
NFHS Boys Lacrosse — Complete 2026 Summary (Full Rulebook Overview)

(Organized in the same order as the NFHS rulebook)

1. The Game, Field, and Personnel

1.1 The Field

- Standard rectangular field with clearly marked:
 - End lines, sidelines
 - Midfield line
 - Restraining lines
 - Goal creases
 - Wing areas
 - Substitution box
- 2026: **Cones required** to mark coaches' area and team area boundaries.

1.2 Goals & Nets

- Goals are 6'x6' with properly secured nets.
- Goal line must be clearly visible.
- Goals must be anchored or weighted for safety.

1.3 Game Personnel

- **10 players per team:** 3 attack, 3 midfield, 3 defense, 1 goalie.
- Coaches restricted to the coaches' area.
- Table personnel must include:
 - Timer
 - Scorer
 - **Working horn** (2026 requirement)

2. Equipment

2.1 Mandatory Player Equipment

- Helmet meeting NOCSAE standard

- Shoulder pads meeting NOCSAE ND200
- Arm pads
- Gloves
- Mouthguard
- Athletic cup
- Cleats or turf shoes

2026 Mouthguard Updates

- All color restrictions removed.
- Decorative attachments prohibited.

2.2 Goalie Equipment

- Chest protector (NOCSAE ND200)
- Throat protector
- Goalie gloves
- Goalie stick

2.3 Crosse (Stick) Requirements

- Length:
 - Short: 40–42 inches
 - Long: 52–72 inches
 - Goalie: 40–72 inches
- Pocket must allow the ball to move freely.
- No protrusions or illegal stringing.

2.4 Illegal Equipment

- Improperly worn gear
- Missing required equipment
- **Entering crease to block a shot as a non-goalie = personal foul (2026)**
- **Helmet loss during play = technical foul (2026)**

3. Game Timing & Structure

3.1 Game Length

- Four 12-minute stop-time quarters (standard NFHS).
- Halftime: 10 minutes (modifiable by agreement).
- Overtime: 4-minute sudden victory periods.

3.2 Timeouts

- Each team gets 2 timeouts per half.
- No timeouts during live ball except after a goal.

3.3 Interrupted Games

- **2026 rule:** If 75% of regulation time has elapsed and the game cannot resume the same day, the game is official and complete.
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4. Starting Play & Faceoffs

4.1 Opening Faceoff

- Conducted at midfield with standard NFHS positioning.
- Sticks and gloves must be set properly before whistle.

4.2 Faceoff Violations

- Early movement
- Improper stance
- Illegal equipment
- Repeated violations may result in:
 - **Delay-of-game penalty (2026 clarification)**

4.3 Alternate Possession

- Used when officials cannot determine possession.
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5. Substitutions

5.1 On-the-Fly Substitutions

- Must occur through the substitution box.
- Player must fully exit before replacement enters.

5.2 Horn Substitutions

- Only allowed during dead balls when officials permit.

- Table must have a **working horn** (2026 requirement).
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6. Offside, Positioning, and Movement

6.1 Offside

- Must have:
 - 3 players in offensive half
 - 4 players in defensive half
- Violation = technical foul.

6.2 Crease Rules

- Only goalie may enter crease to play the ball.
 - Attack players may not enter or land in crease.
 - Goalie has 4 seconds to leave crease with possession.
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7. Scoring & Goal Situations

7.1 Legal Goal

- Ball must fully cross goal line.
- Shooter must not be in crease.
- Stick must be legal.

7.2 2026 Clarification

- If the ball becomes **loose behind the plane** and crosses the goal line, it counts **regardless of who caused it**.

7.3 Goalie Privileges

- Goalie may bat or catch ball in crease.
 - Opponents may not interfere with goalie's movement.
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8. Restarts & Ball Placement

8.1 Restart Basics

- Ball restarted at spot of foul or nearest allowable location.
- Player must be stationary with 5 yards of space.

8.2 Goalie Restart

- **2026:** Removal of the old “goalie 5-second restart rule.”
- Goalie restarts follow standard restart timing.

8.3 Out-of-Bounds

- Last touch determines possession unless shot (closest player rule).
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9. Stalling & Delay of Game

9.1 Stalling

- Officials may warn a team to “keep it in.”
- Team must keep ball in the attack box.
- Violation = turnover.

9.2 Delay of Game

- Slow restarts
 - Interfering with ball
 - Repeated faceoff violations (2026 emphasis)
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10. Fouls

10.1 Technical Fouls

- 30 seconds or loss of possession
- Examples:
 - Offside
 - Holding
 - Interference
 - Illegal procedure
 - Goalie in crease too long
 - **Helmet loss (2026)**

10.2 Personal Fouls

- 1–3 minutes, releasable or non-releasable
- Examples:

- Slashing
- Cross-check
- Illegal body check
- Targeting head/neck
- **Non-goalie entering crease to block shot (2026)**
- Unnecessary roughness

10.3 Ejections

- Fighting
- Flagrant misconduct
- Second non-releasable foul
- Abusive language toward officials

11. Officials & Mechanics

11.1 Officials' Roles

- Referee
- Umpire
- Field judge (in 3-man crew)

11.2 Responsibilities

- Equipment checks
- Faceoff administration
- Penalty enforcement
- Goal/no-goal decisions
- Game management

11.3 Points of Emphasis (2026)

- Properly worn equipment
- Head/neck safety
- Sportsmanship
- Pregame responsibilities
- Sideline management

12. Administrative Rules

12.1 Scorekeeping

- Goals, assists, penalties, timeouts.
- Table must maintain accurate penalty times.

12.2 Protests

- NFHS does not allow protests of judgment calls.

12.3 Game Termination

- Officials may terminate for safety, weather, or misconduct.
- **75% rule (2026)** determines whether game is official.

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