

Pennsylvania Interscholastic Athletic Association, Inc.

2017 Boys' Lacrosse Bulletin I

Rules, Revisions, and Interpretations



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SPORTSMANSHIP

The 2017 season is underway, and I'd like to focus our attention on an important point of emphasis.

For many years, there has been a persistent myth that the "lacrosse community" is more accepting of un-sportsmanlike behavior than other sports. Unfortunately, we as PIAA Boys Lacrosse officials must take some responsibility for allowing this myth to thrive, and therefore we must take some responsibility for killing it.

I hear more foul language and back-talk in High School games now than I ever heard on an NCAA Division I field. I've heard from several High School administrators that the behavior they see at Boys Lacrosse games is "troubling" and "frustrating." It has to stop- and we officials need to do our part! These same administrators assure me that if we hold participants to a higher standard, they will have our backs.

The Rulebook gives us the tools we need to deal with any situation. Let's look at a few:

1. A player misses a pass and quietly curses to himself. You happen to be close by, and the only people in the stadium who are aware of his curse are the player and you. **This doesn't necessarily require a penalty, but please respectfully yet emphatically talk to the player and let him know that audible foul language will not be tolerated. A simple, "Watch the language please, three seven" is all it takes.**
2. After a face-off violation, an assistant coach asks, "What did he do?" **If asked respectfully, this isn't a foul. This is just an assistant coach doing his job. He can't correct his players' mistakes if he doesn't know what the issue is. And don't expect the player to honestly and completely convey a message you've given him directly to his coach. It's OK for assistants to ask questions in a respectful manner, assuming, of course, that they aren't demanding your attention the entire game. Responding respectfully to assistants can take some of the pressure off of the head coach, and off of us.**
3. A coach loudly complains about a call and keeps it up (no "F-bombs"). **Start with a conduct foul. Take the ball away if you can. Then "ramp up" the fouls as necessary.**
4. A player curses at himself, but the curse is heard by an opposing player or coach. **This must be called! If it's anything other than an "F-bomb," you can use the technical conduct foul here, especially early in a game, or in a game where sportsmanship has not been an issue. But don't pass on it!**

SPORTSMANSHIP cont'd

5. A player or coach drops a loud "F-bomb" that everyone in the stadium hears. **Of course, this needs at least a one-minute non-releasable unsportsmanlike conduct foul! If the "F-bomb is directed at you or a partner, consider a two-minute foul. If you've assessed an unsportsmanlike conduct foul, and the player or coach continues to be abusive, don't hesitate to drop another one. This of course, will result in an ejection. But if that's what we have to do to clean up our game, then that's what we have to do!**

This type of conduct is detrimental to our game, and is a foul just like any other. We call the slashes and cross-checks. We need to make these calls, too.

Use the tools we have in the Book. If a coach is pushing the conduct line, start by taking the ball away if you can. "Ramp up" fouls as necessary, but if the first one is a loud "F-bomb," don't make that a minor foul; go with the full minute. Don't respond angrily to unsportsmanlike behavior without making the call (with the possible exception of the quiet comment that only you hear, as mentioned above- keeping in mind that "emphatic" doesn't mean "angry"). Call the foul without emotion or added emphasis- exactly as you would if you were calling a hold or slash.

Officials can make a huge difference in the whole "atmosphere" of high school lacrosse. Remember that athletics are considered an extension of the classroom. We can do the same for the boys' game. Be smart; be respectful; use common sense. But MAKE THE CALLS!

Remember: officials run the games – coaches don't – Why is that? Because officials don't care who wins.

NFHS RULES Q & A

Please note that a **2017 NFHS Rules Q&A** document has been posted to the PIAA website under the Boys Lacrosse Documents tab. It answers some common questions we've received, mostly regarding 2017 rules changes. It's worth a look!

