

What is JOCAP?

JOCAP is an acronym that was selected so it would be easily remembered -- Joint Officials Coaches Abuse Panel (JOCAP).

This panel was created to put an end to the copious amount of verbal abuse that coaches, players, parents and fans inflict on the officials in our game. This panel has a dozen people on it – six from the BC Lacrosse Officials Group and six from the BC Lacrosse Coaches Group.

JOCAP's mandate, as directed by both the BC Lacrosse Officials and Coaches Technical Support Groups during the 2015 Special Sessions Joint Session, is for both the officials and coaches sectors to work together to identify why there is so much abuse and to find solutions to this ongoing issue. Strong recommendations have been made to the Directorates for suspensions to help eliminate the abuse.

The system is broken and this ongoing cycle of abuse must now end. Times have changed. No longer can coaches use the excuse "Back in the day, my coach yelled and screamed at the referees so now it my turn". It is no longer acceptable behaviour to use profanity, use rude gestures, or threaten or intimidate a referee. Respect is a vital part of the game and it must be displayed by everyone or the game will simply not grow.

We are losing officials at an alarming rate and what really hurts all of us is that we are losing the high level referees who have said they have had enough of the abuse. They don't like the way they are being treated in the game so who can any one blame them for leaving? Why would anyone place themselves in an environment where they are not having fun?

Last year there were death threats, RCMP having to escort referees to the parking lot and players going the referees' homes to physically assault them. On top of that, there was constant bullying and the most horrific things said on social media about officials.

We have hit an all time low. We are destroying our game. We are in a crisis situation for referee availability. We struggled to get referees to officiate regular season games, begged referees to do double duty for play off games and had bare bones for referees to do provincials. We were forced to place referees in games over their heads which made the situation uncomfortable for everyone. This is not fair to the players, the coaches or the officials.

After many meetings, to sum it all up, the common denominators are coaches showing the bad behaviour and the players emulate their coaches with bad behaviour. The parents see this display so they think it is acceptable. On the flip side, the referees do not call penalties because they are too young and inexperienced or the seasoned veteran is told to have thicker skin.

For 2016, coaches will coach, players will play and referees will officiate the game. Everyone has their role in the game. No longer can a coach embarrass, humiliate, swear or be aggressive toward any official. This type of behaviour distracts the officials from doing their job on the floor and it is a safety concern for the players.

The referees have been instructed to call it early and often. Consider this a warning...

JOCAP

2016 Instructions to Officials

At the 2016 Officials Clinics, the referees have been instructed to call unsportsmanlike and abuse of officials early and often.

The Head Coach of each team is **totally responsible** for his/her bench. Bench is defined as players, door personnel, assistant coaches and trainers. This Head Coach must take the time to talk to the parents/fans before the very first game of the season about respect for the game. These parents/fans must keep their negative comments to themselves. If any parent or fan is abusive to any official they will be asked to immediately leave the arena. The game will be suspended until the abusive individual(s) leave(s) the arena.

Door Personnel (Novice and below). Their job is to open and close the door. That is it. They count their players onto and off the floor and they may cheer on their players. The door people may never say a negative comment to the referee.

Consequence:

2 minute Unsportsmanlike Bench Minor + Game Misconduct + Game Report.

Any player except a designated goal keeper shall serve the penalty.

Door Personnel (Pee Wee and above). All Door Personnel are all trained or certified coaches. Their job is to open and close the door. That is it. They count their players onto and off the floor and they may cheer on their players. The door personnel may never say a negative comment to the referee.

Consequence:

2 minute Unsportsmanlike Bench Minor.

Any player except a designated goal keeper shall serve the penalty.

For a second Unsportsmanlike Offence by that same non-playing personnel.

2 minute Unsportsmanlike Bench Minor + Game Misconduct + Game Report.

Any player except a designated goal keeper shall serve the penalty.

A bench penalty will also be called if a trainer, door person or coach, while attending an injured player on the floor makes a negative comment or attempts to intimidate the official.

Consequence:

2 minute Unsportsmanlike Bench Minor + Head Coach Game Misconduct + Game Report.

Any player except a designated goal keeper shall serve the penalty.

In Pee Wee and below, the coach may talk directly to the official about an interpretation of rule without going through the captains. Of course, this is only in effect as long as the coach is polite and not aggressive in behaviour.

In Bantam and above, the referees have been instructed to use open communication with the coaches as long as it is polite and quick dialogue. This is not intended for repeated questioning of calls and must not unnecessarily slow the game down.

As the Head Coach is responsible for the bench, he/she must make sure of the following.

1. Must not enter in argument with the officials.

2. Must not say any negative comments to anyone in the game.
2. Must not attempt to influence any calls (running commentary) or any decision of an official.
3. Intimidate any official. (Aggressive behaviour)

In cases where the coach has a complaint against the performance of the official - no good can come from that coach talking to that referee. The mechanism in place at this time, is for the coach to report that referee to his own Head Referee. If need be, that Head Referee will report that referee to the referee zone co-ordinator.

In all cases, only the Head Referee, referee zone co-ordinators, referee clinicians, Chair and Vice Chair of the BC Lacrosse Officials Group will be permitted to talk to any referee about his/her performance.

Head Coaches are encouraged to speak to everyone associated with their teams about abuse. This abuse must stop now. All games are going to heavily monitored.

For this 2016 season, information about this paper will be disseminated in the following mediums:

1. On-Line BCLA Community of Practice to all Topic Areas
2. BC Lacrosse Coaches Group Information Sheet
3. On the BCLA Website
4. At Coaches and Officials Meetings and Clinics
5. Tournament Packages and RIC
6. Pre-game talk by the officials of the games

Let's all work together so everyone can enjoy the games.

Sincerely,
Joint Officials Coaches Abuse Panel (JOCAP) Representatives