

2022 GNLL Boys Youth Rules

Last updated April 3, 2022

The US Lacrosse 2022 Youth Boys Rulebook shall govern US Lacrosse boys youth play, except as amended below for GNLL youth play. The 2022 NFHS Boys Lacrosse Rulebook covers all situations not specified in the US Lacrosse rules or in this document.

US Lacrosse rules (or, in some cases, NFHS rules that apply to youth) will be printed in black text. Any modifications specific to GNLL will be printed in **blue text**. Significant changes from 2021 rules will be highlighted in **gray**.

A quick-reference guide showing the major rule variations is included in the appendices.

Points of Emphasis for 2022

Safety: Every youth lacrosse program should do its best to provide a safe environment at practices and games for everyone involved, including—but not limited to—ensuring that fields are safe, ensuring that all prescribed protective gear fits properly and is worn at all appropriate times, having protocols in place for dangerous weather, and ensuring that players are instructed on how to play the game safely and non-violently.

Sportsmanship: The point of youth lacrosse is for players to have fun and to learn to play lacrosse. Game officials are usually new and learning to officiate, and unsportsmanlike conduct discourages people from continuing as or becoming officials. Coaches, players, and spectators should always exhibit the highest level of sportsmanship toward each other and toward officials. Coaches are expected to focus on teaching fundamental lacrosse and not on influencing the officials or exploiting loopholes in the rules to win games. Coaches are asked to address poor spectator behavior without the officials needing to ask (by rule, if the officials do ask, the coaches are required to deal with spectator behavior issues, up to and including ejecting spectators from the venue). US Lacrosse expects officials to enforce the unsportsmanlike conduct rules without hesitation.

Spectator behavior: If there are problems with spectator behavior, officials may stop the game until the situation has been resolved to the officials' satisfaction (including possible removal of all spectators from the playing facility) or they may terminate the game immediately if they feel the situation warrants it. In the case where the problem spectators are obviously associated with one team, that team's head coach must correct the situation or unsportsmanlike conduct penalties may be assessed against that team's head coach. Coaches are responsible for making sure spectators are positioned only on the side of the field opposite the team benches and that they are at least **6 yards** from the sideline (except in stadia with permanent seating, where fans may sit in the permanent seating on either side); it is strongly recommended that a dashed limit line be marked to indicate 6 yards. In cases where fans are closer than 6 yards, the *home team head coach* is required to move the fans back before the game can continue, even at neutral sites; failure to comply results in a non-releasable unsportsmanlike conduct foul against that coach.

Coaches are strongly encouraged to educate players and parents about the differences in rules between high school and the various youth levels; much of the unsportsmanlike conduct in youth games arises from their lack of knowledge of the differences between rules at different levels of play. Youth lacrosse rules are much more restrictive in allowable physical contact than higher levels.

Legal stick checking. The US Lacrosse rules for stick checking are extremely restrictive, with the goal of promoting player safety and developing good stick skills. Officials should remind coaches and players about the stick checking rules for that level prior to the start of each game and enforce them consistently, explaining to players—situation permitting—what it was that resulted in the penalty. Coaches should teach players the legal checks for their players' level of play. If the rules are not being enforced, it is appropriate for a coach to calmly and politely speak to the officials to remind them to call violations of the stick-checking rules for that level on both teams.

Legal body checking: Body checking of any kind is illegal in 8U, 10U, and 12U. Body checking is only allowed in 14U when the player applying the check is upright and the force applied is not sufficient to put the opponent on the ground. A “take-out” body check—where the player making the check lowers his head or shoulder and hits with the force and intent to put the opponent on the ground—results in a minimum 1-minute non-releasable penalty at all levels, and often a 2- or 3-minute non-releasable penalty or an ejection. A player in possession may not initiate violent contact with a defender.

Officials are encouraged to call non-releasable penalties for violent contact early in the game and to elevate the length of penalties for excessively violent contact after the first offense by a team. In particular, a second “take-out” or “excessive” body check by the same player should generally be a 3:00 NR penalty or an ejection foul. The concept of “targeting” has been added to the boys lacrosse rules, and for youth lacrosse targeting will **always** result in an ejection.

Coaches must teach their players how to make legal contact for their level of play.

Age groups

The US Lacrosse age groups for 2022 are:

Date of Birth	Age Group
Born 9/1/2013 through 8/31/2015	8U
Born 9/1/2011 through 8/31/2013	10U
Born 9/1/2009 through 8/31/2011	12U
Born 9/1/2007 through 8/31/2009	14U

Individual leagues or tournaments may alter these dates, either for all players or on a case-by-case basis, provided the policies are clearly stated to all participating teams. Any variations from these birth dates must be approved by the GNLL **before** the athlete in question plays any league or tournament games—and preferably before practices—or forfeits and other sanctions may result per GNLL policies.

Rules for ALL levels (8U–14U) of GNLL boys youth play

Uniform and equipment

Game jerseys must be of the same dominant color. Goalkeepers **must** wear the same color jersey as their teammates. Player shorts need not match colors, although having shorts of the same dominant color for most or all players is preferred.

Visible numbers on the front and back of the jerseys are recommended for 8U and are required for 10U, 12U, and 14U, with a different number for each player (numbers may be added or altered using tape to comply with this rule). If a team does not have legal jerseys, a technical foul is assessed to start the game and the officials must report issue to the GNLL. If duplicate numbers are not corrected after an official notifies the head coach, further occurrences are penalized with a conduct foul.

All players must wear protective cups (this is not checked by officials).

All players must wear chest protection meeting the NOCSAE ND200 standard (chest protectors for goalies and shoulder pads for field players).

For non-goalie sticks, the minimum head width at the widest point, inside measurement, will be 6.0". The "template test" will **never** be used to measure throat width in youth games.

Officials will not measure sticks during equipment inspections unless there is a Level 2 official working the game. Measurements will then only be checked for a coach-requested check in which the coach requests that the stick be measured.

Shooting strings may not be more than 4" from the scoop. These will be visually inspected at all levels, with any obvious inverted U or V stringing considered illegal. Shooting strings will not be measured unless a Level 2 official is working the game and a coach makes a specific request for measurements.

Rib pads are recommended but not required.

Arm pads are recommended but not required for goalies at any level. Goalkeeper shin/knee/thigh pads are recommended but not required; if used, they are not allowed to significantly increase blocking area.

Eye shade (grease or non-glare strips or stickers) that is not a solid stroke (or includes words, numbers, logos or other symbols within the eye shade) is prohibited. **Situation:** A1 has eye shade (grease or non-glare strips or stickers) that is (a) a solid stroke inside the eye socket and not extending to the cheek bone; (b) includes words, numbers, logos or other symbols; or (c) extends outside the eye socket or below the cheek bone. **Ruling:** (a) legal; (b) and (c) illegal. In (b) and (c), A1 must adjust the eye shade before returning to play.

Host requirements, team requirements, and pre-game

For association-hosted games, each team supplies balls for the end line and sideline on their half of the field. The balls must be white, yellow, orange, or lime green balls and must meet the current NOCSAE standard at the time of manufacture. Coaches may agree to switch colors provided there is a sufficient supply of that color. For GNLL-hosted league and tournament games, the GNLL will supply game balls.

Coaches are responsible for making sure spectators are positioned only on the side of the field opposite the team benches and that they are at least 6 yards from the sideline (except in stadia with permanent seating, where fans may sit in the permanent seating on either side); it is strongly recommended that a dashed limit line be marked to indicate 6 yards. In cases where fans are closer than 6 yards, the *home team head coach* is required to move the fans back before the game can continue, even at neutral sites; failure to comply results in a non-releasable unsportsmanlike conduct foul against that coach.

A full-team lineup is done for 8U, 10U, and 12U; only starters line up for 14U games.

A coin toss is conducted for all levels of play (any player or coach for 8U; captain(s) for 10U and up) if time permits. Otherwise, the home team chooses a goal to defend and the away team gets alternate possession.

At least one coach for each team—not necessarily the head coach—must be at least 18 years old and meet all league or tournament training requirements for a coach or the game will be forfeited. Once a game starts, if for any reason a team no longer has at least one coach who is at least 18 years old and who meets league or tournament requirements, the game is a forfeit. Game officials will not enforce this rule because they are unable to verify coach certifications, but leagues and tournaments will declare forfeits after the game if they determine this rule was violated.

Practice goals are legal at all levels provided there are no holes or gaps in the net and provided they will not tip over during play.

In-home and nominated defender rules: Prior to the start of any 10U, 12U, or 14U game, each head coach will specify both a starting attackman to serve as the in-home (who will serve penalties not against a specific player on the field) **and** a starting defender (who may serve non-expulsion-foul penalties for the goalkeeper; it is still allowable for the goalie to serve a penalty and to have a legally-equipped backup substitute into the game). **If the nominated defender is already serving a penalty or is assessed a penalty at the same time as the goalkeeper, the next defender in the scorebook will serve for the goalkeeper.**

Flag down rule

The youth flag-down rule is essentially the same as it was in 2018, but the NFHS rule changed in 2019, so the current youth rule is included here. For youth games, if a defending player commits a personal or technical foul when any attacking player has possession of the ball, the official must drop a flag, make the verbal signal “flag down” and withhold the whistle until:

- a) A player on the defending team gains possession of the ball.
- b) The ball hits the ground (not on a shot)
- c) A subsequent defensive foul is committed (unless a scoring play is imminent, in which case play can be allowed to continue until a scoring play is no longer imminent). Note: If there is a flag down and a technical foul is committed by the defensive team while a pass is in flight, that will result in a second flag and a stoppage of play in youth games.
- d) A shot hits the goalkeeper, goal posts, or crossbar, and then the ball is touched (1) by any player of either team other than the defending goalkeeper, or (2) by an official.
- e) Any other action occurs that would normally require the officials to stop play (e.g., a goal is scored, the ball goes out of bounds, the offense commits any foul, an injury or equipment timeout, a team timeout, the period ends)

When a second defensive foul is committed, play stops unless a scoring play is in progress. Scoring plays in process should be defined when the team in possession of the ball (1) has the ball in the offensive half of the field (2) continuously advances towards the ball towards the goal (3) does not bring the ball below goal line extended once the ball is above goal line extended (4) has not taken a shot (5) does not allow the ball to hit the ground, except on a shot (6) a situation has not occurred that would stop a Slow-Whistle Technique

Note that the definition of a “shot” requires that the ball be released from the head of the stick above the goal-line extended. This affects how points (b) and (d) are enforced in some situations.

Penalty enforcement

Games can be terminated by officials for reasons including but not limited to:

- flagrant unsportsmanlike conduct by coaches, players, or spectators
- rough play
- encouragement of rough play by coaches and spectators

Dead-ball fouls are enforced in sequence, exactly as in NFHS rules.

In 10U, 12U, and 14U games, if a team in the lead by 1 or 2 goals in the last two minutes of play commits a time-serving penalty, officials will stop the play when appropriate by rule and then will stop the game clock to report the penalty. The clock will start when the whistle blows to restart play.

A player fouls out with 5 minutes of personal foul penalties or 3 separate personal fouls.

Play of the game

There are no mercy rules at any levels of youth play. However, coaches are strongly discouraged from running the score up against any team once a clear winning margin has been established.

Default timing for all levels is 12-min. running-time quarters, with teams allowed 1 timeout per half. Shorter times can be used, but if the total game time is 32 minutes or less there are no timeouts allowed.

There is no overtime in regular-season games. For tournaments, ties will stand unless the GNLL specifies an OT and/or tiebreaker in advance involving at least 4 players per team.

There is no 20-second clear rule at any level of play.

A contrasting color shaft (or paint or tape) for faceoff players is not required. Players taking faceoffs may not touch the plastic portion of the head with their glove.

If a player in possession or potentially involved in the play loses required protective equipment, this will be an immediate stoppage of play with no penalty (unless the loss of equipment was deliberate, in which case an unsportsmanlike conduct foul is assessed). If a player not in possession of the ball legally loses mandatory equipment and no other players are in the immediate vicinity, then the play may continue.

Body contact

Body contact is legal only when the player being contacted either (1) has possession of the ball or (2) is within 3 yards of a loose ball (including a ball in flight). Violations could be penalized as a technical foul (interference, push, hold) or a personal foul (illegal body check, unnecessary roughness, targeting, defenseless player, check to the head or neck).

Subject to the above rule and the rulebook rules, all levels of play allow limited holding, pushing, and man-ball boxing out.

Body checking of any kind is *illegal* in 8U, 10U, and 12U. Body checking is only allowed in 14U when the player applying the check is completely upright and the force applied is not sufficient to put the opponent on the ground. A “take-out” body check—where the player making the check lowers his head or shoulder and hits with the force and intent to put the opponent on the ground—results in a minimum 1-minute non-releasable penalty at all levels, and often a 2- or 3-minute non-releasable penalty or an ejection. Any take-out body check that would be illegal at the high school level (e.g., from behind, below the waist, when a player is on the ground) must be at least a 2:00 NR penalty. Officials are encouraged to give longer penalties for violent contact after the first offense by a team. In particular, a second take-out body check by the same player should generally be at least a 3:00 NR penalty or an ejection foul.

Stick checking (all levels)

One-handed stick checks are illegal at all levels. A one-handed stick check is penalized as slashing even if the check contacts only the opponent’s stick or misses the opponent’s stick/body completely.

Contact of any degree made to an opponent’s head while attempting to execute a stick check is slashing. Stick contact to the head or neck *could* be a two-minute or three-minute non-releasable penalty per NFHS Rule 5-4 or an ejection foul per NFHS Rule 5-12, but if rule 5-4 and 5-12 do not apply then a 1:00 releasable penalty could be issued.

Stick-to-stick contact of any kind is illegal unless the player being contacted either (1) has possession of the ball or (2) is within 3 yards of a loose ball (including a ball in flight). Violations could be penalized as a technical foul (interference).

Stick-to-body contact is always illegal except for an equal-pressure hold with the stick between the hands no wider than shoulder width. Violations could be penalized as a technical foul (interference, push, hold) or a personal foul (slashing, cross check, unnecessary roughness, targeting, check to the head or neck).

Mercy rule (10U, 12U, and 14U)

After the first half, once the goal differential reaches 12 goals or more, in any situation where a faceoff would normally be held, the head coach of the trailing team shall have the option to either (1) have his or her team start with possession of the ball at midfield or (2) have a faceoff as usual. If the score reverts to 6 goals or less, faceoffs will be held as normal.

Suspensions

All player ejections carry an additional 2-game suspension for the first offense. All coach ejections carry an additional 4-game suspension for the first offense. Subsequent ejections carry longer suspensions, and the count of ejections carries over from year to year.

Suspensions will be extended if a coach does not leave the playing facility in a timely manner after being ejected or if inappropriate behavior continues after the ejection.

Coaches box

There is a limit of 3 coaches in the coaches box for all GNLL youth games. No one else is permitted in the coaches box during the game except for one, two, or three coaches.

Forfeits

Each team must have the minimum number of players to field a full team (including a legally equipped goalkeeper for 10U and higher) and a qualified head coach (according to GNLL policies), for any game to start. If a team does not meet these requirements within 10 minutes of the scheduled game time, the game will be declared a forfeit and no game will be played.

Sideline managers

It is strongly recommended that each team provide a sideline manager to keep spectators 6 yards back from the far sideline and to encourage only positive behavior from spectators.

Rules for 8U

US Lacrosse 8U rules apply with the modifications listed below **along with the rules for all levels of GNLL boys youth play** listed earlier.

Field

A small field will be used. No midfield line is required.

The crease circles can be marked with paint, soccer discs, or foldable creases.

See the US Lacrosse 2020 Youth Boys Rulebook for field diagrams and possible field setups using existing regulation fields.

Any situation that would normally result in the offensive team starting in the alley will result in the offensive team starting 1 yard in from the sideline instead.

Goals

Goals should be 4'x4'. If no such goals are available, goals of a different size or a standard goal flipped to a triangle may be used instead provided the same size is used at both ends.

Officials, coaches, and timekeepers

Coaches may officiate 8U games. If desired, one or two officials may be used.

If no officials are used, coaches can be anywhere on the field or sideline and will assume responsibility for officiating the game.

If at least one official is used, **coaches are not allowed on the field of play** but are allowed anywhere along the bench-side sideline except the opposing coaches box.

If an official or officials are used, there must be at least one person—preferably two—working in the table area to keep game time, time penalties (even though teams will not play man-down), and record penalties in order to be able to notify the officials if a player fouls out of the game.

Squad size and offside

5v5 (no goalie). (Fewer players can be used if a team does not have enough players at any point since score will not be kept.)

There is no offside rule.

Equipment

No long crosses are permitted. All sticks must be between 37" and 42". **Players may use girls field crosses provided they pass the boys pocket depth and rollout requirements.**

A soft lacrosse ball (or other similar size and weight soft ball) or a NOCSAE lacrosse ball must be used.

Starting play

There will be no faceoffs at this level. The team winning the coin toss will be awarded possession to start the game. The other team gets first alternate possession and choice of goal to defend in the first and third quarters.

After goals, the scored-upon team is awarded possession anywhere along the GLE (Goal Line Extended). Players may be anywhere on the field for the restart provided no player is within 5 yards of the player in possession. Play may be restarted as soon as substitutions are completed.

Each quarter starts with a team awarded possession at midfield based on alternate possession unless there is a flag down at the end of a quarter or a foul between quarters (in which case the opposing team is awarded possession to start the period, with no change in alternate possession). Note: Since there are no time-serving penalties, possession can never carry over from one quarter to the next based only on one team having possession when the period ends.

One-pass rule

The three-pass rule previously used for 8U in some leagues is no longer be used in **any** league or tournament. Instead, in any situation in which a face-off would normally be held in a higher-level game (i.e., the start of a quarter when possession is not carrying over due to a flag down, after a goal is scored), the team awarded possession must **attempt** one pass before they are allowed to shoot at the goal. **Note:** This rule does **not** apply on every possession, only in situations where there would normally have been a face-off in a higher-level game.

If a team shoots at the goal before attempting a pass, it is a technical foul on the attacking team: no goal, and possession is awarded to the opposing team.

Officials determine what qualifies as a pass attempt, but attempts to circumvent the spirit of the rule, such as dropping the ball from one stick into another, will not be counted as passes.

Coaches may instruct their own teams to attempt or complete any number of passes in any situation (and are encouraged to do so when their teams have a large lead), and coaches may agree with each other to any such rules, but under no circumstances may officials be asked to enforce these team rules or handshake agreements.

Restarts

For 8U and 10U, officials must ensure that no player from either team is within 5 yards of the player in possession before restarting play. If a player is closer than 5 yards, the officials will instruct the offending player to move back 5 yards and will start a 5-second count. If the player does not move back 5 yards within 5 seconds, a delay of game foul will be assessed.

If a defensive player who is more than 5 yards from the player awarded possession moves within 5 yards of that player to prevent the quick restart, a delay of game foul may be assessed.

Substitution

Substitution will be done differently from what is described in the US Lacrosse rules:

- When a goal is scored, the goal scorer **must** substitute out of the game unless a team has the minimum number of players. Other players **may** substitute after a goal. Play will resume when substitution is complete.
- At the start of a period or after a goal, penalty, or officials timeout, coaches should be striving to complete substitutions within 20 seconds, and teams could potentially be called for delay of game if they are taking more than 20 seconds and significantly longer than their opponents.
- Whole- or partial-team substitution allowed at other dead balls (coach must notify official during live-ball play that he wants to substitute on the next dead ball or notify the official during a dead ball before the official restarts play; teams will have 20 seconds to substitute).
- The head coach of team in possession may get a stoppage of play during any live ball in order to complete substitutions by yelling “sub timeout!” to the officials **provided** that his or her team is in no danger of losing the ball at the time of the request (e.g., if player A1 is being aggressively double-teamed by B1 and B2, Coach A may not call for a sub timeout).
- Officials should stop play after 2 minutes or so if there have been no chances for substitution and if there is no imminent scoring opportunity. The timekeeper should alert the officials if there have been 2 minutes with no substitution opportunities.
- Otherwise, substitution is allowed during live play according to standard NFHS rules.

Substitution should be done so that all players get roughly equal playing time.

Equipment inspections

Routine inspections by officials: When trained officials are assigned to the game, they should inspect the protective gear, check stick for end cap, visually inspect shooting strings, and visually inspect the rest of the stick for one player from each team at least once per half. If the visual inspection indicates an obvious problem the official will check pocket depth and rollout, and if the stick is illegal it is removed from the game until corrected. There are no equipment penalties assessed at this level, but a player with missing or illegal protective gear may not return until he is wearing all the proper protective gear and he has a stick that meets specifications. If one player is found to have missing or illegal protective equipment or an illegal stick, possession will be awarded to the opposing team. There will be no routine inspections if coaches are officiating the game.

Coach-requested inspections: None.

Stick checking

The US Lacrosse stick-checking rules for 8U are highly restrictive. The rule for those levels reads:

In all cases, stick checks must be made with two hands on the crosse and to the crosse of an opponent or his gloved hand on his crosse. An opponent must be in possession of the ball or within 3 yards of a loose ball. Only checks with the crosse listed below are legal:

(a) *Lift the bottom hand or the head of the stick, whichever is below the chest area.*

(b) *Poke the bottom hand or the head of the stick, whichever is below the chest area.*

(c) *Downward check initiated from below both players' shoulders.*

Other than a poke check, **any check that is directed toward the body is a slash** for this level of play regardless of contact. In addition, any attempted stick check that contacts an opponent's body anywhere other than the gloved hand on the stick is a slash regardless of whether points (a)–(c) are followed.

An attempted stick check that contacts the stick **and** the body is a slash; hitting the stick does not remove a player's obligation to not hit the body.

The following situations have been approved by US Lacrosse and apply to 8U games:

Situation 1: In an 8U game, player A1 has possession and carries his entire stick above his shoulders in a non-lacrosse fashion so that no one can legally check his stick under the rules for that level of play. **Ruling:** The first time it happens in the game, the officials should stop the game and explain to the players and coaches that we don't do that in lacrosse. If it happens again, the officials will call withholding and award possession to the opposing team. Continued violations may result in a releasable unsportsmanlike conduct foul for repeatedly committing the same technical foul.

Situation 2: In a 8U game, player A1 is preparing to shoot or pass and has both hands and his stick above shoulder height, which according to the wording in the rule book makes any check to the stick or gloves illegal. **Ruling:** If it is not possible to initiate a lift or poke check that makes contact below the chest of the player in possession or a downward check that starts below shoulder height for both players, the defensive player may (1) hold his stick in a blocking or covering position in front of A1's stick to interfere with the shot or pass or (2) execute a well-controlled lift or poke to the bottom hand even if the contact is above A1's chest provided the check is not violent and contacts only the stick or the gloved hand on the stick.

Note that these rules are **in addition** to the rules about stick checking in the "Rules for All Levels" section.

Penalties

There are no man-down situations. The flag-down, slow-whistle procedure is still used, but when play stops, the official will explain the foul to the player and coaches. The penalized player must leave the

game and will stay in the table area until the penalty time expires or, for releasable penalties, the opposing team scores a goal; at that point, the penalized player may substitute back into the game subject to the substitution rules.

Even though teams do not play man-down, a player may still be ejected or foul out of the game.

Possession cannot carry over from quarter to quarter due to uneven penalty situations since teams will not play man-down, but it will carry over if the period ends with a flag down.

Other rules

No score will be kept.

No body checking of any kind is permitted (see *Rules for All Levels* section).

Raking/covering the ball is **legal** as long as the ball is immediately moved and not withheld from play. If a player covers the ball without immediately moving the cross, that is withholding. (The old rule prohibiting this for 8U and 10U has been removed.)

As with every level of boys lacrosse play, no defensive player (other than a properly equipped goalkeeper, and goalkeepers are not allowed in 8U) can enter his own crease with the perceived intent of blocking a shot or acting as a goalkeeper.

Scrum ball rule: If 3 or more players are near the ball and no player can pick up the ball within 4 seconds, the ball is awarded by alternate possession.

Rules for 10U

US Lacrosse 10U rules apply with the modifications listed below **along with the rules for all levels of GNLL boys youth play** listed earlier.

Field

A small field will be used. The crease circles can be marked with paint, soccer discs, or foldable creases. The center line can be marked with cones on the sideline for 10U rather than with paint.

See the US Lacrosse 2020 Youth Boys Rulebook for field diagrams and possible field setups using existing regulation fields.

Any situation that would normally result in the offensive team starting in the alley will result in the offensive team starting 1 yard in from the sideline instead.

Goals

Goals should be 4'x4'. [If no such goals are available, goals of a different size may be used instead provided the same size is used at both ends. If a standard goal \(6'x6'\) is used, it may not be flipped to a triangle.](#)

Officials, coaches, and timekeepers

Two officials are preferred, but in some situations one official may be used.

Coaches are allowed anywhere on sideline *except* in table area or opponent's coaching box/bench area.

[There must be at least one person—preferably two—working in the table area to keep game time, time penalties, and record penalties in order to be able to notify the officials if a player fouls out of the game.](#)

Squad size and offside

[Seven players per team \(2 attack, 2 midfield, 2 defense, 1 goalie\).](#)

A team is offside if it has *more than* 4 players in its offensive end or *more than* 5 players in its defensive end; players serving penalties count toward *both* ends of the field. In many cases, only cones will mark the center line and not a painted line; officials will only make the call for offside if it is clear there too many players clearly past the cone(s).

[If, due to injuries, penalties, disqualifications, ejections, or other reasons, a team is unable to put at least 5 players on the field \(including a legally equipped goalkeeper\), that team forfeits the game.](#)

[The penalty stacking rule will come into effect for 10U when there are more than 2 players from the same team assessed penalties at the same time \(rather than 3 as in 12U and higher levels\).](#)

Equipment

Up to 2 long crosses (other than the goalkeeper's crosse) between 47" and 54" are allowed on the field at the same time. These are optional; all players may use short crosses if desired. The US Lacrosse recommendation is that no long crosse be taller than the player using it, but this is *not* a requirement.

Short sticks must be between 37" and 42". Goalie sticks must be between 37" and 54".

[Players may use girls field crosses provided they pass the boys pocket depth and rollout requirements.](#)

Faceoffs

On a faceoff, each team must have a goalkeeper in its crease, 2 players behind the GLE in its offensive end, and 2 players behind the GLE in its defensive end. One midfielder from each team faces off, [and](#)

one midfielder from each team stands with one foot on the crease above GLE on his defensive end of the field.

Midfielders are released on the whistle; goalies must stay in their crease and other players are restrained behind the goal line extended on their side of the field until the faceoff is over.

If a team is down one player on a face-off, the midfielder spot on the crease must be left empty. If a team is down two players, the midfielder spot and one spot behind that team's defensive-end GLE must be left empty; in that situation, NFHS rules about offside for taking the faceoff apply. Note: A team cannot be down more than 2 players on the faceoff due to the penalty stacking rule (see above).

Faceoffs are treated like any other loose-ball situation: there is no requirement for players to play the ball, so man-ball boxing out, pushing, and holding are allowed subject to the usual rules.

One-pass rule

The two-pass rule previously used for 10U in some leagues will no longer be used in any league. Instead, in any situation in which a face-off would normally be held (i.e., the start of a quarter when possession is not carrying over due to a flag down or uneven penalty situation, after a goal is scored), the team gaining possession must **attempt** one pass before they are allowed to shoot at the goal. This applies even if the faceoff does not take place (e.g., due to a pre-whistle violation on one team) or if possession is awarded due to a post-whistle violation. **Note:** This rule does **not** apply on every possession, only in situations where there would normally have been a face-off in a higher-level game.

If a team shoots at the goal before attempting a pass, it is a technical foul on the attacking team: no goal, and possession is awarded to the opposing team.

What qualifies as a pass attempt is determined by the officials, but attempts to circumvent the spirit of the rule, such as dropping the ball from one stick into another, will not be counted as passes.

Coaches may instruct their own teams to attempt or complete any number of passes in any situation (and are encouraged to do so when their teams have a large lead), and coaches may agree with each other to any such rules, but under no circumstances may officials be asked to enforce these team rules or handshake agreements.

Restarts

For 8U and 10U, officials must ensure that no player from either team is within 5 yards of the player in possession before restarting play. If a player is closer than 5 yards, the officials will instruct the offending player to move back 5 yards and will start a 5-second count. If the player does not move back 5 yards within 5 seconds, a delay of game foul will be assessed.

If a defensive player who is more than 5 yards from the player awarded possession moves within 5 yards of that player to prevent the quick restart, a delay of game foul may be assessed.

Substitution

Substitution will be done differently from what is described in the US Lacrosse rules:

- When a goal is scored, the goal scorer **must** substitute out of the game unless a team has the minimum number of players. Other players **may** substitute after a goal. Play will resume when substitution is complete and teams are ready for the ensuing face-off, if any.
- At the start of a period or after a goal, penalty, or officials timeout, coaches should be striving to complete substitutions within 20 seconds, and teams could potentially be called for delay of game if they are taking more than 20 seconds and significantly longer than their opponents.
- Whole- or partial-team substitution is allowed at other dead balls (coach must notify official during live-ball play that he wants to substitute on the next dead ball or notify the official during a dead ball before the official restarts play; teams will have 20 seconds to substitute).
- The head coach of the team in possession may get a stoppage of play during any live ball in

order to complete substitutions by yelling “sub timeout!” to the officials **provided** that his or her team is in no danger of losing the ball at the time of the request (e.g., if player A1 is being aggressively double-teamed by B1 and B2, Coach A may not call for a sub timeout). Both teams may substitute.

- Officials should stop play after 2 minutes or so if there have been no chances for substitution and if there is no imminent scoring opportunity. The timekeeper should alert the officials if there have been 2 minutes with no substitution opportunities.
- Otherwise, substitution is allowed during live play according to standard NFHS rules.

Substitution should be done so that all players get roughly equal playing time.

Equipment inspections

Routine inspections by officials: At least once per half, the officials will check protective gear, check sticks for end caps, visually inspect shooting strings, and check pocket depth and rollout for one player from each team. If a player is missing required protective gear, the player will be penalized. If the stick has a deep pocket or is otherwise illegal, it must be removed from the game until corrected (no penalty).

Coach-requested inspections: Allowed subject to NFHS rules. Such inspections will be conducted the same as officials checks, except there will be a penalty for a deep pocket or otherwise illegal crosse (2:00 NR; stick can return if adjusted). In addition, measurements are subject to inspection and possible penalty if there is a Level 2 official working the game and if the coach specifies that measurements should be checked. Note: Level 1 officials may check the length of long sticks to ensure they are in the 47” to 54” range; this should normally be done prior to the start of the game to ensure there are no issues, but if a long stick is discovered to be outside the legal range once the game starts, it will be penalized.

Stick checking

The US Lacrosse stick-checking rules for 10U are highly restrictive and are the same as for 8U. The rule for those levels reads:

In all cases, stick checks must be made with two hands on the crosse and to the crosse of an opponent or his gloved hand on his crosse. An opponent must be in possession of the ball or within 3 yards of a loose ball. Only checks with the crosse listed below are legal:

- (a) Lift the bottom hand or the head of the stick, whichever is below the chest area.*
- (b) Poke the bottom hand or the head of the stick, whichever is below the chest area.*
- (c) Downward check initiated from below both players’ shoulders.*

Other than a poke check, **any check that is directed toward the body is a slash** for this level of play regardless of contact. In addition, any attempted stick check that contacts an opponent’s body anywhere other than the gloved hand on the stick is a slash regardless of whether points (a)–(c) are followed.

An attempted stick check that contacts the stick **and** the body is a slash; hitting the stick does not remove a player’s obligation to not hit the body.

Note: If long crosses are used—they never required—coaches must pay special attention to teaching proper stick checking for these levels of play: a downward check may only be initiated from below the shoulders of *both* the player applying *and* the player receiving the check, and that can be difficult to execute with a long stick.

The following situations have been approved by US Lacrosse and apply to 10U games:

Situation 1: In a 10U game, player A1 has possession and carries his entire stick above his shoulders in a non-lacrosse fashion so that no one can legally check his stick under the rules for that level of play. **Ruling:** The first time it happens in the game, the officials should stop the game and explain to the players and coaches that we don’t do that in lacrosse. If it happens again, the officials

will call withholding and award possession to the opposing team. Continued violations may result in a releasable unsportsmanlike conduct foul for repeatedly committing the same technical foul.

Situation 2: In a 10U game, player A1 is preparing to shoot or pass and has both hands and his stick above shoulder height, which according to the wording in the rule book makes any check to the stick or gloves illegal. **Ruling:** If it is not possible to initiate a lift or poke check that makes contact below the chest of the player in possession or a downward check that starts below shoulder height for both players, the defensive player may (1) hold his stick in a blocking or covering position in front of A1's stick to interfere with the shot or pass or (2) execute a well-controlled lift or poke to the bottom hand even if the contact is above A1's chest provided the check is not violent and contacts only the stick or the gloved hand on the stick.

Note that these rules are **in addition** to the rules about stick checking in the “Rules for All Levels” section.

Other rules

Raking/covering the ball is **legal** as long as the ball is immediately moved and not withheld from play. If a player covers the ball without immediately moving the cross, that is withholding. (The old rule prohibiting this for 8U and 10U has been removed.)

Stick checking is very limited and no body checking of any kind is permitted (see *Rules for All Levels*).

Scrum ball rule: If 3 or more players are near the ball and no player can pick up the ball within 4 seconds, the ball is awarded by alternate possession.

Rules for 12U

US Lacrosse 12U rules apply with the modifications listed below **along with the rules for all levels of GNLL boys youth play** listed earlier.

Squad size and offside

Ten players per team, including the goalkeeper. Normal offside rules apply

Officials and coaches

Two officials will normally be used, but 3 could be used in some circumstances upon request.

Coaches are restricted to coaches' area with exceptions defined in NFHS rules.

Field

Full field (110 yards by [53 1/3–60yards wide](#)) with midline.

Equipment

Short sticks must be between 40" and 42". Goalkeeper sticks must be between 40" and 72". Up to 4 long crosses, 52"–72" long, may be on the field at once. The US Lacrosse recommendation is that no long crosse be taller than the player using it, but this is *not* a requirement.

Restarts

Play may be restarted with a defensive player closer than 5 yards to the player awarded possession (offensive players must still be at least 5 yards away). If a defender is within 5 yards of the player in possession, he may not defend the player in possession until that player reaches a distance of 5 yards from the defender or a technical foul will be assessed. In addition, the defensive player must give the offensive player a direct path to the goal on the restart or a technical foul may result in some situations. This rule is identical to the NFHS restart rule for high school play. **Because this rule does not apply to 10U and under games, coaches are encouraged to teach new 12U players about this rule.**

Substitution

[Standard NFHS substitution rules will be used.](#)

Equipment inspections

Routine inspections by officials: At least once per half, the officials will check protective gear, check sticks for end caps, visually inspect shooting strings, and check pocket depth and rollout for one player from each team. If a player is missing required protective gear, the player will be penalized. There will be a penalty for a deep pocket or otherwise illegal crosse (2:00 NR; stick can return if adjusted).

Coach-requested inspections: Allowed subject to [NFHS rules](#). They will be conducted the same as routine inspections for this level and with the same penalties. [In addition, measurements are subject to inspection and possible penalty if there is a Level 2 official working the game and if the coach specifies that measurements should be checked.](#)

Stick checking

In addition to the rules regarding slashing for all levels (e.g., no one-handed checks, stick checks are only legal if the opponent has the ball or is within 3 yards of a loose ball), the following rules apply:

- Any stick check that contacts the body or stick above shoulder height for the shorter player is a slash.
- Any attempted stick check above shoulder height for the shorter player, regardless of contact, is a slash.
- A check directed toward the body (i.e., slap check) is legal only if it is a controlled check and if it either makes no contact or makes contact only with the stick or the gloved hand on the stick. A slap check directed toward the body that contacts any other body part (e.g., forearm, elbow, upper arm, shoulder, ribs) is a slash.
- A downward check is legal and **may** start above shoulder height; however, it may not contact the stick above shoulder height or make any contact with the body. Any downward check starting above head height will be heavily scrutinized by the officials to ensure that it is controlled and not made with deliberate viciousness or reckless abandon, regardless of whether the opponent's crosse or body is struck.

An attempted stick check that contacts the stick **and** the body is a slash; hitting the stick does not remove a player's obligation to not hit the body.

Coaches are strongly encouraged to continue teaching players to focus on the checks that are legal at the 10U level (poke or lift the bottom hand below chest level; downward check initiated below shoulder height for both players).

The following situations have been approved by US Lacrosse and apply to 12U and under games:

Situation 1: In a 12U, player A1 has possession and carries his entire stick above his shoulders in a non-lacrosse fashion so that no one can legally check his stick under the rules for that level of play.

Ruling: The first time it happens in the game, the officials should stop the game and explain to the players and coaches that we don't do that in lacrosse. If it happens again, the officials will call withholding and award possession to the opposing team. Continued violations may result in a releasable unsportsmanlike conduct foul for repeatedly committing the same technical foul.

Situation 2: In a 12U, player A1 is preparing to shoot or pass and has both hands and his stick above shoulder height, which according to the wording in the rule book makes any check to the stick or gloves illegal. **Ruling:** If it is not possible to initiate a lift or poke check that makes contact below the chest of the player in possession or a downward check that starts below shoulder height for both players, the defensive player may (1) hold his stick in a blocking or covering position in front of A1's stick to interfere with the shot or pass or (2) execute a well-controlled lift or poke to the bottom hand even if the contact is above A1's chest provided the check is not violent and contacts only the stick or the gloved hand on the stick.

Other rules

No body checking of any kind is permitted (see *Rules for All Levels* section).

There is no "scrum ball" rule; this has been eliminated by US Lacrosse for 12U.

The offensive 10-second count and over-and-back rules will apply, **but the 20-second clearing timer will not be used.**

"Get-it-in/keep-it-in" stalling rules apply. If officials believe a team is deliberately keeping the ball from play in the defensive end of the field, they may issue a get-it-in/keep-it-in stall warning even though the ball has not yet advanced to the offensive end.

Rules for 14U

US Lacrosse 14U rules apply with the modifications listed below **along with the rules for all levels of GNLL boys youth play** listed earlier.

Squad size and offside

Ten players per team, including a goalkeeper. Normal offside rules apply

Officials and coaches

Two officials will normally be used, but 3 could be used in some circumstances upon request.

Coaches are restricted to coaches' area with exceptions defined in NFHS rules.

Field

Full field (110 yards by [53 1/3–60 yards wide](#))

Equipment

Up to 4 long crosses, 52"–72" long, may be on the field at once. The US Lacrosse recommendation is that no long crosse be taller than the player using it, but this is *not* a requirement.

Short sticks must be between 40" and 42".

Goalkeeper sticks must be between 40" and 72".

Restarts

Play may be restarted with a defensive player closer than 5 yards to the player awarded possession (offensive players must still be at least 5 yards away). If a defender is within 5 yards of the player in possession, he may not defend the player in possession until that player reaches a distance of 5 yards from the defender or a technical foul results. In addition, the defensive player must give the offensive player a direct path to the goal on the restart or a technical foul may result in some situations. This rule is identical to the NFHS restart rule for high school play.

Equipment inspections

Routine inspections by officials: At least once per half, the officials will check protective gear, check the stick for an end cap, visually inspect shooting strings, and check pocket depth and rollout for one player from each team. If a player is missing required protective gear, the player will be penalized. There will be a penalty for a deep pocket or otherwise illegal crosse (2:00 NR; stick can return if adjusted).

Coach-requested inspections: Allowed subject to [NFHS rules](#). They will be conducted the same as routine inspections for this level and with the same penalties. In addition, measurements are subject to inspection and possible penalty if there is a Level 2 official working the game and if the coach specifies that measurements should be checked.

Body checking

Body checking is only allowed in 14U when the player applying the check is completely upright and the force applied is not sufficient to put the opponent on the ground. A "take-out" or "excessive" body check—where the player making the check lowers his head or shoulder and hits with the force and intent to put the opponent on the ground—results in a minimum 1-minute non-releasable penalty, and often a 2- or 3-minute non-releasable penalty or an ejection.

Any take-out body check that would be illegal at the high school level (e.g., from behind, below the waist, when a player is on the ground) must be at least a 2:00 NR penalty. Officials are encouraged to issue longer penalties for violent contact after the first offense by a team. A second take-out body check by the same player should generally be *at least* a 3:00 NR penalty (and could be an ejection foul), and a second take-out check by a different player on the same *team* should generally be *at least* a 2:00 NR penalty.

Note that a shoulder-to-chest or shoulder-to-shoulder body check that knocks the opponent down and which would be perfectly legal in a high-school game is considered excessive and would result in at least a 1-minute non-releasable penalty at the 14U level.

Other rules

The offensive 10-second count and over-and-back rules will apply, [but the 20-second clearing timer will not be used.](#)

“Get-it-in/keep-it-in” stalling rules apply. [If officials believe a team is deliberately keeping the ball from play in the defensive end of the field, they may issue a get-it-in/keep-it-in stall warning even though the ball has not yet advanced to the offensive end.](#)

Rules Changes and Modifications

Suggestions for US Lacrosse Rules

For suggestions regarding the US Lacrosse Boys Youth Rules:

- a. The US Lacrosse Men's Game Rules Subcommittee reviews the NFHS rules and the supplemental rules annually and may adopt any changes or modifications deemed necessary to provide for safe play or are desirable to improve the quality of the players' experience or development.
- b. Please send all comments or suggestions regarding the Rules for Boys' Youth Lacrosse to the US Lacrosse Men's Game Rules Subcommittee via the web form at <https://www.usalacrosse.com/submit-rule-change> (please do not contact the NFHS about these rules). The rules committee meets in June, so it is recommended that suggestions be submitted by May 15 to have the best chance of being considered.

Suggestions for GNLL Youth Rules Modifications

To make comments on the GNLL modifications to the rules, please do not contact the NFHS or US Lacrosse. Questions and comments may be directed to:

Harold Buck
Rules Editor, GNLL Boys Youth Rules
lacrosse@yourassignment.net