didn't want them to just be useful to observers and LAREDO clinicians. I want officials to use these forms on a regular basis as a self-evaluation tool, and since I can't recommend an official do something that I haven't tried myself, I filled out an evaluation form after most of my games this season.

This season was a season of firsts for me. First high school games with a new association, the [Southern Lacrosse Officials Association \(SLOA\)](#), first collegiate games in District 4, and first games with partners who, for the most part, I had never met. I may not be a rookie official, but this was my rookie year in Maryland and I had a great opportunity to test the new [Level 2](#) and [Level 3](#) evaluation forms. I only evaluated myself after Junior Varsity and Middle School games if they were done individually and not part of a doubleheader, and I never complete self-evaluations in the postseason. I see those games as a reward for good work during the regular season and I like to go out onto the field knowing I will give 100%, but not stressing about trying to change any part of my game. That brings the total number of evaluated games to 31 (I reffed a lot of doubleheaders).



After entering in all of the category evaluations, I also wrote down my three focuses for my next game. After my very first game this season I wrote:

1. Do not harp on negative coach comments.
2. Communicate more effectively with crew and more eye contact.
3. A speedier Trail jog.

My very last game had:

1. Be confident in myself and in my calls.
2. As the Single run to the sideline instead of the cone when the ball ricochets to the corner cone to have a better angle on players chasing the ball.
3. Keep having fun.

Other common focuses that I put down were:

- Keep your eyes on the players on every dead ball.
- Anticipate. Read the offense and the defense to know where the ball is most likely to go next.
- Echo, echo, echo. I forgot to repeat my partner's "Flag down!"
- Slow down on a slow transition as the New Lead official.

The great thing about having all of these evaluations and my three focuses after each game is that I can see my progression through the entire season. Plus, I can count up all the times I rated myself poorly on faceoffs, or didn't give myself good marks on communication. On the flip side, I get to see where I did things well and incorporated critiques from more experienced partners that I worked with. In 27 out of 31 self-evaluations I rated myself as having done a very good job.

While I may be certified as a Level 3 official for 2015, I don't always give a Level 3 performance. Regular self-evaluation allowed me to see that the games where I didn't perform as well as I would have liked were more likely outliers to my usual level of performance. It's important to me to note when I fail and not give myself credit for a certification that I didn't earn in a game. As my old Jiu-Jitsu instructor was fond of reminding me: "Gordon the belt only covers two inches of your rear end, you have to cover the rest." Just being certified doesn't mean anything, the effort I put into each and every game does and I have off days just like every other official. Doing regular self-evaluations this year gave me a great perspective on exactly where my skills were lacking but also what I was consistently doing well. I hope that it can do the same for you.



I also put together two videos, one for each form, demonstrating how you can use them as a self-evaluation tool following your games this offseason.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bbJ_wKdNM8 - Level 2 Form

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GSWUdNPyycc> - Level 3 Form

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