

## Overview of Box Lacrosse Rules

**[Sadly, the official CLA rulebook must be purchased:**  
<http://bcla.centraldesktop.com/bcla/media/Forms/resources/resources.pdf>]

Although lacrosse is very complimentary to hockey, it is really more similar to basketball. The main similarities and differences are as follows:

- Like basketball, and unlike hockey to some degree, the game of Lacrosse involves a full team offense. Everyone plays offense, and everyone plays defense.
- The five offensive players are referred to as left crease, left corner, right crease, right corner & point ( centre ).
- In Lacrosse many "plays" originate from the corners where players on the possession team try to "set picks" on opposing players to hopefully free up a teammate for a possible scoring opportunity.
- Like basketball, there is a shot clock. A team who gains possession of the ball has 30 seconds to get a shot on net or they lose possession.
- If 2 players are going after a "loose" ball they must play the ball and not check the other player until he has possession. This again can be a little misleading especially when each player is battling and jostling for the ball. If a player makes a play on the body of the opponent before making a play on the ball, this is interference and possession is awarded to the opponent.
- When the ball goes out of bounds, the opponent of the team who last touched the ball gets possession.
- Players cannot pass the ball to the goalie in the crease at any time.
- An illegal cross-check is defined as: a) above the shoulders, b) below the waist, c) when the opponent is not on their feet, d) when a non-ball carrier is outside the dotted line on the floor. It is perfectly *legal* (and a very good strategy) to cross-check non-ball carriers *inside* the dotted line.
  - In higher levels (Pee Wee +), players who over-aggressively cross-check are readily exploited by strong offensive players, as they will be off balance with their weight forward, and prone to an easy roll or face dodge.
- When a goalkeeper is hit on the mask, play is stopped. The goalkeeper restarts play with possession of the ball in their crease.
- Under current rules, if the ball hits a goalie's face-mask and goes in – it's a goal.
- Slashing is not allowed at all in minor lacrosse. This is confusing for new parents and players because a well-executed stick check essentially uses a slashing motion. If the stick-check ("controlled slash") makes contact with any part of the body (including gloves), that check will be considered a slash. Stick-checking ("controlled slashing") the head of the lacrosse stick or portion of the lacrosse stick between the players gloves is *legal*.
- When a penalty is assessed, the non-offending team restarts play with possession of the ball near the centre of the floor.
- When one team offends (usually interference of non-ball carriers outside dotted circle), and no penalty is called, "possession" is awarded to the other team. The same applies for a player who loses the ball into the stands - the other team is awarded possession and the play is started once the whistle is blown by the referee.
- Checking from behind (back-checking) is to be dealt with severely as it is one of the leading potential injury factors. Back-checking is an automatic 4 minute penalty.
  - If the player in possession of the ball turns abruptly to dodge or mitigate the contact while the defensive player is in the act of checking them, and this leads to a check on the back, this is *not* considered a back-check.
- Cross-checking in box Lacrosse (hands apart on shaft, and shaft driven into the opponents shoulder or chest), is both legal and a very important and proper method of checking. This can occur on a player in possession of the ball anywhere on the floor, and can also be applied to players *without the ball* if they are attacking inside the dotted circle.

- High sticking is another area of confusion for parents. In some cases "Incidental" contact with the helmet by an opponent's stick is not automatically a penalty!! It is again a referee's judgment call.
- Players or goalies, out of their crease, will be penalized if they catch the ball in the hand. If they just contact it with the hand, it is a foul with possession awarded to the other team.
- Face-offs are taken with the open face of the stick facing your own net. The ball must come out of the 2' small face-off circle before other players can cross the restraining lines. An offense results in immediate possession to the other team.
  - Watch for players sitting down on their knees with their butts on their heels – this is a common mistake.
- A player with the ball cannot push off with his free hand or arm! If he does (called warding off) possession is awarded to the other team. This rule is very misunderstood by new parents. Many times spectators will not notice freehand or arm pushing (by the way, as long as the player with the ball keeps both hands on his stick he can usually push, or shoulder or resist his checker ) and often miss the checking by offensive players especially action away from the ball.
- A loose ball or ball on the ground trapped in an opponent's stick can be kicked in box lacrosse but not for a goal.
- When a team is shorthanded, they have 10 seconds in which to get the ball over centre and once over cannot go back, or a change of possession call is made with possession awarded to the opposing team.
- When a player is awarded possession by the referee, he must be given at least 3 metres of room by the defending player/s until the whistle signifies restarting of play.
- Once possession of the ball changes the team gaining possession has 30 seconds to get a shot on net or score a goal.
- Another big difference between hockey and Lacrosse involves the goalie's crease. If you go into the *other* team's crease to shoot or cut through it (i.e., when on offence), you will lose possession. If you go through the *other* team's crease (i.e., when on offence) and contact the goalie while he is in his crease it results in a minor or major penalty ("crease play"). If you are pushed into the crease you are okay but you must make every effort to get back out immediately.
  - When on *defence*, it is perfectly legal, and often a good strategy to have a foot inside and to cut through your OWN goalie's crease. This is perfectly legal, and in situations where players are defending against creasemen who are in low and tight, is often necessary.
  - Defending players clearing the ball cannot take the ball from outside their crease and then enter it or pass the ball in to their goalie. (A defending player who has just gained possession can pass or roll the ball to their goalie if that goalie is outside the crease).
  - Defending players that recover the ball while *inside* their goalie's crease can carry the ball out of the crease.
- The goalie in Lacrosse can function just like any other player on the floor. This includes cross-checking while outside of the goalie crease. Also, a goalie can go anywhere on the floor.
- Charging. If an offensive player (usually a larger or stronger player) is carrying the ball at a full run, and makes *no attempt* to dodge or avoid the defensive player, and contacts them with shoulder / shoulder-helmet (head down) (or jumps into the air!) this will be assessed as charging, and a minor penalty assessed. If the referee determines there was intent to injure, then a major penalty may be assessed under this rule. Goalie's cross-checking or running at offensive non-ball players who have their heads turned back looking for a pass will generally receive a major penalty for charging.
- Players accumulating 5 penalties in a single game must sit out the remainder of play once they have completed serving their 5<sup>th</sup> penalty.

# Key Rules of Box Lacrosse

## Ball Out of Bounds (Rule 31)

1. Possession is awarded to the opponent of the team who last touched the ball even when the ball deflects off the goalie from a shot on net.

## Cross Checking (Rule 40)

1. Illegal cross check defined as: (1) below the waist (2) on top of the shoulder, (3) opponent not on their feet, and (4) non-ball carrier outside of the dotted line.

## Crease Play (Rule 39)

1. The team with possession of the ball in their own crease has 5 seconds to move the ball out of the crease.
2. If a player touches a loose ball, receives a pass or incidentally interferes with an opposing players'/goalkeepers' stick in the opposing team's crease loses possession of the ball. Intentional contact with the players'/goalkeeper's stick or body within the crease in a two-minute penalty to the offending player.
3. When shooting on goal, a player may not step into the goal crease. A player's body or stick may break the plane of the crease in the act of faking/shooting but may not make contact with the floor.
4. No goal shall be allowed if a player of the attacking team is in the crease. If the player entered the crease as a result of a check, and no attempt to interfere with the goalie took place, the goal shall be allowed.
5. A minor penalty shall be assessed to a player who cuts through the opposition crease to check the ball carrier.
6. A player may cut through the opposition crease when not in possession of the ball unless it is giving him a distinct advantage in recovering a loose ball which will result in possession to the non-offending team.
7. In minor lacrosse, the ball may not be passed back into the crease. A goalie may not recover or receive a pass when outside the crease and then enter the crease.
8. If a goalkeeper has at least one foot in the crease, he may reach out to recover the ball or intercept a pass and return it to the crease.

## The Face-Off (Rule 43)

1. Players cannot enter restraining lines before ball leaves two-foot face-off circle.
2. Players taking the face-off line up with the open face of their stick facing their own goal with both feet behind the parallel lines at the face-off circle.
3. When the referee blows his whistle, the players must draw their sticks straight back. Withholding the ball from play is a loss of possession.
4. If a player moves prior to the referee blowing their whistle, possession is awarded to the non-offending team.
5. If a player kicks the opponent's crosse, possession is awarded to the non-offending team.

## Fighting (Rule 45)

1. In minor lacrosse, a major penalty plus a game misconduct shall be assessed to any player who fights.

## Handling the Ball with Hands (Rule 49)

1. If a player/goalkeeper touches the ball with his hand outside of the goal crease, possession shall be awarded to the non-offending team. A minor penalty shall be assessed to a player/goalkeeper who catches the ball with his hand while the ball is outside the crease.
2. The designated goalkeeper may touch or catch the ball with his hand while the ball is within the goal crease. If the goalkeeper throws the ball outside of the crease with his hand, possession shall be awarded to the non-offending team.
3. If any defending player other than the designated goalkeeper catches the ball with his hand while in the crease, a penalty shot shall be awarded. If the goalkeeper had been removed from the floor when the offence occurred a goal shall be awarded.

### **Interference (Rule 55)**

1. When players are pursuing a loose ball, checking the opponent's stick and body contact is allowed. If the contact is a direct attempt to drive the opponent off the ball while making no attempt to play the ball, possession is awarded to the non-offending team.
2. If a defender is interfered with by means of a moving screen (moving pick), possession is awarded to the non-offending team.
3. In all screening situations contact is expected. If the contact is excessive, it shall be penalized under the appropriate rule (i.e. unnecessary roughness).

### **Kicking the Ball (Rule 58)**

1. Kicking the ball shall be allowed in all zones. However, a goal may not be scored by kicking the ball directly into the opposing team's goal.

### **Slashing (Rule 64)**

1. A minor or major penalty shall be assessed to any player who slashes any portion of an opponent's body with the stick.
  - i. In minor lacrosse, a player may not strike an opponent with that portion of the stick not held between the hands. Stick-to-stick contact is allowed but hands (gloves) are considered part of the body and may not be touched.
2. A minor or major penalty shall be assessed to a player who while in the process of shooting or passing, follow through with the stick and slashes and opponent. Should a goal be scored on the shot, the goal is awarded and the penalty assessed.

### **Over-and-Back (Rule 66b)**

1. When the short handed team is in possession of the ball in the attacking zone and they cause the ball to go out of the attacking zone in any manner except a shot on goal, it shall be immediately be recovered by or awarded to the non-offending team.

### **Time Rules (Rule 66a; Rule 68)**

1. When a team is short-handed they shall advance the ball into their attacking zone within ten seconds or possession shall be awarded to the non-offending team.
2. The offensive team (whether short-handed or at full strength) shall be required to take a shot on goal within thirty seconds of gaining possession. Failure will result in possession to the non-offending team.

### **Time Outs (Rule 70)**

1. Each team shall be allowed one thirty second time out in the regular playing time of the game. Time out shall be granted only if requested by a player on the floor when his team has possession of the ball or during a stoppage in play. (Most experienced referees will recognize that Novice age players will be inaudible due to difficulties manipulating their mouth guards, and thus recognize timeouts called by coaches). If the team calling the time out was in possession when the time out was awarded, they re-start play with possession. In all other cases, play is started with a face-off.
2. If a team calls a time out to which they are not entitled, possession is immediately awarded to the non-offending team.

### **Wrap Around (Rule 73)**

1. A minor penalty shall be assessed to a player who impedes the progress of an opponent with his stick and/or arms in a holding fashion.

### **Minor Penalties (Rule 76)**

1. Minor penalties require the removal of the offending player without substitute for two minutes, unless terminated by a goal.

### **Major Penalties (Rule 77)**

1. Player assessed a major penalty serves the entire five minutes, released on dead ball after penalty time expired. Substitution from bench allowed on two goals scored by opposition.
2. Any player who receives a second major penalty in the same game shall be assessed a game misconduct penalty. A substitute player shall serve the major penalty without charge.

### **Goalkeeper's Penalties (Rule 82)**

1. A goalkeeper's penalty shall be served by a player who was on the floor at the time of the infraction.

### **Calling of Penalties (Rule 85)**

1. Play re-starts after penalty with possession to non-offending team.
2. If a goal is scored during a delayed penalty call and the offending team is at full strength, the goal shall count towards the delayed penalty. The delayed penalty will be recorded on the score sheet.
3. If a goal is scored during a delayed penalty call and the offending team is short-handed, the goal shall count towards the penalty that made the team short-handed and the delayed penalty shall be assessed in the normal manner.