

# BOX LACROSSE



**SAFETY STANDARDS FOR PLAYERS, COACHES & OFFICIALS  
RE: CONTACT ON AND OFF BALL**



## **2026 Age & Stage Contact Standards**

Lacrosse Canada is implementing a unified national standard for Contact, Cross-Checking, and Equal Pressure across all age groups beginning in the 2026 season. The purpose is not to remove contact from the game, but to ensure that contact is taught properly, introduced at appropriate stages, and executed safely.

The emphasis across all divisions is consistent and simple:

**Teach First • Arms Extended • Push & Place • Equal Pressure**

These principles ensure athletes learn how to apply contact, not avoid it. When taught correctly, contact remains a safe and meaningful part of lacrosse.

### **CORE PRINCIPLES FOR ALL AGES**

#### **1. Teaching First**

Coaches and officials must focus on:

- Safe approach speed
- Balance and footwork
- Body positioning
- Hands placement on the stick
- How to apply pressure without force

#### **2. Arms Extended**

All defensive contact must begin with:

- Arms extended
- Hands shoulder-width apart
- Stick held firmly, not swinging
- This creates distance, control, and safety.

#### **3. Push & Place (NOT driving or thrusting)**

Permitted contact must be:

- A guided push, not a shove
- A placed cross-check, not a hit
- Enough pressure to guide, slow, or control an opponent
- Never enough to displace, collapse, or knock back the player

#### **4. Equal Pressure**

Equal Pressure means:

- Defender matches the opponent's movement
- Pressure remains steady and balanced
- No sudden force, no acceleration into contact
- Athletes stay upright and in control

**Equal Pressure is the foundation of legal contact at every age.**



## AGE & STAGE CONTACT EXPECTATIONS (Unified Standard)

### **U7 – Introduction**

- No cross-checking.
- Light guidance only: arms extended, gentle steer.
- Focus on stance, mirroring, body control.
- Emphasis on proper technique and correction over penalizing players.
- Communication from Officials

### **U9 – Fundamentals**

- Introduction of Push & Place contact.
- Arms extended at all times—no jabs, no thrusting.
- Equal pressure taught in all loose-ball and on-ball situations.
- Communication from Officials

### **U11 – Learning to Train**

- Controlled cross-checking introduced with:
  - Arms extended
  - Hands separated
  - Push & place only
- No checks to the back, no driving through contact.
- Communication from Officials

### **U13 – Train to Train**

- Progressive contact fully permitted within WL standards.
- Contact must remain controlled and directional, not forceful.
- Athletes must maintain equal pressure and avoid over-extension.
- Players protected from repeated or extended contact.

### **U15 – Train to Compete**

- Full technical cross-checking permitted.
- Contact must help control or contain, not collide.
- Driving, swinging, collapsing pressure, or high contact is penalized.
- Athletes expected to demonstrate understanding of equal pressure.
- Communication from Officials

### **U17 – Train to Compete**

- Full WL ruleset applied.
- Equal pressure used as the standard for evaluating borderline contact.
- Officials strictly enforce head/neck safety and dangerous approach speed.
- Communication from Officials



## **Junior (U22) – Train to Win**

- High-performance contact within WL rules.
- Zero tolerance for excessive force or prolonged pressure.
- Athletes expected to execute elite-level control, balance, and containment.
- Communication from Officials

## **SUMMARY: WHAT EVERY COACH & OFFICIAL MUST ENFORCE**

### Legal Contact Looks Like:

- Arms extended
- Hands separated, steady
- Controlled approach
- Push & place
- Equal pressure
- Athletes remain balanced
- Contact used to guide, contain, or slow an opponent

### Illegal Contact Looks Like:

- Arms swinging, punching, or collapsing
- Driving or launching into players
- Jabs, thrusts, or sudden force
- Checks to the back or head
- Overpowering or displacing opponents
- Extended or repeated pressure without release

These standards ensure that contact stays in the game, but is taught properly, learned safely, and applied consistently across Canada. By emphasizing teaching, arms extended, push & place, and equal pressure, we maintain the integrity of the sport while protecting our athletes.