



USA LACROSSE

Instructor Notes



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OFFICIALS
EDUCATION

RULE 4 PART 1 - FLOW OF THE GAME

MENS OFFICIALS DEVELOPMENT | 2026 SEASON



Instructor Notes

RULE 4 OVERVIEW

A LOT TO COVER

- Rule 4 is very comprehensive and covers a large amount of information
- The best way to learn is simply to study the rulebook and watch games
- We are going to break this down for you
- This presentation will focus on FLOW OF THE GAME
- How to keep the game moving!



OVERVIEW

- Rule 4 is very comprehensive and covers a lot
- Reading and studying the rulebook is the way to learn



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FLOW OF THE GAME

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

- FLOW refers to the feel of the game for everyone involved
 - Speed of the game
 - Score of the game
 - Length of the game
- Is the game taking too long?
- Does it seem slow?
- Is it entertaining?
- Are the players having fun?
- You have more control than you think!



FLOW OF THE GAME

- This section will review areas of the game that as an official you will help facilitate the flow of the game.
- Knowing the keys to your role as a member of the third team on the field, managing face-offs and other starts and restarts are crucial to the flow of the game.



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THIRD TEAM ON THE FIELD

GETTING ON THE SAME PAGE

- The PREGAME is our primary method of creating consistency
- For many high school games, we have little time to pregame on game day.
- Some advance communication between crewmates is necessary for a successful game
- Consider pregame emails, text messages or phone calls.
- Cover the important details at the game



THIRD TEAM ON THE FIELD

Review with the class why a solid pregame is needed to ensure success.

Each official must be aware of:

- Positioning and your actions.
- The positions and actions of your partners.
- Make individual/crew adjustments when necessary.
- Being supportive of the other members of the crew.
- Communicating effectively with your team members as a group and individually.



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GOALS FOR EVERY CREW IN EVERY GAME

- Consistency
 - As a crew
 - At both ends of the field
 - Acknowledge when you "kick" a call to your partners
- Rules & Mechanics Knowledge
 - Dedication to knowing the rules and mechanics for the level you are working
 - ABS – Always Be Studying
- Teamwork & Trust
 - Willingness to work as a team and trust your partners
 - Don't go fishing unless it is absolutely necessary!
- Communication
 - Do you understand each other's verbal and non-verbal signals

CLASS DISCUSSION - HOW DO THESE GOALS AFFECT THE FLOW OF THE GAME?

- The closer you get to these goals, the less time you take to get the



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job done

- We don't have the luxury of working in crews like football



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HIGH SCHOOL GAME LENGTH

HUSTLE VERSUS NO HUSTLE

- There are required time lengths in every game that we can't control
- There are controllable aspects to every game
- This largely is controlled by the game officials
- **HUSTLE vs. NO HUSTLE!**

DID YOU KNOW

At the international level, officials must track the time from goal scored to the next faceoff.

Do you know why?



Situation	Time	No Hustle Game	Hustle Game
Quarters	48	1 Hour and 10 Minutes Of Required Time to Complete	
Timeouts	8		
Half + Breaks	14		
Goal to Faceoff	18	@ 45 sec = 13.5 min	@ 12 sec = 3.6 min
Penalty Admin	7	@ 120 sec = 14 min	@ 30 sec = 3.5 min
Restarts	~15	@ 10 sec = 2.5 min	@ 5 sec = 1 min
		30 minutes	8.1 minutes
		1:40	1:18

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HIGH SCHOOL GAME LENGTH

- Big effort over the last 20 years to “speed up the game”
- A quick game is generally a safe game
- A quick game is generally a focused game
- Time is lost largely on faceoffs and penalty enforcement
- Old Quote
 - “Idle hands...”
- Do your job, but do it expeditiously
- Make it fun with your crew to hustle
- Use private “buzzwords” to tell each other to pick up the pace

DID YOU KNOW ANSWER

- International games are running clock
- Officials hustle can make a big difference in a close game



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PREGAME RESPONSIBILITIES

SET THE TONE

- 1 MEET AND CERTIFY COACHES
- 2 CAPTAINS/COIN TOSS
- 3 MEET WITH FACEOFF PLAYERS (IF TIME PERMITS)
- 4 SUBSTITUTION COACHES-SET EXPECTATIONS
- 5 MEET TABLE PERSONNEL-REVIEW RESPONSIBILITIES
- 6 READY THE FIELD FOR PLAY
- 7 LINE-UP



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PREGAME RESPONSIBILITIES

A solid pregame is needed to ensure success

Each official must be aware of:

- Positioning and your actions.
- The positions and actions of your partners.
- Make individual/crew adjustments when necessary.
- Being supportive of the other members of the crew.
- Communicating effectively with your team members as a group and individually.



Instructor Notes

FACEOFFS & RESTARTS

MANAGING THE TEMPO OF THE GAME

- This section dives deeper into your role as the official in administering the face-off
- How your teamwork and communication can help keep the game flowing



FACEOFFS & RESTARTS

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Instructor Notes

FACEOFFS

WHERE THE FLOW BEGINS

- Pre-Game Faceoff Meeting
 - Set your expectations
 - Talk about speed of setup
 - Enlist the faceoff men as partners
- Opening faceoff sets the tone
 - Take your time and be legal
 - Call violations and explain them
 - Get the restart quickly



FACEOFF

- The pre-game faceoff meeting is key to flow
- If not possible such as during youth games, discuss at first face-off
- Come down together, don't delay
- Don't throw the ball away on a violation



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FACEOFF SETUP EXAMPLE

IS THIS A GOOD SETUP?



Class
Discussion
Questions

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FACOFF – SETUP TOO LONG

Discussion:

- How does the timing of this face off set up effect the flow of the game?
- What do you see in this clip that is no longer legal for a face off in our current rules?



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FACEOFF SETUP EXAMPLE

IS THIS A GOOD SETUP?



Class
Discussion
Questions

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FACOFF – SETUP

Discussion:

- How does the timing of this face off set up effect the flow of the game?
- What do you see in this clip that is different from the previous clip?



Instructor Notes

AFTER A GOAL, BEFORE NEXT FACEOFF

THE REAL TIME-SAVER

Signal the goal and retrieve the ball, wherever it is.

Jog back to center... Do Not WALK

Dead ball officiating is important

Record the score when in position for the faceoff

Non-faceoff official signals when field is ready for play



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AFTER THE GOALS, BEFORE NEXT FACEOFF

- In two-man mechanics, a ball toss of more than 15 yards that is too short or a high toss and the ball bounces over the trial officials head.
- Now we are chasing the ball or referees that are lazy and yell for one of the players to go after the ball.
- ALL THIS TAKES TIME!
- If the distance is too long, move toward one another to shorten the distance.
- Remember how soon do we want to start the next F/O?



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NO HUSTLE AFTER A GOAL

THE REAL TIME-WASTER



Class
Discussion
Questions

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NO HUSTLE AFTER GOAL

- Following a goal, you are not on a break. Hustle back to center and be ready for the face off before the players are. Players and teams should never be waiting for you to get back and set up to start play.



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RESTARTS AFTER FOULS

MAKE THE CALL & START THE PLAY

- Be efficient between fouls and restarts
- Start play as soon as possible, but not before everyone is ready
- Before starting play ensure the following has been done:



RESTARTS AFTER FOULS

- Step away from players and receive/report foul
- Clearly communicate to the table using the CNOTE penalty reporting protocol.
- Don't forget to use your timer after reporting the foul as per mechanics.
- This provides accountability for you and the other teams to be ready quickly along with keeping the game moving.



VIDEO - PROPER RESTART AFTER FOUL

THREE MAN MECHANICS



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VIDEO – PROPER RESTART AFTER FLAG

- Ball starts in far alley
- Lead and single have field ready to play
- Trail finished reporting foul, looks, points and play starts
- Lead heads to the crease since ball is wide



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WHAT ARE YOU DOING?

WHILE YOUR PARTNER IS RELAYING THE FOUL

Class
Discussion
Questions

I really hope my
partner is
getting the field
ready.



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WHAT ARE YOU DOING?

- Your partner is up near the box relaying the foul to the scorer's table, what do you do?
- Often, we see crews doing nothing to get the field ready for play when the penalty is being delivered to the bench area.
- Whether two or three person crew, get the field ready for play.
- Tell the team that is man up to move the ball to where it will be put into play.
- Advise the goalie and the defense where the ball is and which player (number) has the ball.
- Even assist with retrieval of your partner's flag if possible.
- By doing this when the official doing the penalty enforcement is done, play is ready to start without any unnecessary delay.
- All of this saves TIME!



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VIDEO - QUICK RESTART HUSTLE

THREE MAN MECHANICS



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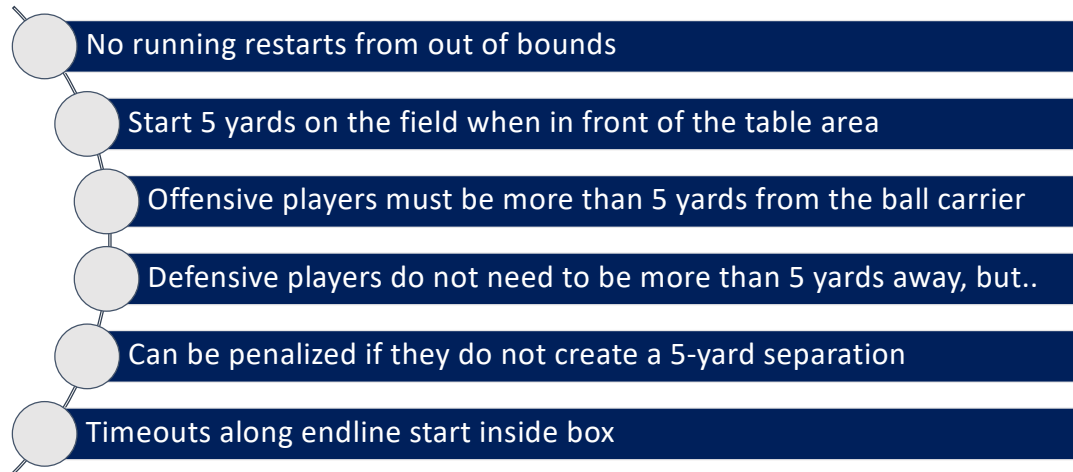
VIDEO – QUICK RESTART HUSTLE

- First, what was the call?
- Play-On Possession Interference w/goalie, FREE CLEAR
- Lead (now new Trail) makes call, grabs ball and hustles to the midline
- Tosses ball to player at midfield and restarts play within 15-seconds



OUT OF BOUNDS RESTARTS

A KEY TO GAME FLOW



OUT OF BOUNDS RESTARTS:

- Coaches want a quick whistle because no team wants their opponent to get set on defense.
- Referees want quick restarts because they keep the game flowing.
- No one wants an unclear restart.
- At lower levels (youth), maybe an issue with not enough balls on end line that will slow down the game.
 - What can you do?
 - Pocket a ball and when it occurs you simply take the ball out of your pocket and give to the player.
 - Quick fix and keeps the game going.



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IN-BOUNDS RESTARTS

SOME SLIGHT DIFFERENCES

- Quick restarts allowed from in-bounds
- Play-On fouls should restart quickly
- Offensive players must be more than 5 yards from the ball carrier
- Defensive players do not need to be more than 5 yards away, but..
- Can be penalized if they do not create a 5-yard separation
- Offensive restarts must be outside of box in alley if play stopped in box



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IN-BOUNDS RESTARTS:

- Coaches want a quick whistle because no team wants their opponent to get set on defense.
- Referees want quick restarts because they keep the game flowing.
- No one wants an unclear restart.
- Don't force yourself into a Delay of Game (5y rule) penalty by starting too fast



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QUICK RESTARTS

A CLOSER LOOK

- The following requirements need to be met for a quick restart
- If not, a flag-down or turnover could occur



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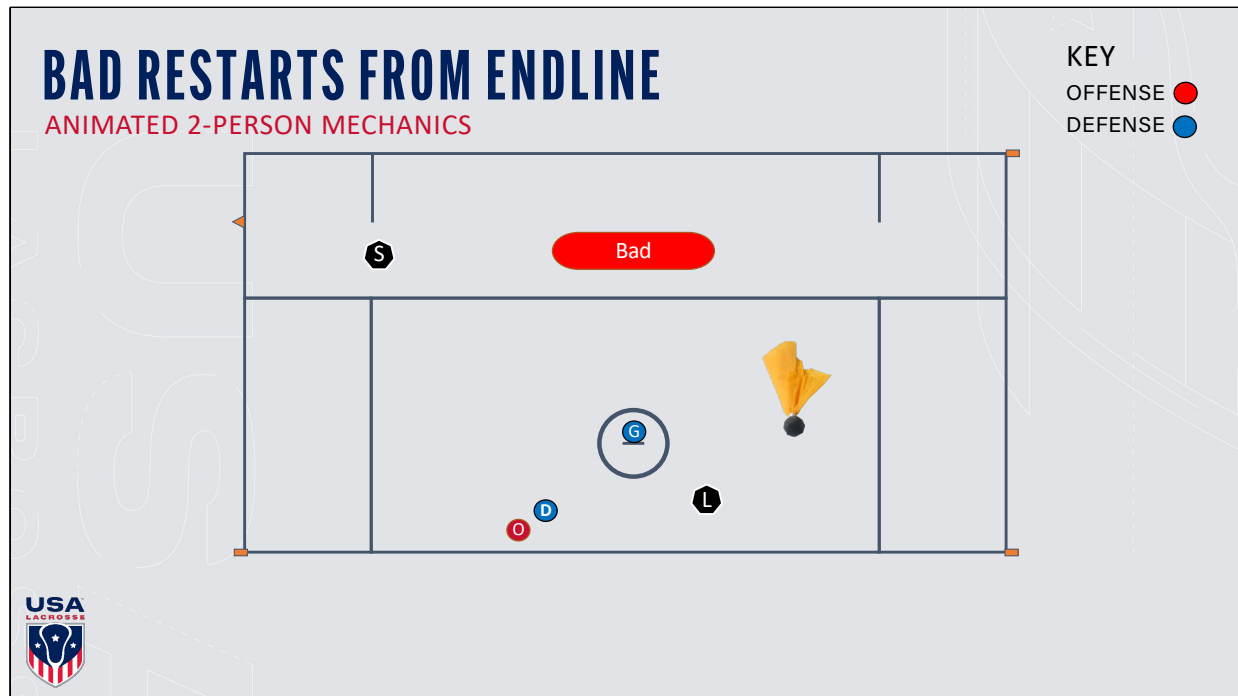
QUICK RESTARTS

A defensive player plays the ball handler on a restart without granting the players 5 yards

- Must give the offensive player a clear path to the goal
- A 5-yard differential must be attained before the defensive player can engage
- If the defensive player is or moves away from a direct path to goal and the offensive player runs at him, no foul will occur
- Don't split hairs...recognize the situation



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BAD RESTARTS FROM ENDLINE (Next slide shows good example)

- Situation (describe and ask what **SHOULD** happen)
 - Shot taken and chased by both offense (red) and defense Blue), ball awarded to offense (red)
 - D1 is within 5y when O1 is ready to play
 - What needs to happen for this play to start without a flag?
 - Where should LEAD (L) official go as whistle is blown?
 - What is TRAIL (T) official watching in this case?



Instructor Notes

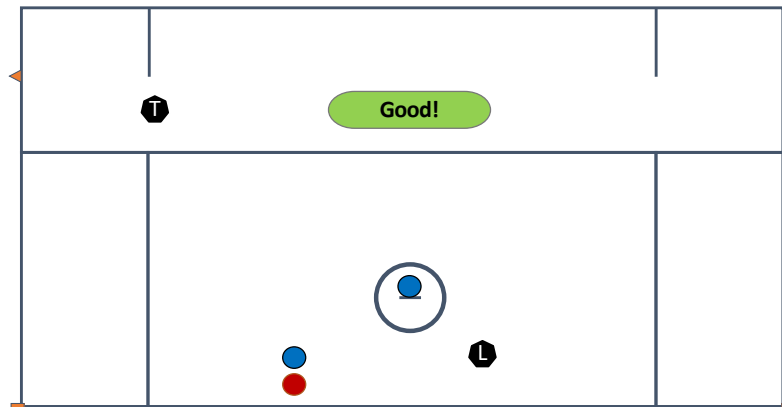
GOOD RESTARTS FROM ENDLINE

ANIMATED 2-PERSON MECHANICS

KEY

OFFENSE ●

DEFENSE ●



GOOD RESTARTS FROM ENDLINE

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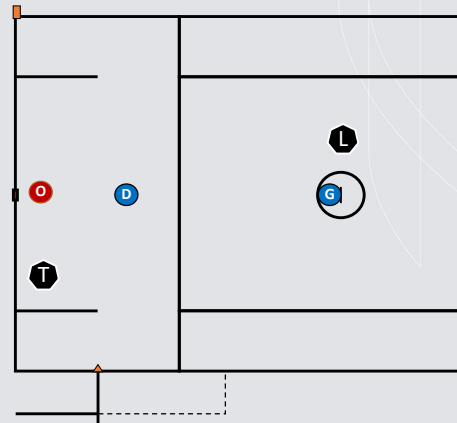


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RESTARTS FROM MIDLINE

ANIMATED 2-PERSON MECHANICS

- When trouble happens most.
 - Over & Back
 - Restart after a faceoff violations



KEY

OFFENSE ●

DEFENSE ●



RESTARTS FROM MIDLINE

- DON'T say "give him 5" to the defense
- This is coaching
- When do you throw the flag if he does not separate?
- Is simply running with the player a foul?
- Do we communicate they are NOT 5y in any way?

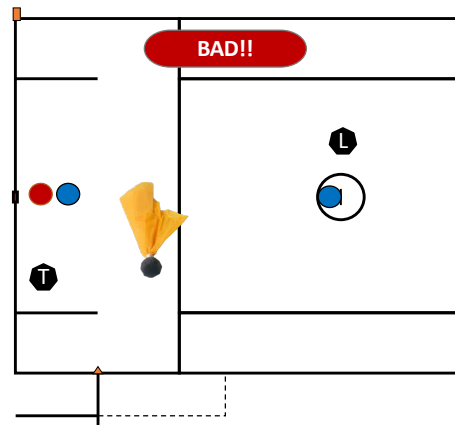


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BAD RESTARTS FROM MIDLINE

ANIMATED 2-PERSON MECHANICS

- When does this happen?
 - Faceoff violations
 - Shutoff in a man-down situation
 - Take-away defender



KEY
OFFENSE ●
DEFENSE ●



BAD RESTARTS FROM MIDLINE

- Blow the ball in
- See what happens
- If the defender doesn't separate, throw the flag
- Remember – The offensive player cannot run into him on purpose if he is trying to move out of the way
- Don't start TOO fast and "create a penalty"

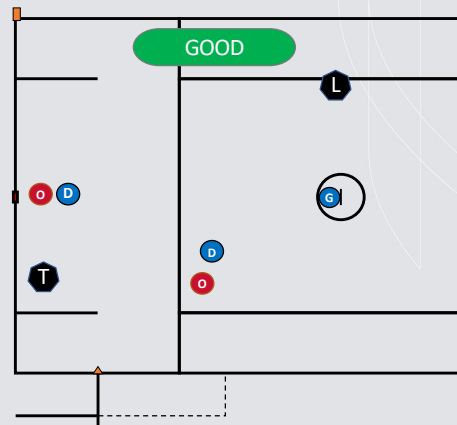


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GOOD RESTARTS FROM MIDLINE

ANIMATED 2-PERSON MECHANICS

- When does this happen?
 - Faceoff violations
 - Shutoff in a man-down situation
 - Take-away defender



GOOD RESTARTS FROM MIDLINE

- It is counter-intuitive for a player to move out of the way.
- They will likely back off and the play
- Good teams will use the “slide, rotate, recover” concept and have the defenders rotate
- In most cases, this will happen while other subs are happening, and the team is not yet ready to play
- Good teams will push this and look for the 2 on 1



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GOOD RESTART FROM SIDELINE



GOOD RESTARTS FROM SIDELINE

- This is a great example of a quick restart that is legal.
- Player gets the ball, pauses to show the official he is ready and gets a quick whistle from the single
- This does not need to be a situation where the single gets to the cone and lets the new trail blow it in.
- If he is ready, blow it in.
- Talk to the player as he is getting the ball saying “come in and stop”



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TIMEOUTS & RESTARTS

A CHANCE TO GET ON THE SAME PAGE

- Anticipate when a TO will be requested
 - Last 2m of half
 - Close game
 - Possession saver
 - Man-down kill and double-team
 - Out of bounds in transition
 - If we start talking about stalling
 - Overtime Faceoff (this is key!)
- Trail official needs to expect this! **Pregame this point**
- Where's the restart?
- How many TO remain
- Tell the coaches



RESTART AFTER TIMEOUT

- Move with a purpose and encourage others to restart the steady tempo as well.
- If you are a slacker official, you will be an irritant.
- Sluggish/lazy officials contribute to a feeling of annoyance among coaches, players and fans.
- You can “advance the flow” with a conscious effort.



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OFFICIALS TIMEOUTS

WHEN CLARIFICATION IS NEEDED

- Know the situation...
 - Crease call (goal or no goal?)
 - Two Penalty Flags Thrown
 - A foul in which a player will be "locked" in
 - Issues at the Scorer's Table/Time Issues
- Report to coaches the results
- "Who's watching the players"?
 - 3rd official
 - Conference should never be all 3 officials
 - If 2-man, open-up your field of view to see the players



OFFICIAL'S TIMEOUTS

- In-game communication is key to preventing these, but...
- Sometimes they are necessary
- This is more common with new officials, that's OK!
- Our goal is to get the call, CORRECT!
- Remember to stop the clock for RINNING-TIME games!

CLASS DISCUSSION

- What other situations can cause an officials timeout?



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STALLING

GET IT IN – KEEP IT IN

- When and where...
 - Usually start behind the goal
- Recognize the situation/level of play
 - Usually not called in lopsided games
- Bottom line, is the offense attacking the goal?
 - What does that mean?
 - Shots?
 - Dodges and re-dodges
- Last two minutes of the game with a 4-goal or less differential



STALLING

- One of the toughest calls in the game
- College got a shot clock to get rid of it
- When the situation seems apparent (score is close end of Q3), TALK ABOUT IT!
- What's the tolerance? (60s, 90s, 120s)
- There is no rule on the timing, but you MUST talk about it and watch the clock.

CLASS DISCUSSION

- How will we signal stalling?
 - Hand over heart
 - Hands on belt
 - Others?



Instructor Notes

ALWAYS BE PROFESSIONAL

DEMEANOR AND COMMUNICATION

- This lesson was about Flow of the Game
- Professionalism from the first whistle keeps everyone focus on their job (playing, coaching, officiating)
- Respect will come when you approach the game the way the coaches do.
- We may not make the "Big" bucks officiating but, we are still getting paid for the job. WORK HARD...Hustle!
- We, as officials must approach every game, regardless of level, as the most important game at that time.
- It IS the most important game for the coaches and athletes, it must also be for us!
- If you make a mistake, ADMIT IT & OWN IT!



ALWAYS BE PROFESSIONAL

- Professionalism is the one thing that you can always do well regardless of age, physical ability or talent
- If you are not a professional, why are you here?
- Treat the vocation of officiating with respect it deserves and it will be very good to you.



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THANK YOU TO THE MEMBERS OF THE
2025 MENS OFFICIAL'S EDUCATION
DEVELOPMENT TEAM

TAKE CARE OF YOUR CREW



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