



2013-2014 Boys Youth Rules FAQ's

Where can I find the 2013-2014 US Lacrosse Boy's Youth Rules? Who develops, writes and approves these rules?

The Boy's Youth Lacrosse Rules can be found in the back of the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) Boy's Lacrosse Rule Book. The US Lacrosse Men's Game Committee has approved these rules.

The rules can also be found on the US Lacrosse Rules portion of the website. To check out these and more resources for the youth rules please [click here](#)

Who is the National Rule Interpreter for US Lacrosse Boys (Youth and High School) Rules?

Walt Munze has been selected as the US Lacrosse Youth/High School National Rule Interpreter. Walt possesses considerable experience as an interpreter, a high level of knowledge of the game at many different levels and a strong passion for the game. In addition, Walt is highly respected among lacrosse officials and coaches throughout the nation.

Walt currently serves as the New York State High School and former COC Lacrosse Rules Interpreter. He has experience as an official at all levels of play; Youth: U9,U11,U13,U15 and indoor lacrosse in Syr. Area and Field in Florida; High School and State Lacrosse Championships Official; and College and International Lacrosse experience including: NCAA Division 1,2, 3 National Championships; World Games Championships in Canada 1986; European Championships in Germany 1998; Berlin Open 1999; World Games Officials Evaluator in Canada 2007; Under 19 World Games Officials Selection Committee Member 2008; World Games Officials Selection Committee for 2010; Tournament Official at Lake Placid and Florida Classic; Serving as District 2 USILA Assignor; former COC Rules Interpreter and NCAA Rules committee representative.

This is not Walt's first involvement with a leadership role in the game and within US Lacrosse as he previously has served as a member of the Board of Directors for US Lacrosse 1987-89, but most recently was the past president of the New York State Lacrosse Officials Association.

What is the process if I have a rule question regarding US Lacrosse Boy's Youth Rules?

All Program Administrators, Coaches and Officials that have questions regarding US Lacrosse Rules for Boys Youth Lacrosse should be directed first to your local [Sub District Coordinator](#) or your Local [District Coordinator](#). To find a list of the Official District Coordinators and Sub District Coordinators click [here](#)

You may also forward any questions to the US Lacrosse Men's Game National Rule Interpreter at boysyouthrules@uslacrosse.org. Please do not contact NFHS about the US Lacrosse boy's youth rules.



What is the process if I have a rules question regarding NFHS high school interscholastic competition?

All rules questions regarding NFHS high school interscholastic games should be directed to the state association office or the designated statewide rules interpreter for boys lacrosse. Please do not contact the NFHS directly with rules interpretation requests. If the state association or rules interpreter needs assistance with the interpretation, they will contact the NFHS office for clarification. For more information about NFHS [click here](#)

What if I don't have a state association and live in a non-sanctioned state?

All questions should/can be directed to your local [Sub District Coordinator](#) or your Local [District Coordinator](#). To find a list of the Official District Coordinators and Sub District Coordinators click [here](#)

If I have a rule suggestion or a rule change proposal to be considered for next year for US Lacrosse Boys Youth Rules, where can I submit them?

The NFHS rules and the US Lacrosse supplemental rules are reviewed annually by the US Lacrosse Men's Game Rules Subcommittee, which may adopt any changes or modifications deemed necessary to ensure safe play at all levels.

Coaches, officials or other parties may submit comments or suggestions regarding the Rules for Boys' Youth Lacrosse at any time **before May 20, 2014** for consideration by the USL Men's Game Rules Sub Committee. Any changes or modifications that are recommended by the Rules Subcommittee and approved by the USL Men's Game Committee will be effective for the Boys' Youth Rules and will be included in the 2014 NFHS rules book.

To make comments or suggestions regarding the Rules for Boys' Youth Lacrosse, please contact the US Lacrosse Men's Game Rules Subcommittee at the address below, or at boysyouthrules@uslacrosse.org to receive the link to the US Lacrosse website's Boys' Youth Rules Input Form. Please do not contact NFHS about these rules.

*US Lacrosse Men's Game Rules Subcommittee
c/o US Lacrosse
113 W. University Parkway, Baltimore, MD 21210-3300
410-366-6735 (fax) 410-235-6882 (phone)*

If I have a rules proposal for the NFHS rules, how can I submit that proposal?

All rules proposals for NFHS rules must be approved and submitted by the state association. To submit a rules proposal for the NFHS rules, contact your state association office and request a rules proposal form. Complete the form and submit it to your state association office for approval. If the state association approves the proposal, they will then sign the form and submit it to the NFHS office for consideration by the NFHS rules committee. All rules proposals are due to the NFHS office in mid-June annually.



What is the annual timeline/process for the development of the US Lacrosse Boy's Youth Rules??

OCTOBER (current year)– AUGUST 2014
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The US Lacrosse Youth Rules are LIVE. All Youth Programs, Tournaments and Leagues are encouraged to begin playing by the upcoming seasons rules in the fall preceding the spring season.- US Lacrosse Men's Game Rules Subcommittee accepts all recommended changes/submissions to be considered for the upcoming season...- Click here for submission form: http://www.uslacrosse.org/TopNav2Right/Rules/MensRules/RequestaRuleChange.aspx
MARCH– JUNE 2014
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Youth Rules REVIEW begins; Surveys and Questionnaire blasted out to the entire men's game committee structure, US Lacrosse Sport, Science and Safety Committee, Program Administrators, Chapter Leadership, Tournament Directors, and more. The survey is posted on the US Lacrosse website, blasted through our monthly newsletters (coaches, officials, PA's), and through social media (Facebook, Twitter).
JUNE 2014 – USL MG Rules Subcommittee annual meeting
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Tom Dolan, NFHS Rules Chair and Kent Summers, NFHS Rules Editor are in attendance as representatives for NFHS.• Jack Couch, Youth Subcommittee member was in attendance
JUNE –JULY 2014
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• the Men's Game Rules subcommittee develops a rules survey to gain feedback from regarding the recommended changes the committee was considering for the upcoming season.
JULY 2014
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Annual National Federation of High School Sports, Boy's Lacrosse Rules meeting held in Indianapolis, IN. US Lacrosse Men's Game Director Stephen Berger and US Lacrosse Men's Game Rules Chair Eric Rudolph, and US Lacrosse National Rule Interpreter Walt Munze attend the annual NFHS Rules meeting as representatives of US Lacrosse.
JULY – SEPTEMBER 2014
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• US Lacrosse Men's Game Rules subcommittee works together to finalize the youth rules for the upcoming season based on the changes made by the NFHS rules committee, the collective feedback from across the country and within the Men's Game Committee and Subcommittees.
SEPTEMBER 2014 – the Youth Rules are Voted on and approved by the USL BOD
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The rules go into effect as soon as the youth rules are approved in September and should be used for fall, winter, and spring play.
NOVEMBER 2014- NFHS Rulebooks are available and mailed out to appropriate constituency's



Do we have to follow USL rules to be USL members and use USL Insurance?

No, eligibility for USL insurance is not dependent on using USL age appropriate rules at this time.

Why is USL taking body checking out of the game?

USL does not want to remove body checking from lacrosse. The USL age appropriate rules are designed to provide an environment that fosters development of critical skills in our youngest athletes. Body contact is introduced over time to prepare players for higher levels of play in High school and College but does so in a manner that creates the best playing experience at the younger ages. Research in a variety of sports has proven that player development and a positive playing experience are maximized when violent contact is limited or removed in the younger age divisions. This is also a fundamental best practice that US Lacrosse is emphasizing with regards to player safety and skill development.

Does Boy's Youth Lacrosse have Points of Emphasis similar to the NFHS and NCAA each year?

Yes, the US Lacrosse Men's Game Rules Subcommittee has developed Points of Emphasis concerning the boy's youth rules based on feedback from the previous year and concerns or items they want to address for the upcoming season.

2013-2014 Points of Emphasis for Boy's Youth Lacrosse (15 and below)

US Lacrosse endorses the points of emphasis in the 2014 NFHS Boys Lacrosse Rules, and adds the following points of emphasis for youth play:

Violent Collisions – Some body contact is permitted at all levels of boys' youth lacrosse, with progressively more age-appropriate contact permitted as players become more physically mature and learn proper checking techniques. However, sports medicine research indicates that the severity of certain injuries may be reduced if a player can anticipate and prepare himself for an oncoming hit, and other sports medicine research indicates that peripheral vision may not be fully developed in many boys before approximately age fifteen. Therefore, there is no justification for deliberate and excessively violent collision by any player at any youth level, especially intentional player-to-player collisions with defenseless players (so-called "blind side" and "buddy-pass" checks), checks involving the head and/or neck, and excessive body-checks ("take-out checks").

The 2014 NFHS Rules and US Lacrosse Boys Youth Rules more clearly define such violent collisions and in many cases increase the severity of the penalties that prohibit them. US Lacrosse urges officials to apply these rules and utilize the more severe penalty options, and reminds them that body-checks that might be acceptable in high school play may be excessive



in youth lacrosse, and should be penalized accordingly. Coaches are encouraged to coach players to avoid delivering such checks, and to support the officials when they call such penalties. All participants must work together to reduce or eliminate such violent collision from the game.

- **To support this US Lacrosse has also developed a free online tutorial for men’s game coaches to better understand the role and rules of contact in the game, how to teach proper contact technique, and uphold the game’s culture. More information can be found at:**

<http://www.uslacrosse.org/TopNav2Right/EducationTraining/USLCoachingEducationProgram/CEPOnlineCourses.aspx>

Sportsmanship – Unsportsmanlike conduct by coaches and/or players and/or spectators degrades the experience of youth players and erodes the integrity and appeal of the sport. Therefore, unsportsmanlike conduct will not be tolerated. Obscenities need not be used in order for language to draw a penalty. Tone, intent, and body language can all contribute to unsportsmanlike conduct. Players, coaches, and spectators should exhibit the highest level of sportsmanship at all times. US Lacrosse expects officials to enforce the Unsportsmanlike Conduct rules without hesitation, and further expects coaches to promote good sportsmanship among players and anybody associated with the team, including spectators, and to support officials in maintaining an environment of civility and sportsmanship

US Lacrosse initiated the Sideline Manager and Sportsmanship Card program in an effort to invest the lacrosse community with responsibility for seeing that good sportsmanship is the rule, rather than the exception, in the sport of lacrosse. When used in conjunction with the rules, the Sportsmanship Card procedures serve as an effective deterrent to abusive behaviors. The program was created with the goal of establishing constraints that should:

eradicate the "unsportsmanlike behavior" that is creeping into sport, strengthen sportsmanship, contribute to the retention of officials, and honor the game.

US Lacrosse encourages leagues and local programs to utilize the Sideline Manager and Sportsmanship Card program, details of which can be found at www.uslacrosse.org under the “Programs & Grants” tab on the homepage.

RULE CLARIFICATIONS FOR 2013-2014 NEW RULES

Why did US Lacrosse adopt the NFHS Rule 4, Section 22, Article 2 – Substitution On the Fly....

The NFHS moved to no horns for subs for sideline out of bounds as has the NCAA. That was already the rule for International Lacrosse.

That is the way the lacrosse rules were before the addition of horns for Subs. It is designed to speed up the game. Since many leagues must keep tight schedules due to multiple games scheduled one right after another (often running time). Horns slow down the game and this means less playing time for the players. Doing away with horns may in fact increase the playing



time for many players. It also should help allow players to be able to play both offense and defense as opposed to being slotted and platooned.

Since the youth rules are based on the NFHS rules we felt that is the way we should go. Where it makes sense, we also are trying to make the rules more uniform across the different levels. (College, high school and youth).

Note we did add language in the timeout section as a way to help with subs if desired. i.e. the leagues may authorize more timeouts.

Team Time-Outs-RULE 4 SECTION 26

Two (2) team timeouts - of a maximum duration of two minutes each - are permitted per team per half, unless league or association rules specify otherwise. Whenever circumstances allow, leagues and organizers should permit no fewer than two team timeouts per half. Many leagues permit teams three or more team time-outs per half to enhance instruction, safety, and opportunities for substitution.

In addition there was a concern expressed that at the lower age groupings this might be an issue in some areas and so we added the below language that provides that local leagues if they choose may allow, as an option, the use of horns for subs on sideline out of bounds balls for U/9 and U/11

Substitution Procedures

RULE 4 SECTION 22 ARTICLE 2

US Lacrosse Youth Rules NOTE—U9 & U11 Horn Substitution Option: *For U9 and/or U11 play, Leagues may authorize substitutions when play has been suspended by the officials after the ball has gone out of bounds on the sidelines. For such substitutions, the timer shall sound a horn upon the request of a coach indicating to the officials that a substitution is desired. All other rules with respect to substitutions during suspension of play shall apply.*

Age Eligibility FAQ's

How do I know what division my son should be in?

Leagues and associations should organize competition by age, and consider physical, cognitive, and emotional maturity when grouping players. For leagues or associations in which some local programs choose to organize their teams by grade, those teams should play in the age division determined by the oldest player on their roster.

Teams organized by single birth year or single grade are suggested, but if a league needs to group two years/grades together, it should strive to limit the maximum age difference between players in a youth game to no more than twenty-four (24) months.



Players who are participating in any high-school level program such as a high school freshman, JV-B, junior varsity, varsity or club team should not be eligible for U15 competition in the same season. This means that a player who is age-eligible for U15 but plays on a high school level team should not concurrently play on a youth league U15 team. At other times of the year this player may be U15 eligible; for example, for summer ball or fall ball play, depending on the guidelines of the sponsoring league or organization.

The following age groupings are determined as of August 31st preceding competition:

U15:

All players must be 14 years old or younger on the August 31st preceding competition. It is recommended that when multiple teams exist within a program, the program should consider physical size, skill, and maturity when organizing teams.

U13:

All players must be 12 years old or younger on the August 31st preceding competition. It is recommended that when multiple teams exist within a program, the program should consider physical size, skill, and maturity when organizing teams.

U11:

All players must be 10 years old or younger on the August 31st preceding competition. It is recommended that when multiple teams exist within a program, the program should consider physical size, skill, and maturity when organizing teams.

U9:

All players must be 8 years old or younger on the August 31st preceding competition. It is recommended that when multiple teams exist within a program, teams should consider physical size, skill, and maturity.

NOTE: Age group references used in this section are in common usage but should not be understood literally. The U15 (read: "Under 15") grouping means that, if a player is 14 years old on the cutoff date, he may participate in U15 competition as a 15-year old.

****Special Consideration**

Although it is not recommended that any athlete play below his age group, US Lacrosse recognizes the need for special consideration due to the physical and/or cognitive development of an athlete. It would be up to the league to establish a waiver process through which it can review such cases. Ultimately it is up to the league and athlete's parents to come to an agreement in the best interest of all athletes participating in said league.



Do you have a chart that shows the cutoff for each age division?

2014 Age Grouping Quick Reference Table

Birthdate	Age Bracket
Born on or after 9/1/1998	U15
Born on or after 9/1/2000	U13
Born on or after 9/1/2002	U11
Born on or after 9/1/2004	U9

Can High School players compete in U15 if they are age eligible?

Players who are participating in any high-school level program such as a high school freshman, JV-B, junior varsity, varsity or club team should not be eligible for U15 competition in the same season.

All of the USL age divisions contain two ages; can we divide our players into single age groups?

Yes, as long as the individual divisions play under the same age appropriate rules.

The new rules state "It is recommended that when multiple teams exist within a program, the program should consider physical size, skill, and maturity when organizing teams." Does this effectively permit tier programs at the younger levels (U9 & U11)?

Tiered play can be very valuable when used to benefit all players. Several of the biggest/best leagues around the country have both A and B divisions. This can help new players enter the sport, provide a safer environment for smaller or less mature players and also provide more equitable competition for new programs joining the league. There are some key factors however, that must be considered properly. First, is that there are actually two divisions not just towns making A and B squads that ultimately play in the same division with the A team having great success while the B team consistently loses. Secondly, it is important that the A and B divisions are treated equally with an emphasis on quality coaching at both levels. Field quality, officiating etc should all be carefully maintained to ensure all players have a quality playing experience.



What we are saying in the section of rule you quoted is that often a big, strong, more mature players belong on the A team even if he is not yet a skilled lacrosse player. These players tend to find success at the higher level and physically could create issues on a B squad. US Lacrosse's position is that leagues should consider all contributing factors when/if operating A/B divisions.

Why would you define divisions by age when youth players just want to play with their classmates?

We agree that it is great for youth players to play with their classmates on teams and that there can be much gained from this experience. However, when this issue was addressed in making rules, safety of the players was the primary concern of the rules subcommittee. GROUPING PLAYERS BY AGE RATHER THAN GRADE, ELIMINATES THE OPPORTUNITY FOR PLAYERS TO BE HELD BACK IN SCHOOL TO GAIN A PERCEIVED COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE.

This particular instance involved a player who was two years "behind" in school. While this is uncommon, having players one year "behind" (often intentionally held back by parents to gain an advantage) is something we hear on a daily basis. By grouping players by age rather than grade we eliminate parent's ability to gain a competitive advantage for their children by holding them back in school (at least until High School). This best practice has widespread support throughout the lacrosse community.

Will USL be creating age eligibility ID cards?

We recognize that there is a need for age verification but it is a complex issue and we have a lot of work to do to get to the point where everyone requires ID cards for participation. We do believe it is a step that has to be taken in our sport for both competitive and safety reasons and we are actively looking at the best ways to implement such a system.

Are youth players allowed to "play up"?

The standard answer is that youth players should compete in their appropriate age based division. That said, this is one of those "rules" that has exceptions and your son may be one of those. Over the years I have seen players who although "playing up" were still the biggest fastest player on the field. We specifically did not state anything about playing up in the rules for this reason. It is a decision local league, coaches and most importantly parents need to make. You know your son's ability to be in physical competitive situations with older kids and should be able to make the best choice for your son. We do have concerns around this and I am sure you are aware of parents who might push a kid who is not ready into an older group thinking it will "toughen him up" or give him an advantage down the road.

Why not use U14 as the top division and then U12, U10, U8 as this is more like the old grade divisions?



There is a sizable group of students who do not qualify for U14 during their 8th grade year. In order to capture all of the “youth lacrosse eligible” players we needed to start with U15 as the oldest division and move down from there.

Why was the Age cutoff moved from December 31 to August 31?

This was done for three reasons:

First was to get in line with the school cut off for most states and it being a youth best practice strongly recommended by our Sports Science and Safety committee.

The second reason was to make the fall and start of a new school year the time the players shift divisions. The shift takes place after the summer tournament season and before the new fall seasons starts. We found that most people consider the summer season the end of a cycle with the fall being the beginning of a new cycle.

Finally, FIL (the international governing body of Lacrosse) uses Aug 31 as the cut off for U19 play and in theory will use that cut off if they ever sponsor any other levels of international play. We use that cut off for U19 play to line up with FIL so it made sense to make the date consistent across the board.

Are we “breaking the rules” if we schedule games on the hour and just play 20 minute halves at all age divisions?

The USL age appropriate rules were written to provide a great deal of flexibility in game times. USL recognizes that there are many factors at play locally when it comes to scheduling games. Leagues must have the ability to do what works for their specific situation.

If I have any more questions where can I send them?

Please do not hesitate to [contact](#) the Men’s Game Committee with any questions or concerns you may have regarding the best practices and rules of boy’s youth lacrosse.



LINKS - RESOURCES

US Lacrosse Rules: <http://www.uslacrosse.org/TopNav2Right/Rules.aspx>

Youth Rules info and FAQ <http://www.uslacrosse.org/TopNav2Right/Rules/YouthRules.aspx>

US Lacrosse Guidebook: <http://www.uslacrosse.org/TopNav2Right/Rules/Guidebook.aspx>

Sports Science & Safety:

<http://www.uslacrosse.org/UtilityNav/AboutTheSport/HealthSafety.aspx>

Coaches Education Program:

<http://www.uslacrosse.org/TopNav2Right/EducationTraining/USLCoachingEducationProgram.aspx>

Officials Education Program:

<http://www.uslacrosse.org/TopNav2Left/Officials/BecomeanOfficial.aspx>

Programs and Grants: <http://www.uslacrosse.org/TopNav2Right/ProgramsGrants.aspx>

Keeper of Lacrosse:

<http://www.uslacrosse.org/TopNav/USLacrosseFoundation/KeeperofLacrosse.aspx>