

## 2012 Rules for Boys Youth Lacrosse

The National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) 2012 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.

### **OVERARCHING PRINCIPLE**

The game is to be played with emphasis on the proper development of individual stick skills, team play, player safety, and sportsmanship.

### **Age and Eligibility Guidelines**

US Lacrosse establishes eligibility guidelines in order to promote the game of lacrosse among the youth of America in a safe and sportsmanlike environment. To best achieve this goal, US Lacrosse believes that leagues, associations, and other organizers of youth lacrosse should seek to provide playing opportunities that, as much as possible, establish a "level playing field" among players of similar age, size, and ability.

Age and Eligibility Guidelines are not considered "game-day rules" and are not enforced as game-day rules by officials. Exceptions to age divisions cannot be made on game day and all coaches must adhere to classifications as determined by their league or association.

**League and Association Play.** 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. 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 31<sup>st</sup> preceding competition:

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.

#### **U15:**

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

Spring 2012 Age Grouping Quick Reference Table

Birthdate	Age Bracket
Born on or after 9/1/1996	U15
Born on or after 9/1/1998	U13
Born on or after 9/1/2000	U11
Born on or after 9/1/2002	U9

**Format of the following Section:** Existing NFHS Rule Section reference, followed by the corresponding US Lacrosse Boys Youth Rule section modification. All divisions will follow NFHS Boys Lacrosse Rules with the following modifications:

**Rule 1 — The Game, Field & Equipment**

**The Game - Number of Players**

RULE 1 SECTION 1.

Boys youth lacrosse is played by two teams with 10 players per side on the field. However, if a governing league or association deems it necessary or desirable, for example, due to the number of available players or skill level, or if in non-league contests both coaches agree, games can be played with as few as seven (7) per side on the field.

**The Field – Dimensions**

RULE 1 SECTION 2.

Play on regulation size field is preferred; however, the coaches and officials may agree to play on any size field available. If a game is played with reduced numbers (e.g. 7 per side) it is recommended that field size be reduced as well.

**The Field – Spectator Restrictions**

RULE 1 SECTION 2, ARTICLE 11 a, b & c

- a. Spectators and media, including photographers, are not allowed behind the end lines except in stadium structures where permanent seats exist which are also protected by a fence or netting.
- b. Spectators must be on the side of the field opposite the table and bench areas or in permanent stands separated from the bench area by a barrier and/or a buffer distance such as a track.
- c. Where possible, limit lines will be used. Spectators and media, including photographers, are not allowed within the limit lines at any time during a contest.

If the field is laid out in a manner that does not allow spectators and media to be located as prescribed by paragraphs a, b and c of this rule, as modified here, the game official can waive one or more of these requirements.

**Crosse Dimensions**

RULE 1 SECTION 6

US Lacrosse recommends that coaches assess players’ size, strength, and skill in determining proper long crosse length for defense players, within NFHS rules. US Lacrosse further recommends that a long crosse should not be taller than the player at any youth level. Crosse dimensions will conform to NFHS or NCAA requirements, with the following modifications:

**U11**

The length of the crosse for field players may be 37 to 42 inches or 47 to 52 (“long crosse” for purposes of NFHS RULE 2 SECTION 1 ARTICLE 2). Many coaches find that the use of a 37 to 42 inch crosse is best for defensive player development in the U11 Division.

**U9**

The length of all crosses for all field players shall be 37 to 42 inches.

**Crosse Prohibitions**

RULE 1 SECTION 8

Any strings or leathers are limited to a hanging length of 2 inches.

**Player Equipment**  
RULE 1 SECTION 9

Equipment shall conform to NFHS requirements, including gloves, arm pads, shoulder pads, mouth piece, shoes, and NOCSAE - approved helmets, which must be properly fitted and worn, with the following modifications:

- All goalies are required to wear arm pads and a protective cup.
- A protective cup is recommended for all players.
- Rib pads are recommended for all players.
- Game Jerseys: The provisions of RULE 1, SECTION 9, ARTICLE 1.g need not be strictly enforced at the youth level. A team's game jerseys should have numbers centered on the front and back of sufficient size to be clearly visible by game officials anywhere on the field and opposing teams' jerseys should have contrasting dominant colors. Home teams are responsible for contrasting jersey colors and will provide and wear contrasting color numbered pinnies or pinnies that allow jersey numbers to be clearly seen, if needed. The jersey, pinnie, or an under jersey should completely cover the shoulder pads, which will help hold them in place.
- The color provisions of RULE 1, SECTION 9, ARTICLES 1 and 2 for helmets, uniform shorts, under-jerseys, compression shorts, and sweatpants need not be strictly enforced at the youth level.

**Game Administration – Sideline Managers**  
RULE 1 SECTION 12

Each team should provide a designated Sideline Manager (one adult per team, on site, per game-day contest) to help encourage, maintain, and manage the sportsmanlike behavior of spectators and fans and assist the coaches and officials in keeping spectators and media an appropriate distance from the sideline. If used, it is the responsibility of each team administration to ensure that the Sideline Manager is present and in place to perform his/her duties; however, this is not a game day rule to be enforced by the officials.

**Rule 2 — Game Personnel**

**Coaches**  
RULE 2 SECTION 3

At the U9 level, if the coaches from both teams agree, one coach per team may be allowed on the field during play to provide instruction during the game. Teams are encouraged to take advantage of this teaching opportunity but this presence does not authorize the coach on the field to address the game officials or - unless agreed to by the other teams coach - members of the opposing team. Coaches are encouraged to stay wider than the face off wing lines extended to the end line and not get in the way of players or officials.

**Rule 3 — Time Factors**

**Length of Game**  
RULE 3 SECTION 1

At all levels, all timing and overtime rules must be determined prior to the start of game, preferably by the governing league or association. If a league/association mandates, or if in non-league contests both coaches agree, shorter time periods, stop time, or running time may be used. If running time is to be used, the clock will stop for all timeouts.

NOTE: US Lacrosse strongly discourages the use of a “braveheart” competition - or any other means which requires, for example, one or a few players to compete against another such individual or group - to determine the winner of a game. Such “braveheart” competitions encourage reliance on ... and put potentially excessive pressure on ... the most physically precocious or skilled children and contradict the concepts of team play we seek to instill.

Game will consist of four 10-minute stop-time quarters. In the event of a tie, 4-minute sudden-victory overtime periods will be played until a winner is determined (provided time permits and coaches and officials are in agreement). In sudden victory overtime, each team is entitled to one timeout per period.

### **U13**

Game will consist of four 10-minute stop-time quarters. In the event of a tie, up to two 4-minute sudden-victory overtime periods will be played. In sudden victory overtime, each team is entitled to one timeout per period.

In the event of a tie at the end of the two regulation overtime time periods the game should end as a tie. If league or tournament play requires that a winner be determined, overtime should be played in accordance with U15 rules.

### **U11**

Game will consist of four 8-minute stop-time quarters. If running time is to be used, 12-minute running time quarters are recommended.

In the event of a tie at the end of regulation time the game should end as a tie. If league or tournament play requires that a winner be determined, overtime should be played in accordance with U15 rules.

### **U9**

Game will consist of four 12-minute running-time quarters (clock stops only for a team timeout, an official's timeout, or an injury timeout). If stop time is to be used, 8-minute stop-time quarters are recommended.

In the event of a tie at the end of regulation time the game should end as a tie. If league or tournament play requires that a winner be determined, overtime should be played in accordance with U15 rules.

## **Final Two Minutes of Regulation Play**

### **RULE 3 SECTION 3**

#### **U15 and U13**

The Final Two Minute stalling rule shall be **ENFORCED** for these Divisions

#### **U11 and U9**

The Final Two Minute stalling rule shall be **WAIVED** for these Divisions. (This rule also modifies "Final Two Minute" provisions of RULE 4, SECTION 34.C.1)

## **Rule 4 — Play of the Game**

### **Lineup**

#### **RULE 4 SECTION 2**

Before the lineup, US Lacrosse strongly encourages game officials to meet with both teams, separately or together, near the team areas to explain any special ground rules, emphasize safety and fair play, and remind players that they must be properly equipped with mouthpiece in place at all times on the playing field.

Alternatively, a league, association, or other governing authority may mandate that when the game officials call for the lineup before the opening faceoff, the head coaches will send all of their players (not just the starters, as has been traditional) to the center of the field. At this time the game officials will convey the equipment, safety, and fair play information, in addition to explaining any special ground rules as required under NFHS Rule 4-2.

### **Facing Off**

#### **RULE 4 SECTION 3**

**U15 and U13**

All NFHS face off rules will be followed.

**U11 and U9**

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

**Not Offside**

RULE 4 SECTION 11 ARTICLE 3

If a team momentarily has fewer than the required number of men on either end of the field while players are exiting and entering the field through the special-substitution area, this is not considered to be an offside violation. However, if a team delays its substitution and that causes it to have too few players on either half of the field, it may be called for offside or illegal procedure.

**Advancing the Ball**

RULE 4 SECTIONS 14 & 15

**U15 and U13**

The defensive 20-second count will be used.  
The offensive 10-second count will be used.

**U11 and U9**

The defensive 20-second count WILL NOT be used.  
The offensive 10-second count WILL NOT be used.

**Official's Time-Outs**

RULE 4 SECTION 27 ARTICLE 6

If the player in possession of the ball loses any piece of required equipment the official should stop play immediately regardless of proximity of opposing players.

**Team Time-Outs**

RULE 4 SECTION 28

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

**Get It In/Keep It In**

RULE 4 SECTION 34

**U11 and U9**

Section not enforced at these levels.

**3- YARD RULE**

All stick checks, body checks, legal holds, and legal pushes must be on a player in possession of the ball or within 3 yards of a loose ball or ball in flight. This is a change from the 5 yards specified in RULE 4 SECTION 17, Checking With Crosse; RULE 5 SECTION 3, Illegal Body Check, ARTICLE 1; RULE 6 SECTION 3, Holding, ARTICLE 3.a and d; and RULE 6 SECTION 9, Pushing. (NOTE: This change from five to three yards does not apply to a free play restart under RULE 4 SECTION 5, Play of the Ball Definitions, ARTICLE 1, in which no player may be closer than five yards to the player awarded the ball.)

**Rule 5 — Personal and Ejection Fouls**

In keeping with the overarching emphasis on player safety and sportsmanship *at the youth level, US Lacrosse expects stricter enforcement of the Cross Check, Illegal Body Check, Checks Involving The Head/Neck, Slashing, Unnecessary Roughness, and Unsportsmanlike Conduct rules than is common at the high school level.*

**Illegal Body-Check**  
RULE 5 SECTION 3

Add to Rule 5 Section 3: An avoidable body check of an opponent after he has passed or shot the ball is an illegal body check.

The definitions below supplement, but do not supplant, all aspects, points of emphasis, and Play Rulings of NFHS Rule 5-3.

**NO TAKE-OUT CHECKS ARE PERMITTED BY ANY PLAYER AT ANY AGE LEVEL.**

A take-out check is defined as:

- Any body check in which the player lowers his head or shoulder with the force and intent to put the other player on the ground.
- Any body checks considered more aggressive or more physical than necessary to stop the advancement of the player carrying the ball or to keep or move a player away from a loose ball. This includes but is not limited to: (i) any check in which a player makes contact with sufficient force and intent to knock down the opposing player; (ii) any check in which a player makes contact with sufficient force and intent to injure the opposing player; and (iii) any check made in a reckless or intimidating manner.
- Any body check on a player in a defenseless position. This includes but is not limited to: (i) body checking a player from his “blind side”; (ii) body checking a player who has his head down in an attempt to play a loose ball; and (iii) body checking a player whose head is turned away to receive a pass, even if that player turns toward the contact immediately before the body check. NOTE: *Sports medicine research indicates that the severity of certain injuries may be reduced if a player can anticipate and prepare himself for an oncoming hit. Other sports medicine research indicates that peripheral vision may not be fully developed in many boys before approximately age fifteen. Game officials should be especially alert to blind side checks at all youth levels.*

**U15 and U13**

Body Checking is permitted. To be legal a body check should be delivered in a generally upright position with both hands on the stick and the player initiating the check may not use his lowered head or shoulder to make the initial contact.

**U11 and U9**

No body checking of any kind is permitted.

Legal pushes (RULE 6 SECTION 9, Pushing) and holds (RULE 6 SECTION 3, Holding, ARTICLE 3 a & d) are allowed.

In all loose ball situations players should “play the ball,” but incidental contact, “boxing out”, or screening techniques during such play shall not be considered a violation of this rule.

If a loose ball is not moving, stuck, or the players are having difficulty picking the ball up the referee may re-start play following the alternate possession rule.

**Checks Involving the Neck/Head**  
RULE 5 SECTION 4

US Lacrosse calls special attention to the new (2012) NFHS RULE 5 SECTION 4, CHECKS INVOLVING THE HEAD/NECK, which is modified to state:

ARTICLE 1 ... A player shall not initiate contact to an opponent’s head or neck with a slash, cross-check, or with any part of his body (head, elbow, shoulder, etc.), including any follow through to the head or neck.

ARTICLE 2 ... Blocking of an opponent with the head or initiating contact with the head, including by an offensive player in possession of the ball (known as spearing).

PENALTY: One, two, or three minute non-releasable foul, at the official's discretion, for violation of either article 1 or 2. An excessively violent violation of this rule may result in an ejection foul for flagrant misconduct.

**Slashing**

RULE 5 SECTION 7

**U15**

Slashing shall be called per NFHS rules.

**U13, U11, and U9**

Any one-handed check will be considered a slash, whether or not it makes contact with the opposing player.

**Unsportsmanlike Conduct**

RULE 5 SECTION 10

Unsportsmanlike conduct by coaches and/or players will not be tolerated. Obscenities need not be used for language to draw a penalty. Tone, intent, and body language can all contribute to unsportsmanlike conduct. Players and coaches will exhibit the highest level of sportsmanship at all times. This means that in addition to the unsportsmanlike examples contained in NFHS Rule 5-10, any player or coach who uses derogatory or profane language on the field or bench, whether addressing a player, coach, or official may receive: first offense, 1 to 3-minute non-releasable unsportsmanlike conduct penalty; second offense, a 3-minute non-releasable expulsion foul.

**Fouling Out**

RULE 5 SECTION 11

**U15 and U13**

Any player who accumulates 4 personal fouls or 5 minutes in personal foul penalty time shall be disqualified from the game. A substitute for that player may enter the game when the disqualified player would have been permitted to re-enter had he not fouled out.

**U11 and U9**

Any player who accumulates 3 personal fouls or 5 minutes in personal foul penalty time shall be disqualified from the game. For U11, a substitute for that player may enter the game when the disqualified player would have been permitted to re-enter had he not fouled out. For U9, a disqualified player must leave the field but his team may replace him with a substitute; no man up situation should occur.

**Ejection**

RULE 5 SECTION 12

Any player or coach ejected from a game by a game official (Note: this does not include fouling out per Rule 5-11) shall be suspended for his next regularly scheduled game (at the time of the ejection). The second time a player or coach is ejected in the same season or tournament he will be suspended for the next two regularly scheduled games (at the time of the ejection). A third ejection in the same season or tournament will result in a suspension for the remainder of the season or tournament.

**Rule 6 — Technical Fouls**

**Stalling**

RULE 6 SECTION 10

**U15 and U13**

All NFHS Stalling and Advancing the Ball rules are in effect, including Rule 4, Section 34.

**U11 and U9**

ARTICLE 2. Not used at these levels. However, if a game official detects an effort to stall the advancement of the ball in either the defensive clearing area or the offensive zone outside the goal area, the official will give a verbal command to "advance the ball" followed by a visual 5-second hand count. If the team so warned does not attempt to advance the

ball within the 5-second count to within five yards of an opposing player, a turnover will occur with restart at the point of the stalling infraction (or laterally outside the goal area).

ARTICLE 3. The team with the lead NEED NOT automatically keep the ball in the goal area during the last two minutes of the game.

### **Rule 7 — Penalty Enforcement**

#### **Time Serving Penalties**

RULE 7 SECTIONS 1, 2 & 3

In all “Running Time” games and situations, penalties will also be running time, and will begin with the next whistle resuming play. The running time penalty clock will stop for all timeouts and at the end of periods.

#### **U15, U13, and U11**

Time serving penalties are enforced per NFHS rules.

#### **U9**

Offending player must leave the field and remain out of the game for the length of his penalty time but his team may replace him with a substitute on the field. No man up situation should occur. Ball is awarded per NFHS rules.

#### **Game Termination**

Officials will have authority to terminate a boys’ youth game in response to flagrant acts of unsportsmanlike behavior including excessively rough play or the encouragement of excessively rough play by coaches, athletes, spectators, or fans. A game termination will be the last resort in ensuring the players’ safety and preserving the integrity of the game. If possible, game officials will issue at least one strong warning that the game is in danger of being terminated. However, it is conceivable that games may be terminated on the first instance of a flagrant unsportsmanlike act. Every effort should be taken to avoid game termination, including the enforcement of existing rules for team-conduct penalties, unsportsmanlike-conduct penalties, and ejection fouls. Mechanics for terminating a game for flagrant unsportsmanlike behavior can be found at [www.uslacrosse.org](http://www.uslacrosse.org) (Programs & Grants, Sportsmanship Card). All games terminated by an official will result in a 1-0 victory for the team that is innocent of the terminal offense(s). It is recommended that the game should count in league statistics as a full game, and all goals, assists, saves, and other team statistics should count toward team and league records.

#### **Rules Changes and Modification**

- a. 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.
- b. Coaches, officials or other parties may submit comments or suggestions regarding the Rules for Boys’ Youth Lacrosse at any time before June 1, 2012 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 2013 NFHS rules book.
- c. 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](mailto:boysyouthrules@uslacrosse.org). Please do not contact NFHS about these rules.

#### **US Lacrosse Men’s Game Rules Subcommittee**

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