

# USA Youth Girls Lacrosse Rules – Coaches and Admin

## Preface

Youth lacrosse is intentionally different from high school and beyond. At the youth level, the priority is **safety, development, and teaching fundamentals** before adding more contact or advanced physical play. This spring, our league is following **USA Lacrosse youth rules** to ensure consistency, simplicity, and alignment with teams from other areas.

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# USA Youth Girls Lacrosse Rules – Coaches and Admin



## Youth Girls Lacrosse Rules – By Age Division

### 1. Youth Rules Summary

PCLA	Stick Check	Penalty	One				Draws after Goal	Timeout	Coach on	
			Scrum	Pass	Players	Goalie			the Field	Offside
K-2	No	Free Position	Yes	No	7v7	No - Optional	No - Alt Poss	1 per half	Yes	2 on defensive, 5 on offense
3-4	No	Free Position	Yes	No	8v8	Yes - Recommended	Yes- Fewer Circle Players	2 per half	Yes	2 + Goalie on defense, 4 on offense
5-6	Yes-Modified	Modified Card	Yes	No	12v12	Yes	Yes	2 per half	No	3 + Goalie on defense, 5 on offense
7-8	Yes-Modified, Full Optional	Modified Card	Yes	No	12v12	Yes	Yes	2 per half	No	3 + Goalie on defense, 5 on offense

### 2. Timeouts

#### Timeout Rules

- 14U → 2 per half
- 10U → 2 per half

### 3. Timeout Rules

- The clock stops during a timeout, even in a running-clock game.
- Unused timeouts do not carry over.
- Timeouts may be called by the team in possession or by the defense during a dead ball.
- No age group has special restrictions
- No USA Lacrosse rule limits timeouts in the final two minutes — that's a *local modification* some leagues add, not a national rule.



## Girls' Youth Rules Explained

This document explains USA Lacrosse standards for girls' youth lacrosse. It is written for coaches, parents, officials, and administrators who need a clear, practical understanding of how girls lacrosse is played, what contact is allowed, what is prohibited, and how the rules differ between Elementary (10U) and Middle School (14U). Girls lacrosse is not a lighter version of boys lacrosse; it is a distinct sport with its own safety model, defensive mechanics, and officiating priorities.

### Key Body and Stick Check Principles:

- Girls' youth lacrosse is a non-body-checking sport at all levels.
- The game is built on safety through space, stick-first defense, and strict protection of the head and shooting lane.
- All contact rules flow from these principles.

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## Youth Girls' Lacrosse Rules

### 1. CORE IDENTITY OF GIRLS' YOUTH LACROSSE

Girls youth lacrosse is built on five foundational principles:

1. No Body Checking  
Body-initiated displacement is never legal at any age group.
2. Stick-First Defense  
Defenders use stick position, footwork, and angles — not body contact — to stop attackers.
3. Safety Through Space  
The game requires open lanes, controlled movement, and avoidance of dangerous convergence.
4. Sphere Protection  
A safety bubble around the head must remain free of sticks and bodies.
5. Shooting Space Protection  
Defenders may not enter the shooting lane without marking a player.

These principles apply to both 10U and 14U, with differences in checking rules and game structure noted throughout the document.

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### 2. AGE-DIVISION DISTINCTIONS (INLINE)

Elementary (10U)

- No stick checking of any kind
- Only stick-to-stick contact while playing the ball
- No checking motion. At **10U girls**, players may **not swing, swipe, tap, poke, jab, or make ANY active motion with the stick toward another player's stick**. The only legal contact is **two sticks touching because both players are going for the ball**. Not because one player *moved* her stick toward the opponent.
- Strict Sphere enforcement
- Strict Shooting Space enforcement
- Small-sided format (7v7 or 8v8 depending on league)
- Shorter field
- More instructional officiating
- Many fouls result in indirect free positions
- Restart positioning is more controlled for safety

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## Middle School (14U)

- Modified stick checking allowed
  - Controlled
  - Below shoulder level
  - Directed at stick head or shaft
  - Away from the head
- Full field
- Full 12v12 format
- Full free movement
- Direct free positions for major fouls
- Cards used more consistently
- Shooting Space fully enforced
- Players expected to understand spacing and restart mechanics

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### 3. ALLOWED CONTACT

Girls' lacrosse allows limited, controlled forms of contact that do not involve body-initiated displacement.

#### 1. Incidental Contact

Legal when two players are moving in a natural path without force.

Elementary (10U): Allowed but tightly monitored.

Middle School (14U): Allowed with more flow, but still no displacement.

#### 2. Positioning (Holding Space)

A defender may occupy a spot on the field and maintain it without using force.

Elementary (10U): Must be stationary and non-threatening.

Middle School (14U): May establish position with movement but cannot initiate contact.

#### 3. Stick-to-Stick Pressure

A defender may place her stick on the opponent's stick to influence direction or disrupt cradling.

Elementary (10U): Only gentle stick-to-stick contact; no checking motion.

Allowed at Elementary (10U) Sticks may touch if both players are playing the ball or if the defender is matching the attacker's stick path.

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Not allowed at Elementary (10U) The defender may not move her stick toward the opponent's stick in any checking motion.

Middle School (14U): Controlled checks allowed (see Stick Checking section).

## 4. Boxing Out on Ground Balls

Players may use body position to gain advantage without pushing.

Elementary (10U): Must be gentle and non-displacing.

Middle School (14U): More competitive but still no body checks.

## 5. Stick Positioning in Passing Lanes

Defenders may extend their stick to block or intercept passes.

Elementary (10U): Must avoid contact with opponent's body or head.

Middle School (14U): Same rule, but players have more freedom of movement.

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## 4. PROHIBITED CONTACT

Girls' lacrosse prohibits any action that uses the body to move, displace, or endanger another player.

### 1. Body Checking

Illegal at all levels.

### 2. Pushing or Leaning

Any forceful use of the body to move an opponent is illegal.

Elementary (10U): 10U: Strictly enforced; even mild leaning is a foul.

Middle School (14U): Still illegal; officials expect players to know better.

### 3. Checking Toward the Head

Any stick motion toward the head or face is illegal.

### 4. Checking the Arms, Ribs, or Back

Stick checks must be directed at the stick head or shaft only.

Elementary (10U): 10U: No checking motion at all.

Middle School (14U): Controlled checks allowed but never to the body.

### 5. Empty-Stick Checks

Illegal at all levels.

### 6. Dangerous Follow-Through

A check that ends near the head or body is illegal even if the initial direction was legal.

### 7. Blocking or Screening with the Body

Illegal because it creates body-to-body contact.

### 8. Cross-Body Checks

Illegal at all levels.

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## 5. STICK CHECKING RULES

Elementary (10U): 10U

- No checking motion of any kind
- Only stick-to-stick contact while playing the ball
- No downward, upward, or sweeping motions
- No attempts to dislodge the ball
- Officials emphasize safety and teaching

Middle School (14U)

- Modified checking allowed
- Must be controlled
- Must be below shoulder level
- Must be directed at the stick head or shaft
- Must be away from the head
- No checking toward the body
- No dangerous follow-through
- No slashing or uncontrolled swings

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## 6. SPHERE AND SHOOTING SPACE

Sphere

The sphere is the safety bubble around the head. No stick or body may enter this space.

Elementary (10U): Strict enforcement; most checks that come near the head are fouls.

Middle School (14U): Still strict; players expected to maintain safe distance during checks.

Shooting Space

Defenders may not enter the shooting lane without marking a player. This prevents dangerous head-on shots.

Elementary (10U): Officials stop play early to prevent collisions.

Middle School (14U): Full enforcement; defenders must recognize and avoid the lane.

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## 7. COACHING IMPLICATIONS

### Elementary (10U): 10U Coaching Priorities

- Cradling, passing, catching
- Movement and spacing
- Avoiding Sphere and Shooting Space
- No checking mechanics
- Confidence and ball control
- Safe approach angles
- Understanding free positions

### Middle School (14U) Coaching Priorities

- Stick protection
- Controlled checking technique
- Defensive footwork and angles
- Shooting Space recognition
- Transition play
- Team offensive and defensive concepts
- Restart mechanics and positioning

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## 8. OFFICIATING IMPLICATIONS

### Elementary (10U):

- More instructional
- Frequent stoppages for safety
- Indirect free positions for many fouls
- Players repositioned before restart
- Emphasis on teaching rules and spacing

### Middle School (14U)

- More continuous play
- Direct free positions for major fouls

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- Cards used when necessary
- Players expected to know proper spacing
- Officials manage game flow more than instruction

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## 9. GAME FLOW

Elementary (10U):

- More instructional
- Frequent stoppages for safety
- Indirect free positions for many fouls
- Players repositioned before the restart
- Emphasis on teaching rules, spacing, and safe play

Middle School (14U)

- More continuous play
- Direct free positions for major fouls
- Cards used when necessary
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## 10. EXAMPLES OF LEGAL VS. ILLEGAL PLAY

### LEGAL EXAMPLES

- Defender places stick on attacker's stick to influence direction
  - Elementary (10U): Gentle stick-to-stick contact only
  - Middle School (14U): Controlled, below-shoulder modified check
- Two players bump incidentally while chasing a loose ball (no force, no displacement)
- Defender holds position without leaning or initiating contact
- Defender extends stick into a passing lane without contacting the opponent's body or head

### ILLEGAL EXAMPLES

- Defender swings stick toward attacker's head (Sphere violation)
- Defender steps into shooting lane without marking a player (Shooting Space violation)
- Player pushes another player off a ground ball (displacement)
- Player checks the arms or ribs (checks must be directed at the stick only)
- Player uses body to block or screen (illegal body-to-body contact)
  - You cannot step in front of someone to stop them with your body.
  - You cannot widen your stance or lean to block their path.
  - You cannot "set a pick" like in basketball.
  - You cannot use your hips, shoulders, or back to impede someone's movement.

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- You cannot make body-to-body contact to slow someone down.

In girls' lacrosse, **your body cannot be the tool that stops the opponent**. Only **stick position, footwork, and angles** are legal ways to defend.

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## 11. CONTACT-SAFE DRILL PACKAGE

### Elementary (10U): 10U DRILLS

- Cradle and Move: Emphasize spacing and safe approach angles
- Lane Recognition: Teach Shooting Space visually
- Stick-to-Stick Pressure Walkthroughs
- Ground Ball Box-Out (gentle, no displacement)
- Safe Close-Out Footwork

### Middle School (14U) DRILLS

- Controlled Checking Mechanics
- Stick Protection Under Pressure
- Defensive Angles and Approach
- Shooting Space Recognition Under Speed
- Transition Movement with Safe Spacing
- Ground Ball Compete (no body checks)

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