

# 2025 GNLL Boys Youth Rules

Last updated November 20, 2024

The following rules are based on the [USA Lacrosse Boys Youth Guidebook](#). The [2024 NFHS Boys Lacrosse Rulebook](#) (which is available for purchase from the NFHS in print and digital versions) covers all situations not specified in this document until the 2025 rule book is published. In addition to this rule document, there is a [2024 GNLL Rules Summary and Comparison by Level of Play](#) document available. There is also a summary table of rules that apply for all levels of youth play at the end of this document.

US Lacrosse rules (or, in some cases, NFHS rules that apply to youth) will be printed in black text. Any modifications specific to GNLL will be printed in blue text. Significant changes from 2023–24 rules will be highlighted in gray.

## Points of Emphasis for 2024

**Spectator lines and coaches box lines:** A dashed spectator line 6 yards from the far sideline (or soccer discs every 5 yards) and a marked table area and coaches boxes are required. Substitute players must be 6 yards back from the sideline, out of the 6-yard by 20-yard coaches box, except when subbing.

**Eye shade/eye black:** Coaches must ensure that any players wearing eye shade are doing so legally. See rules for all levels of youth play for details.

**Slashing:** One-handed stick checks are legal for 12U and 14U, but coaches must teach proper technique and should expect players to be penalized if a one-handed check hits anything other than the stick with any force.

**Body checking:** There are no takeout checks (checks with the force and intent to put the opponent on the ground) permitted at any youth level. There is some legal pushing allowed, and at 14U, completely upright non-takeout checks are legal if not violent.

**Communication with officials:** Many officials working youth games are newer and will not make every call correctly nor will they have a firm grip on every technical rule. It's critical that coaches understand this. All officials should absolutely be able to throw a flag whenever there is violent contact. If the rules about such contact are not being enforced, it is appropriate for a coach to calmly and politely speak to the officials to remind them to call violations of the stick-checking and body-checking rules for that level of play on both teams.

**Safety:** Every youth lacrosse program should do its best to provide a safe environment at practices and games for everyone involved, including—but not limited to—ensuring that fields are safe, ensuring that all prescribed protective gear fits properly and is worn at all appropriate times, having protocols in place for dangerous weather, and ensuring that players are instructed on how to play the game safely and non-violently.

**Violent contact:** Officials must call penalties for violent contact early in the game and to elevate the length of penalties for excessively violent contact after the first offense by a team. In particular, a second “take-out” or “excessive” body check by the same player should generally be a 3:00 NR penalty or an ejection foul. Note that *targeting* is **always** an ejection in youth games.

**8U one-pass rule:** The 8U one-pass rule will be enforced by officials exactly as written. No modifications can be made to this rule, and coaches who attempt to force the officials to modify the rule are subject to penalty.

## Age groups

The US Lacrosse age groups for 2025 are:

Date of Birth	Age Group
Born 9/1/2016 through 8/31/2018	8U
Born 9/1/2014 through 8/31/2016	10U
Born 9/1/2012 through 8/31/2014	12U
Born 9/1/2010 through 8/31/2012	14U

Individual leagues or tournaments may alter these dates, either for all players or on a case-by-case basis, provided the policies are clearly stated to all participating teams. Any variations from these birth dates must be approved by the GNLL **before** the athlete in question plays any league or tournament games—and preferably before practices—or forfeits and other sanctions may result per GNLL policies.

## Rules for ALL levels (8U–14U) of GNLL boys youth play

### Uniform and equipment

Game jerseys must be of the same dominant color. Goalkeepers **must** wear the same color jersey as their teammates. Player shorts need not match colors, although having shorts of the same dominant color for most or all players is preferred.

Visible numbers on the front and back of the jerseys are recommended for 8U and are required for 10U, 12U, and 14U, with a different number for each player (numbers may be added or altered using tape to comply with this rule). If a team does not have legal jerseys, a technical foul is assessed to start the game and the officials must report the issue to the GNLL. If duplicate numbers are not corrected after an official notifies the head coach, further occurrences are penalized with a conduct foul.

Helmets must be worn properly, with chin straps tightened so the helmet cannot come off without the chin strap being unsnapped. A player with a loose chin strap will be sent off the field to have it corrected. If a player's helmet comes off during play, even as the result of a foul, play will be stopped immediately and the player must substitute out of the game. The player may not return until after the next dead ball following the restart.

The standard rule is that mouthguards must be a highly visible color and not white or clear. An Invisalign is not a mouthguard and cannot be worn in place of a mouthguard. There are a small number of players who have clear custom mouthguards created by a dentist; if a player has such a mouthguard: (1) coaches need to disclose the issue to officials before the game (2) coaches must provide the officials with a copy of a note from the dentist—which the officials can keep—stating that the item is a mouth guard specifically designed for the player (3) the mouthguard must be modified in some way to make it visible to officials (e.g., a piece of colored tape affixed to the front of the mouth guard).

All players must wear protective cups (this is not checked by officials).

All players must wear chest protection meeting the NOCSAE ND200 standard (chest protectors for goalies and shoulder pads for field players).

Officials will not measure sticks during equipment inspections unless there is a Level 1.5 or higher official working the game. Measurements will then only be checked for a coach-requested check in which the coach requests that the stick be measured. **The “template test” will never be used to measure throat width in youth games.**

Shooting strings may not be more than 4” from the scoop. These will be visually inspected at all levels, with any obvious inverted U or V stringing considered illegal.

Shooting strings will not be measured unless a Level 1.5 or higher official is working the game and a coach makes a specific request for measurements.

Rib pads are recommended but not required.

Arm pads are recommended but not required for goalies at any level. Goalkeeper shin/knee/thigh pads are recommended but not required; if used, they are not allowed to significantly increase blocking area.

Eye shade (grease or non-glare strips or stickers) that is not a solid stroke (or includes words, numbers, logos or other symbols within the eye shade) is prohibited. Officials will check for mouth guards and for illegal eye black at the lineup and will send off any noncompliant players before the start of the game. **Situation:** A1 has eye shade (grease or non-glare strips or stickers) that is (a) a solid stroke inside the eye socket and not extending to the cheek bone; (b) includes words, numbers, logos or other symbols; or (c) extends outside the eye socket or below the cheek bone. **Ruling:** (a) legal; (b) and (c) illegal. In (b) and (c), one-minute nonreleasable penalty. A1 must adjust the eye shade before returning to play.

### **Host requirements, team requirements, and pre-game**

For association-hosted games, each team supplies balls for the end line and both sidelines on their half of the field. The balls must be white, yellow, orange, or lime green balls and must meet the current NOCSAE standard at the time of manufacture.

Coaches may agree to switch colors provided there is a sufficient supply of that color. For GNLL-hosted league and tournament games, the GNLL will supply game balls.

Coaches are responsible for making sure spectators are positioned only on the side of the field opposite the team benches and that they are at least 6 yards from the sideline (except in stadia with permanent seating, where fans may sit in the permanent seating on either side); a dashed limit line 6 yards from the far sideline is required (or soccer discs every 5 yards) and the site manager must ensure that all spectators are on the far side of the field behind that line. In cases where fans are closer than 6 yards, the *home team head coach* is required to move the fans back before the game can continue, even at neutral sites; failure to comply results in a nonreleasable unsportsmanlike conduct foul against that coach.

There must be a marked 10-yard by 6-yard substitution area and two 20-yard by 6-yard marked coaches boxes on the bench side; substitute players may not be in the coaches boxes at any time and may only be in the substitution area when the player they are substituting for is running toward the sub area.

If time permits, a full-team lineup is done for 8U, 10U, and 12U; only starters line up for 14U games.

If time permits, a coin toss is conducted for all levels of play (any player or coach for 8U; captain(s) for 10U and up) if time permits. Otherwise, the home team chooses a goal to defend and the away team gets alternate possession.

At least one coach for each team—not necessarily the head coach—must be at least 18 years old and meet all league or tournament training requirements for a coach or the game will be forfeited. Once a game starts, if for any reason a team no longer has at least one coach who is at least 18 years old and who meets league or tournament requirements, the game is a forfeit. Game officials will not enforce this rule because they are unable to verify coach certifications, but leagues and tournaments will declare forfeits after the game if they determine this rule was violated and will assess additional penalties and suspensions.

Practice goals are legal at all levels provided there are no holes or gaps in the net and provided they will not tip over during play.

In general, each team must supply one person to work the timer/scorer table to run the game clock, time penalties, and keep a record of penalties. They must notify the officials if a player has 5 total minutes of personal foul penalties or three separate personal fouls. The home team must supply a score book or score sheets and writing implement.

*In-home and nominated defender rules:* Prior to the start of any 10U, 12U, or 14U game, each head coach will specify both a starting attackman to serve as the in-home (who will serve penalties not against a specific player on the field) **and** a starting defender (who may serve non-expulsion-foul penalties for the goalkeeper; it is still allowable for the goalie to serve a penalty and to have a legally-equipped backup substitute into the game). If the nominated defender is already serving a penalty or is assessed a penalty at the same time as the goalkeeper, the next defender in the scorebook will serve for the goalkeeper.

### **Flag down rule**

For youth games, if a defending player commits a personal or technical foul when any attacking player has possession of the ball, the official must drop a flag, make the verbal signal “flag down” and withhold the whistle until:

- a) A player on the defending team gains possession of the ball.
- b) **The ball hits the ground (not on a shot)** (note that this is different from the high school rule, where play continues)

- c) A subsequent defensive foul is committed (see below). Note: If there is a flag down and a technical foul is committed by the defensive team while a pass is in flight, that will result in a second flag and a stoppage of play in youth games.
- d) A shot hits the goalkeeper, goal posts, or crossbar, and then the ball is touched (1) by any player of either team other than the defending goalkeeper, or (2) by an official.
- e) Any other action occurs that would normally require the officials to stop play (e.g., a goal is scored, the ball goes out of bounds, the offense commits any foul, an injury or equipment timeout, a team timeout, the period ends)

When a second defensive foul is committed, play stops unless a scoring play is in progress. A scoring play in progress is defined as when the team in possession:

- (1) has the ball in the offensive half of the field
- (2) continuously advances towards the ball towards the goal
- (3) does not bring the ball below goal line extended once the ball is above goal line extended
- (4) has not taken a shot
- (5) does not allow the ball to hit the ground, except on a shot
- (6) a situation has not occurred that would stop a Slow-Whistle Technique

Note that the definition of a “shot” requires that the ball be released from the head of the stick above the goal-line extended. This affects how points (b) and (d) above are enforced in some situations.

## **Penalty enforcement**

Penalties are releasable unless there is a specific NFHS rule that makes them nonreleasable (some fouls are automatically nonreleasable and some become nonreleasable under NFHS Rule 7-2).

Games can be terminated by officials for reasons including but not limited to:

- flagrant unsportsmanlike conduct by coaches, players, or spectators
- rough play
- encouragement of rough play by coaches and spectators

Dead-ball fouls are enforced in sequence, exactly as in NFHS rules.

In 10U, 12U, and 14U games, if a team in the lead by 1 or 2 goals in the last two minutes of play commits a time-serving penalty, officials will stop the play when appropriate by rule and then will stop the game clock to report the penalty. The clock will start when the whistle blows to restart play.

A player fouls out with 5 minutes of personal foul penalties or 3 separate personal fouls.

If a penalty expires **after** a goal is scored, the player is not released until the time has expired *and* the faceoff has ended.

All unnecessary roughness penalties are nonreleasable in youth games.

## Play of the game

Regular season default timing is:

- 12-min. running-time halves **or** 10-min. running-time quarters for 8U
- 12-min. running-time quarters for 10U–14U

with teams allowed 1 timeout per half. The game clock generally starts running at the scheduled start time regardless of whether teams are ready to play. Halftime is generally five minutes and breaks between other quarters are two minutes, but these may be shortened if teams and officials are ready for play. Quarters may be shortened if needed to keep games on schedule. Tournaments may choose different timing for halves and quarters and may run off of a central horn..

There is no overtime in regular-season games. For tournaments, ties will stand unless the GNLL specifies an OT and/or tiebreaker in advance.

There is no 20-second clear rule at any level of play.

A contrasting color shaft (or paint or tape) for faceoff players is *not* required. Players taking faceoffs may not touch the plastic portion of the head with their glove.

If a player in possession or potentially involved in the play loses required protective equipment, this will be an immediate stoppage of play with no penalty (unless the loss of equipment was deliberate, in which case an unsportsmanlike conduct foul is assessed). If a player not in possession of the ball legally loses mandatory equipment and no other players are in the immediate vicinity, then the play may continue. A goalie outside of the crease is treated like any other player regarding lost or broken equipment.

## Body contact

Body contact is legal only when the player being contacted either (1) has possession **or** (2) is within 3 yards of a loose ball (including a ball in flight). Violations could be

penalized as a technical (interference, push, hold) or personal foul (illegal body check, unnecessary roughness, targeting, defenseless player, check to the head or neck).

Subject to the above rule and the NFHS rulebook rules, all levels of play allow limited holding, pushing, and man-ball boxing out.

Body checking of any kind is *illegal* in 8U, 10U, and 12U. Body checking is only allowed in 14U when the player applying the check is completely upright and the force applied is not sufficient to put the opponent on the ground. A “take-out” body check—where the player making the check lowers his head or shoulder and hits with the force and intent to put the opponent on the ground—results in a minimum 1-minute nonreleasable penalty at all levels, and often a 2- or 3-minute nonreleasable penalty or an ejection. Any take-out body check that would be illegal at the high school level (e.g., from behind, below the waist, when a player is on the ground) must be at least a 2:00 NR penalty. Officials are encouraged to give longer penalties for violent contact after the first offense by a team. In particular, a second take-out body check by the same player should generally be at least a 3:00 NR penalty or an ejection foul.

Note: As of Fall 2023, at the high school level, there is a 1:00 NR penalty option for indirect/incidental contact to the head; this penalty is **not** an option in youth games.

### **Stick checking (all levels)**

One-handed stick checks are illegal for 8U and 10U games. For 12U and 14U, one-handed checks are legal, but officials should call these as slashes if they hit any body part other than the gloved hand on the stick with any force.

Contact of any degree made to an opponent’s head while attempting to execute a stick check is slashing. Stick contact to the head or neck *could* be a two- or three-minute nonreleasable penalty per NFHS Rule 5-4 or an ejection foul per NFHS Rule 5-12, but if Rules 5-4 and 5-12 do not apply then a 1:00 releasable penalty could be issued.

Stick-to-stick contact of any kind is illegal unless the player being contacted either (1) has possession of the ball **or** (2) is within 3 yards of a loose ball (including a ball in flight). Violations could be penalized as a technical foul (interference).

Stick-to-body contact that is violent or gains an advantage is always illegal except for an equal-pressure hold with the stick between the hands no wider than shoulder width. Violations could be penalized as a technical (interference, push, hold) or personal foul (slashing, cross check, unnecessary roughness, targeting, check to the head or neck).

## **Mercy rule (10U, 12U, and 14U)**

After the first half, and once the goal differential reaches 12 goals or more, in any situation where a faceoff would normally be held, the head coach of the trailing team shall have the option to either (1) have a faceoff as usual or (2) have his or her team start with possession of the ball at midfield by requesting that to the officials immediately after a goal or prior to the start of a quarter. If the score reverts to 6 goals or less, faceoffs will be held as normal. Coaches are strongly discouraged from running the score up against any team once a clear winning margin has been established, regardless of the mercy rule or time left in the game.

## **Suspensions**

All player ejections carry an additional 2-game suspension for the first offense. All coach ejections carry an additional 4-game suspension for the first offense. Subsequent ejections carry longer suspensions, and the count of ejections carries over from year to year.

Suspensions will be extended if a coach does not leave the playing facility in a timely manner after being ejected or if inappropriate behavior continues after the ejection. An ejected coach may not be within sight of the field; a coach who remains within sight of the field after being ejected or who returns to being within sight of the field after leaving is subject to additional suspensions.

All nonreleasable unsportsmanlike conduct fouls on head coaches and assistant coaches will be reported by officials to the assigner, who will forward them to the league. A coach who accumulated 3 such fouls in the same season will incur a 1-game suspension for the first such accumulation and additional and longer suspensions for subsequent fouls.

Additional information is included in Section IX of the [GNLL Operating Policies](#).

## **Coaches box**

There is a limit of 3 coaches in the coaches box for all youth games. No one can be in the coaches box during the game except for one, two, or three coaches. Players must be kept out of the coaches box. Any person designated as a coach must meet all GNLL coach requirements as designated in Section IV of the [GNLL Operating Policies](#).

## **Forfeits**

Each team must have the minimum number of players to field a full team (including a legally equipped goalkeeper for 10U and higher) and a qualified head coach (according

to GNLL policies), for any game to start. If a team does not meet these requirements within 10 minutes of the scheduled game time, the game will be declared a forfeit and no game will be played.

### **Sideline managers**

For association-hosted games, it is strongly suggested that the host site will provide a site manager for all games played at the site that day (including games not involving the association hosting the games). If the host site is unable to do so, the home team must provide a site manager. This site manager is responsible for keeping spectators 6 yards back from the sideline and for dealing with issues involving spectator behavior.

### **Eligibility requirements**

Rules about eligibility for players are detailed in Sections V, VI, and VII of the [GNLL Operating Policies](#). Game officials do not enforce these requirements but may be used as a credible witness if a violation is brought to the attention of the sponsoring authority. Individual associations may impose additional and/or stricter requirements.

Coach eligibility requirements are listed in Section IV of the [GNLL Operating Policies](#). If a head coach is ejected and there is no coach who meets sponsoring authority eligibility requirements available to take over, league rules will generally declare the game to be a forfeit, but game officials are unable to determine coach eligibility and are unable to declare such a forfeit; instead, if there is a violation of applicable rules, the opposing coach will need to protest to the sponsoring authority.

### **Misconduct**

At the discretion of officials, a five-minute misconduct penalty may be appended to a technical or personal foul on a player. A substitute is permitted for the player serving a misconduct penalty when that player's penalty time other than the misconduct penalty is released. A player serving a misconduct penalty shall remain in the table area for the full duration of the misconduct penalty time, regardless of the number of goals scored.

- a. Misconduct penalty time begins when the player's penalty time other than the misconduct penalty is released.
- b. Misconduct penalty time does not count toward the five minutes of personal foul time for the purposes of fouling out.
- c. Misconduct penalties do not count as unsportsmanlike conduct penalties for the purposes of ejection.

- d. As is the case with all time-serving penalties, any misconduct penalty remaining at the end of a period shall carry over into subsequent periods.

### **Concussions**

If a player is removed from a game by a coach or official due to signs, symptoms, or behaviors consistent with a concussion, that player may not return to play that day under any circumstances. Per [GNLL Operating Policies](#), the player may only return to play or practice on a later date after the parents submit written clearance from a medical doctor (other than a coach or the parent of any player associated with the team) to the head coach stating that the player can return to play; the head coach must be allowed to keep a copy of this clearance letter.

## Rules for 8U

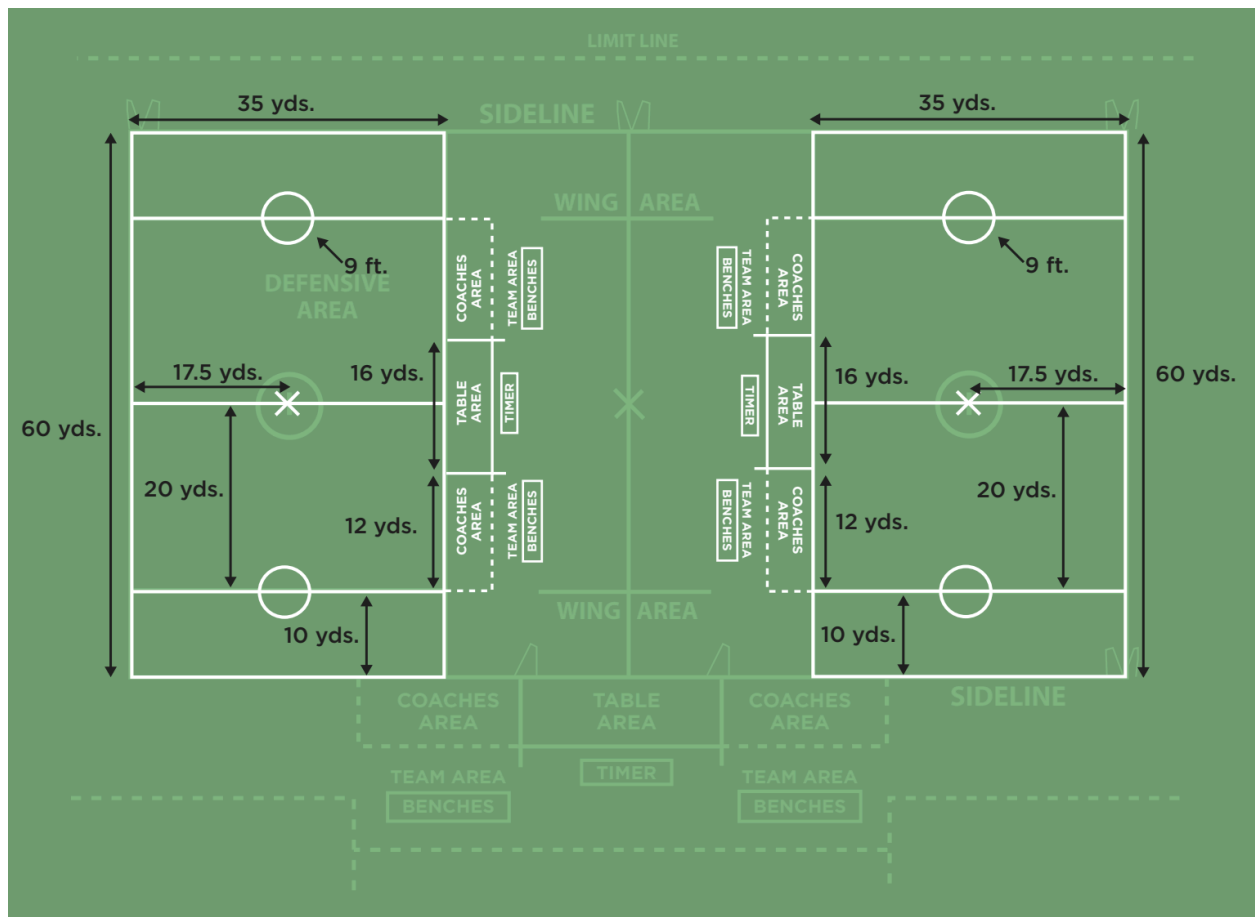
US Lacrosse 8U rules apply with the modifications listed below **along with the rules for all levels** of GNLL boys youth play listed earlier.

### Field

A small field will be used. No midfield line is required.

The crease circles can be marked with paint, soccer discs, or foldable creases.

See below for field diagrams and possible field setups using existing regulation fields:



Any situation that would normally result in the offensive team starting in the alley will result in the offensive team starting 1 yard in from the sideline instead.

## Goals

Goals should be 4'x4'. If no such goals are available, goals of a different size [or a standard goal flipped to a triangle may be used instead provided the same size is used at both ends.](#)

## Officials, coaches, and timekeepers

Coaches may officiate 8U games. If desired, one or two officials may be used.

If no officials are used, coaches can be anywhere on the field or sideline and will assume responsibility for officiating the game.

If at least one official is used, [coaches are not allowed on the field of play](#) but are allowed anywhere along the bench-side sideline except the opposing coaches box.

If an official or officials are used, there must be at least one person—preferably two—working in the table area to keep game time, time penalties (even though teams will not play man-down, the offending player must still sit out of the game for the assessed penalty time), and record penalties in order to be able to notify the officials if a player fouls out of the game.

## Squad size and offside

[5v5](#) (no goalie). (Fewer players can be used if a team does not have enough players at any point since score will not be kept.)

There is no offside rule.

## Equipment

No long crosses are permitted. All sticks must be between 37" and 42". Players may use girls field crosses provided they pass the boys pocket depth and rollout requirements.

A soft lacrosse ball (or other similar size and weight soft ball) or a NOCSAE lacrosse ball must be used.

## Starting play

There will be no faceoffs at this level. The team winning the coin toss will be awarded possession to start the game. The other team gets first alternate possession and choice of goal to defend in the first and third quarters.

## Start of quarter

Each quarter starts with a team awarded possession at midfield based on alternate possession unless there is a flag down at the end of a quarter or a foul between quarters (in which case the opposing team is awarded possession to start the period, with no change in alternate possession). Note: Since there are no time-serving penalties, possession can never carry over from one quarter to the next based only on one team having possession when the period ends.

The one-pass rule applies at the start of each quarter except when possession carries over due to a flag down. The players other than the one in possession may line up anywhere on the field as long as there is no player within 5 yards of the player in possession.

## Goal scored

When a goal is scored, both teams will have up to 20 seconds to substitute, and the scored-upon team will start with a player in possession outside the crease anywhere along the goal-line extended. The other players, including the defense, may line up anywhere on the field as long as there is no player within 5 yards of the player in possession. The one-pass rule will apply on the restart. **Note:** there is no rule requiring the defensive team to wait on the other side of midfield after a goal.

## One-pass rule

In any situation in which a face-off would normally be held in a higher-level game (see above), the team awarded possession must **attempt** one pass before they are allowed to shoot at the goal. That pass attempt may occur anywhere on the field. **Note:** This rule does **not** apply on every possession, only in situations where there would normally have been a face-off in a higher-level game.

If a team shoots at the goal before attempting a pass, it is a technical foul on the attacking team: no goal, and possession is awarded to the opposing team.

Officials determine what qualifies as a pass attempt, but attempts to circumvent the spirit of the rule, such as dropping the ball from one stick into another, will not be counted as passes.

Coaches may instruct their own teams to attempt or complete any number of passes in any situation (and are encouraged to do so when their teams have a large lead), and coaches may agree with each other to any such rules, but under no circumstances may officials be asked to enforce these team rules or handshake agreements. Coaches

attempting to force officials to modify the one-pass rule or to enforce handshake agreements are subject to penalty.

## Restarts

For 8U (and 10U), officials must ensure that no player from either team is within 5 yards of the player in possession before restarting play. If a player is closer than 5 yards, the officials will instruct the offending player to move back 5 yards and will start a 5-second count. If the player does not move back 5 yards within 5 seconds, a delay of game foul will be assessed.

If a defensive player who is more than 5 yards from the player awarded possession moves within 5 yards of that player to prevent the quick restart, a delay of game foul may be assessed.

## Substitution

Substitution will be done differently from what is described in the US Lacrosse rules:

- When a goal is scored, the goal scorer **must** substitute out of the game unless a team has no substitutes. Other players may substitute after a goal. Play will resume when substitution is complete.
- At the start of a period or after a goal, penalty, or officials timeout, coaches should be striving to complete substitutions within 20 seconds, and teams could potentially be called for delay of game if they are taking more than 20 seconds and significantly longer than their opponents.
- Whole- or partial-team substitution allowed at other dead balls (coach must notify official during live-ball play that he wants to substitute on the next dead ball or notify the official during a dead ball before the official restarts play; teams will have 20 seconds to substitute).
- The head coach of the team in possession may get a stoppage of play during any live ball in order to complete substitutions by yelling “sub timeout!” to the officials provided that his or her team is in no danger of losing the ball at the time of the request (e.g., if player A1 is being aggressively double-teamed by B1 and B2, Coach A may not call for a sub timeout). A sub timeout can also be requested by the team entitled to possession during a dead ball. **Note:** calling for a sub timeout when not entitled (e.g., the other team has possession, the ball is loose, the player in possession is in danger of losing the ball, it’s a dead ball but the other team is entitled to possession and a quick restart) is a technical foul.
- Otherwise, substitution is allowed during live play according to standard NFHS rules.

Substitution should be done so that all players get roughly equal playing time.

## Equipment inspections

*Routine inspections by officials:* When trained officials are assigned to the game, they should inspect the protective gear, check stick for end cap, visually inspect shooting strings, and visually inspect the rest of the stick for one player from each team at least once per half. If the visual inspection indicates an obvious problem the official will check pocket depth and rollout, and if the stick is illegal it is removed from the game until corrected. There are no equipment penalties assessed at this level, but a player with missing or illegal protective gear may not return until he is wearing all the proper protective gear and he has a stick that meets specifications. If one player is found to have missing or illegal protective equipment or an illegal stick, possession will be awarded to the opposing team. There will be no routine inspections if coaches are officiating the game.

*Coach-requested inspections:* None.

## Stick checking

The US Lacrosse stick-checking rules for 8U are highly restrictive. The rule for those levels reads:

*In all cases, stick checks must be made with two hands on the crosse and to the crosse of an opponent or his gloved hand on his crosse. An opponent must be in possession of the ball or within 3 yards of a loose ball. Only checks with the crosse listed below are legal:*

*(a) Lift the bottom hand or the head of the stick, whichever is below the chest area.*

*(b) Poke the bottom hand or the head of the stick, whichever is below the chest area.*

*(c) Downward check initiated from below both players' shoulders.*

Other than a poke check, **any check that is directed toward the body is a slash** for this level of play regardless of contact. In addition, any attempted stick check that contacts an opponent's body anywhere other than the gloved hand on the stick is a slash regardless of whether points (a)–(c) are followed.

An attempted stick check that contacts the stick **and** the body is a slash; hitting the stick does not remove a player's obligation to not hit the body.

One-handed stick checks are illegal, even if they do not make contact or make contact only with the stick.

The following situations have been approved by US Lacrosse and apply to 8U games:

**Situation 1:** In an 8U game, player A1 has possession and carries his entire stick above his shoulders in a non-lacrosse fashion so that no one can legally check his stick under the rules for that level of play. **Ruling:** The first time it happens in the game, the officials should stop the game and explain to the players and coaches that we don't do that in lacrosse. If it happens again, the officials will call withholding and award possession to the opposing team. Continued violations may result in a releasable unsportsmanlike conduct foul for repeatedly committing the same technical foul.

**Situation 2:** In a 8U game, player A1 is preparing to shoot or pass and has both hands and his stick above shoulder height, which according to the wording in the rule book makes any check to the stick or gloves illegal. **Ruling:** If it is not possible to initiate a lift or poke check that makes contact below the chest of the player in possession or a downward check that starts below shoulder height for both players, the defensive player may (1) hold his stick in a blocking or covering position in front of A1's stick to interfere with the shot or pass or (2) execute a well-controlled lift or poke to the bottom hand even if the contact is above A1's chest provided the check is not violent and contacts only the stick or the gloved hand on the stick.

Note that these rules are **in addition to** the rules about stick checking in the “Rules for All Levels” section.

## Penalties

There are no man-down situations. The flag-down, slow-whistle procedure is still used, but when play stops, the official will explain the foul to the player and coaches. The penalized player must leave the game and will stay in the table area until the penalty time expires or, for releasable penalties, the opposing team scores a goal; at that point, the penalized player may substitute back into the game subject to the substitution rules.

Even though teams do not play man-down, a player may still be ejected or foul out of the game.

Possession cannot carry over from quarter to quarter due to uneven penalty situations since there are none, but it will carry over if the period ends with a flag down.

## Other rules

No score will be kept.

No body checking of any kind is permitted (see *Rules for All Levels* section).

Raking/covering the ball is **legal** as long as the ball is immediately moved and not withheld from play. If a player covers the ball without immediately moving the cross, that is withholding. (The old rule prohibiting this for 8U and 10U has been removed.)

As with every level of boys lacrosse play, no defensive player (other than a properly equipped goalkeeper, and goalkeepers are not allowed in 8U) can enter his own crease with the perceived intent of blocking a shot or acting as a goalkeeper.

Scrum ball rule: If 3 or more players are near the ball and no player can pick up the ball within 4 seconds, the ball is awarded by alternate possession.

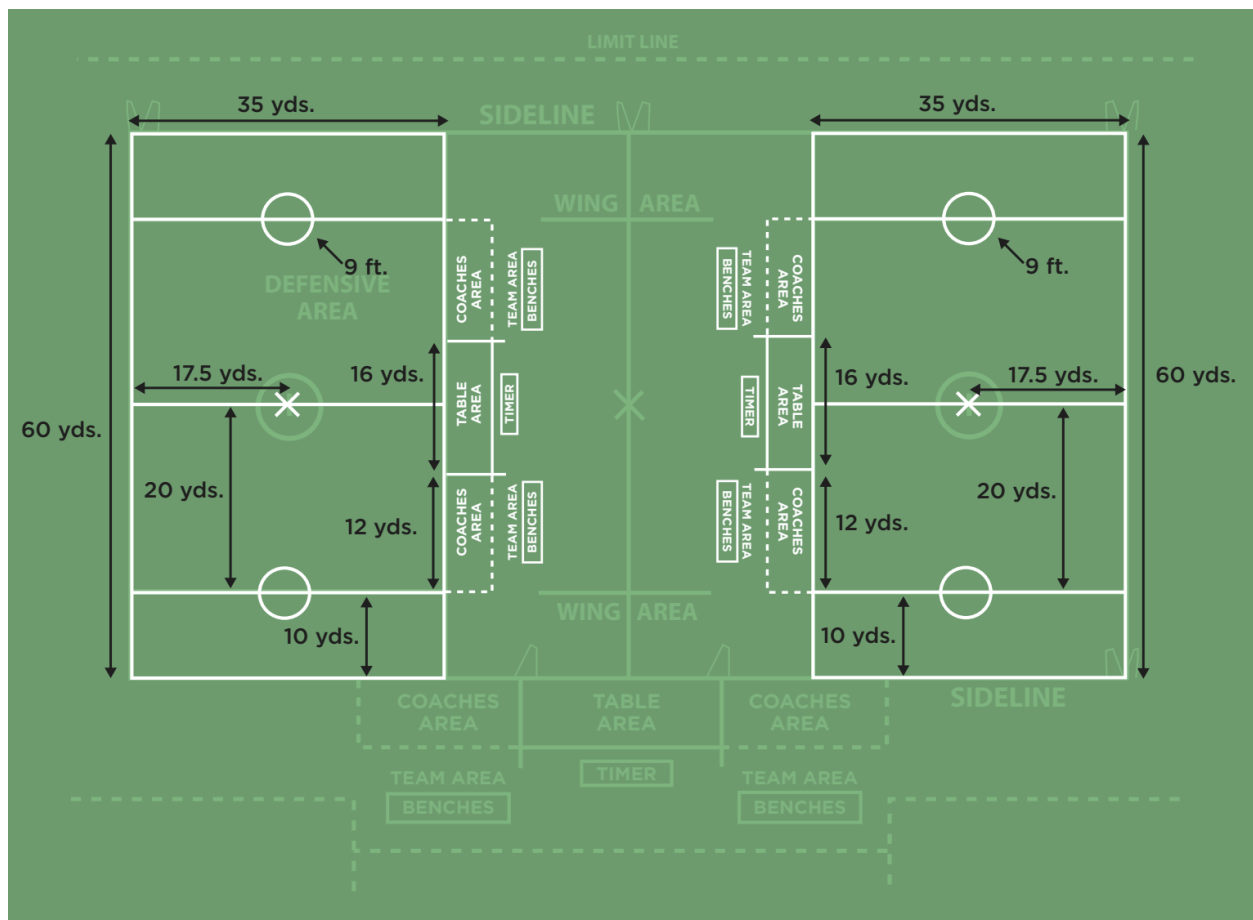
## Rules for 10U

US Lacrosse 10U rules apply with the modifications listed below **along with the rules for all levels** of GNLL boys youth play listed earlier.

### Field

A small field will be used. The crease circles can be marked with paint, soccer discs, or foldable creases. The center line can be marked with cones on the sideline for 10U rather than with paint.

See below for field diagrams and possible field setups using existing regulation fields:



Any situation that would normally result in the offensive team starting in the alley will result in the offensive team starting 1 yard in from the sideline instead.

## Goals

Goals should be 4'x4'. If no such goals are available, goals of a different size may be used instead provided the same size is used at both ends. If a standard goal (6'x6') is used, it may not be flipped to a triangle.

## Officials, coaches, and timekeepers

Two officials will be used except in emergency situations.

Coaches are allowed anywhere on the sideline *except* in the table area or the opponent's coaching box/bench area.

There must be at least two people working in the table area to keep game time, time penalties, and record penalties in order to be able to notify the officials if a player fouls out of the game. Each team must provide one person to work the table except when such personnel are provided by the league.

## Squad size and offside

Seven players per team (2 attack, 2 midfield, 2 defense, 1 goalie).

A team is offside if it has *more than* 4 players in its offensive end or *more than* 5 players in its defensive end; players serving penalties count toward *both* ends of the field. In many cases, only cones will mark the center line and not a painted line; officials will only make the call for offside if it is clear there are too many players clearly past the cone(s).

If, due to injuries, penalties, disqualifications, ejections, or other reasons, a team is unable to put at least 5 players on the field (including a legally equipped goalkeeper), that team forfeits the game.

The penalty stacking rule will come into effect for 10U when there are more than 2 players from the same team assessed penalties at the same time (rather than 3 as in 12U and higher levels).

## Equipment

Up to 2 long crosses (other than the goalkeeper's crosse) between 47" and 54" are allowed on the field at the same time. These are optional; all players may use short crosses if desired. The US Lacrosse recommendation is that no long crosse be taller than the player using it, but this is *not* a requirement.

Short sticks must be between 37" and 42". Goalie sticks must be between 37" and 54".

Players may use girls field crosses provided they pass the boys pocket depth and rollout requirements.

## **Penalties**

Penalties will be time-serving and teams will play man-down when penalized.

## **Faceoffs**

On a faceoff, each team must have a goalkeeper in its crease, 2 players behind the GLE in its offensive end, and 2 players behind the GLE in its defensive end. One midfielder from each team faces off, and one midfielder from each team stands with one foot on the crease above GLE on his defensive end of the field.

Midfielders are released on the whistle; goalies must stay in their crease and other players are restrained behind the goal line extended on their side of the field until the faceoff is over (e.g., officials call possession, ball crosses the GLE, there is a time-serving foul, the ball goes out of bounds, or play restarts after a non-time-serving technical foul).

If a team is down one player on a face-off, the midfielder spot on the crease must be left empty. If a team is down two players, the midfielder spot and one spot behind that team's defensive-end GLE must be left empty; in that situation, NFHS rules about offside for taking the faceoff apply. Note: A team cannot be down more than 2 players on the faceoff due to the penalty stacking rule (see above).

Faceoffs are treated like any other loose-ball situation: there is no requirement for players to play the ball, so man-ball boxing out, pushing, and holding are allowed subject to the usual rules.

## **One-pass rule**

The two-pass rule previously used for 10U in some leagues will no longer be used in any league. Instead, in any situation in which a face-off would normally be held (i.e., the start of a quarter when possession is not carrying over due to a flag down or uneven penalty situation, after a goal is scored), the team gaining possession must attempt one pass before they are allowed to shoot at the goal. This applies even if the faceoff does not take place (e.g., due to a pre-whistle violation on one team) or if possession is awarded due to a post-whistle violation. **Note:** This rule does not apply on every possession, only in situations where there is a faceoff (or where a faceoff was pending and then possession was awarded due to a foul).

If a team shoots at the goal before attempting a pass in these situations, it is a technical foul on the attacking team: no goal, and possession is awarded to the opposing team.

What qualifies as a pass attempt is determined by the officials, but attempts to circumvent the spirit of the rule, such as dropping the ball from one stick into another, will not be counted as passes.

Coaches may instruct their own teams to attempt or complete any number of passes in any situation (and are encouraged to do so when their teams have a large lead), and coaches may agree with each other to any such rules, but under no circumstances may officials be asked to enforce these team rules or handshake agreements.

## Restarts

For 8U and 10U, officials must ensure that no player from either team is within 5 yards of the player in possession before restarting play. If a player is closer than 5 yards, the officials will instruct the offending player to move back 5 yards and will start a 5-second count. If the player does not move back 5 yards within 5 seconds, a delay of game foul will be assessed.

If a defensive player who is more than 5 yards from the player awarded possession moves within 5 yards of that player to prevent the quick restart, a delay of game foul may be assessed.

## Substitution

Substitution will be done differently from what is described in the US Lacrosse rules:

- When a goal is scored, the goal scorer **must** substitute out of the game unless a team has no substitutes. Other players may substitute after a goal. Play will resume when substitution is complete and teams are ready for the ensuing face-off, if any.
- At the start of a period or after a goal, penalty, or officials timeout, coaches should be striving to complete substitutions within 20 seconds, and teams could potentially be called for delay of game if they are taking more than 20 seconds and significantly longer than their opponents.
- Whole- or partial-team substitution is allowed at other dead balls (coach must notify official during live-ball play that he wants to substitute on the next dead ball or notify the official during a dead ball before the official restarts play; teams will have 20 seconds to substitute).
- The head coach of the team in possession may get a stoppage of play during any live ball in order to complete substitutions by yelling “sub timeout!” to the officials

provided that his or her team is in no danger of losing the ball at the time of the request (e.g., if player A1 is being aggressively double-teamed by B1 and B2, Coach A may not call for a sub timeout). Both teams may substitute. Note: calling for a sub timeout when not entitled (e.g., the other team has possession, the ball is loose, the player in possession is in danger of losing the ball) is a technical foul.

- Otherwise, substitution is allowed during live play according to standard NFHS rules.

Substitution should be done so that all players get roughly equal playing time.

## Equipment inspections

*Routine inspections by officials:* At least once per half, the officials will check protective gear, check sticks for end caps, visually inspect shooting strings, and check pocket depth and rollout for one player from each team. If a player is missing required protective gear, the player will be penalized. If the stick has a deep pocket or is otherwise illegal, it must be removed from the game until corrected (no penalty).

*Coach-requested inspections:* Allowed subject to NFHS rules. Such inspections will be conducted the same as officials checks, except there will be a penalty for a deep pocket or otherwise illegal crosse (2:00 NR; stick can return if adjusted). In addition, measurements are subject to inspection and possible penalty if there is a Level 1.5 or higher official working the game and if the coach specifies that measurements should be checked. Note: Level 1 officials may check the length of long sticks to ensure they are in the 47" to 54" range; this should normally be done prior to the start of the game to ensure there are no issues, but if a long stick is discovered to be outside the legal range once the game starts, it will be penalized.

## Stick checking

The US Lacrosse stick-checking rules for 10U are highly restrictive and are the same as for 8U. The rules for these levels are:

*In all cases, stick checks must be made with two hands on the crosse and to the crosse of an opponent or his gloved hand on his crosse. An opponent must be in possession of the ball or within 3 yards of a loose ball. Only checks with the crosse listed below are legal:*

- Lift the bottom hand or the head of the stick, whichever is below the chest area.*
- Poke the bottom hand or the head of the stick, whichever is below the chest area.*

*(c) Downward check initiated from below both players' shoulders.*

Other than a poke check, **any check that is directed toward the body is a slash** for this level of play regardless of contact. In addition, any attempted stick check that contacts an opponent's body anywhere other than the gloved hand on the stick is a slash regardless of whether points (a)–(c) are followed.

An attempted stick check that contacts the stick **and** the body is a slash; hitting the stick does not remove a player's obligation to not hit the body.

*Note:* If long crosses are used—they are never required—coaches must pay special attention to teaching proper stick checking for these levels of play: a downward check may only be initiated from below the shoulders of *both* the player applying *and* the player receiving the check, and that can be difficult to execute with a long stick.

One-handed stick checks are illegal, even if they do not make contact or make contact only with the stick.

The following situations have been approved by US Lacrosse and apply to 10U games:

**Situation 1:** In a 10U game, player A1 has possession and carries his entire stick above his shoulders in a non-lacrosse fashion so that no one can legally check his stick under the rules for that level of play. **Ruling:** The first time it happens in the game, the officials should stop the game and explain to the players and coaches that we don't do that in lacrosse. If it happens again, the officials will call withholding and award possession to the opposing team. Continued violations may result in a releasable unsportsmanlike conduct foul for repeatedly committing the same technical foul.

**Situation 2:** In a 10U game, player A1 is preparing to shoot or pass and has both hands and his stick above shoulder height, which according to the wording in the rule book makes any check to the stick or gloves illegal. **Ruling:** If it is not possible to initiate a lift or poke check that makes contact below the chest of the player in possession or a downward check that starts below shoulder height for both players, the defensive player may (1) hold his stick in a blocking or covering position in front of A1's stick to interfere with the shot or pass or (2) execute a well-controlled lift or poke to the bottom hand even if the contact is above A1's chest provided the check is not violent and contacts only the stick or the gloved hand on the stick.

Note that these rules are **in addition to** rules about stick checking under “Rules for All Levels.”

## Other rules

Raking/covering the ball is **legal** as long as the ball is immediately moved and not withheld from play. If a player covers the ball without immediately moving the cross, that is withholding. (The old rule prohibiting this for 8U and 10U has been removed.)

Stick checking is very limited and no body checking of any kind is permitted (see *Rules for All Levels*).

Scrum ball rule: If 3 or more players are near the ball and no player can pick up the ball within 4 seconds, the ball is awarded by alternate possession.

## Rules for 12U

US Lacrosse 12U rules apply with the modifications listed below along with the rules for all levels of GNLL boys youth play listed earlier.

### Squad size and offside

Ten players per team, including the goalkeeper. Normal offside rules apply

### Officials and coaches

Two officials will normally be used, but 3 could be used in some circumstances upon request.

Coaches are restricted to coaches' area with exceptions defined in NFHS rules.

### Field

Full field (110 yards by 53 1/3–60 yards wide) with midline.

### Equipment

Short sticks must be between 40" and 42". Goalkeeper sticks must be between 40" and 72". Up to 4 long crosses, 52"–72" long, may be on the field at once. The US Lacrosse recommendation is that no long crosse be taller than the player using it, but this is not a requirement.

### Restarts

Play may be restarted with a defensive player closer than 5 yards to the player awarded possession (offensive players must still be at least 5 yards away). If a defender is within 5 yards of the player in possession, he may not defend the player in possession until that player reaches a distance of 5 yards from the defender or a technical foul will be assessed. In addition, the defensive player must give the offensive player a direct path to the goal on the restart or a technical foul may result in some situations. This rule is identical to the NFHS restart rule for high school play. **Because this rule does not apply to 10U and under games, coaches are encouraged to teach new 12U players about this rule.** Officials will *not* warn players to move back before the restart; it is the player's responsibility to give up the 5 yards.

### Substitution

Standard NFHS substitution rules will be used.

## Equipment inspections

*Routine inspections by officials:* At least once per half, the officials will check protective gear, check sticks for end caps, visually inspect shooting strings, and check pocket depth and rollout for one player from each team. If a player is missing required protective gear, the player will be penalized. There will be a penalty for a deep pocket or otherwise illegal crosse (2:00 NR; stick can return if adjusted).

*Coach-requested inspections:* Allowed subject to [NFHS rules](#). They will be conducted the same as routine inspections for this level and with the same penalties. [In addition, measurements are subject to inspection and possible penalty if there is a Level 1.5 or higher official working the game and if the coach specifies that measurements should be checked.](#)

## Stick checking

Stick checking is legal only if the opponent has the ball or is within 3 yards of a loose ball.

An attempted stick check that contacts the stick **and** the body is a slash; hitting the stick does not remove a player's obligation to not hit the body.

Coaches are strongly encouraged to continue teaching players to focus on the checks that are legal at the 10U level (poke or lift the bottom hand below chest level; downward check initiated below shoulder height for both players).

One-handed stick checks are **legal**; however, they will be closely scrutinized by officials, and are more likely to be called as a slash if they make contact with anything other than the opposing player's stick or gloved hand on the stick.

## Other rules

No body checking of any kind is permitted (see *Rules for All Levels* section).

There is no "scrum ball" rule; this has been eliminated by US Lacrosse for 12U.

The offensive 10-second count and over-and-back rules will apply, [but the 20-second clearing timer will not be used.](#)

"Get-it-in/keep-it-in" stalling rules apply. If officials believe a team is deliberately keeping the ball from play in the defensive end of the field, they may issue a get-it-in/keep-it-in stall warning even though the ball has not yet advanced to the offensive end.



## Rules for 14U

US Lacrosse 14U rules apply with the modifications listed below **along with the rules for all levels** of GNLL boys youth play listed earlier.

### Squad size and offside

Ten players per team, including a goalkeeper. Normal offside rules apply

### Officials and coaches

Two officials will normally be used, but 3 could be used in some circumstances upon request.

Coaches are restricted to coaches' area with exceptions defined in NFHS rules.

### Field

Full field (110 yards by [53 1/3–60 yards wide](#))

### Equipment

Up to 4 long crosses, 52"–72" long, may be on the field at once. The US Lacrosse recommendation is that no long crosse be taller than the player using it, but this is not a requirement.

Short sticks must be between 40" and 42".

Goalkeeper sticks must be between 40" and 72".

### Restarts

Play may be restarted with a defensive player closer than 5 yards to the player awarded possession (offensive players must still be at least 5 yards away). If a defender is within 5 yards of the player in possession, he may not defend the player in possession until that player reaches a distance of 5 yards from the defender or a technical foul is assessed. In addition, the defensive player must give the offensive player a direct path to the goal on the restart or a technical foul may result in some situations. This rule is identical to the NFHS restart rule for high school play.

### Equipment inspections

*Routine inspections by officials:* At least once per half, the officials will check protective gear, check the stick for an end cap, visually inspect shooting strings, and check pocket

depth and rollout for one player from each team. If a player is missing required protective gear, the player will be penalized. There will be a penalty for a deep pocket or otherwise illegal crosse (2:00 NR; stick can return if adjusted).

*Coach-requested inspections:* Allowed subject to [NFHS rules](#). They will be conducted the same as routine inspections for this level and with the same penalties. In addition, measurements are subject to inspection and possible penalty if there is a **Level 1.5 or higher** official working the game and if the coach specifies that measurements should be checked.

## **Body checking**

Body checking is only allowed in 14U when the player applying the check is completely upright and the force applied is not sufficient to put the opponent on the ground. A “take-out” or “excessive” body check—where the player making the check lowers his head or shoulder and hits with the force and intent to put the opponent on the ground—results in a minimum 1-minute nonreleasable penalty, and often a 2- or 3-minute nonreleasable penalty or an ejection.

Any take-out body check that would be illegal at the high school level (e.g., from behind, below the waist, when a player is on the ground) must be at least a 2:00 NR penalty. Officials are encouraged to issue longer penalties for violent contact after the first offense by a team. A second take-out body check by the same player should generally be at least a 3:00 NR penalty (and could be an ejection foul), and a second take-out check by a different player on the same team should generally be at least a 2:00 NR penalty.

Note that a shoulder-to-chest or shoulder-to-shoulder body check that knocks the opponent down and which would be perfectly legal in a high-school game is considered excessive and would result in at least a 1-minute nonreleasable penalty at the 14U level.

## **Other rules**

The offensive 10-second count and over-and-back rules will apply, [but the 20-second clearing timer will not be used](#).

“Get-it-in/keep-it-in” stalling rules apply. If officials believe a team is deliberately keeping the ball from play in the defensive end of the field, they may issue a get-it-in/keep-it-in stall warning even though the ball has not yet advanced to the offensive end.

## Summary of rules that apply for all levels

Additional rules at ALL youth levels	Equipment rules at ALL youth levels
Spectators must be 6 yards back from the far sideline	Goalie arm/shin/knee/thigh pads: recommended but not required (can't significantly increase blocking area)
Body contact and stick checking during a loose ball is <b>illegal</b> if more than 3 yards from the ball	Shaft with contrasting color (natural color, paint, tape) to head and gloves <b>not</b> required for face-off players
Games can be terminated by officials for flagrant USC, rough play, encouragement of rough play by coaches/spectators, etc.	Obviously illegal shooting strings (more than 4" from scoop) will be treated as illegal at all levels even if they are not measured
Flag-down rule differs from NFHS rule	Rib pads recommended but not required
Five-minute misconduct foul can be assessed	Goalies, if used, are treated like any other player when outside the crease with regard to lost equipment.
No 20-second clear rule at 8U, 10U, 12U, or 14U	Players must wear protective cups (not verified by officials)
Mercy rule for 10U, 12U, and 14U: team trailing by 12 or more in second half can ask to take ball rather than face off until they trail by 6 or less	NOCSAE ND200 chest protection required for all players
Raking/covering permitted at all levels (but must move ball immediately)	Eye black limited to a single stroke within the eye socket with no words or symbols (1:00 NR penalty for violations)
Any stick-to-helmet contact during an attempted stick check is a slash (no "brush" calls)	No template test for stick heads. Minimum width 6", inside measurement, for widest point of the stick head.
Players foul out with 3 separate personal fouls or 5+ minutes of personal fouls	Stick measurements only done on coach-requested check if coach asks for measurements by a Level 1.5 or higher official

# Rules Changes and Modifications

## Suggestions for US Lacrosse Rules

For suggestions regarding the US Lacrosse Boys Youth Rules:

- a. The US Lacrosse Men's Game Rules Subcommittee reviews the NFHS rules and the supplemental rules annually and may adopt any changes or modifications deemed necessary to provide for safe play or are desirable to improve the quality of the players' experience or development.
- b. Please send all comments or suggestions regarding the USA Lacrosse Rules for Boys' Youth Lacrosse to the US Lacrosse Men's Game Rules Subcommittee via the web form at <https://www.usalacrosse.com/submit-rule-change> (please do not contact the NFHS about these rules). The rules committee meets in June, so it is recommended that suggestions be submitted by May 15 to have the best chance of being considered.

## Suggestions for GNLL Youth Rules Modifications

To make comments on the GNLL modifications to the rules, please do not contact the NFHS or US Lacrosse. Questions and comments may be directed to:

Harold Buck  
Rules Editor, GNLL Boys Youth Rules  
[lacrosse@yourassignment.net](mailto:lacrosse@yourassignment.net)

Rule change suggestions must be received by July 31 to be considered for the upcoming September–August rules year. In some cases, rule changes that are adopted may be enacted for the fall youth season.