



FIL General Assembly 2018

Technical Director Report to the 2018 GA

Overview

I would like to acknowledge the work of the previous Men's and Women's Directors who previously guided the officiating and rules programmes as part of their individual portfolios. The new Technical Director's role brings each of these areas into a single management structure. Whilst this is a larger undertaking, it allows a more holistic approach to the continued development of a homogenised officiating and rules program.

I would like to thank the current Officiating and Rules Chairs in each of the programmes for their acceptance to work together to look for ways that the "officiating program" can harmonise rules, officiating mechanics, program administration, approaches to development and training, amongst others. As the game continues to evolve this cooperation will be crucial to ensure that the "technical aspects of the game" can support any new initiatives that are deemed appropriate.

A strategic plan for the officiating program had previously been developed, but not recognised at the Board level. The plan has since been accepted and will guide the management of the officiating program going forward.

Over the past year we have provided support working collaboratively with other Board members to support their work. Specifically, much discussion has been had regarding the envisioning of what future forms of the game might look like, how we can evolve the current accepted forms of the game with an emphasis on improving the change of pace, encouraging new ideas to improve participant and spectator engagement, commercial viability and the growth of the game. Many of the rule changes that are being introduced at this GA are designed to make world championships and the games in general more exciting, more consumable and more competitive. We worked with the development committee to provide support at the player clinic delivered in Greece. Most exciting has been the development of a Chinese Rules of Men's Lacrosse Rule Book led by the Taiwan Lacrosse Association. This is truly a milestone for lacrosse and will serve to aid the growth of the game in that region. We would like to thank Taiwan Lacrosse for their foresight and tenacity in seeing this project through.

At this GA I will introduce a change to the rule change cycles to ensure that they coincide with the appropriate World Championship to maximize input from the members and necessary technical support. We recommend that all forms of the game are moved to a two-year change cycle without the requirement to "trial" rules prior to their implementation. This will ensure an agile approach, better enabling the game to evolve into the future.

We have also reached out over the past year to the Regions, specifically the APLU and ELF where their officiating programmes are maturing to the point where they are quite developed. This is due to the good work of their executive teams and officiating coordinators. I believe that with continued

cooperation between the FIL and Regions, that we will further develop the “product” enabling the continued growth of the game.

In January this year we brought together some of the best officiating best minds in the international game to begin the development of international officiating pathway supported by accepted competencies that will be used within all forms of the game. This structure will be further developed into a harmonised officiating program that member nations will be able to access to educate and train their officials, enabling a consistent approach to officials’ development and progression. Members with existing official’s programmes will be able to map their current offerings to the “FIL Pathway” or adopt this program for use within their country. We will continue to work with US Lacrosse to access with their permission systems and resources to aid in the delivery of the international program.

To support technical delivery, we continued to evolve the supporting structures. In addition to the current Chairs of Officiating and Rules for both Men’s and Women’s, we have introduced three new roles:

- We appointed on an interim basis a Chair of Education and Training to oversee all FIL training. Their initial focus is on officiating development and to support the Development Committee on officiating materials for new and emerging members.
- An Indoor Officiating Rules Committee to provide domain specific support.
- A Chief Medical Officer (CMO) will shortly be appointed to inform and advise the Board and Committees on any medical and player safety related issues. They will also look to evolve the FIL’s medical systems and policies.

We would like to encourage members to assist where possible in the recruitment of suitably qualified candidates from within their country and region for FIL advertised roles to ensure a good cross section of candidates.

The officiating committee has also developed a new fitness testing protocol that will be used across all programs beginning with the 2018 World Championship.

Men’s Officiating & Rules

Much work in the last year by Tom Sutton and the Officiating Committee has surrounded the Men’s World Championship in Israel July 2018. At the time of writing, 95 officials have been appointed from 20 countries. A fantastic achievement that shows the growth of the international game.

The RIC is in place for the 2019 World Indoor Championship. Recruitment for a deputy is on-going. Request for officials will take place in Q3/Q4.

The Committee supported events in the APLU and ELF over the last year in the provision of assessors to develop regional officials and talent identify those for future Fil events.

The Rules Committee has considered a number of rules and interpretations many of which have been submitted for consideration by the General Assembly.

Women’s Officiating & Rules

I would like to personally recognize Stephen Taylor, Jan Jackson and their teams who have delivered two very successful events in the last year. It is a big ask of volunteers to undertake such a task, but it was done in a very professional and successful manner. The Officiating Committee continues to prepare for the 2019 World Championship and is now recruiting its management team for next year. There has been involvement with US Lacrosse to look at how a harmonised approach to sticks could be developed to simplify stick rules into the future.

At the 2017 GA numerous women's rules were put forward for consideration and trial. Several members have elected to trial the rules and provide feedback which has been taking place in certain jurisdictions. The World Games in Poland used a set of rule variations which included:

- The field size was reduced to a smaller field,
- Reduced squad sizes from 18 to 15 players and only 10 on the field
- Game times were changed to 2x35 running time with stopped clock in 2nd half – last 2 minutes
- Reduction of players at the centre draw from 5 to 3
- Minor foul penalties from direction of approach to 4 m to the side
- No dropping of the stick after every goal

Anecdotally they were all well received.

Jan Jackson who leads the Rules Committee has updated the Women's Rule Book and will introduce further rules for consideration arising from the trials and as a result of the work that the rules committees' have done to try and harmonise rules across the game.

Anti-Doping

We are pleased to report that there have been no adverse anti-doping results in any testing undertaken in the last year. We continue to test as per our requirements under the WADA guidelines. It may be into the future that we will need to undertake a more enhanced testing regime. The FIL continues to work with WADA to determine what this may need to look like and will advise members accordingly.

At the 2017 GA each member was asked to nominate their Anti-Doping contact and provide this to the FIL. To date only 15 have been received. We therefore request if you have not yet completed this task that you do so as soon as possible.

It is important that teams provide their athletes with the appropriate support on anti-doping matters. Education and support prior to and at the event is key. We have advised competing teams in advance of world competitions of the deadline dates for Therapeutic Use Exemptions (TUE's) to be submitted. However, Feffie Barnhill, the FIL Anti-Doping Administrator often receives these incomplete, late or not at all. To ensure athletes are adequately prepared, please ensure that your athletes meet all published timelines.

It was also agreed that all athletes would be required to undertake some form of recognised anti-Doping education and training prior to any involvement in an FIL World Championship. Given the lack of infrastructure available at the time to track 1100 athletes' compliance with this requirement, the FIL has since made this a strong recommendation to comply. However, for future events, this requirement will be enforced. WADA has since introduced a new E-Learning Platform ([ADEL](#)) where athletes can undertake the ALPHA Education program. Their qualification records will be logged and made available to the FIL, which can then be used to ensure compliance with the FIL education requirement. In addition to ALPHA there are several other educational offerings that members may wish to access.

As part of our WADA compliance, we are obliged to provide WADA with Team Whereabouts for the top three counties in the registered testing pool. We continue to have issues with some members who do not register this on a timely basis and as such are not compliant. We require in the future members to comply with this requirement, or the FIL may take actions according to the FIL by-laws.

WADA is requiring more evidence to ensure our members are compliant with the World Anti-Doping Code (WADC). This will require the FIL to develop a more stringent regime to ensure individual member compliance. Those members who cannot demonstrate compliance with the WADC may be subject to further disciplinary actions

Finally, I would like to thank each of the Chairs and their committees within the Technical portfolio. They have worked tirelessly to deliver an officiating and rules program that enhances participant experience at all levels and continue to look for new ways that we can improve officials and the game for all.

Don Blacklock
Technical Director
4th May 2018