

# HEY REF!

**YOU MIGHT NOT ALWAYS AGREE WITH THEM, BUT THE MEN AND WOMEN WHO REFEREE ONTARIO LACROSSE GAMES – BOX, FIELD, WOMEN'S FIELD AND MASTERS – ARE PEOPLE TOO. IF YOU DON'T THINK SO, KEEP READING.**

## MARISA DI BARI

**Hometown:** Toronto

**Age:** 33

**Years of Lacrosse**

**Refereeing Experience:** 8

**Type of Lacrosse**

**Refereed:** Women's field



**Do you currently play lacrosse?** I am not playing anymore. I started out playing varsity for York University (where I later coached), then club for the Oshawa Lady Blue Knights.

**What do you like most about refereeing lacrosse?** I like being able to give back to the sport by ensuring the game is safe and that the traditions of the game are upheld. Also, I get to umpire with some of the best umpires in the world and they make me feel like I'm a part of an elite group of people.

**Biggest lacrosse game refereed:** A few years ago, I refereed a game in the senior provincials: Orangeville vs. Six Nations. I had friends on both teams, they were the two best teams in the league, both played with heart and showed what women's lacrosse is all about — finesse!

**Toughest aspect of refereeing lacrosse:** Knowing you have to go from being yourself to being an unbiased umpire who is umpiring your friends, former players and former teammates. The worst part is having to issue a card to one of your friends when necessary. The other hard part is having people (fans, coaches, players) not agreeing with a call you made and getting "booed" for it. But that's part of the game; you learn to block that out.

**Lacrosse rule you would like to see changed:** Allowing goggles. If we played the game the way it was intended, we wouldn't need goggles. I'm not a fan of the goggles, but I guess I'm biased because I'm a goalie, but I think that if people use their skills properly, they wouldn't need more equipment.

**Most confusing rule amongst coaches and players:** A charge call against the offensive

player. Some players still think it's okay to push their way through a well set up defense. And on the reverse of that, players often think they set up a good defensive block and that's not always the case.

## JOE SELLORS

**Hometown:** Whitby

**Age:** 19

**Years of Lacrosse**

**Refereeing Experience:** 5

**Type of Lacrosse**

**Refereed:** Minor Box, Men's Masters Box



**Do you currently play lacrosse?** I played from the age of five until I was 18.

**Why did you become a referee?** Initially, I became a referee for a summer job and to stay in shape. As I gained confidence as an official, I developed a passion for being on the floor. The intensity of being right beside the action every step of the way can't be explained through words. It's something you have to experience for yourself.

**What do you like most about refereeing lacrosse?** I have a chance to make a difference and provide a fair outcome to the best of my abilities for each team. It is also the people you meet both on and off the floor, the friendships that develop and the memories you take home that is so satisfying.

**Most embarrassing moment refereeing lacrosse:** I was refereeing a novice house league game and as I was turning to run up the floor I tripped over one of the players. I made my best effort to avoid him and in doing so fell flat out on the floor. The fans were pretty amused but the best part was when the player asked: "Am I going to get a penalty?"

**Biggest lacrosse game refereed:** Last year, I was given the opportunity to referee in the qualifiers

program, a two-weekend tournament with high-level lacrosse at the peewee and bantam ages. From there I was invited to referee in the Final Six: The Ontario Provincial 'A' Championships.

**Toughest aspect of refereeing lacrosse:** No matter how precise your call is, you will most likely get yelled at. When one team is happy, the other is usually not. I think this is what drives younger officials away from the game. They don't know how to ignore the yelling and feel intimidated by it. I admit, being 6'10" definitely gives you some authority on the floor but being tall will never discourage a coach or a fan from letting you know just how dumb they think you are. If you get past the yelling then the game is nothing but fun.

## EMILY BRANTON

**Hometown:** Wallaceburg

**Age:** 21

**Years of Lacrosse**

**Refereeing Experience:** 6

**Type of Lacrosse**

**Refereed:** Boys and Girls Box



**What do you like most about refereeing lacrosse?** There are a few things more rewarding than being on the floor and knowing that you are part of the game. Not having had the opportunity to play growing up, I love that refereeing is giving me a chance to be a part of the game I love. The second is the sense of family that is created, the camaraderie with your fellow officials and mutual understanding of a shared passion.

**Why did you become a referee?** My summers have been centered on lacrosse for the majority of my life and I grew up loving the game. My brother and dad have both played and my mom was a big part of my house league association for a long time. Since I was unable to play, I think refereeing was my way to be involved with the game.

**Biggest lacrosse game refereed:** The biggest game that I have refereed was the Bantam Girls Gold Medal game at provincials. It was a really intense game and well played by both teams. Having been a part of the girls system over the past few years, I saw this game as a big step for girl's lacrosse. The skill level has just improved so much since the league started and I am happy to see that girls lacrosse is really coming into its own.

**Toughest aspect of refereeing lacrosse:** The toughest part is being a minority in the game. There are few female officials so we take a lot of flak. Even before the game, people have a preconceived notion of me just because I have a ponytail

and I find a lot of people think that my gender alone is grounds for harassment. There have been countless times that derogatory comments have been made about me being female and a lot of men (and even some women) can be extremely disrespectful of my authority on the floor. However, the reward definitely outweighs the harassment.

### ANDREW ECCLESTONE

**Hometown:** Fergus

**Age:** 23

**Years of Lacrosse:**

**Refereeing Experience:** 10

**Type of Lacrosse**

**Refereed:** Box, Men's Field, Board Box



Photo: Images of You

**Do you currently play lacrosse?** No. I did play minor lacrosse from tyke upwards for the Fergus Thistles.

**What do you like most about refereeing lacrosse?** Being part of the game of lacrosse and the camaraderie amongst officials. We get the opportunity to see many different teams across Ontario and to make some good friends along the way.

**Biggest lacrosse game refereed:** I would say the gold medal game at the Peeewe Nationals back in 2004. It was my first big gold medal game, it was televised, and Pad 1 at Iroquois Park Sports Centre was full. I remember teams Ontario and B.C. went right down to the wire. It was fun, intense, and one of my most memorable games ever.

**Toughest aspect of refereeing lacrosse:** Refereeing is a big commitment, so it is hard to be able to juggle work and play or family and friends with it. On top of it all, it is physically demanding so you are usually exhausted and need some recovery time after a long weekend of tournaments and some cross-province travel.

**Lacrosse rule you would like to see changed:** It's not so much a rule as it is a procedure, but I would like if all minor and major coincidental penalties cancelled each other out the way minor hockey in Ontario does it. It takes so long and mistakes are often made when sorting out multiple penalties. If we were able to cancel out coincidental penalties, then we could just say, "Both of you who just came in, sit there for two minutes, and wait for a dead ball before coming onto the floor!"

**Most confusing rule amongst coaches and players:** Equipment! There are always new makes and models of sticks, facemasks, goalie

pads and other lacrosse equipment. Some makes and models of equipment are legal for junior-major, while illegal in minor field or box lacrosse. Then there is other lacrosse equipment that was legal last year but is illegal this year, or has never been legal, or is modified, or does not conform to the body. It seems like everyone (including referees, players, and coaches) are not all on the same page, which causes some major confusion.

### JOSH HILTZ

**Hometown:** Brampton

**Age:** 23

**Years of Lacrosse**

**Refereeing Experience:** 9

**Type of Lacrosse**

**Refereed:** Minor Lacrosse



**What do you like most about refereeing lacrosse?** Being able to stay a part of the game, meeting new people and working with different partners.

**Why did you become a referee?** I played the game for about 16 years. I became too old to play anymore, but I still wanted to be a part of the game.

**Most embarrassing moment refereeing lacrosse:** When I was refereeing a Junior 'B' game, a fight broke out and the one guy fell to the ground. I linked on to the guy that was on top and he took me for a ride and smashed my face off the ground. The two players who were fighting stopped right away and said, "Look the ref is hurt." Funny enough, they stopped fighting.

**Biggest lacrosse game refereed:** In my second year, I did a Junior 'A' playoff game in the second round. I have never refereed a game where the arena was sold out.

**Toughest aspect of refereeing lacrosse:** My size. I'm not a very big guy, but if you work hard and listen to other refs, you quickly realize size doesn't matter.

**Lacrosse rule you would like to see changed:** The 30-second shot clock on the penalty kill. If a team has a good player that can run around and keep the ball off of the other team for two to five minutes, I think he should be able to do that. As of now, the rule states that the 30-second shot clock runs during all possessions.

**Most confusing rule amongst coaches and players:** The "No offense/defense" rule. Bantam and divisions below cannot change their players on the fly. They have to play a shift at both ends of the floor, but are

allowed a draw team, a penalty kill team and a power play team.

### CAROLYN TOLL

**Hometown:** Oshawa

**Age:** 36

**Years of Lacrosse**

**Refereeing Experience:** 20

**Type of Lacrosse**

**Refereed:** Women's Field



**Do you currently play lacrosse?** No, I retired from the Canadian team in 2001 — after the World Cup.

**What do you like most about refereeing lacrosse?** Exercise, working in the outdoors, giving kids the opportunity to play and providing women with the opportunity to play at a high level.

**Why did you become a referee?** I was involved in the grassroots development of women's lacrosse in the late 1980s. The game was progressing and girls were getting involved faster than umpires were being trained. I was quickly given a whistle and learned the game over the next 10 years. I continued to umpire and play into 2000. After I finished playing at the 2001 World Cup, I decided it was time to focus on officiating and retire from playing. I have two children who are involved in the sport so it is easier to choose my schedule instead of trying to work around a playing schedule.

**Biggest lacrosse game refereed:** Bronze Medal Game, England vs. Canada, Naval Academy 2005.

**Lacrosse rule you would like to see changed:** Currently, the "check to the head" rule says that the offending player must sit out for two minutes, but can return to the game after the two minutes has expired. I would like to see all "checks to the head" resulting in a two minute penalty for the offending team and the offending player would not return to the game. My reason for this change is clear: there are some people in the lacrosse world who are pushing for helmets. I would never want to see the game played with helmets. Instead, let's make the punishment more severe so the defenders work harder to get better body positioning and think twice about swinging their sticks.

**Most confusing rule amongst coaches and players:** Most coaches and players complain about the consistency of a "dangerous check." A player must establish good body positioning and be in control of her stick to make a stick check. ♦