

Lacrosse and Fighting

OTTAWA, ON, December 10, 2012 - The Canadian Lacrosse Association (CLA) and its Board of Directors hereby declare that they are opposed to fighting in the game of lacrosse. A Task Force was established in the spring 2012 to examine the policies and rule changes required to give effect to this declaration. The Task Force reported back to the CLA's Board of Directors with recommendations in Fall 2012 at the Annual General Meeting.

As a result of the recommendations, the CLA Board of Directors has approved changes to *Rule 45* in the Box Lacrosse Rule and Situation Handbook that positions Canadian lacrosse on the international stage as a world leader in maintaining the integrity of the game.

Here's what you need to know about the rule change - the approved changes are in bold.

Rule 45 – Fighting

- (a) A major penalty **and game misconduct penalty** shall be assessed to any player/goalkeeper who fights. A goalkeeper penalty shall be served by a player who was on the floor at the time of the infraction. **The major penalty must be served in its duration.**
- (b) If there is an instigator or clear aggressor in a fight, **a major penalty and** a game misconduct plus any other penalties shall be assessed to the offending player(s). Where an instigator or clear aggressor penalty is assessed the non-offending player shall not receive a game misconduct under 45 (a).

So what does this mean? After lengthy discussion and revisions the updated rule enforces that fighting is not tolerated. If an athlete, at any level, takes part in a fight, they will be removed from the game.

Fighting in the sport is an unnecessary risk - it is a dangerous activity for any athlete to be a part of. Incidents of concussions can increase with every fight that happens; it is becoming more apparent that a blow to the head area has the potential to cause severe and long-term injury. The health and safety of all participants in Canada's national summer sport is amongst the leading concerns of the Canadian Lacrosse Association - changes to Rule 45 demonstrates our collective assertion that fighting in the game will not be tolerated and lends additional protection to our participants.

"The CLA Board of Directors took a stance today and we are positive that others will follow. The rule change allows our athletes to showcase the sport that we all love and keeps the focus on the aspects that make our sport so great - speed, athleticism, and skill. Lacrosse is the quickest game on two feet, played by some of the most passionate and athletic participants in any sport." commented Joey Harris, CLA President. "The stance that our board took against fighting in our sport holds true to the values of Canadian lacrosse and the CLA. Our values are our HEART - **Health • Excellence • Accountability • Respect • Teamwork** - they guide how we lead the sport both nationally and internationally."



The rule change will come into effect in the 2013 lacrosse season.

The 2013 Canadian Lacrosse Association Rule Book will be available in the early new year through the head office of the CLA.

Questions? Check out our quick-fact Q&A guide [here](#). Athletes, parents, coaches and administrators are also encouraged to contact their Member Association should they have any questions or require further clarification.

About the Canadian Lacrosse Association

The Canadian Lacrosse Association (CLA) is the governing body responsible for all aspects of lacrosse in Canada. The CLA mission is to honour the sport of lacrosse and its unique nation-building heritage, by engaging our members and leading our partners and providing opportunities for all Canadians to participate. We value health, excellence, accountability, respect and teamwork. For more details on the Canadian Lacrosse Association and the sport of lacrosse, visit www.lacrosse.ca

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Quick-Fact: Questions and Answers

Q: What are the definitions of instigator and aggressor *penalties*?

A: INSTIGATOR: The instigator to a fight shall be defined as the player/goalkeeper who, by his/her own actions or demeanor, demonstrates at least one of the following criteria: distance traveled in order to begin fighting; gloves off first; first punch thrown; substitution directly from bench in order to begin fight; menacing attitude or posture; verbally inciting or instigating another player/goalkeeper; gestures or threats; conduct in retaliation to a prior game incident.

Note: Not all fights will have a clear instigator. An instigator penalty should only be assessed when the referee is certain that at least one of the defined criteria has been committed by the offending player/goalkeeper.

AGGRESSOR: Any player/goalkeeper who continues to fight after the Referees have attempted to separate fighters, attempts to restart a fight or refuses to stop fighting after being so instructed.

Q: What penalty(s) are assessed to two player/goalkeepers' involved in a fight.

A: Both player/goalkeeper(s) will be assessed a 5 minute major for fighting and a game misconduct, plus any other penalties assessed.

Q: What penalty(s) will be assessed to Team A player/goalkeeper who is the clear instigator/aggressor in a fight with Team B player/goalkeeper?

A: The "clear" instigator/aggressor player/goalkeeper will receive a 5 minute major & game misconduct for the instigator/aggressor (Rule 45 b), 5 minute major & game misconduct for fighting (Rule 45a), and a game misconduct for 2 major penalties (Rule 77c).

The intent of this new rule is to ensure the Clear instigator/aggressor is penalized for starting the fight or continuing to fight after being clearly directed to stop by the officials.

Q: During a fight which Team A player/goalkeeper is the clear instigator/aggressor, Team B player/goalkeeper fights back to protect themselves. What penalties will be assessed?

A: The clear instigator/aggressor will receive a 5 minute major & game misconduct for the instigator/aggressor (Rule 45b), 5 minute major & game misconduct for fighting (Rule 45a), and a game misconduct for 2 major penalties (Rule 77c). Team B player/goalkeeper will receive a 5 minute major for fighting (Rule 45b).

The intent of this rule is to protect the player/goalkeeper who is just defending themselves and is not a willing combatant in the fight. Officials need to be diligent to ensure the willing combatants are assessed the Game Misconduct under Rule 45a for fighting.

Q: Team A player/goalkeeper attacks a Team B player/goalkeeper and starts to throw punches and fights with the Team B player/goalkeeper who does not fight back. As the officials try to break up the one-sided fight, the Team A player/goalkeeper does not stop and keeps throwing punches and continues to fight. What penalties are assessed to the Team A player/goalkeeper?

A: Team A player/goalkeeper will be assessed the penalties under Rule 45a and 45b for being the clear instigator. The Team A player/goalkeeper will be assessed the 5 minute major & game misconduct for the instigator (Rule 45b), 5 minute major & game misconduct for fighting (Rule 45a), and a game misconduct for 2 major penalties (Rule 77c). The Team A player/goalkeeper will then be assessed the 5 minute major & game misconduct for the aggressor (Rule 45b).

In total the Team A player /goalkeeper will have three (3) majors and 4 game misconducts due to their actions.

The intent of this situation is to show that a player/goalkeeper can receive both an instigator and an aggressor penalty under Rule 45b. Officials need to be diligent to ensure the one-sided fights are broken up quickly, however also need to ensure the clear instigators and aggressors in fights are penalized.

Q: A player/goalkeeper from Team A instigates an altercation with a player/goalkeeper from Team B. Initially, the player from Team B does not defend himself/herself but eventually begins to fight back. Once the officials intervene, the player/goalkeeper from Team B does not cease fighting and continues to land punches on the Team A player (who has ceased fighting). What penalties should be assessed?

A: Team A Player/goalkeeper: 5 minute instigator & game misconduct (Rule 45b), 5 minute fighting & game misconduct (Rule 45a), plus additional game misconduct for 2 major penalties (Rule 77c).

Team B Player: 5 minute fighting (no game misconduct as this player defended themselves) (Rule 45b), 5 minute aggressor & game misconduct (Rule 45b), additional game misconduct for 2 major penalties (Rule 77c).

The intent of this rule situation is to show the penalty results for the player/goalkeeper who instigates a fight and what the player/goalkeeper would receive who becomes the aggressor in a fight and what penalties are assessed.