

## **Senior and Junior - Box Lacrosse Rule Changes (2026)**

The rule changes were driven by a desire to align the way the game is played at the highest level for the purpose of enhancing the speed and excitement for fans while ensuring consistency for our players and officials. Age & stage appropriate modification for box lacrosse in alignment with World Lacrosse Rule Book.

The rule changes follow discussion and unanimous recommendation by a panel of current players, coaches, general managers, and Commissioners of the five Leagues involved (Major Series Lacrosse, Western Lacrosse Association, Ontario Junior A Lacrosse League, BC Junior A Lacrosse League, and Rocky Mountain Junior A Lacrosse League) and World Lacrosse.

The rule changes are approved for all six leagues (Sr. A, Sr. B, Sr. C, Jr. A, Jr. B1 and Jr. B2) for the 2026 box seasons.

### **Approved rule changes for 2026 season**

- 1. Wooden Sticks:** are allowed in play for both runners and goaltenders. Runners' sticks dimensions as per WL Rule Book, Goalie must not exceed 15" inside measurement at the widest point.
- 2. 10-second count:** When a team gains possession in their defensive half of the floor, they must advance the ball across center within ten (10) seconds of gaining possession. Previously, a 10-second rule applied, and only when a team was short-handed.
- 3. In Home:** A runner must be identified prior to the game and then will serve any goaltender or bench penalties.

4. **Crease Play:** There is no longer a “cylinder” associated with the crease. Diving is allowed provided the player does not come in contact with the goaltender or the floor prior to the ball crossing the goal line.
5. **Loose Ball in Crease:** A loose ball in the crease is live. Offensive players can reach into the crease and pickup and shoot the ball. No batting in. Defensive players can pull a ball back into the crease now, just just a goaltender.
6. **Overtime:** Over time will be sudden death, 3 vs 3 in league play period will be 20 minutes. Playoffs will be 5 vs 5. 1 point will be awarded to both teams with an additional point to the winner.
7. **Restraining Lines (Face-Off's):** It is the intension to have World Lacrosse restraining lines, a letter will be produced by Lacrosse Canada to address this with our arenas. In the meantime the use the hockey blue line is in effect.
8. **Off Ball Checking:** Off ball checking shall be even pressure to direct or position. No repeated cross checks or slashes. Checking shall be at the elbow.
9. **Administration of Penalties:** Explains the way penalties and penalty shots are awarded. [Link to the presentation](#).
10. **Periods and Lengths:** A game will continue to be 3 periods and 20 minutes each in duration.
11. **Nets:** The nets will stay at 4' high x 4' 6" wide but may increase to 4' high x 4' 9" wide in the future.
12. **Face Masks:** Will continue to be 4 points of contact with helmet.
13. **Goalie Equipment:** Can be NLL equipment but it must comply with the standards also detailed in the presentation. Referees are to have calipers to measure equipment.

# RULE CHANGES FOR 2023 SEASON & BEYOND

## Senior and Junior - Box Lacrosse Rule Changes (2023)

The rule changes were driven by a desire to align the way the game is played at the highest level for the purpose of enhancing the speed and excitement for fans while ensuring consistency for our players and officials.

The rule changes follow discussion and unanimous recommendation by a panel of current players, coaches, general managers, and Commissioners of the five Leagues involved (Major Series Lacrosse, Western Lacrosse Association, Ontario Junior A Lacrosse League, BC Junior A Lacrosse League, and Rocky Mountain Junior A Lacrosse League).

The rule changes are approved for all six leagues (Sr. A, Sr. B, Sr. C, Jr. A, Jr. B1 and Jr. B2) for the 2023 box seasons.

### Approved rule changes for 2023 seasons

- 1. 4-second count:** When a team gains possession of the ball in their crease, the player in possession must vacate the crease within four (4) seconds. Previously, a five-second count applied.
- 2. Face-offs & restraining lines:** In addition to revised face-off procedures, which restrict stick and body contact, specifically, sticks must be eight (8) inches apart and touching the floor. The sticks must be placed so they are parallel to the centreline, four (4) inches from centre, and the players must keep their feet behind the centreline. In addition, the leagues are implementing wider positioning between the two player restraining lines; these restraining lines will now align with the hockey bluelines, which are 50' apart and 25' from the centre line. Previously, opposing players' sticks would be back-to-back, with the ball clamped in between, and the respective restraining lines were 22' apart and just 11' from the centre line.

3. **Over and back:** Over and back will now be in effect for all possessions. Previously, the rule only applied when a team was short-handed.
4. **Too many players:** In all situations, if a team is found to have too many players on the floor, a two-minute penalty shall be imposed on the offending team. Previously, a penalty was applied only if the infraction occurred by a team without possession.
5. **Delayed penalties:** After a delayed penalty is called, the play is whistled down if/when: the defending team gains possession of the ball; if the ball goes out of bounds; an over-and-back violation occurs; a goal is scored; the shot clock or game clock expires; or an offensive player commits a penalty. The play shall continue upon a shot on goal if the offensive team regains possession on the rebound, and the shot clock is reset; and if the ball contacts the defensive player's stick or body but the defensive team does not gain possession and control of the ball. Previously, after a delayed penalty was called, the play was whistled down when the non-offending team took a shot on goal.
6. **Fast restarts:** Upon the re-start of play, the non-offending team may gain possession of the ball at the location of the ball at any location on the playing floor. Upon stoppage of play, a player must immediately put the ball down upon loss of possession and allow for a fast restart for the opposing team. As well, an offending team player must immediately move a minimum of six (6) feet from the ball. If a player does not move 6 feet away from the ball, a 2-minute Delay of Game penalty shall be called on the offending player. Previously, the re-start position had to be at the point of the violation.
7. **Sudden-death OT during regular season:** During the regular season, if the game is tied at the end of regulation, the first team to score in overtime will win. The WLA will continue with its 3-on-3 overtime format for the 2023 regular season while existing rules and procedures will remain for playoff games and National Championships. With the exception of the WLA, previously, overtime consisted of a 10-minute period, followed by a 20-minute sudden death period.

**8. Penalty shot called for additional penalties on a team already 2 men short:** If a team is playing with two players serving penalties in the penalty box, and a third penalty is called, this will result in a penalty shot awarded to the non-offending team. Previously, penalties would continue to be added, and players would be sent to the penalty box.

### **Existing rules to get increased enforcement**

- 1. Off-ball slashing:** The athletes, coaches, and administrators from the rules panel support strict enforcement of the existing rules. Off-ball slashes to the opponent's hands, arms, legs, or any part of the body are not permitted at any location on the playing floor.
- 2. Illegal picks:** The panel recognizes the need to address this topic as its own rule. An illegal offensive pick is when the offensive player uses unequal pressure and creates movement of the defensive player or displaces the defensive player from his position.