



US Lacrosse Men's Game Rules Subcommittee

Guidelines for Reduced Squad/Reduced Field Men's & Boys' Lacrosse

Rationale: Reduced squad/reduced field lacrosse is often appropriate, especially for new or younger players (U11, U9 and younger). For players, reduced squad lacrosse can be more fun and contribute more to their development than standard 10v10 play because each player is more involved ... has more “touches.” Also, lacrosse on a reduced size field is more proportionate to younger players’ size, speed, and endurance. Further, the pace of play in reduced squad/reduced field lacrosse is often faster, enhancing fitness and fun. From an organizer’s standpoint, smaller fields better utilize scarce field space (instead of 20 players, 28 to 42 may use the same space) and in smaller programs can allow for tighter age groupings on the field (a safety consideration).

Reduced squad/reduced field lacrosse may be especially appropriate at the U11, U9, and younger age levels, but is a fun form of the game for all ages. The most common configuration is seven players per side (7v7 lacrosse—2 each attack, midfield, and defense, with a goalkeeper) and these guidelines focus on this version of the game. However, 8v8 lacrosse (2 attack, 3 midfield, 2 defense with a goalkeeper) also works well, and at the youngest level, some programs have had great success playing with small goals and no goalkeeper, either 6v6 (2 each attack, midfield, and defense) or 7v7 (2 attack, 3 midfield, 2 defense).

Rules: Except as addressed by these guidelines, rules of play – especially safety-related rules (e.g., no long crosses at U9 or younger) – are unchanged from those that apply to the participating age group in regular 10v10 play under US Lacrosse Youth, NFHS, NCAA, or Post-Collegiate Club Rules. US Lacrosse prepared these suggested guidelines to assist programs wanting to play with reduced squads on smaller fields.

The Field:

- If a freestanding reduced size field is used, it should be rectangular, 60-70 yards long and 30-40 yards wide, with a bold center line marked through the center of the field perpendicular to the sidelines. Goals, surrounded by standard 9-foot radius creases, shall be centered equidistant from the sidelines and placed 10 yards from the end line. If practical, other lines may be added that are proportional to the smaller field:
 - Wing area lines 5 yards from the sidelines and 5 yards either side of the center line
 - Defensive-area lines 15 yards from the center line.

- A popular option is to play 7v7 lacrosse across a standard 110 yard by 60 yard men's field, separated into two (or even three) reduced size fields:
 - Two reduced size fields may be bounded by the standard field end lines, sidelines, and defensive-area lines, yielding two 60 by 35 yard reduced size fields. In this instance, the goals would be centered on the standard field goal area lines (making them 10 yards from the end lines). The center line would then be through the center of the standard field goal line, the wing area lines would be 5 yards from the sideline and 5 yards either side of the center line, and the defensive-area lines would be 15 yards from the center line.
 - If a third reduced size field is inserted across the middle of the standard full sized field, it should be 60 by 30 yards, with 5-yard bench/buffer areas between it and the other two fields.
 - Standard 9-foot radius creases should be marked at the midpoint of the standard field's goal area lines, equidistant from the defensive area lines and the end lines, or at the intersections of the standard field center line and wing area lines. When marked/painted creases cannot be applied, use of portable creases is recommended. If portable creases are not available, low profile athletic cones, disks, or other markers such as tape that do not present a safety hazard may be used to delineate the crease.
- If marked/painted lines cannot be added to a reduced field, especially one laid out across a standard field, (e.g., center line, wing area lines, defensive area lines, "sidelines" for a field across the middle of a standard field), low profile athletic cones, disks, or other markers such as tape that do not present a safety hazard may be used. Cones on the sidelines may be used to help identify imaginary center lines and defensive area lines.

(Insert images of modified men's field and freestanding reduced size field -- similar to the modified version of Women's Game Youth Guidebook at 22-23 or Mass Bay's diagrams.)

Goals: Regulation goals (6' x 6') are standard. However, many coaches find that substituting small goals (e.g., 4' x 4') at the U9 level and younger levels. If either or both teams lack goalies, the coaches may agree to use small goals, an artificial goalkeeper, or no goalkeeper.

The Ball: At U9 or younger ages, many coaches find that substituting soft balls (often pink and called "soft sponge," "soft pink," or "pinkies") for regulation balls may increase enjoyment and improve development.

Number and designation of players (7v7):

- 7 players shall constitute a full team. They shall be designated as follows:
 - 1 goalkeeper, 2 defense, 2 midfield, 2 attack.

- Coaches may agree to play with fewer or more than 7v7, provided that the number of players on the field for each team is the same at all times, except during time serving penalties.

Faceoffs:

- Play shall be started at the beginning of each period and after each goal by facing the ball at the Center, except as provided by the relevant rules for each age group.
- **Positioning of Players Before a Faceoff (7v7):** When a team has all its players on the field it will have one player at the center of the field and one player in one of the wing areas (or when an actual wing area line cannot be marked, an imaginary wing area within 5 yards of the sideline and 5 yards either side of the center line). In addition, a team shall confine its goalkeeper and two other players behind the defensive-area line (or an imaginary defensive-area line 15 yards from the center line when an actual line cannot be marked) and two players behind the actual or imaginary defensive-area line in their offensive half of the field. These players will remain behind these actual or imaginary defensive-area lines until possession is gained or the ball crosses the actual or imaginary defensive-area line. (When a Reduced field is laid across a standard field, an alternative is to use the goal area lines or wing area lines [which are also the Goal Lines Extended] as defensive-area lines for the purpose of pre-faceoff positioning of players, with the goalkeeper allowed in the crease above the goal line.)
- **Quick Restart Option:** Alternatively, an organizing authority, league, or both coaches may decide to employ a “quick restart” following goals, in which the goalie plays the ball out of goal immediately after a goal, on the whistle restarting play, initiating a clear attempt. Quick restarts yield faster paced play and more actual playing time in running time games. As such, they are often appropriate for older players. *However, US Lacrosse does not recommend quick restarts at the U9 and U11 youth ages.*
- Note for U9 and U11 play, US Lacrosse Rule 4.3 should apply:

At any point during a game when there is a six-goal lead, the team that is behind will be given the ball at the center line in lieu of a face-off or quick restart as long as the six-goal lead is maintained, unless waived by the coach of the trailing team.

Offside:

In a 7v7 contest, a team is considered offside when it has:

- a) More than four players in its offensive half of the field (between the center line and the end line), including players in the penalty box.

- b) More than five players in its defensive half of the field (between the center line and end line), including players in the penalty box.

If a different Reduced squad configuration is used, suitable adjustments to offsides requirements should be made.

Advancing the Ball and Get It In/Keep It In:

- The defensive 20-second count will not be used.
- The offensive 10-second count will not be used.
- The Get It In/Keep It In rule will not be used.

Note: If Advancing the Ball and Get It In/Keep It In counts are to be used at older age levels, the center line will serve as the defensive-area lines for purposes of these rules.

Note: US Lacrosse recommends that in Reduced squad play at the younger age levels, players play a variety of positions and NOT focus on one position exclusively. One way to achieve this is to divide each team into pairs of players. Before the game, coaches agree on time intervals when both teams will substitute. At each interval, the timer will notify the game official who will call an official's time-out at the first available opportunity. At the first substitution, each team sends a new pair of players in on defense, the two previous defenders move to midfield, the middies move to attack, and the original attack goes to the sideline. Both teams repeat this process at each substitution interval. Goalkeepers change between the quarters. In such games, either no long crosses should be used, or restrictions on the number of long crosses should be waived to allow players who normally play defense to play offense with their long crosses. Normal subbing on the fly could still be used, but the above is a way that might help young players play a variety of positions.