



May 20, 2009

TO: SPLOA Executive Board
CC: YCLA Board of Directors
CC: US Lacrosse, Positive Coaching Alliance, PIAA

As we approach the final week of the 2009 spring lacrosse season, I wanted to take a moment to express our thanks and appreciation on behalf of the York County Lacrosse Association (YCLA). We sincerely appreciate everything that the leadership and general membership of the SPLOA has done for us to give back to the game of lacrosse in the York Adams area this year.

As the current President of the YCLA, I have had the privilege to serve our local lacrosse community since 1998. Over the past eleven years, I have been associated with and have interacted with the SLOA out of Maryland, the CPLOA out of the Harrisburg/Mid Penn area and now the SPLOA out of South Central PA.

There is no question that the effort put forth by the SPLOA leadership and membership helped to make our 2009 spring season a success both on and off the field.

Nearly one year ago, upon discovering that the CPLOA was not going to support the York County Lacrosse Association Youth level of play (54 teams – close to 1,000 games), the YCLA Board asked me to reach out to your organization in an effort to insure that we would have officials for our games this spring. After meeting with Dan Wilmot, Nick Hendler and Mark Norris last summer, it was clear to me that the SPLOA was 100% committed and focused on helping our lacrosse Association.

I attended numerous SPLOA meetings over the last nine months to personally witness the dedication of time, effort and energy that your membership invested in education. Dozens of training sessions both on and off the field held by Jim Bateman and Steve Marshall brought the official's overall level of knowledge and understanding of the game to a new height. The participation and sharing of ideas during the monthly SPLOA meetings showed me that the membership cared deeply about learning, improving and helping each other to become better officials.

The assignment of games this year was by far the best it has been in my eleven years in the area. Going from the old days of having to call Mrs. Sheehan (Grandma) on game days to see if we would have officials coming from the Maryland area to having a completely automated system through Assign By Web (ABW) has made a huge difference for our coaches and SID's. Tim Link should be commended for insuring that the 1,000+ game assignments were properly filled and completed. And given the weather challenges this spring with snow, rain and multiple game cancellations, it is amazing that I did not have one complaint this spring via email about the officials not showing up.

As far as the on the field results, you should know that during our last YCLA Board meeting, many Board members shared openly that the official's performance on the field this year was the best it has been since lacrosse had been introduced to the region back in the mid 1990's. YCLA members did acknowledge that there is always room for improvement. We appreciate your willingness to provide us the venue to share our comments and constructive feedback through the game reports and rating system on ABW. We are confident the feedback provided by our coaches will be used in an effort to improve and help educate your membership.

Player safety is always one metric used when reviewing the performance of the officials. The total amount of injuries is down significantly this year, compared to 2008 thanks to the efforts of the SPLOA. The number of game incidents is down significantly thanks to the efforts of the SPLOA. And the YCLA membership appreciates the easy access to vast information on the SPLOA website to include rules, fees, schedules, contact information, field directions and so much more. We want to thank Nick Hendler for doing an outstanding job on this front.

As far as off the field, the SPLOA should be commended for its willingness to give back to the game. Many of your members participated in our Positive Coaching Alliance trainings so that they would have a better understanding of what we were hoping to accomplish in terms of "Honoring the Game". The SPLOA participated in our monthly YCLA Board meetings to share information and keep our Board abreast of what was happening since last summer. The SPLOA should be commended for offering their services to support the Annual World's Longest Running Lacrosse Game to benefit Make-A-Wish Foundation in addition to offering its services for our annual Laxfest Event held last weekend.

Last month, I shared with our Board of Directors (13 Clubs) that I will be retiring in June from the YCLA. In doing so, I know that the line of communication that has been established between the officials group (SPLOA) and the lacrosse community (YCLA) is the best it has ever been. I am confident that the YCLA and SPLOA will continue to work together to improve and thanks to this very strong and open line of communication, the end result in the future will benefit all those associated with this great game of lacrosse.

Please pass this letter of thanks and appreciation onto your membership on behalf of the 13 participating YCLA Clubs representing 2,000 players in the York/Adams County area.

Thank you for your outstanding service to our lacrosse community.

Bob Rhein
President & Secretary
York County Lacrosse Association (YCLA)

ROOTS ==> *Honor the Game*