



Fall 2012 – 2013 Boys Youth Rules FAQ's

Where can I find the Fall 2012 – Spring 2013 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 Boy's Lacrosse Rule Book. The National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) 2013 Boys Lacrosse Rules Book shall govern US Lacrosse boys youth play, except as amended below. The US Lacrosse Men's Game Committee has approved these exceptions to the NFHS Rules. Send questions about the US Lacrosse Rules for Boys Youth Lacrosse to the US Lacrosse Men's Game Rules Subcommittee at boysyouthrules@uslacrosse.org. Please do not contact NFHS about the following rules.

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

The NFHS rules and the supplemental rules are reviewed annually by 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 June 1, 2013 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 in the 2014 NFHS rules book. Please send all comments or suggestions regarding the Rules for Boys' Youth Lacrosse to the US Lacrosse Men's Game Rules Subcommittee, at the address below, or to boysyouthrules@uslacrosse.org. Please do not contact NFHS about these rules.

Is there a list of tournaments or youth leagues that I can find out about that is already using these playing rules for youth lacrosse?

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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.

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

Yes, in 2012-2013 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 following season.

For 2012-2013 they are....

Checks To The Head/Neck - There has been a growing awareness in the medical and lacrosse communities of the potentially harmful long-term effects of concussions and other head injuries, including those caused by repeated blows to the head that may not result in immediate concussions. In light of this the rules have been revised to further discourage such contact and provide more guidance on when more severe penalties are appropriate. Officials are encouraged to call such violations strictly, including multiple minute penalties or ejections as warranted. 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 dangerous contact from the game.

Unnecessary Roughness - Some body contact is permitted at all levels of boys' youth lacrosse, with progressively more contact permitted as players grow and learn proper checking techniques. However, there is no justification for deliberate and excessively violent contact by any player at any youth level. Failure to properly instruct and enforce appropriate defensive techniques can result in an increased risk of injury to both the attacking and defending youth player. Therefore, to further discourage excessively violent contact, any penalty for unnecessary roughness shall be non-releasable.

Cross Check - When a player uses the part of the handle that is between his hands to check an opponent, serious injury may result. The use of this illegal technique should be neither taught nor permitted.

Cross Check Hold - The cross-check hold (NFHS Rule 6-3 Art 2a) is being employed with increasing regularity on the field and clearly gives an unfair advantage to the defender. Because this call has not been enforced uniformly, coaches may have felt it was appropriate to permit, or not discourage, this technique. Officials are encouraged to call this penalty and coaches are encouraged to teach their players not to employ this technique, and to support officials when they call such penalties.





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 the 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 their 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 they 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?

Fall 2012 –2013 Age Grouping Quick Reference Table

Birthdate	Age Bracket
Born on or after 9/1/1997	U15
Born on or after 9/1/1999	U13
Born on or after 9/1/2001	U11
Born on or after 9/1/2003	U9

What rules should a 5/6 grade team be using?

It is very difficult to place grade divisions into age division because they do not line up. When kids are divided by grade there can be as much as 4 and sometimes even 5 year spread in age. It is for this specific reason that US Lacrosse Age Appropriate Rules were developed with age based divisions for youth players. A child in 6th grade can be 10, 11, 12 or even 13 years old. We want to prevent the 10 year old from ever competing against the 13 year old on the field and so our rules subcommittees, following the recommendations of our Sport Science and Safety Committee, specified that youth players should be divided by age rather than grade. Simply taking a set of Age Appropriate Rules and applying them to a grade based division misses the fundamental intent of the rules which is for them to be applied to children of a specific age.

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. 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.





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 to this being done 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. Also, 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 kids have a quality playing experience.

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

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

We agree that it is great for kids 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. With grade based teams we have received complaints of kids as much as 5 years apart in age being on the same field. A quote from one such complaint letter:

"Is there an age limit for the respective age groups/divisions? If not, I think the USL should seriously consider imposing such a rule. Last year during a Lightning division game (3rd and 4th graders), we had the mother of the opposing team admit that her son (who was a lot bigger than every kid on the field and was "tearing it up") was 12. To no surprise, he was a lot faster and stronger than the 7-10 year olds that he was playing against given the five (5) year age differential between he and a few of our players"

This particular instance involved a kid who was two years "behind" in school. While this is uncommon, having kids one year "behind" (often intentionally held back by parents to gain an advantage) is something we hear on a daily basis. By grouping kids 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 HS). This rule has widespread support throughout the lacrosse community and is generally viewed as the best way to deal with a growing problem.

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 kids allowed to "play up"?

The standard answer is that kids 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 kids who although "playing up" were still the biggest fastest kid on the field. We specifically did not state anything about playing up in the rules for this reason. So, in the end 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. As we were looking at pushing for age vs. grade divisions the issue that came up most often as a concern was that kids may not get to play with their classmates. Specifically it was pointed out by many people who contacted us that kids born in Sept, Oct, Nov and Dec can be on track grade wise (not held back or started early) but ends up in a different division than the other 75% of the kids in their grade.

The second reason was to make the fall and start of a new school year the time the kids 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) 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.

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 foster 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.

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 and we wanted to give leagues the ability to do what works for their specific situation.

