

Maine Lacrosse Officials Association



Policy Manual

MAINE LACROSSE OFFICIAL'S ASSOCIATION
POLICY MANUAL
March 2016

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1 INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the Maine Lacrosse Officials Association, referred to as MLOA.

On behalf of our members, Executive Board and the Maine Principals Association, we are glad you decided to join our organization. We believe that your knowledge and abilities will be put to the test and that your experience with our organization will be a mutually beneficial experience.

As a new member of the MLOA team, you need to be familiar with the policies and regulations of MLOA. Start by reading this policy manual. You should also familiarize yourself with the MLOA website (mloa.org) and review the MLOA Constitution and By-Laws, which are posted on the website.

This manual is intended to list policies of MLOA. All policies included within this manual can be changed or modified at any time. MLOA also reserves the right to add policies at any time. You are responsible to be familiar with all policies.

MLOA holds two meetings a year and, at which, new policies and procedures are discussed. We also discuss internal matters, discuss new rules and mechanics that have been implemented, and answer member's questions. You need to keep current with policy changes by attending meetings, reading all emails that come from the MLOA and periodically visiting our web site at mloa.org.

During the lacrosse year, you will have the opportunity to be evaluated by another member of our organization. Please take this evaluation as a positive learning tool and feel free to ask your evaluator for additional feedback. Our goal at MLOA is to make officiating lacrosse a challenging and rewarding experience and we hope you will feel the same way.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding policies and procedures or evaluations, please discuss them with a member of our Executive Board.

2 APPLICABILITY

These policies do not form a contract but are designed to develop positive working relationships within the MLOA, so that MLOA can achieve our goal of becoming the best officiating organization in the State of Maine. MLOA retains the right to change, delete, add to, and interpret all statements made in these policies. As policies change, you may be notified verbally, via email or via our web site. Please note that you are responsible to keep updated with all policy and procedure changes and that you are expected to abide by all new policies and procedures.

These policies affect all officials within the MLOA, without exception. All officials are responsible for familiarity with these policies. The Executive Board, along with an Appeals Committee (when appointed), are responsible for administering these policies in a fair and equitable manner.

It is the intent of the MLOA to support the needs of the membership. Any official may propose revisions or additions to these policies by submitting a recommendation to the Executive Board. It is the responsibility of the Executive Board, with the recommendations of other Full members, to periodically review and revise all policies. Please note that, due to our contract with the MPA, not all policies can be changed, deleted or added.

Also note that this manual is a guide for the policies of our organization and that procedural changes may also be directed by US Lacrosse, the National Federation of High Schools (NFHS) or the Maine Principal's Association (MPA). Whichever the case may be, you are expected to follow policies and procedures from MLOA, MPA and lacrosse governing bodies at all times.

If you have a question regarding a policy or procedure, please contact a member of the Executive Board.

3 MEMBER ACCEPTANCE

All persons, who want to become MLOA officials, must complete a formal application via the association web site (mloa.org). This includes past members who have missed more than 2 seasons.

Per our contract with the MPA, MLOA is required to obtain background information on all officials every contract year. By applying for or continuing membership in MLOA, all officials agree to submit information.

Please note that the MPA policy states that if you have a felony conviction, you may not be allowed to continue officiating with the MLOA. Each case will be taken on a separate basis, but the decisions of the Executive Board are subject to the terms of the MPA contract. If you are charged with a felony conviction during the lacrosse season, the MLOA has the right to change, delete or alter your schedule. Final decisions will be made as quickly as possible by the Executive Board.

If any official is arrested for any reason, the official may be suspended until the Court case has been decided. The Executive Board will determine whether the official may start officiating again.

Acceptance to the MLOA shall be by majority vote of the Executive Board. If accepted, new members will be considered Probationary members. New officials shall not have voting rights until accepted as Probationary members.

Returning members must update their application information with the Treasurer of the MLOA as it changes or confirm the information on an annual basis, to be done via the ArbitersSports website (arbitersports.com).

All members must attend mandatory meetings and complete mandatory testing, including, but not limited to, training clinics, MLOA business meetings, electronic rules tests and on-field

evaluations. An active US Lacrosse membership is mandatory, all personal information in Arbiter must be updated as required, and full payment of annual dues for the following year must be made between the close of the current season and October 31st (with an additional late payment fee due if not paid in full by that date).

4 LEVELS OF MEMBERSHIP

MLOA shall have three classes of Membership:

1. **Active Membership** - Active Members are those members who are actively engaged in officiating lacrosse games. There are two levels of Active Membership:
 1. Probationary Member: A Probationary member is a first year official. Probationary officials are eligible for sub-varsity assignments. All requirements for membership must be completed and the Executive Board must have accepted any Probationary official before said official receives a schedule. Probationary members are not eligible for post-season games. Probationary members are not eligible to run for office in the MLOA
 2. Full Member: A Full member is a member who has had a minimum of one season of experience with MLOA or another sanctioned lacrosse officials association. A Full member is eligible for any lacrosse assignment. Full members may be eligible for post-season games, depending upon their evaluations. Full members may run for office in the MLOA.
2. **Sustaining Membership** - Sustaining Members are those members who do not actively officiate lacrosse games but who support the MLOA by doing one or more of the following:
 1. Serve as an Officer of the MLOA.
 2. Participate in the day to day business affairs of the MLOA.
 3. Participate in the supervision of Active Members.
 4. Participate in the education and training of members and prospective members.
 5. Participate in the recruiting of individuals to become members of the MLOA.
 6. Retain their qualification although not officiating for health or personal reasons.
3. **Honorary Membership** - Honorary Members are those members who have been bestowed honorary membership by the MLOA in recognition of their having distinguished themselves through their contribution to or their interest in the game of Lacrosse.

5 DISMISSAL FROM MLOA

Members of MLOA may be dismissed from the organization for a variety of reasons. Some of these reasons include, but are not limited to:

- violation of any MLOA or MPA policy
- conduct detrimental to the association
- continued refusal or cancellation of games without reason
- not appearing at assigned games

For a member to be dismissed from MLOA, the following steps may be followed

1. A three member Disciplinary Committee, consisting of three members of the Executive Board appointed by the MLOA President, shall serve MLOA in its disciplinary process. The Disciplinary Committee will hold a meeting to discuss with the member all complaints filed against the member. At least seven days notice of said meeting shall be given to the member, and that member's officiating schedule may be suspended.

2. A member who violates any of the By-laws, rules and policies of the MLOA, or who disregards decisions of the officers or Executive Board, shall be subject to suspension by affirmative vote of a majority of the Disciplinary Committee appointed by the President.

a. Suspended members may lose all voting privileges.

b. Suspended members may lose their game schedule.

3. Any official, who has been suspended by any other lacrosse governing body, may also be suspended by the MLOA and remain suspended until the other lacrosse governing body lifts its suspension.

4. Appeal Process: Disciplined member(s) may appeal the Disciplinary Board decision in writing or email within 30 days. The President may appoint two Full members from outside the Executive Board (the Appeal Committee) to hear the appeal along with the President. The final decision of the Appeal Committee must be given in writing to the disciplined member(s) within ten (10) calendar days.

6 NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY

MLOA is committed to a non-discrimination policy. All decisions involving new officials will be on the basis of merit and qualifications, without regard to race, color, creed, gender, gender orientation, physical or mental handicap, religion, ancestry, sexual preference, national origin or age.

7 SEXUAL HARASSMENT POLICY

Sexual harassment is illegal and is strictly prohibited within the MLOA. Members of the MLOA who engage in sexual harassment are subject to discipline, up to and including dismissal from MLOA.

Sexual harassment is defined as “unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct. Some examples of sexual harassment include, but are not limited to, unwelcome jokes or degrading comments of a sexual nature, unwanted touching, hugging, kissing, or other unwelcome physical contact, suggestive or lewd remarks or emails, offensive flirtation, staring, requests for sexual favors, displays of sexually suggestive photographs, cartoons, writings or objects.

All complaints of sexual harassment will be investigated promptly and thoroughly. Confidentiality will be maintained to the extent possible.

8 ALCOHOL / DRUG POLICY

MLOA has a zero tolerance policy about consuming alcohol or ingesting drugs before scheduled lacrosse games. All alcohol related offenses will be taken up with the Executive Board.

If an official brings alcohol or drugs to a game site or school, or supplies alcohol to minors, the official will be immediately suspended, pending further investigation. The police may be contacted. Disciplinary action will be initiated up to and including dismissal. The official cannot officiate any games until their case is heard by the Executive Board.

Contraband is not to be brought to any game site or school or shared with any minors. Abuse of this policy may result in the immediate suspension of an official. The police may be contacted. Disciplinary action will be initiated up to and including dismissal. The official cannot officiate any games until their case is heard by the Executive Board.

9 HEALTH AND FITNESS

All officials within the MLOA are expected to keep in game shape. Specific fitness routines are not prescribed, but please realize that you must keep up with play at all times. If you are unable to properly cover the field, the Executive Board may alter, add or delete games from your schedule at any time.

MLOA is not responsible for any medical, legal or other bills that may result from injuries to MLOA members.

10 CONDUCT EXPECTATIONS

All officials will abide by the US Lacrosse Code of Conduct and Code of Ethics policies (uslacrosse.org/about-us-lacrosse/policies).

11 APPEARANCE AND DRESS CODE

As a member of MLOA, you are expected to maintain a professional appearance. We are constantly in view of players, parents, coaches and other school officials. Careful grooming and appropriate attire create a strong positive business image and encourage co-workers to develop a shared feeling of professionalism.

When you walk onto the field, you and your partner must be in the same uniform, including sleeve length, shorts or long pants, jackets, etc. Your uniform must be clean and your shoes shined.

If you are in violation of this policy, or if the Executive Board determines that your attire is improper, you will be asked to correct your appearance. Continued violation of this policy may lead to suspension. The Executive Board has the final say to proper attire.

12 RULES AND MECHANICS KNOWLEDGE

All officials associated with MLOA are expected to know the rules of lacrosse and the mechanics adopted by the US Lacrosse Men's Division Officials Council (USL MDOC). MLOA requires all members of the organization to pass mandatory tests annually in regard to rules and mechanics knowledge. The tests are open book where association members are able to discuss and interpret rules. These tests are administered before the season starts.

All officials with MLOA are required to complete these requirements before they are given game assignments, regardless of their membership status or length of service to MLOA.

13 CALL OUT PROCEDURE / RUNNING LATE

All officials that have been assigned to games are expected to complete their game assignments. If situations arise such as running late at the office, sickness, car accident or for some other reason, please notify your partner immediately, preferably via cell phone.

If for some reason you are not able to make a game, please notify the Assignor immediately.

If you fail to appear for an assignment that you have accepted, you may be subject to disciplinary action.

14 INCLEMENT WEATHER

Due to the large area covered by the MLOA, please be aware that inclement weather may not be happening in all areas. If you are uncertain about a game, please contact the home team's Athletic Director.

When you are notified of a cancellation, please notify your partner of the cancellation. With the best intentions in mind, not all officials are contacted by the Athletic Directors about a game cancellation. If the game is re-scheduled, you may be given first choice to officiate the made up game; however, the Assignor must make all changes to the assignment schedule. Please cooperate with the Assignor at all times.

15 GAME TIME ARRIVALS

All officials are expected to arrive at the game site at least 30 minutes before game time. This allows 10 minutes for partners to meet, coordinate uniforms and review mechanics bulletins, and to step onto the field 20 minutes before game time.

If you are traveling to the game site on your own, please notify your partner should you become late due to work commitments, life commitments or weather issues. Your partner will then notify the different organizations involved with the game should your arrival be later than game time.

Continued abuse of this policy may result in cancellation or removal of games from an official's schedule.

16 PROBLEM SOLVING

The MLOA realizes that problems or misunderstandings can arise and recognizes that it is important to address them as they arise. When you have a problem with another official, the first thing you should do is to discuss this matter with that official. If you are not comfortable addressing the problem directly, please contact the President of the Executive Board.

The Board President will appoint a member of the Executive Board to investigate the issue. If a member of the Executive Board is involved in the issue, then an Ethics Committee will be appointed by the President to investigate.

The decision by the Executive Board member or Ethics Committee can be changed by the Executive Board, but a formal hearing must take place. Please note that all proceedings, communications and records of this procedure will be kept confidential.

Any member always has the right to speak to the President of the Executive Board. A member, who seeks a meeting to discuss an issue, must do so in writing with the Secretary of the MLOA. Please note that due to geography and time constraints, this meeting may take up to 30 days to complete.

If the official is not satisfied with the decision from the Executive Board officer or Ethics Committee, the official can appeal to the entire Executive Board. In some cases, other Full members of the MLOA may be asked to serve on this panel. Please note that not all cases will be considered. All appeal rights have been completed once the Executive Board has heard and decided on a case.

17 EVALUATIONS AND RATINGS

The Executive Board will have ultimate decision making authority regarding who should be doing what levels of play, according to ability, physical appearance, fitness, rules knowledge, on-field performance and adherence to policies.

The expectation of the MLOA is to evaluate all officials and to provide constructive feedback. The evaluation process considers mechanics, rules knowledge and behavior. The feedback is intended to be a learning tool to help each official improve and grow towards bigger and better assignments. The process may include:

- On-field clinics at preseason scrimmages
- Informal feedback from a Full member or member of the Executive Board
- Evaluations during assigned games

All first and second year officials should receive a formal evaluation from the MLOA. All officials with three or more years of officiating experience may also receive formal evaluations.

The Executive Board will maintain a rating of all MLOA members to determine whether each member is capable of:

- A) Serving as Referee at any level of play
- B) Serving as Referee at JV and lesser varsity assignments, or as Umpire at any level of play
- C) Serving as Umpire at lesser varsity assignments
- D) Serving as Umpire at JV assignments

These ratings will be based upon the member's experience, upon MLOA evaluations and upon observations by the Executive Board. Each member is entitled to learn their own rating and to suggestions for how to improve to the next level. Certification levels, guidelines, and on-field evaluation expectations are based on the US Lacrosse Men's Officials Training and Certification website (uslacrosse.org/participants/officials/mens-officials-information/mens-training-and-certification-process).

18 ELIGIBILITY FOR PLAYOFF GAMES

The number of playoff games are limited and the intent is to put the best possible “MLOA product” on the field, while getting as many officials involved with the playoffs as possible. Please note that not all members will be included in playoff games.

In order to be eligible for playoff games, any official must complete the following criteria:

- Be a Full member in good standing with MLOA (2nd year official or longer)
- Attend a minimum of two MLOA meetings within a lacrosse season
- Attend the Playoff Officials meeting
- Be rated at level 2 or higher
- Covered at least six Varsity-level games during the season

The MLOA Executive Board reserves the right to make exceptions or change the criteria at any time. In addition, under the MPA contract, Coaches' recommendations will be considered.

If you have met all the criteria stated above, this does not mean that you will be assigned to any playoff games. Please note that you may not be notified if you qualify or are disqualified from officiating playoff games.

19 SOCIAL MEDIA

As lacrosse officials, one must recognize that at all times one represents not only one's self, but also all of one's fellow officials, assigners, all institutions with or for whom one works (MLOA, MPA, US Lacrosse, NFHS, school districts and communities), the entire officiating community and the sport of lacrosse. One must also recognize that, as officials, anything that one may say about a game, rule, player, parent, coach, or administrator may carry a certain weight and/or credibility by virtue of one's position as an official who is presumed not only to be an authority on the rules and mechanics of the game, but is also presumed to be unbiased.

In order to protect the integrity and the reputation of all officials, and of the game itself, one must recognize that one must refrain from any comment or communication which can be recorded, transmitted or published, either by word, recoding, film, internet or in any form of social media, including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc.

As a guideline, it is strongly recommended that before one sends any electronic message to first stop and think and to ask one's self whether the message is appropriate in all respects, mindful that once a message is sent that it cannot be retrieved.

Of particular concern are:

- Comments which are, or can be deemed to be, in any way critical or derogatory about a player, team, coach, parent, administrator, school, conference, league, assigner, fellow official or any institution that one represents
- Comments that may in any way be construed to be racist, sexist, or otherwise prejudiced
- Actions or words which could be construed as bullying, intimidation, or threats against any player, coach, official, or any other individual