

# 2026 GIRLS' NHYLA YOUTH LACROSSE RULES INTERPRETATION



RULES MEETING  
FOR  
NHYLA  
COACHES



NHYLA “Cheat Sheet” on the website covers the change in rules, not all the rules of the game.

For Rules-

- Youth Guidebook
- NHFS Rule Book

## NOTABLE RULE CHANGES FOR HIGH SCHOOL

- » 2-4-5 — Stick checks may be requested at any point during a quarter break, halftime, a team time-out, prior to the start of an overtime period, prior to the start of a draw, and immediately following goals in regulation and overtime periods
- » 2-8-3 (NEW) & PENALTY — No on-field player can wear an audio or video device during the game
- » 4-3-3d, e — If a possession time-out is called when the goalkeeper has possession of the ball in the goal circle, play will resume at the closest dot and any player may restart play
- » 5-2 PENALTY 1 — When one player draws illegally, the free position may be taken by any player on the opponent’s team at the spot of the ball
- » 7-3 PENALTIES 1a, 3a — When a goal circle foul is committed, the offending player shall move 4 meters away from the player taking the free position instead of behind

## YOUTH ONLY CHANGES - Rules Distinct from High School

- » Allow deputy goalkeepers for 14U



# Safety and Responsibility

## Everyone has a role

Participants in girls lacrosse are expected to play, coach, officiate and spectate according to the spirit and intent of the girls game and in compliance with the USA Lacrosse Girls Lacrosse Rules. Emphasis is placed on safety and good sportsmanship.

- » Players are responsible for their behavior and that their equipment and uniform conform to all required and allowable standards, as defined by USA Lacrosse rules.
- » Coaches are responsible for teaching their players to play by the rules of the game with sportsmanship and safety of the highest standard.
- » Officials are responsible for maintaining fair and safe play by consistently enforcing the rules.
- » Spectators are responsible for their role in a positive and safe play environment by always demonstrating sportsmanlike conduct.



# POINTS OF EMPHASIS



[usalacrosse.org](http://usalacrosse.org)

# POINTS OF EMPHASIS - YOUTH

*NHYLA has zero tolerance for poor treatment of officials – please report for all teams benefit*

## TREATMENT OF OFFICIALS

- Poor treatment of officials remains a persistent problem
- Officials deserve respect and dignity
- Poor sportsmanship, verbal abuse, and harassment of officials should not be tolerated
- Mistreatment of officials contradicts the values of lacrosse



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# POINTS OF EMPHASIS

## EFFICIENT DRAW ADMINISTRATION

- Important POE to keep game moving
- Efficient draw administration requires:
  - Move promptly to draw position after goals
  - Substitute and exchange sticks quickly after the goals
  - Set up draw efficiently
  - Penalize uncooperative players who slow down the draw set up and delay the game



# POINTS OF EMPHASIS

## DELAY OF GAME AND USE OF GREEN CARD

- Important to minimize delay of game and deter fouls
- Common violations:
  - Defenders failing to promptly move 4 meters from a free position
  - Players who commit a foul and continue to run downfield instead of moving 4 meters away or behind when the ball carrier pauses
  - Players slows to clear the penalty zone
  - Teams not returning promptly to the field after a timeout or end of a quarter



# POINTS OF EMPHASIS - YOUTH

## ILLEGAL STICK TO BODY CONTACT

- Safe use of the stick essential to avoid injuries
- Youth rules prohibit defenders from initiating stick to body contact
- Coaches should reinforce proper use of the stick especially by defenders
- Officials should penalize illegal stick to body contact



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# POINTS OF EMPHASIS - YOUTH

## OFFICIATING 3-SECONDS GOOD DEFENSE

- Rule applies to the player with the ball, not a defender
- Rule applies when an offensive player holds the ball for more than 3- seconds when being closely guarded
- 3-second good defense rule rewards defenders when the use proper defensive positioning



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# POINTS OF EMPHASIS - YOUTH

## OFFICIATING FORCING THROUGH

- Forcing through is a foul against an attack player
- Occurs when an attack player forces their crosse through a defender or defenders crosse
- Defenders in legal position should not be penalized when an opponent forces their crosse through defenders crosse



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# RULE CHANGES



[usalacrosse.org](http://usalacrosse.org)



# RULE CHANGE – HIGH SCHOOL

## CROSSE INSPECTION

### 2-4-5 - SUMMARY

- Stick checks allowed during 5 game situations
- Stick checks allowed:
  - Prior to the draw
  - Following goals
  - During quarter breaks and halftime
  - During a team time-out
  - Prior to the start of overtime



# RULE CHANGE – YOUTH

## GOAL CIRCLE DEPUTY RULES

- Deputy goalkeeper allowed at 14U play
- NFHS Rules 7-1 & 3 govern deputy goalkeepers

## NFHS

### Rule **7** Goal Circle

#### SECTION 1 GOAL CIRCLE RULES

**ART. 1 . . .** Only one player, either the goalkeeper or the deputy, is permitted in the goal circle at any one time. A ball resting on any part of the goal line belongs to the goalkeeper or deputy.

#### SECTION 3 DEPUTY RULES

**ART. 1 . . .** The deputy:

- May only enter or remain in the goal circle when the deputy's team has possession of the ball.
- Must immediately leave the goal circle when the deputy's team loses possession of the ball.
- May go into the goal circle to prevent a rolling ball from crossing the goal line.
- While within the goal circle must clear the ball within 10 seconds after it has entered the goal circle.
- While within the goal circle may play the ball with the hand, place it in the crosse and proceed with the game. The deputy may not throw it by hand.

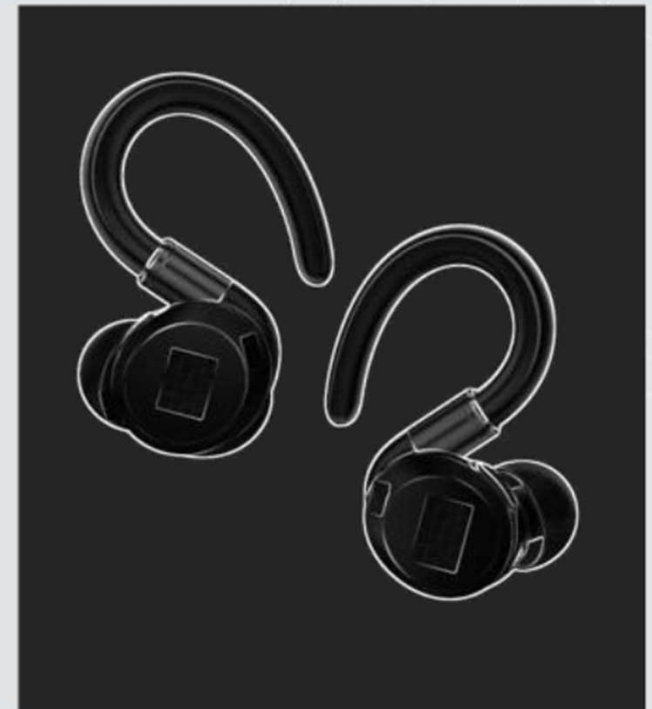


# RULE CHANGE – HIGH SCHOOL

## ELECTRONIC EQUIPMENT

### 2-8-3 – SUMMARY

- Illegal for a field player to wear audio or video devices during the game
- Exception for medical accommodations approved by state association
- Coach misconduct penalty

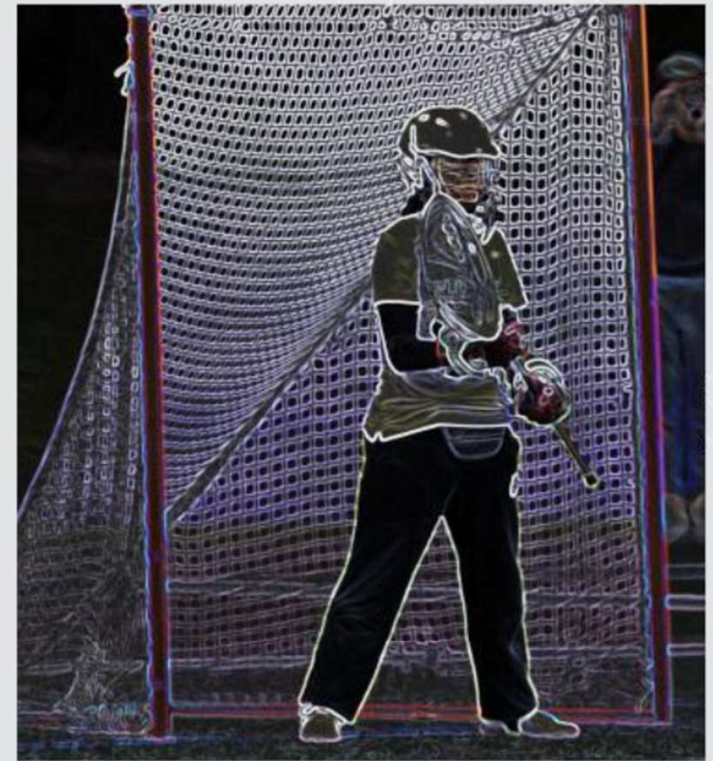


# RULE CHANGE – HIGH SCHOOL

## TEAM TIMEOUTS

### 4-3-3d – SUMMARY

- If a possession time-out is called when ball is in goal circle,
  - Play resumes at the closest dot unless play restarts with a free position
  - Any player may restart when play resumes at the dot



# RULE CHANGE – HIGH SCHOOL

## STARTING PLAY – DRAW

### 5-2 PENALTY 1 - Summary

- When a player draws illegally,
  - Free position will be at the spot of the ball
  - Any player may take the free position
- Self-start is permitted unless the clock is stopped



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# RULE CHANGE – HIGH SCHOOL

## GOAL CIRCLE

### 7-3 PENALTIES 1A, 3A – SUMMARY

- When a goal circle foul is committed,
  - Offending player moves 4 meters away from the free position
  - Offender is no longer placed 4 meters behind the free position



# NOTABLE EDITORIAL CHANGE – HIGH SCHOOL

## EYE SHADE

### 2-7-6 SUMMARY

- Eye shade:
  - May include grease, no-glare strips, and stickers
  - Must be one solid stroke with no words, numbers, logos or other symbols

Note – NHYLA Rule

Players may have any eye blacking as long as it is not deemed obscene by officials and coaches-



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# USLAX Rule Reminders



[usalacrosse.org](http://usalacrosse.org)

# RULE - from 2025

## Different from High School Rule



» **Self-Start (5-4-1)** USAL Youth Rules will continue to require a player to momentarily pause when self-starting for appropriate skill development and game management.

**Momentary pause - Settled Stance:**  
Both feet stationary, on the ground, with  
the ball in the head of the crosse



# RULE - from 2025

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**Momentary pause - Settled Stance:**  
Both feet stationary, on the ground, with  
the ball in the head of the crosse



# RULE -

## 12U Only

### Modified Checking: Summary

- An attempt to dislodge the ball from an opponent's crosse when the checking movement is:
  - down and away from the body, and
  - below the shoulder of the player with the ball.



# RULE -

## 14U

### Transitional Checking: Summary

- An attempt to dislodge the ball from an opponent's crosse when:
  - The checking movement is outside the 12-inch sphere, and away from the opponent's body.
  - If the defender is behind the ball carrier the checking movement must be:
    - down and away from the body,
    - and below the shoulder of the player with the ball.



## Review: 3 SECOND GOOD DEFENSE

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### Only for U8, U10 , and U12

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Is when a player with the ball holds the ball for more than (3) three seconds while closely guarded/checked – MAJOR FOUL

A player may not hold the ball for more than 3 seconds, when they are closely guarded, the defense has both hands on their stick, and the defense is in a position to legally check if it were legal.





# NHYLA Rule Changes



[usalacrosse.org](http://usalacrosse.org)

# Home Team Responsibility

The home team is responsible for:

Ensuring a dedicated Program Administrator be physically present for the game.

- Securing Dedicated Scorekeeper and Timekeeper for the game. Preferably this is two separate people; however, one person may do both timing and scorekeeping. However, under no circumstances can this be a coach or assistant coach of the teams playing the game
- • **Visible Game Clock with Horn (i.e., cannot use a cell phone or handheld stopwatch - must be visible to both benches and officials from anywhere on the field)**
- • **Visible Scoreboard (must be visible to both benches and officials from anywhere on the field)**
- • Paying referees
- • Extra line judges, ball chasers etc., as needed
- • Provide alternate jerseys or pinnies if both teams have the same color
- • **Properly lined and/or marked field (cones and portable creases are acceptable where necessary)**



# NHYLA Rule Reminders



[usalacrosse.org](http://usalacrosse.org)

# One Handed Check

## NHYLA Special

New 2025 -

Rule – One handed check is considered a slash.

Penalty – Treat as mandatory card.

### Officiating the Rule

- NHYLA is concerned regarding checking at the youth level. No one handed checks are allowed.
- Remember – Two handed check uncontrolled or player is off balance – then upgrade to slash and card



# Mercy Rule

NHYLA Special



## 8U

Draw to start each period no matter what the score.

6 goal difference – team with lower score gets ball at centerline. Player positioning for draw does not apply. Pass rule does not apply

## 10U & 12U & 14U

6 goal difference – team with lower score gets ball at centerline. No draw. Player positioning for draw does not apply



# Time Factors

## NHYLA Special

### Playing Time

8U = 4 quarters x 12 minutes each  
10U = 4 quarters x 12 minutes each  
12U = 4 quarters x 12 minutes each  
14U = 4 quarters x 12 minutes each

Games are running time.  
EXCEPT for last minute of each quarter  
where clock stops for all fouls in the critical  
scoring area

### Halftime and Quarter Breaks

- Halftime is up to 5 minutes; may be less if agreed upon by the coaches prior to the game.
- There is a 2-minute break between Quarter 1 and 2 & Quarter 3 and 4. Players must change ends to begin each quarter.

### Clock Stops

- When official signals timeout
- **NOT** After each goal signal, - youth is running time.
- During overtime. OT for only for **12U & 14U**



# Pass Rule

## NHYLA Special

Rule - *Pass Rule* -- only **applies to 8U and 10U**. Does not apply to **12U & 14U** –

*One attempted pass is required after the ball and the ball carrier completely cross their respective offensive restraining line before a shot can be taken at the goal. An additional pass is not required until the ball leaves the offensive side of the field beyond the restraining line.*

*Penalty - If a shot is taken before the pass is attempted, it is considered a goal circle violation and the ball is awarded to the goal keeper in the goal circle with offender 4m away.*

### *Officiating the Rule*

*Hand offs” are not sufficient to be considered a pass in girls 8U, and 10U. A pass or attempted pass is the exchange of the ball through the air from one teammate’s crosse to another teammate’s crosse. A handoff where the ball is dropped from one crosse into another or a roll to a teammate/open space doesn’t constitute a pass.*

» **ATTEMPTED PASS** occurs when a player attempts to pass using the mechanics of a throwing motion in the specific direction of a teammate.

# NHYLA Special

*Pass Rule – once the pass rule is satisfied, the team can shoot on goal.*

*Example =*

- *White team has ball and can shoot*
- If the defensive team (blue team) gains possession and clears the ball past the restraining line, this is a reset and when the white team gets the ball again they will need one pass before they can shoot.
- If the defensive team (blue team) gains possession and DOES NOT clear the ball past the restraining line before the white team gets the ball, the white team can shoot on goal.

## *Rule 8U Clarification*

8U – Same as above except following goal:

- White team shoots and scores. The score is considered a reset.
- Blue gets the ball on the goal line extended (no draw)
- If the white team gains possession the pass rule applies and the white team must have one pass before they can shoot on goal.



## NHYLA Special

### 8U, 10U, 12U, 14U

With new timing rule this will not happen

#### Rule – *End of Quarter / End of Game*

the horn blows to end the quarter or game, and the official has already awarded a Free Position on the 8 meter, the player will be allowed to take the shot, with a 3-second time limit from the whistle

#### Officiating the rule

- Continue to administer the 8m Free Position. Player may only go directly to goal.
- Passing ends the possession.



# Ejections

## NHYLA Special

Reports required for –

- Any coach, player or individual ejected from a game
- Any coach receiving a yellow or red card

Reports need to be done by the umpire to **GirlsVP@NHYLA.org** by the end of the day of day when the game is played.

Report needs to include –

- Team - Town and Age Group
- Player number
- Reason for ejection
- If coach – need to advise Town and Age Group.



# Rosters

## NHYLA Special

Rule - Head coach must provide a roster to opposing coach before the start of the game

Penalty - Offending team plays down 1 player for 1st half of the game.

### Officiating the Rule

- Rosters must be exchanged before the game starts.
- Exchange can be hard copy or electronic.
- Add to coaches meeting - ask if the rosters have been exchange.
  - Yes - all is good
  - No – tell them to take care and exchange rosters
  - No, I can't or will not – assess the penalty



# Coaches

## NHYLA Special

### All Levels for games –

- 3 coaches on the team bench maximum.
- Must all adults.

### 8U Only

- May have one “Parent Helper” in place of one of the 3 coaches
- For 8U only - On-field coach can only be within 5 yards of sideline/endline–



# Reminders

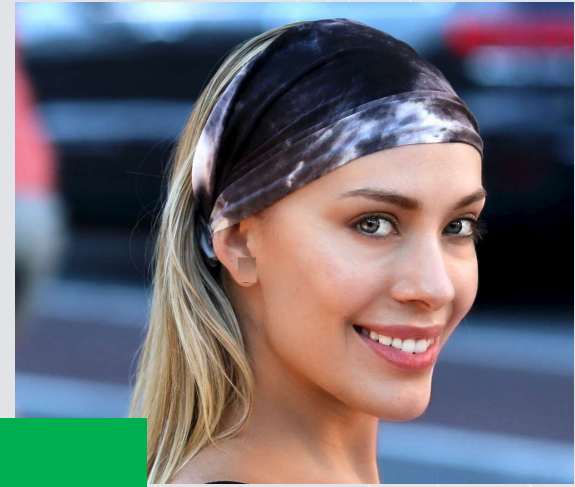
The two most common questions that are asked  
(and the answers)



[USALACROSSE.COM/LAXCON](https://www.usalacrosse.com/laxcon)



# Optional Personal Equipment



**All of these are LEGAL**



# Offsides

- For Short Field 8U and 10U.
  - Restraining line is the center line for short field games.
  - Two players from offensive side and three player from defensive side must remain behind the restraining line.
- Note for full field games -
  - Four players from offensive side and Five players from defensive side must remain behind the restraining line



# Coaches Editorial



[usalacrosse.org](http://usalacrosse.org)

# Most common complaint from coaches – not making a foul call

## Umpire communication to coaches and fans on foul

Name three ways that Official uses to note a foul has been seen

Blow the whistle



Raise Yellow flag to note advantage – only on scoring play



Raise arm noting advantage –



## Thought and recommendation for coaches ...

What to do or say when a youth official makes a mistake during the game?

- Live with it. Say nothing. This is a game and the officials are in high school.

If you are concerned with the knowledge or performance of any official on the field, youth or adults, do not make any comment to the official. Let your town administrator know and they can report to NHYLA – KK and Jill for action

If the game is unsafe – take your players off the field and end the game. Report the game and circumstances to the town administrator and they can report to NHYLA – KK and Jill for action

# THINGS TO REMEMBER ABOUT YOUTH OFFICIALS...

- Youth officials are only 2 years or 3 years older than the players you are coaching.
- Youth officials are someone's child. How would you want your child spoken to?
- The **MAIN** reason why youth officials do not return is because of coaches and fans **BEHAVIORS** during a game.
- Youth officials are going to call the basic calls, they are learning.
- Remember nobody is perfect we all make mistakes it's how we learn just like the players, coaches, and officials.
- Players don't get every goal, save every goal, catch every ball, but we still **ENCOURAGE**.
- There are 24 players on the field it is impossible to watch everyone and everything in a fast pace game, especially when you are learning

# Contacts:



VP of Girls Lacrosse = Jill Mitchel  
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Youth Officials Coordinator and  
Youth Assignor = KK  
[girlsscheduler@nhyla.org](mailto:girlsscheduler@nhyla.org)

Youth Liaison = Dave Pelletier  
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# Questions

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## **20. REACH ACROSS THE BODY**

- a. When an attacker and defender are running side by side, the defender may not attempt to reach across the body of the attack player unless the defender's feet are ahead of the attack. This does not prohibit a defender from checking an attack player's stick from behind whenever the check can be made safely and legally.**
- b. Checking the bottom end or handle of the stick is legal as long as there is no body contact, and the check does not cause the stick or the ball to go into the player's sphere.**