

## CROSS-CHECKING IN THE GAME OF BOX LACROSSE



The cross-check in the game of box lacrosse is a legal play. Rule 40 of the CLA Rulebook states:

“A legal cross-check shall be defined as a check applied with the portion of the stick held between the hands, on an opponent:

- From the front or side
- Below the shoulders
- Above the waist
- The extension of the arms while the check is being delivered is permissible.”

The game of Box Lacrosse allows the cross-checking of players with the ball and without the ball. In Pee Wee and younger, the non-ball carrier can only be cross-checked inside the dotted line. In Bantam and older, the non-ball carrier can be cross-checked in the defensive zone.

The purpose of Rule 40 is to provide the guidelines of what is a legal and an illegal cross-check. The game of lacrosse is a physical game and the rules are in place to ensure fairness and player safety.

The cross-check is a skill that is part of playing defense. From a coaching perspective, it is critical that we teach players to play defense first. To know where the ball is, where the opposing player is, and how to prepare to help a teammate. A defender uses the cross-check on the ball carrier to stop the opposing player from getting into the prime scoring areas. A defender uses the cross-check on the non-ball carrier to stop the opposing player from advancing into the prime scoring areas to receive a pass. For example, if a non-ball carrier cuts through the middle of the floor, the defender can cross-check that player to deter their path towards the net.

The "Clear the House" mentality of playing defense needs to stop! Excessive force on the non-ball carrier is illegal and is a penalty. The referee has the discretion on whether a player is defending their zone or using excessive force against an opponent. Players need to use the cross-check as part of their defensive strategy, not in an attempt to hurt or intimidate opposing players.

Coaches can make a significant difference in the game by understanding the purpose of cross-checking, in its function and its implementation in the sport. The game of Box Lacrosse is inherently physical, it is why many people love the sport. The speed and contact make it a great game to play and watch. However, it is important to play the game within the rules, in order for the game to be safe for all participants.

