

Differences Between Box Lacrosse and Hockey

Referees on the Floor

- Both referees on the floor have the same level of authority.
 - The more senior of the 2 officials will face off the ball at the beginning of each period, conduct any requested measurements, and make any final decisions during the game.
- There may also be an official who handles the operation of the shot clock, but there will only ever be 2 officials on the floor at once.

The Rink

- Box lacrosse is played in a rink having the same dimensions as hockey, except there is only 1 face-off circle, at center, and there are lines running across the floor tangent to that circle.
- There is a crease area which runs 9 feet in radius around the front of the goal.
- Around the goal, there is a semi-circle, 24 feet in radius, where contact can be made between players, whether they are with or without the ball.
- Unlike hockey, box lacrosse goals are a little bit larger – they are 4 feet by 4 feet.

Time of the Game

- Since there is no need to clean the ice between periods, breaks between periods in a box lacrosse game are traditionally shorter than in a hockey game.
 - In Major lacrosse, breaks are normally 10 minutes, and in Minor lacrosse, breaks are normally 2 or 3 minutes, depending on the league, and the amount of floor time remaining.

Dead Ball

- In Minor lacrosse, the game clock is stopped for any dead ball (goals, penalties, or time-outs, whether called by either team), or by 1 of the referees on the floor.
 - For possession calls, ball out of bounds, etc., the clock shall continue to run.
- In Major lacrosse, the game clock will stop for every stoppage in play.

Scorekeepers/Timekeepers

- In box lacrosse, there should be 3 minor officials ready to help out in the timekeeper's box – 2 are provided by the home team, and 1 is provided by the visiting team.
 - 1 person will be responsible for keeping the game time, remembering to only stop the clock for goals, penalties and time-outs in Minor lacrosse.
 - 1 person will be responsible for filling out the game sheet as required, and notifying either on-floor official if any player has already accumulated four penalties in that game.
 - 1 person will be responsible for operating the 30-second shot clock.
- The Head Referee will ensure each minor official is comfortable with his or her role prior to the game starting.

The Game Sheet

- Similar to hockey, all Captains and Assistant Captains shall be marked on the game sheet, as well as the goalkeeper(s).
 - If the team has 2 goalkeepers, they must indicate on the game sheet which of the goalkeepers is starting, and which is the alternate.
- Unlike hockey, there is no requirement to have the proper starting lineup on the floor to match what is written on the game sheet.
- On the bottom of the game sheet, there are spaces for the following:
 - Goalkeeper saves, by period and team (optional).
 - Scoring by period and team.
 - Time-outs by period and team (remember, only 1 time-out is allowed per team in Minor lacrosse, and 2 are allowed per team in Major lacrosse, provided 1 team does not call 2 time-outs in the same period).
 - Spare Goalkeeper (S.G.) entering the game, by period and team (this is recorded, because the backup goalkeeper is only allowed a warm-up the first time they make a change).
- In the event of an incident requiring a write-up, there is space in the middle for writing up a summary of the incident, and mentioning to refer to the Official's Game Report for more information.
 - Similar to hockey, a full report of the incident must be written in an Official's Game Report and sent to that city's Referee-in-Chief within 24 hours of the completion of the game where the incident occurred.
- At the top of a box lacrosse game sheet, the required information is similar to what is required on a hockey game sheet (i.e. the teams, the date and time of the game, officials' and minor officials' names, etc.).
- Unlike hockey, once a coach or team representative has finished entering the team roster onto the game sheet, they must sign their name, where required, to certify the information filled out is correct.
- For penalties, the player's number **and** name must be entered. The reason this is done is so it is easier for the on-floor and minor officials to track who is coming close to receiving their fifth penalty in a game.
 - If a player has received their fourth penalty in a game, the timekeeper should notify one of the on-floor officials of this. This should be covered with the minor officials prior to the start of the game.
 - If a player has received a Double Minor penalty, the penalties will be recorded as 2 separate minor penalties, not as a single 4-minute penalty. This is because both penalties count towards the player's 5-penalty limit in one game.

The Teams

- Each team can have up to 20 players in uniform (including 2 goalkeepers), instead of the maximum of 19 players in uniform in hockey (including 2 goalkeepers).
- Players arriving late are marked on the game sheet with asterisks, and crossed off if they do not show up.

- Similar to hockey, each team may have a Captain and no more than 2 Alternate Captains.
- Unlike hockey, there is no requirement to have the proper starting lineup on the floor, matching what is written on the game sheet.

Signals

- Most signals between the two sports are the same, except for a few which are specific to box lacrosse
 - Signals unique to box lacrosse include crease violation, wrap around, delay of game, 10-second violation, back over, free hand, minor interference, and too many men on the floor.

Change of Players

- Similar to hockey, there is an area outside of each bench area designated for changes.
 - The player coming on the floor cannot participate in the play until the player coming off has both feet in the exchange area.
- If the team with too many men is in possession of the ball, they will lose possession of the ball to the other team, and no penalty will be assessed.
 - If the team with too many men is defending, they will be penalized with a Bench Minor penalty for too many men.
- Similar to hockey, a too many men penalty in the last 2 minutes of the game will result in a Penalty Shot, under one condition, different from hockey – there must be no regular overtime pending.
- On a delayed penalty, if the goalkeeper is not in the exchange area before the extra attacker comes onto the floor, play will be stopped immediately, and no penalty will be assessed.
- Because box lacrosse is more of a possession game than hockey, the goalkeeper will come out more often for an extra attacker.
- In box lacrosse, the first time the goalkeepers change, the replacement goalkeeper is allowed a 2-minute warm-up.
 - On any subsequent goaltender change, no warm-up will be permitted.

Crease Violation

- In box lacrosse, upon gaining possession of the ball, the defensive team has 5 seconds to get the ball out of their own crease.
- Players on the attacking team cannot reach into their opponent's crease to retrieve the ball or receive a pass, but they can fake a shot into the crease.
- When a player is shooting on goal, their **feet** must remain outside of the crease. If their feet break the plane in the act of shooting, the play will be called for a crease violation, and the defending team will restart with the ball.
- No goal is allowed if an attacking player is **intentionally** in the crease when the goal was scored.
- In box lacrosse, an attacking player can run through their opponent's crease, subject to the following exceptions:
 - If a player cuts through their opponent's crease to gain an advantage on a loose ball, possession shall be awarded to the non-offending team.

- If a player cuts through their opponent's crease to check their opponent, he or she will be penalized by a 2-minute Minor penalty for crease play.
- When the goalkeeper is in possession of the ball in his or her crease, no attacking player can make contact with his or her body or stick.
 - This will be penalized with a 2-minute Minor penalty for crease play.

Time-outs

- In Minor lacrosse, each team is allowed 1 30-second time-out per game. In Major lacrosse, each team is allowed 2 time-outs per game, but only 1 can be called in any one period of a game.
 - The 30-second shot clock operator shall time the time-out by running the shot clock down once.
- The time-out must be called by a player on the floor on the team in possession of the ball.
- When the team in possession of the ball calls a time-out, they will retain possession of the ball, **without the shot clock being reset.**
- If a team calls for a time-out, and they have no time-outs remaining, they will lose possession of the ball to the non-offending team.

Short-handed Situations

- In box lacrosse, when a team is short-handed, a number of different rules apply:
 - The short-handed team, upon gaining possession of the ball, has 10 seconds to advance the ball past their attack line. Failure to do this will be called as a 10-second violation, and the other team will be awarded possession of the ball.
 - Once the short-handed team has advanced the ball over their attack line, they must keep the ball past this line. Failure to do this will be called as "back over", and the other team will retain possession of the ball.
 - The only exception to back over is when the team in possession of the ball has taken a shot on goal, and as a result, the ball rolls back over the attack line.
 - The shot clock shall run when either team is short handed.

30-second Shot Clock

- Upon gaining (or regaining) possession of the ball, that team has 30 seconds to make a shot on their opponent's goal. Failure to do this will result in a loss of possession to the other team.
 - Unlike hockey, if, on a shot, the ball hits either post or the crossbar, this **will** be considered a shot on goal, and the 30-second shot clock shall reset.
- The shot clock shall not be reset in the following instances:
 - A player has the ball trapped in their stick.
 - The team in possession of the ball has called a time-out.
- The shot clock will run at all times, regardless of the number of players on the floor for each team.

Injured Players

- Similar to hockey, if a player becomes injured, the play currently happening will finish, unless the player is hurt seriously.

- If the team with the injured player is in possession of the ball, there will be a face-off.
 - If the other team has possession of the ball when a player of the other team is hurt, the team without the injured player will retain possession of the ball.

The Stick

- A box lacrosse stick can be between 40 and 46 inches in length, and between 4½ and 8 inches **inside** width at the head. The depth of the pocket cannot be such that it prevents the free movement of the ball.
 - In the leagues of Pee wee and below, the stick can be anywhere between 34 and 46 inches in length.
- The goalkeeper stick can be of any length, but the inside width of the head of the stick cannot exceed 15 inches.
- Only 1 stick request is allowed per stoppage, and the team requesting the measurement must specify what they would like to have measured.
- If a referee considers a stick as dangerous, the stick can be removed for safety reasons.
- Just like hockey, the butt-end of the stick must be covered so as to prevent injury.

Goalkeeper Equipment

- The goalkeeper can wear suitable chest, shoulder and arm pads which must conform to the shape of the body.
- The goalkeeper can use regulation box lacrosse leg guards, but no material can be added beyond the edge of these pads.
- If a measurement is requested by the Captain or Alternate Captain from one team, the goalkeeper and both officials, as well as a Captain from each team, will go to the referee dressing room to verify the equipment is correct in all dimensions.
 - Similar to what is done in hockey, the team requesting the measurement, if everything is found to be legal, will be assessed a 2-minute Bench Minor penalty for delay of game.

Mandatory Player Equipment

- In box lacrosse, helmets cannot be modified from the form in which they were bought, and the mask cannot have any space in it which would allow either the stick or ball to enter.
- The player must wear a suitable chinstrap. If the player has bought a 4-point cup chinstrap, they must be wearing both the new chinstrap as well as the old strap (the cup chinstrap is bought separately from the O'Neill mask).
 - Similar to hockey, the chinstrap must be tightened so no more than a finger's width can go between the chinstrap and the player's chin.
- Similar to hockey, the helmet must have a sticker of approval from the CSA.
- In box lacrosse, players will also use field helmets (referred to in the rule book as cascade helmets), which are traditionally used in American field lacrosse.
 - The major difference between box and field helmets is that they have a brim on the front.

- These helmets must have a sticker of approval from NOCSAE, the equipment approval organization for American field lacrosse.
 - These helmets must not have a brim which sticks out. If they do, they cannot be used in box lacrosse for safety reasons.
- In Alberta, in the leagues of Midget and below, it is mandatory for players to wear mouthguards while playing.
- Players may cut the palm out of their gloves, but their fingers must be encased inside the individual fingers of the gloves.
- If a player loses a required piece of equipment, they will be given the option to pass or shoot, but they must then go to the player's bench to change.
 - If this does not happen, the player will be assessed a Minor penalty.
- If the player has lost their equipment in the middle of a crowd of players, or in a potential checking situation, play shall be stopped immediately.
- Players in box lacrosse are not allowed to wear any jewelry – this is penalized as a 10-minute Misconduct.

Penalties

- Similar to hockey:
 - A penalty can be called if contact was not made, but the attempt was vicious enough.
 - A Match penalty can be given if a player was deliberately attempting to injure their opponent.
 - Goalkeeper penalties must be served by someone who was on the floor at the time the infraction was committed.
- Unlike hockey, a Major penalty plus Game Misconduct penalty shall be assessed when an infraction causes injury.
- In box lacrosse, fighting and roughing are treated similarly to hockey, with two exceptions:
 - A player identified as either the instigator or aggressor will be assessed a Game Misconduct penalty, not an additional Minor penalty.
 - In box lacrosse, a player does not receive an additional Game Misconduct penalty for participating in 2 fights in the same stoppage of play. The player will only receive any penalties which relate to the 2 individual fights themselves.
- Most of the other ways fights are handled are similar:
 - The first player off the bench from either team shall be assessed a Game Misconduct penalty. If the first player off of the bench cannot be identified, the player must be identified by the Captain of that team.
 - The third player involved in an altercation, even if in a peacekeeping role, will be given a Game Misconduct penalty for third man in.
 - If a player returns to participate in an altercation after being separated, the player will receive a Game Misconduct penalty.
- Similar to hockey, checking from behind is called as a 2-minute Minor penalty plus a Game Misconduct.

- In box lacrosse, an attempt to butt-end, spear or kick is penalized with a Major penalty plus a Game Misconduct, not a Double Minor penalty like in hockey.
 - Similar to hockey, any of the above, if contact is made, is penalized with a Match penalty.
- Boarding in box lacrosse is an automatic 5-minute Major penalty, and can be called as a Match penalty if the player had no means to protect him or herself.
- In box lacrosse, players occasionally use a check called the “spike check”, where the player holds the head of the stick with one hand, and comes down with the butt-end of the stick on a player. This is classified as and penalized as a butt-ending penalty.
- In box lacrosse, players in the act of shooting cannot “follow through” on a shot and slash their opponent. Anyone using this follow-through slash will be penalized for slashing accordingly, and play will be stopped immediately.
- In box lacrosse, charging is called similarly to hockey, with a couple of differences:
 - “Blindsiding” is where the goalkeeper will come out of his or her crease and make contact with a player having their head turned to retrieve a pass. If the goalkeeper is stationary when making contact, he or she will be assessed a Major penalty. If the goalkeeper is still moving when he makes contact, he will be assessed a Match penalty for attempt to injure.
 - A ball carrier can be penalized for charging – this is where an offensive player, with or without possession of the ball, deliberately ducks their head down and runs through an opponent.
- In box lacrosse, an intentional high stick above the height of the shoulders is not an automatic Major or Match penalty as it is in hockey.
- In box lacrosse, there is also a penalty for what is called “wrap around”. This is where the opponent places both hands around his opponent’s shoulders to restrict the player from moving; this is just a variation of the holding penalty.
- In box lacrosse, there is no such thing as a hip check – anyone committing, or attempting to commit, a hip check on an opponent will be assessed a 2-minute Minor penalty for tripping.
- Similar to hockey, stick to stick contact is not considered a slash.
- A penalty will be assessed if an attacking player makes contact with the goalkeeper while they are in their own crease.
- The defending team is allowed to make contact with their opponents off of the ball, provided contact occurs within the 24-foot radius semi-circle in front of their goal.
 - Box lacrosse players will tend to use the shaft of their stick to “cross-check” their opponent, but they must “place and push”, instead of making the cross-checking motion, to drive away an opponent.
- All other penalties are called relatively the same as they are in hockey, with a couple of exceptions:
 - In box lacrosse, a player having received 5 penalties in the same game shall be assessed a Game Ejection.
 - Unlike hockey, in box lacrosse, a player having received 3 stick infractions in one game will not receive an automatic Game Misconduct penalty.
- Unlike hockey, 2 goals cancel out either a Major or Match penalty.

- Bench Minor penalties are to be served by any designated player on the offending team.
- Major penalties will always be served in their entirety.
 - If 2 goals are scored during the penalty, the player must still serve the full 5 minutes, and must wait for the first dead ball, following the completion the penalty, before they may return to the floor.
 - The team will play full strength upon completion of the major penalty, and will substitute from the bench.
- Unlike hockey, if a 10-minute Misconduct penalty occurs with less than 10 minutes to go in the game, the player does not serve an additional game suspension in addition to the penalties they have already accumulated.
- After a penalty has been assessed, play will restart with the non-offending team being awarded possession of the ball behind his or her own attack line.

Coincident Penalties

- If both teams have received 1 Minor penalty each, the teams will play **4 on 4** for **2 minutes**.
- If Team A has received 2 Minor penalties (4 minutes total), and Team B has received 1 Minor penalty (2 minutes total), Team A will play 1 man down for 4 minutes, and Team B will play 1 man down for 2 minutes. **There is no requirement to have a substitute player in the penalty box in this situation.**
- In a situation where there are coincident Major penalties, both teams will play full strength, and the players will return to the floor on the first **dead ball** after their penalties have expired.
 - In box lacrosse, a dead ball occurs after a goal, or after a penalty or time-out has been called.
- If both teams have received penalties on a stoppage, the team with less penalty time will start with the ball, behind their own attack line.
 - On a particular stoppage, if both teams have the same total penalty **minutes** (**not** the same total number of **players** in the penalty box), the team which had possession of the ball will retain possession. If the ball was loose, the ball will be faced off.

Multiple Penalties

- A player receiving 5 penalties in a game will be given a Game Ejection
 - Unlike hockey, in box lacrosse, a player receiving 3 stick infractions does not receive an automatic Game Misconduct penalty.
 - In box lacrosse, a Penalty Shot will count as a penalty toward the player who committed that infraction, and towards the player's 5-penalty limit in a game before being ejected.
 - A Game Ejection means the player is only penalized for the balance of that game, with no additional games served in addition to this.
- On a delayed penalty, if the offending team commits a second infraction, play will be stopped immediately, the appropriate penalties will be assessed, and the non-offending team will restart play with possession of the ball.

- Any player receiving 2 Major penalties in the same game will also be given a Game Misconduct penalty.
- Any player receiving a second 10-minute Misconduct penalty in the same game will receive a Game Misconduct penalty.
- A designated player must serve any 10-minute Misconduct penalty assessed to the goalkeeper.
- A player penalized for checking from behind will also be assessed a Game Misconduct penalty.

Penalty Shot

- Similar to hockey, all 5 criteria must be met in order for a Penalty Shot to be called.
- A defensive player, other than the goalkeeper, covering up the ball in the crease, or intentionally playing the ball with their hands, will result in a Penalty Shot.
- Similar to hockey, a goal shall be awarded to a team if the goalkeeper has been pulled off the floor for an extra attacker, and a foul has been committed where all 5 criteria for a penalty shot have been met.

Face-offs

- The ball is placed between the players' sticks and must touch the ground. Each player's open netting must face his or her own goal.
- Players not participating in a face-off are confined behind either of the restraining lines (the lines running across the floor tangent to the center face-off circle) until the ball comes outside of the inside circle.
- If the ball goes directly out of bounds off of the face-off, the ball will be refaced.
- In box lacrosse, a player is not allowed to "trap" on a face-off – the player must make an effort to draw the ball straight back, and they cannot trap the ball under the netting of their stick, and freeze the ball in one place, for any prolonged period of time. If a player facing off is called for trapping the ball, they will lose possession of the ball to the non-offending team.

Handling the Ball

- In box lacrosse, any player, other than the goalkeeper, may not handle the ball with their hands. A player may make contact with the ball with their glove if their hand is still on their stick, but no glove passes of any kind are permitted.
- Players in box lacrosse are permitted to make contact with, or have possession of, the ball above the normal height of the shoulders, provided the stick is kept under control, and is not making contact with opponents at this height.

Icing

- In box lacrosse, if any player shoots the ball down the floor, the play will not be called for icing. In a short-handed situation, there is less of an advantage to shooting the ball down the floor, since the other team will normally pick up the ball and quickly pass it back down the floor again. Since box lacrosse is a possession game, there is greater advantage in maintaining possession.
- A pass can be made from anywhere on the floor to anywhere else on the floor between players on the same team.

Offside

- In box lacrosse, there are no offside infractions. If an attacking player happens to be in front of his or her teammate when moving the ball up the floor, or when receiving a pass, nothing will be called.
 - The bluelines are not used in box lacrosse.
 - A pass can be made from anywhere on the floor to anywhere on the floor between players on the same team.

Goalkeeper Privileges

- The goalkeeper, upon gaining possession of the ball, has 5 seconds to get the ball out of the crease.
- In Minor lacrosse, when the goalkeeper is hit flush in the facemask with the ball, play will be stopped immediately.
 - The goalkeeper will then be examined for injuries, and play will restart with the goalkeeper receiving possession of the ball.
- No player shall make contact with their opponent's goalkeeper while they have possession of the ball.
 - If contact is made, the attacking player making contact with the goalkeeper shall serve a Minor penalty for crease violation, and the goalkeeper will restart play with the ball.
- Similar to hockey, goalkeepers do not serve their own penalties.
- Unlike hockey, the play does not stop if the goalkeeper covers the ball and freezes it.
 - The play will only stop if the ball is trapped in either their equipment or the netting of the goal. In both of these instances, the goalkeeper will start with possession of the ball.
- Once the goalkeeper leaves the crease, he or she can be bodychecked, and is treated like any other player on the floor.

Minor Interference / Illegal Pick

- When pursuing a loose ball, contact is allowed, provided the contact is not a deliberate attempt to drive the opponent off the ball.
- On possession, a non-ball carrier for the offensive team can use a "pick and roll", but they cannot push off of the defensive player in such a way which provides the offensive team with an advantage.

Ball Out of Bounds

- The ball is not considered out of bounds until it actually touches something out of bounds. This means if a player reaches over the boards to retrieve a ball before it touches anything out of bounds, play will be allowed to continue.

Tied Game

- In Canadian Lacrosse Association regulation rules, there is a 10-minute period of overtime, which is **not** sudden death.
- Similar to hockey, what is played for overtime will vary, depending on the league and tournament.

Mercy Rule

- In Alberta, in Minor box lacrosse, if there is a difference in scoring between the two teams of 6 goals or more, the game will be changed to running time, regardless of if both coaches agree with it or not.
 - If the difference in score between the teams goes back to within 4 goals, the game shall revert back to stop time.
- In Major lacrosse, both coaches must agree to switch to running time before it is carried out.