

DATE: January 28th, 2023

TO: OLA Membership

TITLE: OLA Memo 23-01; U7 (Paperweight Division) Rule Modifications

The Long Term Player Development model sets out a vision for introductory levels of lacrosse that puts the player first. The LTAD model provides age-appropriate opportunities for kids to participate in the game. Focusing on development and enjoyment will lay the foundation for local, national and international success long into the future.

The LTAD model has been developed based on the following principles:

- Doing the right thing for the player at the right stage in their development
- Adopting a player-centered approach and not treating the development of all players the same way
- The broader the foundation of players, the more successful the sport will be
- Viewing player development as a long-term process
- Learning the skills of running, scooping, cradling, passing, catching and shooting are primary, whereas stick-checking, cross-checking and body-checking are secondary
- A need to better educate parents on the lacrosse development of their child – it is okay for parents to want their kids to get to the highest levels but they need to know the best way to go about it

In U7 (Paperweight), the following rule modifications are in effect:

1. Within the dotted line of the defensive zone, defending players are able to create contact by using the Place & Push mechanic on the ball-carrier. A defending player's stick must be placed on the opponent's arm before the defending player extends their own arms. This allows the defending player to accurately steer the attacking player away from the goal. Once the attacking ball-carrier is pushed outside of the dotted line, they can continue to be pushed until they no longer have the ball, but cannot be pushed into the boards.
2. Defending players cannot make contact with any attacking players who are not the ball-carrier (similar to field lacrosse) at any time, anywhere on the floor. There is no Place & Push or cross-checking allowed on a non-ball-carrier anywhere on the floor.
3. Any violation of the modified contact rules (either #1 or #2) will result in a stoppage of play. The offending player will be sent to the team bench for an immediate substitution. Play can be restarted immediately with possession to the non-offending team, but the substitute player cannot enter the playing surface until the offending player has reached the exchange box. This penalty is not recorded on the score sheet. To facilitate skill development, any body contact, stick-to-body or stick-to-stick contact that violates the modified rules is illegal.
4. Any actions of players which would result in a penalty under regulation box lacrosse rules will still result in a penalty being assessed as normal for the Paperweight division.

LTAD Stage	Focus	Age Guide	OLA Division	Long-Term Athlete Development (LTAD) Description
Active Start	PLAY	0-4	Soft Lacrosse	Pre-kindergarten; daily physical activities (both organized and unstructured); encouraged fundamental movement skills; focus on participation and FUN
FUNDamentals	LEARN	5-6	U7 (Paperweight)	Well-structured SAFE skill development, positive and FUN; encourage participation in a variety of activities and areas INTRODUCE: SPEED 1, SIMPLE GAME RULES
Train to Learn	LEARN	7-8	U9	Focus on sport skills and drills (accelerated motor coordination) No position specialization; goaltender position as option INTRODUCE: SPEED 2, SKILL 1, FULL GAME PLAY RULES
Train to Learn	SKILL	9-10	U11	Combine skills and tactics; train in low pressure competitive areas); increase competition, goaltender specialization begins INTRODUCE: SPEED 3, SKILL 2, STAMINA 1
Train to Compete	SKILL	11-12	U13	Model high competitive situations (game play and drills); increase goaltender specialization; late entries supported INTRODUCE: SKILL 3, STAMINA 2, STRENGTH 1
Train To Compete	SKILL	13-14	U15	Skill refinement; athlete-specific training, increase competitive situations (game play and drills); late entries supported INSTRUCT: STAMINA 3, STRENGTH 2
Train To Win	SPECIALIZE	15-16	U17	Skill refinement; athlete-specific training, increase competitive situations (game play and drills); position specialization begins ENCOURAGE: SPEED 3, STAMINA 3, STRENGTH 3
Train To Win	SPECIALIZE	17+	U22 Junior A/B/C	Skill refinement; athlete-specific training, full competitive game play and drills; position specialization refined ENCOURAGE: SPEED 3, STAMINA 3, STRENGTH 3

U7 (Paperweight) Modified Contact

Shane Hubbard
Jeramie Bailey

Session Outcomes

By the end of this module, you will understand:

- Why the rules for U7 are being modified
- What this means for the development of young athletes
- What the modifications to U7 rules are
- How to communicate these modifications to coaches and players

Why is the OLA modifying the rules?

So why Modify the Rules of Play?

- To align with Long-Term Athlete Development model
- To focus on primary skill development
- To prioritize the safety of developing athletes
- These changes came as suggestions from respected participants in the game

- **Player safety is on everyone's minds these days. We can't grow the game if we can't demonstrate that there is a safe way for "non-lacrosse people" to learn it**
- **Increased recruitment allows smaller centres to get started, which will lead to a stronger base of players throughout the entire province**

Jay Thorimbert NOTL Thunderhawks



- **Current rules are not encouraging passing and catching skill development; kids are just running away from cross-checks**
- **Players at young ages leave the game because of contact**
- **Modified rules allow for better skill acquisition over time**
- **Skill levels increased in Kitchener's non-contact field program (vs. summer box)**

Mike Poulin
Kitchener Kodiaks



- **Modified rules makes it easier for young referees to learn the game**
- **If there are less judgement calls on hits, young referees can focus on other areas of their own development, like positioning and awareness**

Chris Williams NOTL Thunderhawks



- Learning the game doesn't happen all at once – we want players to fall in love with lacrosse without fear of significant contact
- Confidence is the single most important factor in the development of young players. There is a time and a place for introducing contact, and it happens when players have developed confidence in their running, passing and shooting abilities

Dan Dawson
Burlington Blaze



- These rules allow referees to learn the basics of officiating without difficult judgement calls
- Parents and fans won't overreact due to a big hit (which will decrease referee abuse)
- A more progressive introduction to lacrosse and refereeing is paired with a more progressive introduction to playing the game

Ian Garrison OLA VP Officiating



- A simple and straightforward proposal that young coaches can understand and work with
- Competing for a loose ball is a very important skill that should be focused on in early stages of player development
- While bumping is likely to occur, high impact collisions which risk injury are avoided

Bruce Codd Orangeville Northmen



- We have versions of the sport where adult men participate in non-contact lacrosse, yet we don't have a parallel option to introduce the game to 5 and 6 year old's
- All other contact sports have identified contact at the youngest ages of competition as a significant barrier to introducing sport to new athletes

Rick Phillips
OLA VP Coaching



Long-Term Athlete Development

LTAD Model is based on several core principles:

- Doing the right thing for the player at the right time
- Adopting a player-centered approach that acknowledges that all players develop differently
- A broader player foundation makes the sport stronger
- Player development is a long-term process
- Primary skills are taught first

LTAD Stage	Focus	Age Guide	OLA Division	Long-Term Athlete Development (LTAD) Description
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FUNDamentals	LEARN	5-6	U7 (Paperweight)	Skill development should be well-structured, positive and FUN; encourage participation in a variety of activities Introduce: SPEED 1, simple game play rules
Train to Learn	LEARN	7-8	U9	Focus on sport skills and drills (accelerated motor coordination) No position specialization Introduce: SPEED 2, goaltender position as an option, full rules
Train to Learn	SKILL	9-10	U11	Combine skills and tactics; train in low pressure competitive areas); increase competition, goaltender specialization begins Introduce: SPEED 3, STAMINA 1
Train to Compete	SKILL	11-12	U13	Model high competitive situations (game play and drills); increase goaltender specialization; late entries supported Introduce: STAMINA 2, STRENGTH 1
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Train To Win	SPECIALIZE	15-16	U17	Skill refinement; athlete-specific training, increase competitive situations (game play and drills); position specialization begins Instruct: SPEED 3, STAMINA 3, STRENGTH 3,
Train To Win	SPECIALIZE	17+	U22 Junior A/B/C	Skill refinement; athlete-specific training, full competitive game play and drills; position specialization refined Encourage: SPEED 3, STAMINA 3, STRENGTH 3,



“Non-Contact Lacrosse” Isn’t Lacrosse

“How will defenders dislodge the ball?”

We must recognize that young athletes:

- Are still learning to scoop and cradle while running
- Dislodging the ball from a player who is still learning is easier than a player who has developed cradling skills
- There are primary and secondary skills

LTAD Lacrosse Skill Development

Primary Lacrosse Skills

- Running
- Scooping
- Cradling
- Passing
- Catching
- Shooting

Secondary Lacrosse Skills

- Stick Checking
- Cross Checking
- Body Checking
- Specialization

Protecting Developing Athletes

“Young athletes are not only developing the skills to success in sport, they are also developing their bodies and brains to success in life.”

We must recognize that young athletes:

- Have developing bodies not designed to withstand high impacts
- Have developing brains that are particularly susceptible to trauma
- Learn best in non-threatening environments where they can focus on primary skill development

How Other Sports Approach Contact

Football

- Tackle Football begins at U9
- All divisions below are 7v7 Touch Football or 5v5 Flag Football

Hockey

- All house league is “non contact”
- U14 rep and below is “non contact”

How Other Sports Approach Contact

Rugby

- U6 – U10 is non-contact
- U12 is “intro to contact”

Even Soccer!

- No heading the soccer ball until the U12 division

**Okay, so what's
allowed in U7?**

Modifications to U7 (Paperweight)

Beginning this season:

- Cross-checking has been replaced with “Place & Push” technique on the ball-carrier only
- Contact on a ball-carrier is only allowed within the 24’ line
- Contact on a ball-carrier must stop when:
 - The ball-carrier loses possession
 - The ball-carrier approaches the boards

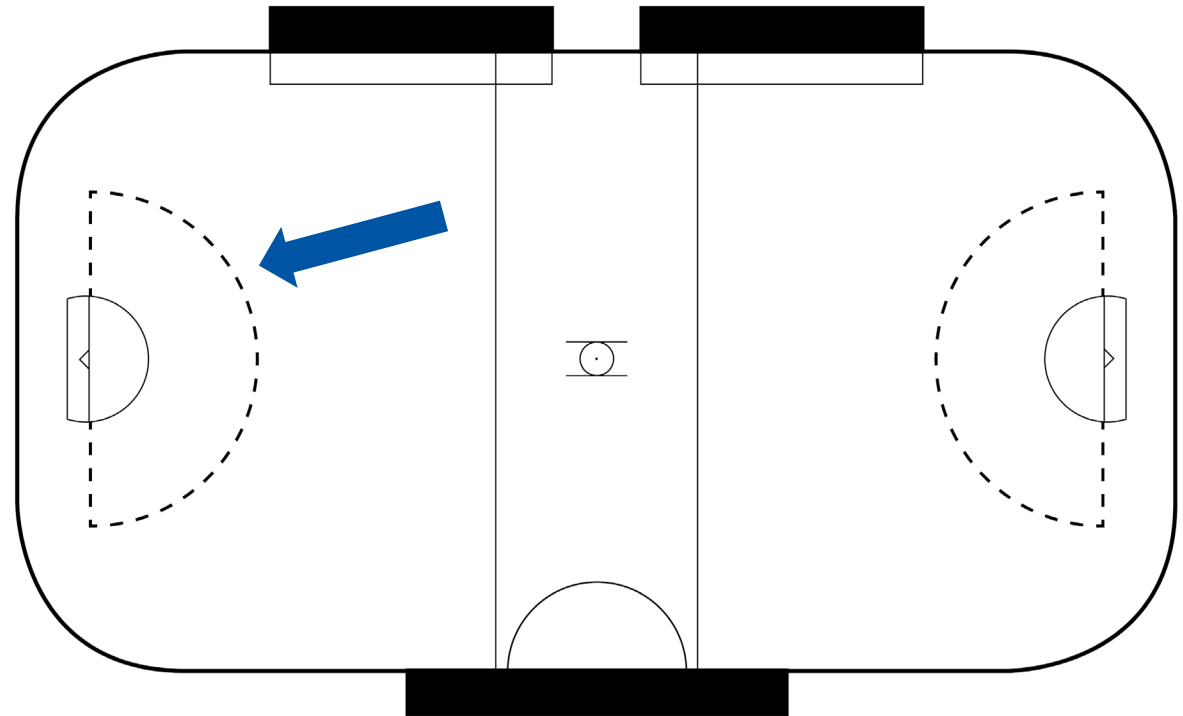
Modifications to U7 (Paperweight)

Beginning this season:

- No contact is permitted on non-ball-carriers anywhere on the floor (similar to field lacrosse)
- Violation of these modified rules results in a stoppage in play, and the offending player is sent to their bench for an immediate substitution (no penalty assessed)

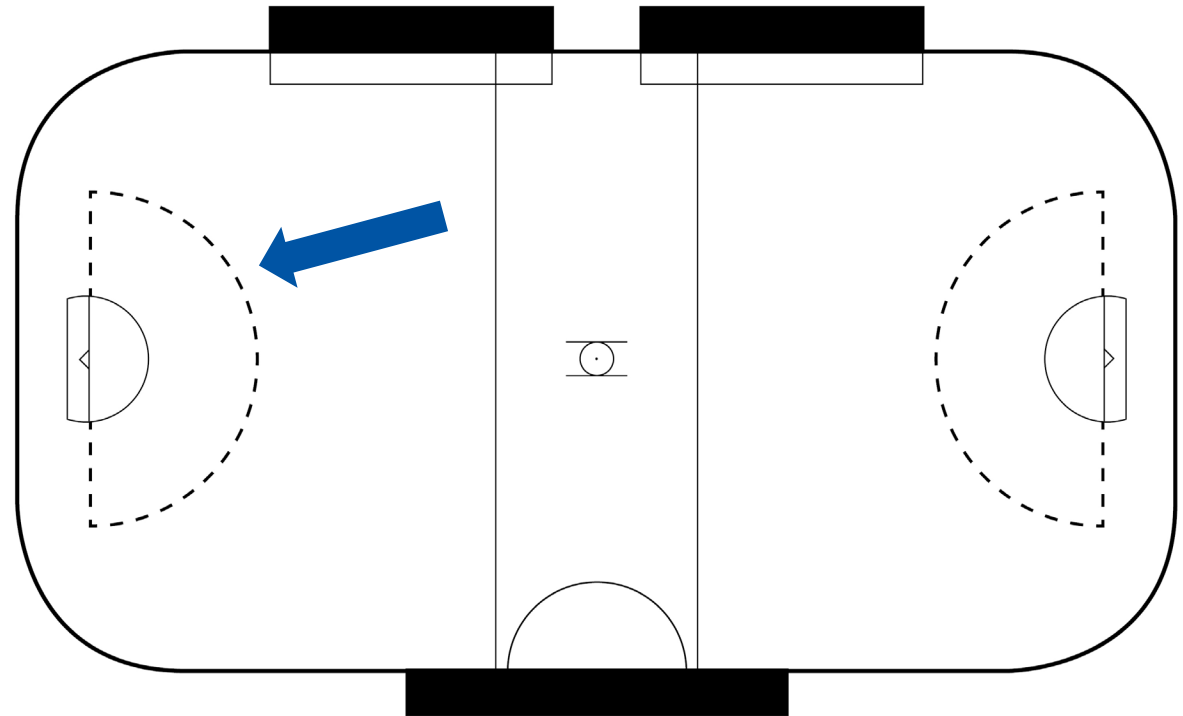
- The ball-carrier must be within the 24' dotted line
- The defending player must place their stick on the ball-carrier before extending their arms
- The intent is for defending players to steer the ball-carrier away from the goal
- The result is a zero-impact defensive play

“Place & Push”



- If a defending player has begun to legally push a ball-carrier, the push can continue outside of the 24' dotted line
- Once the ball-carrier loses possession of the ball, they can no longer be pushed
- If a legal push approaches the boards, the pushing player must stop or steer their opponent away from the boards

“Place & Push”



**Cool. How do I
communicate these
changes to coaches,
parents and players?**

For Coaches

Focus on:

- Placing coaches in the context of what is best for the player in the long-term
- Teaching players the basic elements of lacrosse first
- Putting young athletes in low-risk situations why they are learning foundational skills
- Making lacrosse FUN!

For Parents

Focus on:

- These changes are made with player safety as the primary priority
- Player development is a progression – we don't teach all of the skills all at once
- Players learn to love the game without having to worry about being hurt
- Making lacrosse FUN!

For Players

Focus on:

- The skills that are being taught, not the skills that are being delayed
- Making lacrosse FUN!



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