



2008 NATIONAL CONVENTION Q & A

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The questions that follow were collected during the 2008 US Lacrosse Convention. They are marked USL, or NCAA or BOTH to indicate which rules and/or levels of play are being discussed.

USL = youth, high school, WDIA, post collegiate clubs

NCAA = intercollegiate play

BOTH = all levels of play

Rule 2 – Equipment and Uniforms

Q (BOTH) – It seems sometimes that setting up the draw is affected by the different styles of sticks and their sidewalls. Any comments or suggestions on how to handle this during a game?

A – If possible try to set the draw the same way with each set of sticks. Line up the heads as completely as possible from the scoop to the throat and as evenly as possible along the part of the sidewall that rests on your hand as you set up the draw. If the sticks get caught and the draw doesn't work, call time out for a redraw and re-set the sticks. You may need to slide the sticks so they are a bit offset from one another while still trying to keep them as even as possible along the sidewall area.

Rule 4 – Time Factors and Scoring

Q (BOTH) – Section 8 says that a goal is scored by the whole ball passing completely over the goal line between the posts and under the cross bar. Please clarify. Is the plane of the goal created by the front or the rear edges of the goal posts, cross bar and goal line?

A – A legal lacrosse goal has goal posts and a cross bar that are 2 inches in circumference. A legal goal line is 2 inches in width. The goal should be lined up so that the side posts line up and match the width of the goal line. If the ball hits the side post and nothing else and comes back out onto the field of play, no goal has been scored. If the ball hits the cross bar and nothing else, no goal has been scored. If the ball hits the cross bar, then the side post, then bounces out without touching the ground completely over the goal line, no goal is scored. It is possible that the ball hits the cross bar then hits the side post, then bounces down and hits the goal line. Unless the ball has completely crossed the goal line, no goal is scored.

Q (BOTH) – If the ball hits off the body of an attack player and goes into the goal I know the goal doesn't count. How is play restarted?

A – If the attack player has done nothing deliberate to redirect the ball into the goal, no foul has occurred and no whistle has to be blown. The goalie can simply retrieve the ball and play should continue. However, many times players are confused and unsure about what to do or if the goal should count. The umpire may have to blow the whistle, give the no goal signal, indicate to the goalie that it's her ball, then blow the whistle to restart play. No players have to be moved. But, if the attack player deliberately used her body to direct the ball into the goal then a body ball foul should be called. Assuming the attack player was inside the 8m area when this happened, award the ball to the closest defense player, move her so she's 8m from the goal circle, and position the fouling attack player 4m away. Be sure all other players are 4m away and then restart play.

Q (BOTH) – What happens when a team calls a third time out?

A – An illegal time out is considered a minor foul (Rule 6-2v) and the penalty set up for a minor foul would apply. If after a goal, do not let the teams leave the field and award a free position to the appropriate team at the center rather than taking the draw. Should this happen during an NCAA game with the illegal time out called when a team has possession of the ball, change possession at the spot of the ball and penalize as a minor foul.

Q (NCAA) – Can either team substitute during a possession time out situation?

A – No substitutes are allowed by either team during a possession time out situation. See Rule 4-4. The only exception would be in case of an injury or illness which the umpire should verify with the team's athletic trainer. A substitute would be allowed to enter in this limited circumstance and she would assume the same place on the field that had been occupied by the injured teammate.

Q (NCAA) – Does a possession time out end a scoring play?

A – If the attacking team is in the middle of a scoring play and they wish to call a time out the scoring play would be considered over.

Q (NCAA) – On a possession time out the player who was in possession of the ball leaves her stick and when play resumes a different teammate picks up the stick with the ball. Do you adjust the players? Do you penalize the team with the ball? Do you issue a card?

A – Before resorting to calling a foul or issuing a card please use preventive officiating. Make note of which player had the ball when play stopped and indicate to her that she should start with the ball when play resumes. Review this new time out procedure (dropping sticks and returning to the same spot) with the players at the pre-game captains meeting. Verbalize to the players as they are returning that they should be returning to their own sticks. If an inadvertent mistake is made, correct it. A card could be issued in the case of a player deliberately attempting to circumvent the rule.

Q (NCAA) – A time out is called when the player in possession of the ball is closely marked and she is right next to the sideline. When play is restarted, is anyone moved?

A – The intent with the new possession time out is that the teams will return to the field in the same positions they occupied when time out was called. The umpire should not move the player with the ball away from the sideline. The players who were closely marking her will be allowed to continue to closely mark her, though they should be directed to allow the player with the ball 1m of free space.

Q (NCAA) – The blue team, in possession of the ball, goes offside and the foul is called. Red now has the ball and the coach is yelling for a time out. The umpires are focused on setting up the free position and don't hear the coach right away. Should the umpires stop the clock as soon as they hear the coach? Should they finish setting up the free position and then signal for the time out?

A – In situations when a possession time out is called and the clock would normally be running, i.e. not during an 8m free position set up, a lot will depend on when the umpires hear and recognize the request for the time out. If this scenario happened and the teams were on the side of the field completely opposite from the benches you might have the free position set up and play ready to begin before you heard the coach requesting the time out. In this case when the umpire hears the request they should signal for the time out and allow the players to leave the field after dropping their sticks. Same scenario but play has stopped right next to the red team bench and the coach requests a time out before the free position set up has begun. Signal for the clock to be stopped, set up the free position, then whistle and signal to the table that there is a team time out. This will make it clear to the table when they are to begin timing the two minutes. Basically, umpires can stop the clock when they hear/recognize the time out but should set up the free position before the teams are allowed to leave the field. Then let the table know to start the timing of the 2 minutes.

Q (NCAA) – The goalie has stopped a shot and now is in possession of the ball. The umpire has started the 10 second count and when the goalie's team calls time out. Does the count continue from where it was stopped or does the count start all over once play is resumed?

A – As noted in the answer above, the intent with the new possession time out is that everything will be the same when the teams return to the field. Should this situation with the goalie occur during a game the umpire responsible for the 10 second count will resume the count from where she left off when time out was called. The goalie does not receive a new 10 second count.

Q (NCAA) – If a major foul has been called against the defense while the attack has the ball within the 8m area and play has been stopped, is it necessary to blow a another whistle to indicate that the attack is taking a possession time out?

A – The whistle should blow to indicate a foul is being called. When it is recognized that it is an 8m free position, one of the officials should turn to the timer and blow the whistle to indicate that the clock is to be stopped. The free position is set up with the lead official noting which player will have the ball when play resumes. She should also be noting which player goes behind. Once the free position is set, the lead official should then blow the whistle, indicate a team time out has been called, and allow the players to leave the field. This last whistle will indicate to the official timer that they should begin to countdown the 2 minutes for the team time out.

Rule 5 – Play of the Game

Q (USL) – On a field with only 10 yards behind goal a shot goes out of bounds almost directly behind goal. An attacker is closest to the spot of the out of bounds. When attacker is awarded possession and moved 4m inside the boundary line this places her within 6m of the goal circle. Is this correct, or should she be adjusted so she restarts play 8m from the goal circle?

A – The initial placement of the player is correct. Since no foul has occurred and this is simply a restart of play the player with the ball is allowed to be closer than 8m to the goal circle. Please see Rule 5-24 and note the difference between the foul versus no foul set up procedures.

Q (BOTH) - On a shot that was initiated from outside the goal circle where the attack player's stick follows through over the goal circle can the hand and arm holding the stick also follow through into the circle?

A – The hand and arm are considered to be part of the stick in this instance and therefore they are allowed to follow the stick into the goal circle.

Q (BOTH) – Since the attacker's stick can follow through into the goal circle on a shot, what is allowable for a defender when she is defending a crease roll? When can a defender put her stick into the circle?

A – The defender who is directly defending the shooter may have her stick in the goal circle to block the shot or check the shooter's stick. The defender may not simply stand there with her stick in the circle waiting for something to happen, nor may she run along with the attacker while defending on a crease roll and have her stick in the circle. She may have her stick in the circle to block the shot or check the shooter's stick.

Rule 6 – Fouls

Q (BOTH) – The goalie steps outside her goal circle to block a shot and is not within legal marking distance of any attacker. Should this be an obstruction/shooting space call or a body ball foul?

A – The key phrase in the above question is “not within legal marking distance”. If the shooter is looking to shoot and has the opportunity to shoot and the goalie standing there outside her goal circle and not within legal marking distance denies her the chance to shoot safely then shooting space should be called on the goalie. If the shot is taken before shooting space can be called and the goalie deliberately uses her body to stop the shot while outside the circle, the goalie can be called for a body ball foul but it is upgraded to a Major foul in this instance (see Rule 6-2f).

Q (BOTH) – Obstruction of the free space to goal can be called even if the ball carrier is outside the 8m arc, right?

A – That is correct. The player looking to shoot does not have to be within the 8m arc in order for this foul to be called.

Q (BOTH) – With the new interpretation on body ball fouls are there any special considerations with goalkeepers committing that foul on a shot? For example, is she intentionally outside the goal circle when she gets hit with the ball versus not intentionally in that space?

A – Umpires should not try to judge why the goalie is outside her goal circle, i.e., she came out on purpose versus she doesn't realize where she's standing. The only judgment to make in these situations is did the goalie allow any part of her body to deliberately impede, accelerate or change the direction of the ball. If the ball is bouncing around and just happens to hit off the goalie's leg while she's in the 8m area, this is a no call. However, if she's in the 8m area, sees this bouncing ball heading for the goal and reaches out with her leg and purposely redirects the balls path away from the goal, this is a foul.

Q (BOTH) – Is it really no longer a foul when the ball comes off a defender's body into the protected goal circle?

A – If the defender did nothing to deliberately cause the ball to go into the goal circle it is not a foul. If she directed into the goal circle using some part of her body, then it is a body ball foul.

Q (BOTH) – When a team is in a stall situation and the defense intentionally puts a player in the 8m arc for more than 3 seconds, should this be called or can you hold whistle?

A – In this type of situation with the attacking team stalling, the umpire should hold whistle and hold an arm out to indicate a foul has been recognized but no call is being made yet. If the attack continues their stall the umpire may continue to hold whistle if the defense continues to stand in the 8m arc. Should the attack begin moving towards goal the umpire may then consider blowing the whistle and calling the foul, or if they have begun an active scoring play then a flag may be raised. Making this call when the attack is on a stall could potentially reward the defense by bringing the ball into an area filled with defenders, and if the time is less than 2 minutes making the call will cause the clock to stop which is another advantage for the fouling team.

Q (BOTH) – What should be called when the defense repeatedly false starts on 8m free positions? Is it delay of game? Misconduct?

A – The key word in the question above is “repeatedly”. That could indicate that the defense is fouling deliberately in order to upset or intimidate the player taking the 8m free position. It could also happen in a game between lesser skilled or newer players who aren't aware of the rules. Some could also interpret repeatedly to mean it happens twice in the first half and then once again in the second half. Each of these situations would be handled differently, and the umpires on the field will have to judge the level and the intensity of play and what is happening that day in that game. Umpires may simply make the call and award the penalty for a major foul. They may issue a verbal warning after the first false start call is made. If repeated, then a misconduct card may be issued if the umpire believes the false start was deliberate. A delay of game card might be appropriate if the false starts are clearly the result of lack of skill, but preventive officiating might be a better option with anxious players. When considering options the umpire should also be sure she has not caused the false starts by moving her upraised arm before blowing her whistle to start play.

Rule 7 – Penalty Administration

Q (BOTH) – Some umpires in my area are allowing a player who received a second yellow card to remain in the game. They are saying that because she didn't get two yellow cards for the same offense she may remain. Is this correct?

A – NO! Anytime a player receives two yellow cards in a single game she is to be removed from that game and may not continue to play. The yellow cards can be for the same foul or for different infractions. The umpires have no authority to allow the player to continue to play after she receives a second yellow card.

Q (BOTH) – The goalie has received a red card and her team has no other dressed goalie. The rules state that after a player suspension the team has 30 seconds to send in a substitute. Does this apply when a player has to get dressed in the goalie equipment?

A – In this rare instance when the only dressed goalie is being suspended the time requirement for replacing the suspended player will not be in force. The team will be allowed a reasonable amount of time to dress another player in the goalie equipment.

Points of Emphasis – Three Seconds

We are reiterating what was said at the convention about the new interpretation on calling three seconds. In past years the officials could choose to not make a call/raise a flag if they felt that the player in 3 seconds was not affecting the play. This year the officials are not to make that kind of judgment. The judgments to be made are: do I make the call immediately (attack not on scoring play/going to goal); do I raise a flag (attack on a scoring play) and call if no shot is taken; do I hold whistle (to be used in very limited circumstances such as a stall).

For NCAA games officials should keep in mind the new definition of within a stick's length when determining if a defense player is within legal marking distance from an attack player and therefore exempt from the 3 seconds call. The definition of within a stick's length had not changed in the USL rules. A defender with one foot in and one foot outside of the 8m area is considered to be within the 8m area. Defenders will have to be very aware of where they are standing in relation to the 8m arc and the player they are marking.