



2016 Focus Calls

“Keeping the focus on lacrosse”

Overview

The main concerns for 2016, in the eyes of the CLA’s NOCP working group, were decided based on player safety, lacrosse culture, and growth of the game. Listed are the blanket targets of this year’s focus calls. The goal of these focus calls is to clear up any grey areas from the calling of penalties in Canadian Box Lacrosse.

1. Head Contact
2. Referee Abuse
3. Slashing

Head Contact

Following successful campaigns to reduce dangerous plays like checking from behind, a similar focus on “head contact” is a major focus for Canadian Box Lacrosse in 2016. The term ‘head contact’ is not defined in the CLA Rulebook, however, the focus itself encompasses several rules in the rulebook, and ultimately aims for the same goal; player safety. Some examples of head contact are:

HIGH STICKING – Rule 50

Minor Penalty

It has been agreed that the minor high sticking penalty shall be assessed for minor stick contact to the facemask and/or helmet. An example of this would be a missed stick check, resulting in the defenders stick striking the ball carrier’s helmet without major impact. Another important example of a minor high sticking infraction is when off-ball opponents push or “ride” each others sticks and gloves up into the face/head area. Any player who clearly directs an opponent’s hands up into their face/head area, or into their own, shall be considered for a minor penalty for high sticking. This type of play is quite common at the junior and senior levels, and can lead to more severe altercations between players, if disregarded by officials.

Major/Major + Game Misconduct Penalty

A major penalty shall be considered for any cross-checking motion that results in a player’s stick “riding up” and making contact with the opposing player’s neck and/or head area. The major penalty shall be called if the offending player shows restraint, or if the high check is deemed incidental in the eyes of the official. A major penalty plus a game misconduct shall be assessed to any player continuing their check after the stick rides up into the neck and/or head of the opponent. Contact of this nature will be identified by a change in momentum, jostling of head, etc.



Match Penalty

A match penalty shall be assessed to any player who makes *direct* contact to the neck and/or head of an opponent. A match penalty may also be assessed to a player who continues a check that originates on the arm or chest, and ends violently in the neck and/or head area. This call may also fall under *Reckless and Endangering Play (Rule 30)*.

ELBOWING – Rule 42(b)

A major penalty shall be assessed to any player who uses his/her elbow *or forearm* to foul an opponent. This has become a focus call under “head contact” due to players being checked or pinned to the boards, and having the defender’s arm or elbow drive the ball carrier’s head into the glass/boards. This is a highly dangerous situation, and directly contributes to head and neck injuries in box lacrosse.

Referee Abuse

UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT – Rule 28(a,b)

Provinces across the country are losing officials each year at an alarming rate. Although it is unrealistic to expect 100% of officials to return each season, the numbers reported in 2014/2015 were quite alarming, seeing 30%, up to as much as 50% referee attrition in some areas. When asked to identify the number one contributor to a former referee’s decision to quit, it was nearly always “the way I was treated.” The abuse of officials and unsportsmanlike conduct at **ALL LEVELS** continues to be a major issue in the sport of Box Lacrosse in Canada. The severity of the abuse has exceeded natural coach/referee and player/referee interaction, and action must be taken to preserve the growth of the game.

Officials in 2016 will be directed to assess Unsportsmanlike Conduct penalties as defined by the rulebook. Giving players/coaches “warnings” shall be a privilege, and not a right to said players/coaches. Remarks made directly to the official, during dynamic play, from the bench shall not be tolerated. This type of behavior distracts the officials from doing their job on the floor, and is a safety concern for the players.

Aggressive behavior toward officials, from captains/players/coaches regardless of profanity or use of the word “sir,” shall result in immediate penalization. With the *full* support of the Member Associations and the decline in referee numbers the increasing unsportsmanlike behavior associated with Box Lacrosse can and will be remedied.



SLASHING – Rule 64

Slashing continues to be an ongoing issue for Box Lacrosse. Below is how the rule will be administered in on-ball and off-ball situations.

ON-BALL

A defending player shall not use his/her stick to intimidate their opponent, or attempt to dislodge the ball by checking the hands or arms in a slashing motion. Incidental contact while attempting to dislodge the ball from the ball carrier's stick shall be penalized or disregarded at the discretion of the official. ANY slashing applied directly to the hands, arms or back shall be penalized with the appropriate penalty. Uncontrolled or "wild" swinging of the stick by a defender, regardless of contact, shall be penalized under Rule 64.

FOLLOW-THROUGH SLASHING

At the discretion of the Referee, any ball-carrier who passes or shoots the ball, and directly follows through with his/her stick into the defender, with significant force, shall receive the appropriate penalty. This rule is seldom called, but can be every bit as dangerous as a defensive slashing penalty.

OFF-BALL

Off-ball slashing continues to be an issue predominantly at the junior and senior levels. It has been brought to the CLA's attention that this area of the game is the least consistent between major centers. Off-ball slashing is NOT permitted in the game of Box Lacrosse, as outlined in the rulebook. Any player slashing an opponent off ball shall be considered in violation of this rule, and shall be penalized appropriately at the discretion of the Referee. Any slashing viewed as "intimidation" shall immediately be addressed by the Referee.

In the case of an off-ball player receiving a pass, the on-ball slashing criteria shall be used. At no point in the game of Canadian Box Lacrosse shall a player be permitted to slash his/her opponent in the hands, arms, or back, regardless of possession.