

THIRD EDITION

YOUTH RULES  
& BEST PRACTICES

GUIDEBOOK  
FOR GIRLS



# US LACROSSE » WOMEN'S GAME

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# US LACROSSE » ABOUT

US Lacrosse is the national governing body of lacrosse. Since 1998, we have been dedicated to providing leadership, support and resources to members of the lacrosse community. Fueled by a passion for the game, US Lacrosse plays a central role in the rapid growth of the sport throughout the United States and abroad. Devoted to promoting the game while preserving its integrity and spirit, US Lacrosse provides programs and services to more than 400,000 members in communities across the nation.

**Mission:** US Lacrosse is the national governing body of lacrosse. Through responsive and effective leadership, US Lacrosse strives to provide programs and services to inspire participation while protecting the integrity of the game.

**Vision:** We envision a future that offers people everywhere the opportunity to discover, learn, participate in, enjoy and ultimately embrace the shared passion of the lacrosse experience.

The rules and best practices in this book were developed in conjunction with the US Lacrosse Sports Science and Safety Committee, a diverse group of professionals that specialize in a variety of disciplines within the sports medicine field. The goal of this committee is to utilize the existing sports medicine literature, and to grow the body of lacrosse safety knowledge in order to objectively advise US Lacrosse and the lacrosse community on factors that may enhance the safety and quality of experience in the sport of lacrosse at all levels.

The guidebook is a supplement to the Official Rules for Girls' and Women's Lacrosse, published by US Lacrosse, and is focused on play at the U15 level and younger. The rulebook is available for free download or a hard-copy purchase on the US Lacrosse website at [www.uslacrosse.org](http://www.uslacrosse.org).

### Support Our Mission

This membership-driven resource is made possible in part by donations to the US Lacrosse Foundation, the philanthropic arm of US Lacrosse. To support the responsible growth of the sport, please consider making a donation at [uslacrosse.org/donate](http://uslacrosse.org/donate).



[USLacrosse.org/About](http://USLacrosse.org/About)



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# US LACROSSE » PROGRAMS

## NEW START

The New Start Program provides all of the necessary tools, resources, and information for new teams and developing areas to start and grow the sport in their community.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION GRANTS

Delivers soft-lacrosse equipment and the US Lacrosse Physical Education Curriculum Guide, which aligns with national standards and was developed in partnership with the National Association for Sport and Physical Education. The soft lacrosse sticks and soft balls are gender-neutral, and the curriculum provides age specific unit plans, lesson plans, drills, games, educational handouts, cross-curricular activities and more.

## FIRST STICK PROGRAM

A two-year deployment of comprehensive, team development resources to expand participation to those who otherwise would not be exposed to the game due to financial restrictions or other factors. The US Lacrosse First Stick Program provides US Lacrosse membership, lacrosse equipment, coaching education and life-skills training to new and developing teams across the United States.

## FAST BREAK INITIATIVE

Fast Break, an initiative that started in 2005, is designed to infuse a fledgling lacrosse area with resources to launch the sport from the roots up through educating coaches, officials and educators.

## SPORTSMANSHIP GRANT

US Lacrosse and the Positive Coaching Alliance (PCA) have partnered in a nationwide endeavor to make lacrosse a positive, character building experience for every athlete. The Sportsmanship Grant is designed to help organizations educate their coaches, officials, athletes and fans on honoring the game.

## AED GRANT PROGRAM

US Lacrosse and Cardiac Science, a leading manufacturer of cardiology products, are offering an AED Matching Grant Program which provides an AED unit and comprehensive program management of the unit to lacrosse leagues and US Lacrosse chapters.

## OFFICIALS EDUCATION PROGRAM:

The US Lacrosse Officials Education Program (OEP) provides a national standardized certification path for both men's game and women's game officials. It also provides additional resources for improving in the craft.

# US LACROSSE » PROGRAMS

## COACHING EDUCATION PROGRAM

The US Lacrosse Coaching Education Program (CEP) provides a national standardized approach to teaching the sport to coaches. CEP includes online courses, in-person instructional clinics, Positive Coaching Alliance courses, and multiple levels geared towards an individual's experience. As part of the CEP, US Lacrosse also offers coaches the opportunity to be certified by the organization.

## NATIONAL LACROSSE HALL OF FAME

Located at US Lacrosse headquarters in Baltimore, the National Lacrosse Hall of Fame highlights the sport's history and traditions and honors more than 350 greats that have been inducted into the Hall of Fame.

## NATIONAL CONVENTION

US Lacrosse hosts the largest educational opportunity in the sport each year – the US Lacrosse National Convention. More than 5,000 coaches, officials, administrators, vendors and fans come together each year to learn, network and kick off the season.

## NATIONAL TEAMS

US Lacrosse coordinates the National Teams Program for both men's and women's lacrosse. The U.S. national teams have been wildly successful on the field, winning 24 of 29 Federation of International Lacrosse world championships since 1974, and give back to the sport through numerous clinic programs.

## PLAYING EVENTS

US Lacrosse offers several national playing events each year, including the Women's Collegiate Lacrosse Associates National Championship, the National Tournament, regional championships at the U11, U13 and U15 age groups and the U15 National Championship.

## US LACROSSE FOUNDATION

The US Lacrosse Foundation operates in support of US Lacrosse, the national governing body of men's and women's lacrosse. The principal aims and objectives of the Foundation are to encourage, foster and promote the sport of lacrosse, as played by both men and women, in the United States, and in particular, to benefit and support the programs and activities of US Lacrosse.





In order to provide the best experience possible for the youth who currently or will be playing the sport of lacrosse, the US Lacrosse Gold Stick Standards of Excellence represent the Best Practices that should be incorporated by quality youth lacrosse programs, whether they are in established, well-resourced areas or serving emerging, less resourced communities. At their best, youth sports programs provide young people with a safe environment in which to have fun, build character, learn sportsmanship and develop life skills that help them become responsible adults.

US Lacrosse is currently working with a select number of leagues throughout the country to pilot the Gold Stick Program. The seven standards for leagues in the US Lacrosse Gold Stick Program are:

## RULES

League must adhere to all current US Lacrosse youth rules and age guidelines, have them publicly available and regularly communicated to program coaches, administrators, and parents.

## LEAGUE ADMINISTRATION

League has current, written policies for league governance that are publicly available and regularly communicated to program administrators, coaches, parents and players through a multi-faceted communication system.

## SAFETY AND RISK MANAGEMENT

League has written policies and plans for safety and risk management that are publicly available and regularly communicated to program coaches, administrators, and parents. Unless specifically noted, all policies are followed during all practices and games.



## PLAYER SAFETY AND SPORTSMANSHIP

League demonstrates a commitment to the safety of their players by publishing and promoting current information related to healthy lacrosse activity. League provides a detailed, written sportsmanship policy to players, parents, coaches, officials and administrators.

## SCREENED, TRAINED AND CERTIFIED US LACROSSE COACHES

All head coaches are NCSI background checked, trained, and at least Level 1 certified through the US Lacrosse Coaching Education Program.

## TRAINED/CERTIFIED US LACROSSE OFFICIALS

League must require, at a minimum that all officials assigned to league games are certified by their Local Board, and hold a current on-field rating prior to any assignment to the programs contests. All contests (with the exception of U9 on a shortened field) will have a minimum of two officials assigned to each contest.

## MEMBERSHIP

All players, coaches, officials and administrators are current US Lacrosse members.



Questions? For more information, please contact USL's sport development department at [sportdevelopment@uslacrosse.org](mailto:sportdevelopment@uslacrosse.org)

[USLacrosse.org/GoldStick](http://USLacrosse.org/GoldStick)



## US LACROSSE » CODE OF ETHICS

The US Lacrosse Code of Ethics promotes sportsmanship and character by teaching, advocating, modeling and enforcing ethical principles, while preserving the integrity of the game. Everyone, including parents, players, coaches and officials must conduct themselves in a manner which is respectful, sportsmanlike and positive.

Below is a brief overview of the code:

**RESPECT:** individuals should value the opinions, views and roles of others who work to further the mission of the organization. All should safeguard the dignity, privacy and freedom of individuals regardless of their race, color, creed, socio-economic status, age, gender, religion, sexual orientation, disability or nationality.

**FAIRNESS:** making decisions without favoritism or prejudice. Anything that creates an unfair advantage violates the spirit, as well as the integrity, of the sport of lacrosse.

**TEAMWORK:** defined as a cooperative or coordinated effort on the part of a group of individuals who work collectively in the interest of a common goal. All members of US Lacrosse should adopt and promote the philosophy that greater success can be achieved when individuals sacrifice their desire for personal accomplishment in favor of the benefits of their team.

**COMMUNICATION:** US Lacrosse members should communicate with clarity, honesty, timeliness, and openness. Clear, honest, timely communication allows collaboration and cooperation to occur, building a stronger game and community for sport.

**CONFLICT OF INTEREST:** present in any instance in which the actions of an individual could result in actual or perceived personal gain or advantage, and/or have an adverse effect on the interests, mission or integrity of US Lacrosse. Individuals who represent and serve US Lacrosse, at all levels, have a duty to disclose any financial interest or personal obligation that may, actually or perceptually, affect the independence of their judgment.

**LEGALITY:** all members of US Lacrosse must comply with all applicable laws. US Lacrosse reserves the right to review violations of the law, which may result in revocation of organizational and/or member status.

## HISTORY » WOMEN'S LACROSSE

The oldest sport in North America, lacrosse was one of many stickball games being played by American Indians at the time Europeans arrived. Rooted in Native American religion, lacrosse was often played to resolve conflicts, heal the sick, and develop strong, virile men.

Legend tells of games with as many as 1,000 players per side, playing on fields from one to 15 miles in length. Games sometimes lasted for days. Balls were made out of wood, deerskin, baked clay or stone.

The evolution of the modern game began in 1636 when Jean de Brebeuf, a Jesuit missionary, documented a contest in southeast Ontario, Canada. Lacrosse was given its name by early French settlers.

The first women's lacrosse game was played in 1890 at the St. Leonard's School in Scotland. In 1926, Miss Rosabelle Sinclair established the first women's lacrosse team in the United States at the Bryn Mawr School in Baltimore, Maryland.

Men's and women's lacrosse were played under virtually the same rules, with no protective equipment, until the mid-1930s. Today, women's rules limit stick contact, prohibit body contact and, therefore, require little protective equipment.

In 1933, the United States Women's Lacrosse Association (USWLA) held its first national tournament in Greenwich, Conn. The first NCAA women's championship was played between the University of Massachusetts and Trenton State University in 1982. That same year, the first IFWLA World Cup was played in Nottingham, England with the United States defeating Australia 10-7 in the gold medal game. In 1998, US Lacrosse was established as the national governing body for men's and women's lacrosse.



[USLacrosse.org/History](https://USLacrosse.org/History)



# THE GUIDE » USING THE GUIDEBOOK

**WHAT IS IT?** The guidebook is US Lacrosse's way of providing everyone involved with youth lacrosse a quick understanding of the game and the rules that help make it safe, rewarding, and fun.

**WHEN** tells you when you should expect to see it

**WHERE** tells you where on the field it occurs

**WHO** tells you who is involved in it

**WHY** tells you why it exists as a rule



## FUNDAMENTALS

**READ** Four points offer a quick view to the basics of what's going on and how to execute it properly.

**UNDERSTAND** Presents a better understanding of the rule or component.

**REFERENCE** Refers to other places to learn more about a particular rule or component of youth lacrosse.

**LINK** Links to related pages and online subject areas will be supplied throughout the guidebook.

## DEVELOPMENTAL

» Highlights important modifications for different youth age groups.

» **U9** – age-specific color coded

» **U11** – age-specific color coded

» **U13** – age-specific color coded

» **U15** – age-specific color coded

## PLAY SAFE

» First and foremost, lacrosse is an exceptionally safe and healthy team activity.

» Tips on how to keep it safe, healthy and fun for everyone are listed here.

» Tips related to the skill/rule/category being described in this section.


» The QR code to the left may be scanned with your smartphone to obtain further information on the topic online. If no smartphone is available, the URL provided links to additional information online.




## VIOLATIONS

» Major responsibilities and game violations specific to the topic will be listed here.

» Severity of infraction is color coded as follows:


 RED CARD

 YELLOW CARD

 GREEN CARD

 MAJOR FOUL

 MINOR FOUL

 GOAL CIRCLE FOUL


## BEST PRACTICES


» US Lacrosse recommends “Best Practices” to improve many aspects of the game.


» Ways to help make the game a better experience for all involved are presented here.

## PERSPECTIVES

This section provides interesting perspectives for different participants:

 Parents

 Coaches

 Officials

## SITUATIONS

Many unique situations can arise during a game. Situations section offers insight on how to address these situations when they occur.



# THE GUIDE » TERMS

## DEFENDING

**MARKING:** closely guarding an opponent within a stick's length.

**CHECKING:** using controlled stick-to-stick contact to try and dislodge the ball.

**MODIFIED CHECKING:** checking the stick only if the entire stick is below shoulder level. The check must be down and away from the body.

**BLOCKING:** a player causes illegal contact by moving into the path of the ball carrier, giving her no chance to stop or change direction.

**CROSS-CHECK:** using the shaft of the crosse to hit, push or displace an opponent.

**THREE SECONDS:** while defending within the 8-meter arc, remain in that area more than 3 seconds unless she is marking an opponent within a stick's length.

**HORIZONTAL STICK:** if contact is made with a stick that is held in a horizontal position, the foul shall be on the player who's stick is in that horizontal position.

## ATTACKING

**CRITICAL SCORING AREA:** an area 15m in front of and 15m to each side of the goal and 9m behind the goal. An 8m arc and a 12m fan are marked in this area.

**FREE SPACE TO GOAL:** a cone-shaped path extending from each side of the goal circle to the attack player with the ball that a defender may not occupy unless guarding an opponent within a stick's length.

**SCORING PLAY:** a continuous effort by the attacking team to move the ball toward the goal and generate a shot on goal. The scoring play is over when a shot is taken, the attacking team fouls, loses possession, passes or carries the ball behind the goal line and stops the continuous attempt to score.

**PICK:** a player without the ball, who by her positioning, forces opponent to take another route. It must be set within the visual field of the opponent allowing her time and space to stop or change direction, but the pick doesn't have to be stationary.

**INDIRECT FREE POSITION:** awarded to the offense when a minor foul is committed by the defense inside the 12-meter fan. Player may run or pass but may not shoot until the ball has been passed to another player.

**THREE SECONDS:** a player with the ball may not hold the ball for more than 3 seconds when closely guarded/marked.

# THE GUIDE » TERMS

## PENALTY ADMINISTRATION

**SLOW WHISTLE:** a held whistle, with a flag raised, when the defense commits a major foul and the attack has entered the critical scoring area and is engaged in a scoring play.

**THROW:** occurs when there are off-setting fouls. Two players stand next to each other (each standing closest to the goal their team is defending) and the official tosses the ball between them to get possession.

**CARDS:** used by officials to issue penalties to a player, team or coach for misconduct, and repeated, flagrant or dangerous fouls.

**GREEN CARD:** given as a team caution for delay of game. The green card will be recorded in the score book against the offending team. The next offense results in a green/yellow card presented to the offending player, major foul, the player may remain in the game. Subsequent delay of game offenses result in a green/red card, major foul, to the offending player who must leave the field and enter the penalty area for 2 minutes of elapsed playing time and a substitute must take her place.

**YELLOW CARD:** given as a warning to both teams, an offending player, coach or team personnel. An offender is suspended for 2 minutes of elapsed playing time and serves this time in the penalty area. A substitute may not take her place, and the team must play short at both ends of the field. A second yellow card to the same individual will result in her ejection from the game. A substitute must take the place of a carded U9/U11 player.

**RED CARD:** given as an ejection to an offending player, coach or team personnel for persistent or flagrant violation of the rules. Anyone receiving a red card is prohibited from participating in the team's next game. The offending player must serve 4 minutes of elapsed playing time in the penalty area.





# THE GUIDE » TERMS

## FIELD AREAS

**COACHING AREA:** the area on the bench/table side of the field extending from their side of the substitution area to their end line.

**U15/ U13/U11:** coaches must remain in the coaching area.

**U9:** one coach is allowed on the field for the purpose of coaching, but may not interfere with the flow of the game and may not enter the critical scoring area.

**SUBSTITUTION AREA:** the area in front of the scorer's table, centered at midfield, and between two hash marks 5 yards from the center line.

**PENALTY AREA:** the area directly in front of the scorer's/timer's table and at the rear of the substitution area. Players who are carded and serving their penalty time must sit or kneel in this area and should not be blocking the view of the scorer's/timer's or obstructing any substitutions by either team.

**TEAM BENCH AREA:** the area from the end of the substitution area to the team's restraining line. Players and their equipment should remain in this area during the duration of the game.

**8-METER ARC:** an arc marked in front of the goal used for the administration of major fouls. A defender may not remain in this area for more than three seconds unless closely marking her opponent.

**12-METER FAN:** a semi-circle area in front of each goal circle bounded by an arc 12 meters from the goal circles.

**GOAL CIRCLE:** the circle around the goal to protect the goalkeeper. No player's stick or body may "break" the plane of the goal circle.



# THE GUIDE » TERMS

## PLAYER PLACEMENT

**FREE POSITION:** an opportunity awarded to one player when a major or minor foul is committed by a player from the other team. All players must move 4 meters away from the player with the ball. When the whistle sounds to resume play, the ball carrier may run, pass or shoot, unless the free position is indirect. On an indirect free position, the ball must be passed before a shot can be taken.



**MAJOR FOULS:** offending player stands 4 meters behind player taking the free position.

**MINOR FOULS:** offending player stands 4 meters away with respect to the direction she was heading before committing foul.

**TEAM FOULS/OFFSIDE:** refers to a team with more players

over the restraining line than is allowed. When a violation occurs, correct the offside first. If attack fouls, closest defender to spot of ball takes free position at that spot, no closer than 8 meters to goal circle. If defense fouls, and ball is outside the critical scoring area, attack is awarded free position at that spot, nearest defender 4 meters behind. If the ball was within the critical scoring area, free position will be awarded to the nearest attack at the top of the 12 meter fan with nearest defender 4 meters behind.

**GOAL CIRCLE FOUL:** The penalty for goal circle fouls by the defense other than for an illegal deputy shall be a free position taken 8m out to either side level with the goal line. The offending player, except the goalkeeper, shall be placed 4m behind the player taking the free position and the lane (above the goal line) is cleared. The goalkeeper remains on the spot of the foul, or if she was within or partially within the goal circle, she remains inside the circle.

The penalty for goal circle fouls by the attack shall be a free position taken by the goalkeeper within the goal circle. The offender will be placed 4 meters behind the goal circle.

**STAND:** when whistle is blown, all players must stand where they are. Ball is considered dead until whistle blows again.

**OFFSETTING FOULS:** when a player from each team commits a foul (major and/or minor) during the same play, or when the attacking team commits a foul during a slow whistle situation.



**GIRLS » YOUTH RULES GUIDEBOOK**  
USLacrosse.org/FieldDiagrams



## DEVELOPMENTAL » FAIR PLAY

The US Lacrosse Sports Science and Safety Committee, a diverse group of professionals that specialize in a variety of disciplines within the sports medicine field, released a position paper “Boys’ and Girls’ Youth Lacrosse Participation Recommendations” that form the basis of this section. More information about the work of the Sports Science and Safety Committee, and a complete copy of the paper, can be accessed by scanning the QR code on the following page, or by visiting the link listed.

### FAIR PLAY

Limiting aggressive play in lacrosse is necessary to protect the safety of players. Other approaches that involve incentives for safe play may serve as an effective complement to rules. Programs like that may help to foster a greater emphasis on sportsmanship while protecting the safety of its players.

Other recommendations to maintain healthy and fair play are to not let players participate in games below their age grouping, ensure everybody plays and de-emphasize winning for fun and participation.

To ensure the emphasis at the younger levels stays on skill development and team concepts, tournaments should not be played at the U9 level nor all-star teams be created for U9 and U11 players.

### NUTRITION

Children are growing and in turn require extra attention to their energy intake requirements while participating in physical activities like girls’ lacrosse. Problems in this area can be exacerbated by all day tournaments, strenuous summer camp schedules, and intense competition on very hot days. Active girls ages 9-12 will burn around 1,600 calories a day while active older girls will burn around 2,800 calories in a day.

For active children of all ages, it is paramount that they eat three well balanced meals with two snacks daily. A snack an hour-or-two before games is also recommended.



## DEVELOPMENTAL » ATHLETE

### ATHLETE

Dr. Richard Ginsburg, member of the [US Lacrosse Sports Science and Safety Committee](#) and sports psychologist at Harvard Medical School, published the 10 tips for coaching youth adapted below:

- 1) Have fun. Kids remain active in a sport if they are having fun. Performance improves when participants enjoy playing the game.
- 2) Teach sportsmanship early. Coaches must impart good values (integrity, respect, compassion, etc.) and model good behavior.
- 3) Kids are not mini-adults. They are a work in progress and must be treated and coached differently than adults.
- 4) Design age-appropriate practices. Coaches should consider the physical, psychological and cognitive abilities of youth players when developing practice plans. In addition, coaches should minimize the amount of time spent standing around during practice.
- 5) Define success appropriately for each age group. For pre-kindergarten and kindergarten aged kids, focus on fun and safe activity. Among elementary school aged youth, emphasize developing skills and friendships. With middle school and high school players, define and recognize individual strengths and weaknesses.
- 6) Provide positive feedback. Research shows that a ratio of at least 5:1 between positive and negative feedback is needed.
- 7) Save specialization for older kids. Research shows that an unrealistic number of hours of activity is necessary to move a person’s skill set to a significantly upgraded level.
- 8) Avoid over-training. Ginsburg says youths should play just one sport per season, and have at least 1-2 days off per week, and a break of at least two or three months from the game. He also cautions against increases in training levels that increase the risk of injury.
- 9) Use appropriate equipment. Avoid ill-fitting hand-me-down equipment and make sure equipment fits properly.
- 10) Avoid moving kids into older age groupings based on skill level or physical development. Ginsburg says players risk injuries and social alienation when moved up.



[tinyurl.com/76axe56](http://tinyurl.com/76axe56)



# DEVELOPMENTAL » BURNOUT

## OVERUSE AND BURNOUT

In 2007, the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) addressed the need to help prevent burnout and overuse injuries in young athletes and made the following recommendations:

- » Encourage early diversification in playing a range of sports, rather than early specialization (there's no data to support that early specialization in lacrosse leads to improved performance or greater expertise).
- » Young athletes should have 1-2 days off per week from competitive sports and training to recover.
- » Take 2-3 months away from a specific sport during the year.
- » Emphasize fun, safety and sportsmanship as goals of sport.
- » No sport specialization before puberty.
- » Reduce excessive playing time in all-day, weekend tournaments.
- » Encourage participation in multiple sports throughout the year. However, young athletes should only play on one lacrosse team during a season.
- » Weekly training time should not increase by more than 10 percent weekly.



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USLacrosse.org/HealthAndSafety

# DEVELOPMENTAL » HYDRATION

## HYDRATION

There are critical issues regarding hydration among children in sports.

First, children are more vulnerable to dehydration than adults as a function of the following:

- » Children have a greater surface area-to-mass ratio than adults.
- » Children lack adequately functioning sweat glands, reducing their capacity to sweat and lose heat.

Second, children who train and compete over long periods of time, such as tournaments or camps, on intensely hot days are particularly vulnerable to dehydration. To manage risks, the following is suggested:

- » Provide longer periods of rest between substitutions and games.
- » Attend to heat acclimatization, fluid and energy intake, proper clothing, air temperature and humidity.
- » Encourage drinking between bouts of exercise and during games. Drink enough fluid so that urine color is pale throughout the day.

Thirst is not a reliable indicator of dehydration. Experts recommend that young athletes drink fluids every 15-20 minutes during physical activity.

Athletes need to drink enough fluid to replace lost fluids within 1-2 hours after exercise. At least one hour of rest is necessary to allow for enough time for proper re-hydration and snacking.

Water should be the primary source of hydration throughout the day and before exercise. Sports drinks are only recommended for children and adolescents who have participated in vigorous exercise for longer than 60 minutes.



USLacrosse.org/HealthAndSafety



# AGE & ELIGIBILITY » GUIDE

## RULES AND GUIDELINES

US Lacrosse establishes eligibility standards in order to promote the game of lacrosse among the youth of America in a safe and sportsmanlike environment. This goal can best be achieved by facilitating playing opportunities that seek to establish a “level playing field” among players of a similar age, size and ability.

Teams should be balanced as to physical size, cognitive and developmental stages. Any player who is age-eligible to U15 lacrosse should not be denied an opportunity to play.

### AGE GUIDELINES (BY AUGUST 31 PRECEDING COMPETITION YEAR)

**U9** 8 years old or younger as of August 31 of the previous year

**U11** 10 years old or younger as of August 31 of the previous year

**U13** 12 years old or younger as of August 31 of the previous year

**U15** 14 years old or younger as of August 31 of the previous year

Although possible, it is not recommended that players play up a level. Players may not play down a level.

Teams playing by US Lacrosse rules will be organized by age. When multiple teams exist in an age group, physical size, skill and maturity should be considered when organizing teams.

## BEST PRACTICE

US Lacrosse believes that prohibiting checking for beginning/younger players will enable them to develop the critical skills necessary to play and enjoy the game before being introduced to stick checking. Once they have mastered the basics, modified checking below the shoulders will be introduced at the U13 level.



**GIRLS » YOUTH RULES GUIDEBOOK**  
USLacrosse.org/AgeEligibility

# OBJECTIVES OF THE GAME

Girls' lacrosse is a non-contact game played by 12 players, one may be a goalkeeper. The object of the game is to shoot the ball into the opponent's goal. The team scoring the most goals wins.

After warm-ups and the pre-game equipment check with the officials, the game begins with a draw at the center of the field. Only three players from each team are permitted between restraining lines at the time of the draw. Once the signal for the draw occurs, the players behind the lines may cross over.

Only seven attacking players are allowed over the offensive restraining line and only eight defenders (including goalkeeper) are allowed in their defensive end. Players may exchange places during play, but the player must have both feet over the line before a teammate enters.

When a whistle blows, all players must stop in place. Field players may pass, catch or run with the ball in their stick. Rough checks and contact to the body with the stick or body are not allowed.

Fouls are categorized as major, minor, team, goal circle, and misconduct fouls. The penalty for fouls is a “free position.” For major fouls, the offending player is placed 4 meters behind the player taking the free position. For a minor foul, the offending player is placed 4 meters from where she approached her opponent before committing the foul, and play is resumed.

If a game is tied at the end of regulation, sudden victory may be played at the older levels. Youth girls lacrosse rules are designed to emphasize the proper development of stick skills, team play, player safety and sportsmanship.



## BEST PRACTICE

Coach and administrators should establish team guidelines and a code of conduct for players/parents prior to the season to be distributed and acknowledged by all.



# YOUTH RULES » U9 AND U11

## GAME MODIFICATIONS

Youth lacrosse rules are designed to emphasize player safety, enjoyment and retention through the development of individual stick skills, game situations, team play, safety and sportsmanship.

Youth rules highlighted below are modifications of US Lacrosse rules and aimed at supporting the physical, cognitive and skill progression of each age group.

**COACH:** **U9:** one coach allowed on field to instruct players in a positive manner. Keeping score optional.

**U11:** coaches must remain in the coaching area.

**CHECKING:** absolutely no checking allowed in U9 or U11.

**FIELD:** **U9:** plays on a modified field with a reduced number of players (7v7).

**U11:** may play on modified field or regulation field (12v12).

**GAME TIMES:** maximum 20-minute running time halves. No overtime.

**PLAYERS:** **U9:** 7v7, goalkeeper and keeping score optional.

**U11:** either 12v12 or 7v7. 7v7 is played on a modified field.

**STICKS:** regulation field stick with or without modified pocket. Sticks may be cut to match length of a player's arm. Goalkeepers are allowed mesh pockets and sticks up to 52 inches long.

**MODIFIED POCKET:** no more than half of the ball may fall below the bottom of the sidewall.

**MODIFIED GOAL:** Smaller (street hockey type) cages may be used. The goal may be modified with a shooting net or turned over to present the triangle opening if no goalkeeper is present.

**OFFICIALS:** at least one US Lacrosse-certified official. Two US Lacrosse certified officials are recommended on all games at all levels.

**PENALTY ADMINISTRATION:** cards must be issued at all levels of play. At the U9 and U11 levels, a substitute must take the place of the carded player while she serves her penalty time.

- No shooting from free position if no goalkeeper or open net
- No offside if 7v7
- No follow through into goal on shots
- Offensive 3 seconds called if defense in checkable position

**DEPUTY:** A deputy is a field player who may enter the goal circle when the goalkeeper is not present. No deputy allowed at any youth level, U9/U11/U13/U15.

# YOUTH RULES » U13 AND U15

## GAME MODIFICATIONS

The rules listed below are in place to maintain a safe playing environment while supporting the physical, cognitive and developed skills progression of older players.

**COACH:** must remain in the coaching area. Teams with 15-plus players should have a minimum of two certified coaches.

**CHECKING:** modified checking below the shoulder in U13. Full checking is allowed in U15 if there are two USL officials officiating, one of which must have a Local rating or higher.

**FIELD:** U13/U15 - regulation sized field with appropriate markings.

**GAME TIMES:** maximum 25-minute halves, running time. Two 3-minute overtime periods after 5-minute rest and coin toss.

**STICKS:** regulation field stick with no modified pocket. Goalkeepers are allowed a mesh pocket.

**EQUIPMENT:** requirements same for all levels.

**OFFICIALS:** it is strongly recommended that two US Lacrosse-certified officials be used in U13 and U15 games. U15 must have two USL-rated officials for full checking; one must have Local rating.

**PENALTY ADMINISTRATION:** cards are issued at all levels of play.

- A red card must be given for an intentional check to the head during full check games.
- No follow through into goal on shots.
- Offensive 3 seconds called if defense in checkable position during modified and no checking games.

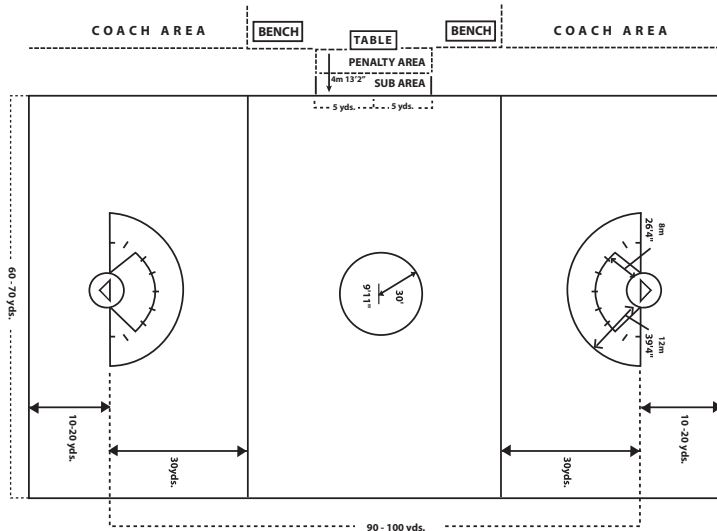
## BEST PRACTICE

Rules are written with the safety of all players being of the utmost importance. Officials have the authority to penalize any foul, unsafe play, or unacceptable behavior. Youth lacrosse should be fun, challenging and safe.

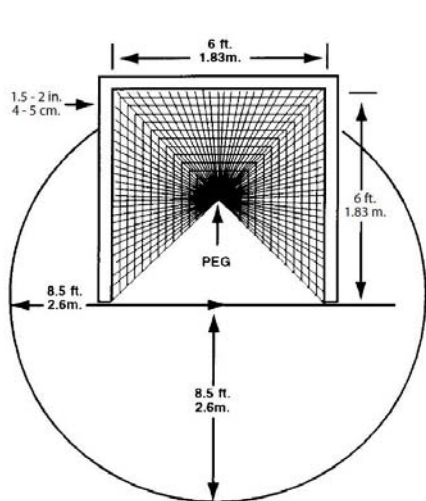


# FIELD » DIAGRAMS

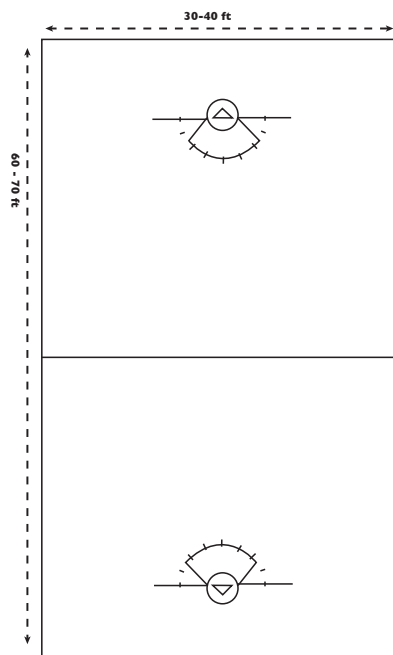
# FIELD » INFORMATION



FULL-SIZED FIELD



GOAL AND GOAL CIRCLE



YOUTH FIELD

**DIMENSIONS:** 110-140 yards long, 60-70 yards wide, goals 90-100 yards apart, 10-20 yards behind goal line (For U11 play and younger a modified field may be used. The field is between 60-70 yards in length and between 30-40 yards in width. The field markings shall include: Goal circle and goal line, 8m arc, centerline only.)

**RESTRAINING LINES:** 30 yards in from goal lines

**CENTER CIRCLE:** middle of field, for draws

**ARC AND FAN:** 8-meter arc and 12-meter fan half circles from goal line

**SUBSTITUTION AREA:** players enter game through this area

**TEAM BENCH AREA:** from the end of the substitution area to the team's restraining line, and even with the level of the scorer's table extended (at least 4m from the sideline). Does not include the area directly behind the scorer's table.

**PENALTY AREA:** in front of the scorer's/timer's table and at the rear of the substitution area where any player who has been carded will sit or kneel while serving her penalty

**SCORER'S/TIMER'S TABLE:** score, time, substitution area

**COACHING AREA:** where coaches may roam, age levels have different rules

**SPECTATOR AREA:** four meters from sideline opposite bench areas and never behind goal line

## FIELD NEEDS

**GOALS:** 6x6 feet with 1.5-2" pipes and net attached

**REGULATION LACROSSE BALLS:** must be stamped with "Meets NOCSAE Standard", ball may be yellow or orange

**SCORE BOOK, GAME CLOCK, HORN, CONES, WATER, MEDICINE KIT**

**AED:** an automated external defibrillator (AED) is recommended to be available on site. Visit [www.uslacrosse.org](http://www.uslacrosse.org) and click "Programs & Grants" for info on securing an AED.

**ELECTRONIC EQUIPMENT:** may be used during play by coaches on the sideline or within the coaching area. However, non-playing team members, athletic trainers and /or other individuals connected with the team shall not use such electronic equipment to communicate with the 12 on-field players or any other coach not present on the team sideline or within the coaching area.



## EQUIPMENT » STICKS



### FIELD STICK

- » Length: 35.5" minimum, 43.25" maximum. U9 and U11 may shorten to the length of player's arm
- » Stringing: 4-5 leather or synthetic strings, 8-12 stitches or cross-lacing, maximum of two "shooting" strings
- » Pocket: no mesh - legal when ball remains above the wall when pressure applied in horizontal stick
- » Head: triangular affixed in same plane as handle
- » Shaft: wood, composite or metal alloy

### GOALKEEPER STICK

- » Length: 35.5" minimum, 52" maximum in youth lacrosse
- » Stringing: goalkeeper sticks come standard with mesh pockets
- » Pocket: legal when ball moves freely in pocket and stick meets manufacturing specs from Rule 9 in "Official Rules for Girls and Women's Lacrosse" rulebook published by US Lacrosse
- » Head: extra-wide triangle in same plane as handle
- » Shaft: wood, composite or metal alloy

Sticks are checked at pre-game line-up and officials may remove illegal sticks from game. Officials will recheck illegal sticks at halftime and allow for use if the stick passes.



US Lacrosse establishes regulations for women's lacrosse. For a full listing of legal sticks, scan the code to the left with your smart phone.

**GIRLS » YOUTH RULES GUIDEBOOK**  
USLacrosse.org/GirlsEquipment

## EQUIPMENT » UNIFORMS

### UNIFORM SHIRTS AND KILTS OR SHORTS

With the exception of the goalkeeper, all team members must be dressed uniformly with:

- » Same colored kilts or shorts
- » Shirts of same color and design
- » Clearly visible numbers on the front (6" minimum height) and back (8" minimum height) in a color that contrasts with the shirt color. (See Appendix K of USL Rule Book for more details.)
- » U13/U15 team members with visible undergarments must wear same color and be of one solid color, either white, black, grey or team's uniform colors
- » Uniform shorts or kilts must be worn
- » Team members' shoes and socks need not match



### GOALKEEPER

- » Goalkeeper's shirt must be of same colors as her team and bottom must be in agreement with her team's predominant color, or be black or grey
- » Shirt must be worn over protective equipment and sweat pants are acceptable

### HOME AND AWAY

Coaches or schools agree on contrasting colors before game day. Home team will wear numbered pinnies or vests of a contrasting color if both teams have uniforms of similar or same colors.



## EQUIPMENT » FIELD PLAYER



## EQUIPMENT » FIELD PLAYER

### GOGGLES (REQUIRED)

- Must be lacrosse-specific
- Meets the ASTM International standard performance specification; includes a statement/seal indicating compliance
- Proper fit should be based on manufacturers' guidelines & requirements on their website or included with the goggles

### MOUTHGUARD (REQUIRED)

- Variety of materials, sizes, colors & fitting options
- Must be visible color other than clear or white
- Self-molding (from manufacturers) or custom-molded (from dentists)
- Proper fit allows players to talk, cover the upper jaw of teeth & not cause discomfort
- May not be altered to decrease protection; can cut if too large for athlete's mouth

### GLOVES (OPTIONAL)

- If worn, they must be close-fitting & should be comfortable for player while holding a stick
- Goalie gloves not permitted for field players

### OTHER PERSONAL EQUIPMENT (OPTIONAL)

- Approved soft headgear
- Protective devices necessitated by medical grounds
- No equipment – including protective devices necessitated by medical grounds – may be used unless compliant with rules & manufacturers' specs & deemed not dangerous to other players by the officials

\* EQUIPMENT NOTE: Hard and unyielding items (guards, casts, braces, splints, etc.) on the hand, wrist, forearm, elbow, upper arm or shoulder are prohibited unless padded with a closed-cell, slow-recovery foam padding no less than 1/2" thick. Knee and ankle braces that are unaltered from the manufacturer's original design/production do not require any additional padding.



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USLacrosse.org/GirlsEquipment





# EQUIPMENT » GOALKEEPER



## GOALIE GLOVES (REQUIRED)

- Hand must be fully inserted in glove
- Includes additional thumb protection
- Should cover 2"-3" above the wrist
- Too short - cuff won't protect wrist; too long - cuff will limit mobility



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USLacrosse.org/GirlsEquipment

# EQUIPMENT » GOALKEEPER

## CHEST PROTECTOR (REQUIRED)

- Should cover front torso from neckline to below navel
- Body straps must be secured to the front of pad – adjust for a snug, comfortable fit
- Too tight – restricts player's movement
- Too loose – pads can move & expose player to injury
- Collar of chest protector should lie flat on player's collarbone
- Must wear underneath jersey

## PELVIC/ABDOMINAL PROTECTION (YOUTH REQUIRED/HS RECOMMENDED)

- Generally incorporated in leg pads

## MOUTHGUARD (REQUIRED)

- Variety of materials, sizes, colors & fitting options
- Must be visible color other than clear or white
- Self-molding (from manufacturers) or custom-molded (from dentists)
- Proper fit allows players to talk, cover the upper jaw of teeth & not cause discomfort
- May not be altered to decrease protection; can cut if too large for athlete's mouth

## HELMET (REQUIRED)

- Must be field lacrosse-specific
- Statement/seal to indicate it meets NOCSAE standard performance specs
- Proper fit should be based on manufacturers' guidelines & requirements on their website or included with helmet

## THROAT GUARD (REQUIRED)

- Separate from helmet
- Attach with snaps, screws or other fasteners
- Proper fit for helmet & guard must be done relying on manufacturers' guidelines & requirements on their website or included with helmet/guard

## LEG PADS (REQUIRED)

- Must protect shins & thighs
- May not use field hockey equipment
- Tight enough so they don't slide up or down during play
- Tight enough not to cause discomfort



# ROLES » COACH

**WHAT IS IT?** The coach is a responsible adult role model whose job is to empower young athletes. The coach should teach kids how to play women's lacrosse, teamwork, sportsmanship and the many life lessons the sport has to offer.

**WHEN** during practices and games

**WHERE** at practices and games

**WHO** an adult who knows the game, is enthusiastic and is ideally an US Lacrosse CEP-certified coach.

**WHY** to teach the game and make it safe and fun for all involved



## FUNDAMENTALS

**POSITIVE** A coach must use positive reinforcement to build player confidence.

**FUN** Stress that winning is secondary to enjoying the game.

**SAFETY** Players' safety is the number one priority.

**COMMUNICATION** A coach must communicate clearly with parents, players, and officials.

## DEVELOPMENTAL

» **U9** - One coach is allowed on the field for the purpose of coaching, but may not interfere with the flow of the game and or enter the critical scoring area

» **U11/U13/U15** - Coaches permitted from their side of the substitution area to their end line

## RESPONSIBILITIES

- » Meet with official(s), captains and opposing head coach prior to start of game. Certify to officials that all equipment is legal under the rules. Confirm length of halftime.
- » Indicate a substitute for an injured or suspended player.
- » Approach official respectfully during pre-game, halftime, or timeouts for clarifications.
- » Request timeouts from official.
- » Coach should always approach practices with a clear and age-appropriate plan.
- » Coaches should ensure equal playing time.

## VIOLATIONS

Teams may incur fouls and cards (yellow or red) if they commit the following:

- » Excessively rough, dangerous or unsportsmanlike play.
- » Persistent or flagrant violations of the rules.
- » Excessive dissent or abusive language by a coach, player or spectator toward an opponent, player and/or official.
- » Coaches leaving coaching area.
- » Second requests to inspect any stick meeting specifications.
- » Not ready after a two-minute team timeout or following half.
- » Requesting too many timeouts.

## BEST PRACTICES

- » It is highly recommended that all youth coaches be US Lacrosse-certified.
- » Practices should be fun and enjoyable while establishing fundamental, technical, and tactical skills which can be applied in game-like situations.

## PERSPECTIVES

- P** Leave the instructing to the coaches. Cheer and be a positive reinforcement for everyone on the team.
- C** The younger the player, the shorter the attention span – plan drills accordingly.
- C** Never underestimate the power of a compliment! Praise small victories. Always be truthful and specific.
- C** A flexible attitude helps when things don't go as planned.
- O** Some coaches may not be familiar with all of the rules. Explain calls when appropriate.

## SITUATIONS COACH

Coaches must assist officials in keeping a game under control, including spectators not conducting themselves properly. The head coach is responsible for all persons officially connected to the team or institution.



**GIRLS » YOUTH RULES GUIDEBOOK**  
USLacrosse.org/CEP



# ROLES » TEAM

**WHAT IS IT?** Girls' lacrosse is a team sport. There are eleven field players and a goalkeeper. Lacrosse is a fast paced game; therefore, substitutions should be frequent to allow players to rest, share playing time, and stay hydrated.

**WHEN** at all times

**WHERE** everywhere on and off the field

**WHO** a group working towards a common goal

**WHY** working as a team is fun, rewarding and helps build lifelong skills



## FUNDAMENTALS

**POSITIVE** Good teammates support and help each other get better with verbal and non-verbal praise and positive feedback.

**FUN** Organized sports are recreation designed to keep kids active, safe and having fun.

**ACCOUNTABLE** All teammates are responsible to each other on and off field.

**COOPERATION** Members of the team must all work together to achieve shared goals.

## DEVELOPMENTAL

» **U9** - Play involves only seven field players on a modified field and a goalkeeper is optional.

» **U11** - Plays on a modified field with seven field players or on a full-size field with 11 field players and a goalkeeper.

» **U13/U15** - Plays on a full-size field.

» Girls develop coordination at different rates. Some players will master new skills more quickly.

## RESPONSIBILITIES

» Attack players use quickness and strong stick skills to score goals and assist others.

» Midfielders play both offensive and defensive sides of the field. Speed and endurance are key to these positions.

» Defenders defend the goal by "marking" (guarding) opponents. Vision, footwork and communication are important.

» The goalkeeper protects the goal with quick hands and feet. She leads the defense with strong communication skills.

## VIOLATIONS

» **CARDING:** All cards will be used at all levels.

» **U9/U11:** Carded player will leave the field for 2 minutes (yellow) or 4 minutes (red). A substitute must enter the game. Teams will not play short.

» **U13/U15:** Carded player must leave the field for 2 minutes (yellow) or 4 minutes (red). No substitute can take her place. Teams must play short on both ends of the field.

» Teams will play short after the fourth card for the remainder of the game.

## BEST PRACTICES

» Coaches may substitute several players at once to share playing time equally.

» It is crucial that girls learn all positions and have the opportunity to play all of them in game situations.

» All players on all teams should be within their age group designation and not play up a level.

## PERSPECTIVES

**P** Teach kids to be encouraging of all teammates, regardless of skill level.

**P** Being part of a team helps girls learn important life skills like cooperation, patience and teamwork.

**C** Because midfielders are involved with play all over the field, they will need substitutions more often.

**O** Violations of rules and penalties should be explained when appropriate, especially at younger levels.

## SITUATIONS TEAM

If a team receives a yellow or red card, there will be fewer than 12 players on the field except at the U9 and U11 levels.



# ROLES » PARENTS

**WHAT IS IT?** A child's parents are as important to her positive experience playing lacrosse as the coach and her teammates. Parents play a major role in making the game a rich and rewarding life experience for all involved, not just their child.

**WHEN** every day, all the time

**WHERE** at home, before, during, after games and practices

**WHO** parents, relatives, caregivers and friends of young players

**WHY** to help maximize the player's potential and fun



## FUNDAMENTALS

**UNDERSTAND** Learn the game's rules by reading this guidebook and referencing it often.

**ROLE MODEL** Display good sportsmanship at all times to coaches, officials, and athletes.

**ENCOURAGE** Young athletes should be encouraged to try new things, take risks and even make mistakes.

**RESPECT** The decisions of officials and coaches must be respected at all times.

## DEVELOPMENTAL

» Be sure your child is in the correct age group, as it is essential to her safety as well as her healthy physical and psychological development.

» Stick checking and body contact rules help make the game safe and enable players to focus on skill development.

» Parents should be aware of game and rule modifications based on age groups.

## PLAY SAFE

» Bring water to keep athletes hydrated.

» Medical issues should be known in advance and communicated to coach/administrator.

» Monitor your child's athletic "calendar" and activities to avoid overuse injuries, dehydration and burnout.

» Ensure that your player has the proper equipment and clothing and that she has removed all jewelry before playing. Jewelry cannot be covered or taped.

» Parents need to make sure they have turned in the medical release/contact information for their player.

## RESPONSIBILITIES

» Get involved. Offer to help keep score or time, raise funds, organize carpooling, line fields, take photos, update websites, etc.

» Spectators must stand 4 meters behind the sideline opposite the team benches.

» Confirm start time and game location in advance.

» Be your child's "home field advantage" by giving her unconditional support regardless of how she performs.

## BEST PRACTICES

» Be supportive of your child by giving encouragement, listening, and showing interest in her team. Positive reinforcement promotes learning and fun.

» Research has shown that a ratio of five positive reinforcements (verbal/non-verbal) for each negative (criticisms, corrections) is ideal for helping athletes do their best.

## PERSPECTIVES

**P** Let the coaches coach. Refrain from giving players advice, instruction or direction during games.

**P** Offer positive reinforcement to coaches by letting them know they're doing a good job.

**C** Explain coaching philosophy and educate parents on differences in girls' and boys' lacrosse rules and objectives.

**O** Coaches are responsible for controlling misbehaving spectators and may receive cards for their behavior.

## SITUATIONS PARENTS

After a game or practice, use open-ended questions to discuss the event with your child, such as, "What do you think your team did well?" This way your child gets to talk about things the way she saw it, not what you think she could do better.



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USLacrosse.org/Parents



# ROLES » OFFICIALS

**WHAT IS IT?** Officials ensure that the game is played safely, fairly, and in accordance with the procedures recommended in the rulebook. At least two US Lacrosse-trained officials should officiate a game.

**WHEN** 30 minutes before game and until they leave the venue

**WHERE** at the playing venue

**WHO** US Lacrosse officials

**WHY** to enforce the rules fairly, safely and consistently



## FUNDAMENTALS

**KNOWLEDGE** Officials must clearly understand, apply and explain the rules of the game.

**IMPARTIAL** An official's calls will not give unfair advantage to either team.

**USL CERTIFIED** Officials must successfully complete US Lacrosse certification and training annually.

**SAFETY** The rules of lacrosse are in place to maintain player safety, and calls made by officials advocate safety.

## DEVELOPMENTAL

» **U9** - At least one USL-rated official

» **U11** - At least one USL-rated official

» **U13** - Two USL-rated officials

» **U15** - Two USL-rated officials; one **MUST** have a Local rating or higher. This is a mandatory requirement for full checking games

» Officials should explain calls to players whenever possible.

## PLAY SAFE

» When two or more officials officiate a game, they work as a team to make the best calls.

» Officials work to ensure the game runs smoothly without delay and that play is safe and fun.

» An official's hand signals indicate the calls being made. (See pages 68-78.)

» All players must immediately stand or stop moving on official's whistle.

» Players must respond immediately to the official's repositioning and directions.

## RESPONSIBILITIES

» Ensure scorekeepers and timers understand their jobs.

» Inform timer on length of half.

» Be available for questions from captains and head coach.

» Make final decision to continue a game due to weather or other circumstances.

» If scorebook is required, sign to make it official.

» Officials need to inspect grounds, goals, balls, sticks, clothing, shoes and protective equipment to ensure compliance with the rules.

## BEST PRACTICES

» It is always a good practice for officials to introduce themselves to both coaching staffs and other game personnel before a game.

» The umpiring team should meet before games to discuss umpiring styles, objectives, responsibilities and strategies.

## PERSPECTIVES

**P** Officiating is difficult. It is impossible to see every infraction. Set a good example by allowing officials to do their job.

**C** It is appropriate to ask for clarification on a call, but it is inappropriate to argue.

**C** Teach players to be respectful of officials and their calls.

**O** Officials will obtain verbal certification from head coaches that all equipment is legal and meets current standards.

## SITUATIONS OFFICIALS

If a situation occurs after the game and before the officials leave during which conduct occurs that would warrant a red card during play, the officials can issue a post-game ejection to be served in the team's next game.



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USLacrosse.org/OEP



# ROLES » ADMINISTRATORS

**WHAT IS IT?** The designated home team must assign a person to ensure the venue is prepared for competition and manned with officials, time and score keepers, and a sideline manager as needed.

**WHEN** before and during a game

**WHERE** at home, before, during, after games and practices

**WHO** assigned administrator or, if none, home team's coach

**WHY** to ensure game can proceed safely under the rules



## FUNDAMENTALS

**COMMUNICATION** Administrators should communicate their expectations of behavior to parents and fans before the game.

**SAFETY** Play must stop when conditions are unsafe due to variables like poor weather as determined by officials.

**SCORER'S TABLE** Each game should have a scorer/timekeeper at a table in the substitution area with a horn, scoreboard, and timer.

**ORGANIZATION** Administrators are responsible for the details necessary to have a successful game.

## DEVELOPMENTAL

» **U9** - Fields should be rectangular, 60-70 yards long and 30-40 yards wide

» **U11** - May be the same as U9 or full regulation field when appropriate

» Coaches should be US Lacrosse certified and background checked. Officials should be US Lacrosse-rated

## PLAY SAFE

- » Administrators should promote good sportsmanship for players, fans and coaches.
- » In case of lightning, play should stop for 30 minutes after the last clap of thunder or flash of lightning as determined by game officials.
- » If a player is injured or bleeding she should be treated immediately and a substitute must replace her.
- » The field must be clearly marked and of the proper dimensions.
- » Medical kit and water supplies should be available. It is also strongly recommended that an AED be in close proximity.

## RESPONSIBILITIES

- » **SIDELINE MANAGER:** Each team (home and away) will provide a sideline manager who will attend the coin toss and whose duty shall be to control effectively the actions of spectators not in conformity with the standards of proper conduct.
- » Ensure all necessary field and sideline equipment is available, working and compliant with rules.
- » Confirm start times with both teams and officials in advance.
- » Communicate the safe place to go in case of inclement weather.
- » Identify trainer or other first aid personnel and procedures for both teams.

## BEST PRACTICES

- » Play should be stopped by the official at any time if a player is exhibiting signs of injury, especially a concussion, cut or dehydration.
- » Administrators must learn state or program's concussion policies and ensure coaches and officials know courses of action if a player has suffered a head injury.

## PERSPECTIVES

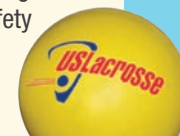
- P** Make sure your athletes come to games prepared to play with goggles, mouthpiece, and plenty of water and make sure they have eaten a healthy snack.
- C** Keep all emergency contact information available during games and practices in case of injury.
- C** The home team is responsible for providing a scorer/timekeeper.
- O** Officials should check with administrators before games to confirm field and safety details are in place.

## SITUATIONS ADMINISTRATORS

Coaches should have extra uniforms in case a player gets blood on her uniform.



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USLacrosse.org/OEP



## ROLES » OFFICIAL SCORER

The official scorer will be from the home team and will sit at the scorer/timer's table opposite the center circle. The official scorer will ensure the table is manned and will be responsible for the following:

- » Record the starting lineups of both teams in the score book 10 minutes prior to the game and make sure the jersey numbers of the players on the field correspond to the numbers in the book. A roster with names and numbers of all players must be at the score table prior to the start of the game.
- » Keep an accurate record of the goals scored in the official home team score book. It is a good practice for the visitors to have a scorer and book at the table.
- » Display continuously an accurate score, for the players, coaches and officials.
- » Notify an official on first ensuing stoppage if there has been an illegal substitution.
- » Record any cards next to the player or coach's name in the score book: delay of game (green-"g", green/yellow-"gy", green/red-"gr"); warning (yellow-"y"); ejection (red "r").
- » Notify an official immediately when a second warning is given to the same player.
- » Record the delay of game suspensions including the time on the game clock when a player is suspended.
- » Record the time on the game clock when a player is given a yellow or red card.
- » Notify an official immediately if a team receives a fourth card.

## ROLES » OFFICIAL TIMER

The official timer will be from the home team and will sit at the scorer's/timer's table opposite the center circle. The official timer will be responsible for the following:

- » Start the clock on the whistle at each draw.
- » Sound a horn at the first stoppage of play:
  1. to notify an official of an illegal substitute.
  2. if a clock has malfunctioned.
  3. to alert an official when there is a four-goal differential.
- » Notify an official when there are two minutes remaining in each half of the game.
- » Sound a horn to indicate the end of the half and the end of the game.
- » Stop the clock for any other circumstances only upon the timeout signal and whistle from the official.
- » Notify an official when a team requests a timeout and use a separate clock to time the timeout. Record all timeouts.
  1. Time 2 minutes.
  2. Blow the horn at 1 minute, 45 seconds.
  3. Blow the horn at 2 minutes.
- » Note the time on the clock when a player is issued a green/red card for delay of game and time the two-minute elapsed playing time penalty, and notify the coach when the two-minute penalty time has ended.
- » Note the time on the clock when a player is issued a yellow or red card and time the two-minute elapsed playing time penalty, and notify the coach when the two-minute penalty time has ended.
- » Stop the clock at the whistle and arm signal after each goal. If there is a 10 or more goal differential, the clock will run within the last 2 minutes of play in each half (no stop clock). If the difference becomes less than 10 goals, the stop clock procedure is reinstated.



# TIME FACTORS » TIME & SCORE

**WHAT IS IT?** The home team will assign a timekeeper to keep the regulation playing time and agreed-upon halftime. A separate scorekeeper to record the score is preferred but not required.

**WHEN** all games

**WHERE** scorer's/timer's table on the sideline at midfield

**WHO** home team appointed personnel or volunteers

**WHY** keep regulation time and score



## FUNDAMENTALS

**BEFORE** Decide duration of halftime with coaches and officials before game.

**RUNNING CLOCK** In all games, the clock is running after goals. During the last 2 minutes of each half the clock will stop on every whistle unless there is a 10 or more goal differential.

**SCORING** U9 and U11 may choose not to keep score.

**OVERTIME** U13 and U15 games can end in a tie or result in a maximum of two 3-minute sudden victory running time periods after a 5-minute rest and coin toss to choose field side.

## DEVELOPMENTAL

» U9 - 20 minute halves with scoring optional

» U11 - 20 minute halves with scoring optional

» U13 - 25 minute halves

» U15 - 25 minute halves

» There is no overtime in U9 & U11.

## PLAY SAFE

» Each team shall be permitted two timeouts during regulation that do not carry over into overtime. Each team is permitted one timeout during the entire duration of overtime. No timeouts permitted in the last 5 minutes if the running clock cannot be stopped (tournament play).


» A coach or player on field may request a timeout after a goal or during a dead ball situation by the team in possession.


» 10 minute halftime unless discussed before the start of the game.

» Teams change ends to begin the second half.

## VIOLATIONS

» Teams can have many different fouls called on them by the official, if they are not aware of or abuse the rules relating to time.

 **RESUMPTION OF PLAY:** failure to be ready to start play after a timeout or following halftime for a draw.

 **ILLEGAL TIMEOUT:** a team requesting more than two timeouts.

## BEST PRACTICES

» It is strongly suggested that teams identify those individuals willing to volunteer with timing and scoring in advance of competition.

» Educate volunteers on expectations and responsibilities prior to game day.

## PERSPECTIVES

**P** If there is no timekeeper, a parent may assume the role of timekeeper.

**C** Knowing how much time is left is an important part of managing the game. Always wear a watch!

**C** Players should be discouraged from asking scorekeeper about personal stats during games.

**O** When there is no timekeeper, officials should keep a record of time to increase game awareness.

## SITUATIONS TIME AND SCORE

If there is no winner after the six minutes of overtime, the game will be considered a tie. There is no overtime in U9 and U11 age groups. Games can end in ties or with no score in U9.





# GAME PLAY » THE DRAW

**WHAT IS IT?** The draw is a chance for either team to gain possession. The centers' sticks are held above hip level and back-to-back so each player's stick is between the ball and the goal she is defending.

**WHEN** to start each half and after each goal

**WHERE** center circle on center draw line

**WHO** one player from each team

**WHY** to resume or start play



## FUNDAMENTALS

**QUICK HANDS** Quickness allows the center to push or pull the ball up first and gain possession.

**STICKS UP** Centers must draw (pull/push) their sticks up.

**RIGHT HAND UP** Center faces the goal she is attacking, and she wants to direct the ball to her teammates.

**LEFT HAND UP** Center's back is to the goal she is attacking, and she wants to direct the ball to her teammates.


## DEVELOPMENTAL

- » **U9/U11/U13/U15** - a maximum of three players from each team may be between the restraining lines during the draw until the whistle blows.
- » **U9/U11/U13** - If a four or more goal differential exists, then the team with fewer goals will have the option to take an indirect free position after a goal at the center line instead of taking a draw.
- » The coach of the trailing team may choose to continue to draw.
- » Officials, scorekeepers and coaches should communicate when a four or more goal differential exists.

## PLAY SAFE

- » Players should be ready to gain possession by catching the ball out of the air or chasing down the ball on the ground. Players should not swing or bat at the ball.
- » Players should not use their sticks or body to jockey for position.
- » While players not taking draw may move, they can not step on or over the center circle or cross restraining line until the whistle blows for the draw.
- » After the official has set the draw and says "ready," the centers may only move their head until the whistle blows.

## VIOLATIONS

 **ILLEGAL DRAW:** the other team gets the ball, and the center moves 4 meters away, 45 degrees from the center line if:

- » She draws too soon.
- » No attempt is made to draw.
- » Movement is not upwards.
- » Player taking draw moves after the official says "ready."
- » Any player steps on-or-over center circle or across the restraining line before the whistle.

### RE-DRAW IF:

- » Ball does not go higher than heads of players drawing.
- » Ball goes out of bounds before either team can touch the ball.

## BEST PRACTICES

- » **Draw Set Up:** with the open pocket of the stick facing the player's defensive goal, the right sidewall of the stick will be placed down, closer to the center line.
- » Players should practice draws with right and left hands to determine which way is more successful. They should learn to push and pull so they are not one dimensional.
- » Let multiple players take the draw in games.

## PERSPECTIVES

- P** Draws are exciting plays but closely called to eliminate dangerous play around the head.
- C** Possession is key! Teach players to legally "box out" opponents before chasing the ball.
- C** Encourage your players to watch where the ball goes. They should try to set up where the ball typically lands.
- O** When setting up the draw, official should place ball in the top 1/3 of the stick.

## SITUATIONS THE DRAW

"Toeing" the line means the players' feet do not go over or on the center line, center circle, or restraining line.



# GAME PLAY » OUT OF BOUNDS

**WHAT IS IT?** When the ball exits the playing field by moving over the boundary lines, the official blows the whistle to stop play and then again to restart play.

**WHEN** the ball or ball carrier touches a boundary line or the ground outside of the playing field

**WHERE** on or outside the boundary lines around the perimeter of the field

**WHO** all players on the field

**WHY** designates legal playing area of field



## FUNDAMENTALS

**STAND** Players must not move after the whistle is blown.

**TURNOVER** The team that last touched the ball before it went out of bounds will lose possession.

**SHOTS** When a shot goes out of bounds, player nearest the ball when it crosses the boundary line will gain possession 2 meters inside the line.

**RESTART** Player with ball moves 2 meters in from the line and all other players stay in relative positions.





## DEVELOPMENTAL

- » **OUT OF BOUNDS** calls are important in games. Practice so that players understand what they can and can't do and begin learning how to use the boundary to their advantage.
- » **CARRYING** or throwing the ball out of bounds is always a change of possession and not a foul.

## PLAY SAFE

- » A ball carrier may hold her stick outside the boundary line as long as her feet are not on or over the line.
- » Players directly involved with the play or near the out-of-bounds ball will be placed relative to their positions before the ball went out.

## VIOLATIONS

-  A player may not deliberately push, flick, or bat the ball into an opponent's body to make the ball go out of bounds.
-  A player may not deliberately push, displace, trip or check a ball carrier out of bounds.
-  A player may not run out of bounds and re-enter to a more advantageous position.
-  When a player's foot or feet are out of bounds, she may not take an active part in the game.

## BEST PRACTICES

» Practice fields should be lined to regulation dimensions to ensure safety for players who can become familiar with the field size and lines that they will use for games.

## PERSPECTIVES

- P** All spectators must remain at least 4 meters back from the sidelines. No spectators are allowed behind the end lines.
- C** Train your players to automatically chase down errant shots at all times.
- C** When the ball is clearly headed out of bounds, teach players to reposition by moving to a more advantageous position before whistle blows.
- O** After the whistle blows to stop play, players may only move upon the direction of the official before the whistle blows to restart play.

## SITUATIONS OUT OF BOUNDS

If the goalkeeper in her goal circle is nearest to the ball when it crosses the end line after a shot, she gains possession and remains in her goal circle to restart play.



# GAME PLAY » OFFSIDE

**WHAT IS IT?** Offside refers to a team with more players over the restraining line than allowed. Play is stopped, and the team with too many players over the line will be penalized.

**WHEN** too many players on the offensive or defensive end of the restraining line

**WHERE** at the restraining lines (30 yards from each goal line.)

**WHO** both the attack and defense can be called for offside

**WHY** keep play safe and fair



## FUNDAMENTALS

**OFFENSIVE** A team may not have more than seven players on or over the restraining line in its offensive end.

**DEFENSIVE** A team may not have more than seven players plus a goalkeeper on or over the restraining line in its defensive end.

**RESTRAINING LINE** One of two solid lines 30 yards up-field from each goal line and extending from one side of the field to the other.

**COMMUNICATE** In transition from one part of the field to another, players should communicate who is going over the line.

## DEVELOPMENTAL

» **U9** - No offside in 7v7. Emphasis on stick skills over field awareness

» **U11** - Same as U9 unless playing full field 12v12

» **U13** - Offside now called and will demand greater field awareness and communication from players

» **U15** - Same as U13

## PLAY SAFE


» Offside applies whether or not the ball is inside the restraining line.


» The team with too many players will have a player moved back on side with a free position at the spot of the ball.


» Players may reach over the restraining line to play the ball, as long as no part of their feet is on or over the line.

» Players may exchange places during play, but the player leaving the offensive or defensive end must have both feet out before the player replacing her can cross the restraining line.

## VIOLATIONS

 If defense is offside with ball outside critical scoring area or below goal line extended, the attack is awarded a free position at the spot of the ball (no closer than 8m to the goal circle), closest defender 4 meters behind.

 If defense is offside with ball inside the critical scoring area and above the goal line extended, the attack is awarded a free position at the center of the 12 meter fan, closest defender 4 meters behind, clear lane.

 If attack is offside, the closest defender to the spot of the ball is awarded a free position at that spot (no closer than 8m to goal circle), attack player 4m behind.

## BEST PRACTICES

» Develop players to be comfortable on both sides of the restraining line (offensively and defensively.)

» Practice playing down a player on offense and defense at the U11/U13/U15 levels.

## PERSPECTIVES

**P** The coach may rotate players into the settled attack or defense.

**C** Players must always know the number of teammates on the field.

**O** Make sure players always understand when a team is a player down.

## SITUATIONS OFFSIDE

When attacking team is offside and scores, goal is disallowed and ball awarded to goalkeeper in goal circle. If defensive team is offside, goal counts and there is no penalty. If both teams are offside, goal is disallowed and a throw is taken.



**GIRLS » YOUTH RULES GUIDEBOOK**  
USLacrosse.org/GirlsRules



# GAME PLAY » GOAL AREA

**WHAT IS IT?** The goalkeeper is the player who is responsible for guarding the goal within the goal circle. The goalkeeper is protected by special equipment, a larger stick with a deeper pocket, and the goal circle.

**WHEN** practices and games

**WHERE** in and around the goal circle as well as in front and behind the goal

**WHO** only one player allowed in goal circle at any one time

**WHY** to protect the goal from shots and clear the ball



## FUNDAMENTALS

**GOAL CIRCLE** A circle measured 8.5ft from the center of the goal line to the outer edge of the circle's line.

**GOAL** A net on two 6ft high posts connected by a 6ft crossbar with a triangular base. The goal line must be 2in drawn between the two posts.

**EQUIPMENT** A helmet with a face mask, separate throat protector, padded gloves, mouthpiece, chest protector, pelvic and abdominal protection, thigh and shin guards.

**STICK** The goalkeeper stick with its deeper pocket is larger and longer than a field player's stick.

## DEVELOPMENTAL

- » U9 - Goalkeeper optional
- » U11 - All players take turns in goal
- » U13 - It's a good practice to rotate multiple players in goal during practices and games.
- » U15 - It is good practice to have at least two trained goalkeepers for your team.
- » There will be no deputy allowed for youth play at any level.

## PLAY SAFE

- » The goalkeeper is allowed in the goal circle at any time.
- » Goalkeeper may reach her stick out of her goal circle to bring ball back provided no part of her body is "grounded" outside the circle. She may also cover the ball with her stick and pull it back into her goal circle as long as no opponent is in a position to play the ball.
- » The goalkeeper's stick is the only stick that may use a mesh pocket and have more than two throwing strings.
- » Teams should have at least two goalkeeper sticks for the team to share.
- » The goalkeeper may not exchange sticks with a field player.

## VIOLATIONS

- ⦿ The penalty for goal circle fouls by the defense is a free position 8 meters out to either side of the goal line.
- ⦿ The penalty for a goal circle foul by the attack is a free position for the goalkeeper inside the goal circle.
- ⦿ The goalkeeper must clear ball with her stick within 10 seconds after it has entered the goal circle.
- ⦿ A goalkeeper may not carry the ball into the goal circle.
- » The goalkeeper may stop the ball with her hand, body or stick when she is inside the goal circle.

## BEST PRACTICES

- » Goalkeepers must wear a lacrosse helmet with face mask and chin strap that meet NOCSAE standards.
- » Goal circles are complex areas to understand. The intricacies and subtleties of attacking and defending around the goal circle should be explained and learned early.
- » Goalkeepers should practice with their mouthpiece in so that they can practice communicating with it in.

## PERSPECTIVES

- P** The best goalkeepers are athletic, have quick reflexes and are strong communicators.
- C** Goalkeepers should be trained to quickly look to transition the ball up field after making a save.
- O** A goalkeeper outside her circle loses her goalkeeper privileges and should have fouls enforced as if she were a field player.

## SITUATIONS GOAL AREA

When a team gains possession of the ball in the goal circle and the ball is cleared, the team cannot intentionally return the ball to the goal circle until the ball has been played by another player.



# GAME PLAY » SUBSTITUTIONS

**WHAT IS IT?** Teams may substitute an unlimited number of players and it must always be done through the substitution area.

**WHEN** during play, after goals, at halftime. Substitutions not allowed during stopped play, injury timeouts or possession timeouts

**WHERE** from the substitution area in front of scorer's table

**WHO** players on either team

**WHY** allow all players to play



## FUNDAMENTALS

**COMMUNICATION** A substitute should call her teammate's name so she will know she's being replaced.

**ENTRY** A substitute cannot step onto the field until the player she is replacing has entered the substitution area, including the goalkeeper.

**SUBSTITUTION AREA** All players must enter and exit the field through the substitution area at all times during the game, including after goals.

**QUICKLY** Players must enter field in a timely manner and may only be in sub area if substitution is imminent.

## DEVELOPMENTAL

» U9 - 7 players on field with goalkeeper optional

» A team may not have more than 12 players on the field at any one time. A full team is 11 field players and a goalkeeper.


## PLAY SAFE


» The player leaving the field must have both feet over the side line before the substitute can enter field.

» After a goal, substitutes may enter the game immediately through the substitution area.

» If a player is removed from the field for any reason, no other players on the field may substitute or exchange positions on the field.

## VIOLATIONS

 If an illegal player is discovered on the attacking team after a goal is scored and before play is restarted, the goal does not count. The opposing goalkeeper gets the ball.

 The penalty for illegal substitution is a free position for the opposing team at the spot of the ball when the illegal substitution occurred.

## BEST PRACTICES

» Substitutions at all levels should be continuously rotating to give each player equal field time to become familiar with rules of play and team concepts. This also helps players to stay hydrated and receive feedback from the coach.

» During practice, players should simulate the substitution procedure to ensure they enter and exit through the substitution area according to the rules.

## PERSPECTIVES

**P** Equal playing time is strongly encouraged at the youth level.

**C** Teach your players when and how to substitute. The best time is when your team has possession in a settled attack.

**C** Don't substitute players in your defensive end when the opponent has the ball.

**O** Make sure that there are not too many players on the field.

## SITUATIONS SUBSTITUTIONS

A player is running toward her team substitution area when the whistle blows to stop play. She continues moving and attempts to complete the substitution. Ruling: ILLEGAL. She must be directed to return to where she was when the whistle blew.



# GAME PLAY » THE WHISTLE

**WHAT IS IT?** The official's whistle is used to stop and start play. The ball is dead when the official blows the whistle. No player may move, unless directed by the official, until the whistle blows to restart play.

**WHEN** throughout the game to stop and start play

**WHERE** anywhere on the field

**WHO** the officials

**WHY** to call fouls and violations, start and stop play, and manage game



## FUNDAMENTALS

**STAND** When the whistle blows, all players must stop moving. The goalkeeper may move if she is within her goal circle.

**ARM SIGNALS** With the whistle, officials will use hand signals to indicate penalties and direction of play.

**RESTART** Play resumes when the official blows the whistle and drops her arm straight down to the side.

**SAFETY** For the safety of all players, everyone must respect the officials' whistles and calls.

## DEVELOPMENTAL


» **U9/U11/U13/U15** - The whistle offers a teaching opportunity to explain why it was blown and learn how to avoid it.


» At all levels, players should learn the rules and understand where to go after the whistle is blown and during a held whistle.

## PLAY SAFE

- » After a goal, the official will blow a long whistle and use an arm signal to verify that the goal counts.
- » On an injury or timeout, players must drop their sticks where they stand.
- » Officials may use a stronger whistle tone as a warning to all players.

## VIOLATIONS

 **FALSE START:** before the whistle, step or make any movement simulating the beginning of play designed to gain an advantage over one's opponent.

 **SLOW WHISTLE:** A flag indicates a major foul by the defense in the critical scoring area. The whistle will blow and the penalty will be enforced if the attack does not continue its advantage on the play.

## BEST PRACTICES

» Players should be taught the distance of 4 meters so they can place themselves properly during penalty administration. Failure to move 4 meters away as instructed by the official may result in a green card for delay of game.

## PERSPECTIVES

**P** Officials blow their whistles often during games to ensure safe and fair play.

**C** Condition your players to respond to the sound of the whistle by using it during practice.

**C** Teach your players to take advantage of stopped play to see the field to decide where to go next.

**O** Use whistle tone to indicate the severity of the foul.

## SITUATIONS THE WHISTLE

The whistle has blown and the officials are setting up a free position at a hash mark in the 8m arc. If players are failing to stand on the whistle they will be returned to their original spots when the whistle was blown. A green delay of game card may be issued.



# PENALTY ADMIN » FOULS

**WHAT IS IT?** When a foul occurs, the official will blow the whistle and all players must stand while the official gives the call and repositions players as necessary.

**WHEN** anywhere an infraction occurs

**WHERE** on and around the field

**WHO** the official directs all players and coaches involved

**WHY** to keep the game safe and fun



## FUNDAMENTALS

**MINOR FOULS** Fouls that give an unfair advantage. The offending player will stand 4 meters away in the direction from which she approached.

**MAJOR FOULS** Fouls that are dangerous. The offending player will stand 4 meters behind the player awarded possession.

**THE THROW** In the event of offsetting fouls, a throw (similar to a jump-ball in basketball) is taken.

**FOUR METERS** No player or her stick is allowed within 4 meters of the player awarded possession.

## DEVELOPMENTAL

- » No shooting on free positions unless using a goalkeeper or modified goal.
- » Teach defenders to quickly mark opponents when inside the 8m arc to avoid 3-second fouls.
- » Violations should be identified in practice. Explain why they happened and how to avoid them.

## PLAY SAFE

- » A yellow card is given as a warning to an offending player, coach, or team personnel. The player must leave the field for two minutes and the team must play short a player below the restraining lines on each end of the field. (U9/U11 allows a substitute to enter the game for the carded player).
- » A red card is an ejection from the game. Anyone receiving a red card must leave the field for four minutes and is prohibited from playing in the team's next game.

## RESPONSIBILITIES

- » Players must stop immediately when the whistle is blown.
- » Players, coaches, officials, administrators and parents should understand the rules before games are played.
- » Players who foul must immediately move 4 meters in the direction indicated by the official.
- » The penalty administration for a foul shall be at the spot of the foul unless directed by rule, or the spot of the foul is a disadvantage to the non-offending team.

## BEST PRACTICES

- » Rule books are available through US Lacrosse. Coaches and parents are encouraged to review the various major and minor fouls.
- » Players and coaches can receive yellow and red cards for unsportsmanlike conduct both on and off the field. For example, screaming at an opponent or using abusive language is a misconduct foul.

## PERSPECTIVES

- P** Spectators will be held accountable for unsportsmanlike behavior by the administration of yellow and red cards to their team's coach.
- C** Call fouls in practice. Explain why the fouls and penalties exist so players learn to play safely and intelligently.
- O** At all levels, officials should take time to explain fouls to players. Which in turn educates parents, spectators and coaches.

## SITUATIONS FOULS

When the defensive team commits a major foul when the attack is on a scoring play in the critical scoring area, the official raises a yellow flag indicating a slow whistle. The flag is put away if the attacker scores a goal or the scoring play ends. If no shot is taken, an 8m free position is awarded at spot closest to the foul.



# MAJOR FOULS » STICK CONTACT

**WHAT IS IT?** Stick checking is an attempt to dislodge the ball from an opponent's stick by using controlled stick-to-stick contact. To keep the game safe, rules are in place to control the players' sticks. Stick-to-body contact is prohibited.

- WHEN** an opponent has the ball
- WHERE** anywhere on the field
- WHO** player defending the ball-carrier
- WHY** to regain possession of the ball by checking the ball loose



## FUNDAMENTALS

**CONTROL** Checks must be under control and never toward an opponent's head or body.

**PATIENCE** Good defensive body positioning can cause the ball carrier to drop ball or expose stick to check.

**STICK UP** Defensive players should hold sticks up to “mirror” the ball carrier's stick in order to block passes and shots.

**MODIFIED CHECKING** Allows a downward motion away from the body when the ball carrier's entire stick is below her shoulders.

## DEVELOPMENTAL

» U9 - NO STICK CHECKING!

» U11 - NO STICK CHECKING!











» U13 - Modified checking below the shoulders in downward motion away from the body

» U15 - Same as U13 unless officiated by two USL officials (at least one must have Local rating), then full checking allowed

## PLAY SAFE

- » Sticks are hard and can cause serious injury if used in an uncontrolled manner.
- » Checks must be outside the 7-inch “sphere” surrounding head and away from the body.
- » No player's stick may hit or cause her opponent's stick to hit the opponent's body.
- » Players should only check using the sidewall of the head of the stick.
- » Rough and reckless checking can cause injury and warrants a yellow or red card.
- » If contact is made with a stick that is held in a horizontal position, the foul shall be on the player who's stick is in that horizontal position.

## VIOLATIONS

-  CHECK TO THE HEAD - U15 FULL CHECKING
-  CHECK TO THE HEAD
-  SLASH
-  DANGEROUS FOLLOW THROUGH
-  ROUGH/DANGEROUS CHECK
-  CROSS-CHECKING
-  ILLEGAL CONTACT
-  ILLEGAL USE OF THE STICK
-  REACH ACROSS THE BODY
-  MODIFIED CHECKING VIOLATION

## BEST PRACTICES

- » Stick checking should be taught as a progression as the player ages and their skills develop. Emphasis should be on fundamental defensive positioning.
- » Modified checking allows players to develop proper checking and positioning skills while encouraging good stick skills.

## PERSPECTIVES

- P** Officials may call a foul anytime they feel a player is using her stick in a dangerous or intimidating way.
- C** Reinforce stick control and safe play.
- O** Repeated dangerous checks should be carded.
- O** Officials should be vigilant about carding initiated checks to the head. Incidental contact with the head or contact initiated by the attacker should not be carded.

## SITUATIONS STICK CONTACT

Defense is called for a dangerous check and a yellow card is issued. Play is stopped and ball carrier is awarded a free position. Carded player is removed from field. The defense now plays short for two minutes. (U9/U11 allows substitution for a carded player.)





# MAJOR FOULS » BODY CONTACT

**WHAT IS IT?** Girls' lacrosse is a non-contact sport although incidental body-to-body contact may occur.

**WHEN** during the course of the game

**WHERE** all over the field

**WHO** all players

**WHY** players compete for the ball and/or positioning to get an advantage



## FUNDAMENTALS

**ANTICIPATION** By anticipating where the ball will go, players can adjust their position relative to others.

**AWARENESS** Players should be aware of the location of themselves and other players.

**SAFETY** Any overly aggressive or uncontrolled contact is unsafe and dangerous.

**HUSTLE** The first player to the ball has a better chance of establishing position and gaining possession.






## DEVELOPMENTAL

- » It is essential to enforce rules at practice to ensure consistency and safety for players.
- » Young athletes need to practice agility and footwork in order to learn proper positioning.

## PLAY SAFE

- » Incidental contact may occur when two players are going for a loose ball.
- » Legally boxing out or sealing off an opponent is an important part of winning possession off the draw and on ground balls.
- » If a player overruns a ground ball, she may not back into an opponent to shield the ball, nor cover the ball with the back of her stick, preventing another player from gaining access to that ball.
- » Body-to-body contact may be called charging, blocking, pushing, or no call at all if it's clearly incidental.

## VIOLATIONS

-  **CHARGING:** a player may not charge, barge, shoulder, or back into her opponent (pictured).
-  **PUSHING:** a player may not push an opponent with her hand, body or stick.
-  **ILLEGAL PICK:** a player may not set a moving or stationary pick out of an opposing player's field of vision, not giving her the time or space to avoid contact.
-  **BLOCKING:** a player may not move into the path of the ball carrier with no chance to avoid contact.
-  **HORIZONTAL STICK:** if contact is made with a stick that is held in a horizontal position, the foul shall be on the player who's stick is in that horizontal position.

## BEST PRACTICES

- » Teaching proper defense positioning is crucial for player development and should be among the first fundamentals taught to players.
- » Drop the stick. Drills should be designed that focus on body positioning and footwork without using a stick.

## PERSPECTIVES

- P** Incidental contact is a natural part of the sport, just like soccer or basketball.
- C** It is essential to enforce rules at practice to ensure consistency and safety for players.
- C** Youth players will sometimes back into defenders to keep the ball protected. Explain why this is unsafe and impractical.
- O** Watch for players jockeying for position on the center circle during the draw.

## SITUATIONS BODY CONTACT

There is NO CALL when incidental contact occurs between opposing players when both players are going for the ball.



# MAJOR FOULS » SHOOTING

**WHAT IS IT?** Shooting the ball at the goal to score is fundamental to lacrosse. Protecting players from injury is paramount as well. Shooting on goal is both exciting and highly regulated so that girls lacrosse can be the safe and fun sport it is.

**WHEN** the attacking team is trying to score

**WHERE** in the critical scoring area around the goal

**WHO** attacking ball-carrier or shooter

**WHY** to score goals safely



## FUNDAMENTALS

**AIM** Good shooters use both hands with follow through dictating placement.

**PROTECTION** The ball carrier's body should stay between her stick and the defender.

**CRITICAL SCORING AREA** An area at the end of the field where the attacking team is shooting for goal. It is 15 meters in front of and to each side of the goal circle and 9 meters behind the goal.

## DEVELOPMENTAL

- » Not all shots need to be power shots. Finesse and placement are equally important.
- » Developing stick skills along with shooting techniques are essential in order for players to take controlled and safe shots.
- » No one is allowed to shoot at or through an opponent. It is the shooter's responsibility to shoot safely.

## PLAY SAFE

- » Players must be able to see the goal before they shoot.
- » A player may not shoot from an indirect free position until she has passed the ball to another player.
- » The free space to goal within the critical scoring area is defined by two lines extending from the ball to the outside of the goal circle. It is expected that a shooter will not shoot if a defender is in this space.
- » Any major foul committed against the goal scorer or her teammate, whether a cardable foul or not, will be penalized. The game will be restarted with a free position at center for the team scoring the goal rather than with a draw.

## VIOLATIONS

- DANGEROUS FOLLOW THROUGH:** a player may not follow through with her crosse in a dangerous or uncontrolled manner at any time.
- DANGEROUS PROPELLING:** when a player passes or shoots the ball without control or in the direction of another player.
- OBSTRUCTION OF FREE SPACE TO GOAL (SHOOTING SPACE):** a player may not use any part of her body to guard the goal in a manner that denies the attack the opportunity to shoot safely and encourages shooting at a player (pictured).
- DANGEROUS SHOT:** a player may not shoot at the goalkeeper in a dangerous way.
- GOAL CIRCLE FOUL:** a field player must not have any part of her body or crosse on or in the goal circle, including on the shot and follow through.

## BEST PRACTICES

- » Encourage safe, smart shooting at practice, before and during games.
- » A goal is not scored when the ball deflects off the body of an attacking player.
- » During practices and pre-game warm-ups it is dangerous to allow players to stand behind the goal while shooting.

## PERSPECTIVES

- P** Remember that shooting is not allowed unless the pathway to the goal is clear.
- C** Using targets in the goal will help with shooting accuracy.
- C** Discipline players to automatically look at the goal and position of players around her before shooting or passing.
- O** Anticipate where defenders are and be ready to make appropriate foul calls.

The ball goes in the goal as the attacker hits the defender on the shoulder with her follow through. Ruling: the goal is disallowed, the shooter receives a yellow card and the defender gets the ball. The carded player will leave the field for 2 minutes.



**GIRLS » YOUTH RULES GUIDEBOOK**  
USLacrosse.org/GirlsRules



# FOULS » CRITICAL SCORING AREA

**WHAT IS IT?** The critical scoring area indicates the area of the field where the attacking team is shooting for goal.

**WHEN** fouls occur by either team in critical scoring area

**WHERE** 15 meters in front of and to the sides of the goal circle and 9 meters behind the goal.

**WHO** either team

**WHY** to keep play safe and fair



## FUNDAMENTALS

**SCORING PLAY** A continuous effort by the attacking team to move the ball toward goal and complete a shot. It is over when a shot is taken, a foul occurs, the attacking team loses possession or stops the continuous attempt to goal.

**FREE POSITION** The entire 8m arc and penalty lane are cleared when a free position is awarded to the attacking team in this area. Players may go directly to goal.

## MAJOR FOULS

### OUTSIDE THE 8-METER ARC

- » For a major foul by a defender, the free position will be at the spot of the most recent foul. All players must be cleared from the penalty lane.
- » If the scoring play ends inside the 8m arc with an additional foul, the free position will take place on a hash mark nearest to the spot of the foul.

## MAJOR FOULS

### INSIDE THE 8-METER ARC

For a major foul by a defender inside the 8-meter arc:

- » All players' bodies and sticks must be cleared from the arc and penalty lane.
- » The goal keeper may return to the goal circle as long as she did not foul.
- » All players must take the shortest route out.
- » The player who was fouled will move to a hash mark on the 8-meter arc nearest to the spot of the foul.
- » The player who fouled moves to the 12-meter fan directly behind the player taking the free position.

## MINOR FOULS

### INSIDE THE 12-METER FAN

For a minor foul by a defender:

- » The player fouled will move to the nearest spot on the 12-meter fan.
- » All other players shall remain in their same positions with the exception of the fouling defender who shall move 4 meters from the player taking the free position, relative to their position at the time of her foul.
- » This is an indirect free position and no shot may be taken by the player awarded this free position until the ball has been passed to another player.

## BEST PRACTICES

- » In taking the shortest route out of the 8m arc, the arc is cleared relative to one's position inside the arc. If a defender is ball-side of an attacker when the whistle is blown, the defender is entitled to a ball-side position on the arc, not necessarily at a harsh mark.

## PERSPECTIVES





- P** The frequent whistles on scoring plays are necessary to keep players safe.
- C** When your players scrimmage at practice, make the calls like an official would to keep players safe and help them understand the rules.
- O** Officials are encouraged to hold their whistle and show advantage, when a minor foul is committed by a defender and the attack player may have the opportunity to shoot.

## SITUATIONS SCORING AREA


An attacker gets called for a minor foul. The player who was fouled will take the free position at the spot of the foul, but no closer than 8m from the goal circle. If the goalkeeper was the player who was fouled, she will get the free position inside the goal circle.



# OFFICIALS » HAND SIGNALS

DIAGRAM	OFFICIAL'S MOTIONS	MAJOR FOULS
	<b>BLOCKING/ILLEGAL PICK</b> Open hands on hips moving in an in-and-out motion.	Block opponent by moving into her path and giving no chance to stop or change direction.  Set a moving or stationary pick out of the visual field of a defender so that she has time to stop or change direction to avoid contact.
	<b>DETAINING</b> Fists in front of hips, one facing up and the other one down.	Detain an opponent at anytime by holding or pushing against her body, clothing, or stick with an arm, leg, body or stick. A player may not hold her stick in a manner that could restrain or hold back a player.
 	<b>CHECKING INTO/THROUGH THE SPHERE</b> A chopping motion with the hand close to the head.	It is illegal (and dangerous) for a player to hold her stick within the sphere around the face or throat of an opponent. The sphere is a 7-inch space around the head.

# OFFICIALS » HAND SIGNALS

DIAGRAM	OFFICIAL'S MOTIONS	MAJOR FOULS
	<b>3-SECOND RULE</b> Three fingers are raised with palm facing out.	Defenders within the 8 meter arc, remain in that area more than 3 seconds unless one is marking an opponent within a stick's length. The 3-second rule is in effect when the team with the ball crosses over the restraining line into their attacking end of the field.
	<b>ILLEGAL CRADLE</b> A cradling motion is made pulling their hand close to their face.	Holding, with or without cradling, the head of her crosse in front of her face or her teammate's face, within the sphere or close to her body, or her teammate's body, making a legal or safe check impossible.
	<b>CHECK TO THE HEAD</b> A chopping motion with the hand close to the head.	No player's stick may hit or cause her opponent's stick to hit her own head.  A check to the head may warrant a card. U15 Full checking —red card. All other youth levels - yellow card.



# OFFICIALS » HAND SIGNALS

DIAGRAM	OFFICIAL'S MOTIONS	MAJOR FOULS
	<p><b>DANGEROUS SHOT</b> An open palm moving in-and-out in front of their face.</p>	<p>Shooting dangerously or without control:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A dangerous shot is based on the combination of distance, force and placement.</li> <li>• A shot can't be directed at the goalkeeper's body, especially her head or neck. Doesn't apply if she moves into the path of the ball.</li> <li>• A shot may be uncontrolled even if it misses the goal.</li> </ul>
	<p><b>SLASH</b> A long swiping motion of the extended arm across the body from high-to-low.</p>	<p>A reckless and/or dangerous swing of the crosse at an opponent's crosse or body, whether or not the opponent's crosse or body is struck.</p> <p><b>MANDATORY CARD</b></p>
	<p><b>OBSTRUCTION OF FREE SPACE TO GOAL</b> Arms in front of body with palms toward face. Hands held up with hand closet to the face and palms in a line about 6" from face.</p>	<p>Obstructing free space between the goal and the goal circle with any part of her body which denies the attack the opportunity to shoot safely and encourages shooting at a player.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Positioning applies only if initiated by the defender and not if she is drawn into the free space to goal by an attacking player, or when a defender's not marking a player within a stick's length.</li> </ul>






# OFFICIALS » HAND SIGNALS



DIAGRAM	OFFICIAL'S MOTIONS	MAJOR FOULS
	<p><b>PUSHING OR BODY CONTACT</b> A pushing motion is made with both arms out in front of body.</p>	<p>To push an opponent with the hand or body.</p> <p>This motion could also apply to other fouls that entail pushing.</p>
	<p><b>ILLEGAL STICK-TO-BODY CONTACT</b> Fists in horizontal position in front of hips, one up and one down, arms then pushed outward.</p>	<p>Initiate crosse to body, or body to crosse contact.</p>
	<p><b>OFFENSIVE FOUL</b> Right hand placed behind head.</p>	<p>Call used when an attack player fouls the defender, such as backing into, charging, illegal pick or pushing off.</p>



# OFFICIALS » HAND SIGNALS

DIAGRAM	OFFICIAL'S MOTIONS	MAJOR FOULS
	<p><b>ROUGH CHECK/ ILLEGAL CHECK ON BODY</b></p> <p>Use the arm to make a large chop motion against the wrist of the opposite arm</p>	<p>Roughly or recklessly check another player's stick.</p> <p>It is illegal to use the stick in a dangerous or intimidating manner, such as directly poking or waving a stick near opponent's face, a sweeping check from behind, lowering stick's head to make stick-to-body contact, or any other action with the stick that the official deems dangerous or intimidating.</p>
	<p><b>DANGEROUS FOLLOW-THROUGH &amp; DANGEROUS PROPELLING</b></p>	<p>Throwing the ball in a dangerous or uncontrolled manner at any time. <b>MANDATORY CARD</b></p> <p>Following through with her stick in a dangerous or uncontrolled manner at any time. <b>MANDATORY CARD</b></p>
	<p><b>FORCING THROUGH</b></p> <p>Front hand brought up and thrust out with back hand brought to back of head.</p>	<p>While in possession of the ball, trying to force her stick through an opponent's stick to purposely cause her own stick to contact her body.</p>

# OFFICIALS » HAND SIGNALS

DIAGRAM	OFFICIAL'S MOTIONS	MAJOR FOULS
	<p><b>OFFSIDE</b></p> <p>Open hand is raised above head to indicate the foul.</p>	<p>A team must not have more than 7 players on-or-over the restraining line in their offensive end or have more than 8 players on-or-over the restraining line in.</p>
	<p><b>GOAL CIRCLE FOUL</b></p> <p>Simultaneous directional signal with one arm, and chopping motion toward goal circle with the other arm.</p>	<p>A field player must not have any part of her body or stick on-or-in the goal circle at any time.</p> <p>Ball can't intentionally be returned to goal circle after a clear until it's been played by another player.</p>



# OFFICIALS » HAND SIGNALS

## DIAGRAM

## OFFICIAL'S MOTIONS

## MINOR FOULS



**WARDING OFF**  
Forearm used in an upward motion away from the body.

If one hand is removed from the crosse, the free hand may not be used to ward off an opponent with or without contact. Elbows can't be used to protect stick.



**COVER**  
Arms extend downward in front of body with the right palm held on top of the left.

Guard a ground ball with her foot or crosse.



**10-SECOND GOAL CIRCLE COUNT**  
One arm, shoulder high, moving from chest (90 degree bend) to full extension.

The goalkeeper must not allow the ball to remain in the goal circle longer than 10 seconds, reach beyond the goal circle to play the ball her hand, draw the ball into goal circle if any part of her is outside, step back into the goal circle with ball, throw any part of her equipment to another player.

# OFFICIALS » HAND SIGNALS

## DIAGRAM

## OFFICIAL'S MOTIONS

## MINOR FOULS



**ILLEGAL BALL OFF BODY**  
Indicated by pointing to the body part that touched the ball.

Allow any part of her body to deliberately impede, accelerate or change the direction of the ball. However, if the goalkeeper blatantly attempts to stop a shot on goal by playing the ball off her body while outside the goal circle, a Major Foul will be called.



**EMPTY CROSSE CHECK**  
The right hand is used with a clapping motion on the left hand.

Check or hold an opponent's stick when it's not in contact with the ball. Applies only if the opponent could have received or gained possession of the ball.



**3-SECOND RULE**  
Three fingers are raised with palm facing out.

When an attack player holds the ball for 3 seconds while closely marked in a modified or no checking game. The defender must have both hands on her stick and be in position to legally check if checking is allowed. However, this rule is not in effect if the stick is in a checkable position.



# OFFICIALS » HAND SIGNALS

## DIAGRAM OFFICIAL'S MOTIONS PROCEDURAL CALLS



**GOAL SIGNAL**  
Turns toward center of field, arms raised and then lowered, pointing horizontally toward center of the field.

The official calls all goals and then points to center of field.



**NO GOAL**  
Arms extended toward the ground and swung out and in so that they cross each other.

Goals that are scored illegally are quickly reversed by the official. Possession is awarded to the defending team.



**TIME IN**  
Hand is open above the head with arm fully extended and then dropped in a chopping motion to start the clock.

After legal team and injury timeouts or the start of play, the official will indicate when play resumes and the clock should start again.

# OFFICIALS » HAND SIGNALS

## DIAGRAM OFFICIAL'S MOTIONS PROCEDURAL CALLS



**TIMEOUT**  
Turns towards the timer and crosses fully extended arms at the wrist above the head.

The official will alert the timekeeper when to stop the clock. Although games use running time, certain conditions like legal timeouts, injury timeouts, carding, and equipment checks will require the clock to be stopped.



**DIRECTION OF POSSESSION/HELD WHISTLE**  
Arms are raised horizontally at shoulder level in the direction of the goal the offended player is attacking.

The official will indicate a change in direction when a violation dictates or that an offense should play on during a held whistle after an attacking player has been fouled.



**RE-DRAW**  
Crossed palms are placed in front of body with hands together and then quickly extended up and out.

Due to any number of illegal procedure violations, draws must be done again. A minor foul may be called if either player draws too soon, movement of the crosse is not up, player taking the draw moves before official's whistle, a player step into center circle or crosses the restraining line before the whistle.





# OFFICIALS » HAND SIGNALS

DIAGRAM	OFFICIAL'S MOTIONS	PROCEDURAL CALLS
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### THROW

One hand is moved back and forth in an underhand motion.

When the official calls offsetting fouls, the ball is tossed between two players giving them both equal access to gain possession.

# OFFICIALS » GAME MISCONDUCT

US Lacrosse works closely with game official's to ensure youth lacrosse is safe for all players as well as being fun and informative. To that end, youth games should be called closely with dangerous fouls and misconduct addressed immediately. The penalty for misconduct is the same as a major foul. In addition to a free position being awarded, time will be stopped and a yellow or red card will be issued. The offending player will need to serve penalty time in the penalty area with no substitute. (U9/U11 allows for a substitute to enter the game.) A player getting a red card means immediate ejection and suspension from team's next game. Misconduct fouls are:

- » Excessively rough, dangerous, or unsportsmanlike play.
- » Persistent or flagrant violation of the rules.
- » Deliberately endangering the safety of an opposing player.
- » Baiting or taunting which is intended or designed to embarrass, ridicule, or demean others.
- » Excessive dissent or abusive language.
- » Non-playing team member leaving their team bench area during the game.
- » Coach leaving their coaching area.
- » Re-entering the game before yellow card or green/red card penalty time has elapsed.
- » Any type of behavior which in the official's opinion amounts to misconduct.



**GIRLS » YOUTH RULES GUIDEBOOK**  
[LaxMagazine.com/WomensOfficialsSignals](http://LaxMagazine.com/WomensOfficialsSignals)



# GAME SKILLS » STICK HANDLING

**WHAT IS IT?** Essential to long term success and enjoyment, basic stick skills must be developed at the earliest ages. Girls' sticks have a shallow pocket so for the ball to stay in the stick, players must master cradling the ball, passing and catching accurately.

**WHEN** the ball is in play

**WHERE** on and around the field in games and practice

**WHO** anyone touching the ball

**WHY** to get or maintain possession, advance ball, learn to pass and catch accurately



## FUNDAMENTALS

**SOFT HANDS** Stick rests comfortably where fingertips meet palm of top hand.

**BIG ARMS** Elbows and hands are kept extended from the body.

**TRIPLE THREAT** Stick head should be slightly above and behind the shoulder so she can pass, catch or shoot.

**PROTECTION** Keep the body between the stick and defenders.

## DEVELOPMENTAL

- » Many youth programs require 3 attempted passes before a team can shoot on goal. This is an important team skill that should be practiced. Accurate, strong passes move the ball quickly and efficiently up the field.
- » 3 SECOND RULE: There is no holding the ball for more than 3 seconds when closely guarded by an opponent who could safely check, if checking was permitted.
- » As ball skills are mastered, right and left handed stick work should be encouraged at practice.

## PLAY SAFE

- » Players should use a push/pull motion with top and bottom hands to ensure clean and accurate throws.
- » Players need to get low and run through ground ball pickups.
- » Players should not reach through other players' legs to play the ball.
- » Watch for youth players backing into their defenders to protect their cradles.

## VIOLATIONS

**DANGEROUS PROPELLING:** players can't pass, throw, flick or shoot the ball in a dangerous or uncontrolled manner.

**ILLEGAL CRADLE:** players cannot cradle too close to their head or body so as to make an otherwise legal check impossible.

**WARDING OFF:** cradling with one hand and using the other arm to ward off a defender.

**COVERING:** a player may not guard a ground ball with her foot or stick.

**HAND BALL:** the only player that may play the ball with her hand is the goalkeeper when she is in her goal circle.

**SQUEEZE HEAD OF CROSSE:** a player may not use her hand or body to keep the ball in her stick.

**BODY BALL:** a player may not allow any part of her body to intentionally impede or affect the ball's direction.

## BEST PRACTICES

- » Passing, catching, shooting, ground ball and dodging skills should be emphasized at all practices and before games.
- » Get instruction on common skill errors and how to correct them through the USL Coaching Education Program.

## PERSPECTIVES

- P** Stick skills will improve in time with practice.
- C** Hand-eye coordination varies from player to player and develops with practice. Exercise patience with new players.
- C** Mistakes happen. Tell the girls to pick-up dropped balls and just keep playing.
- O** Covering the ball is frequent on ground ball pick-ups and should be discouraged and called when there is a disadvantage to the opponent.



# GAME SKILLS » SETTLED OFFENSE

**WHAT IS IT?** When the team has the ball in the attacking end, the attacking players must work together to create good scoring opportunities through ball movement (passes) and off ball movement (cuts and picks).

**WHEN** the attacking team has possession of the ball

**WHERE** below the restraining line on their attacking side of the field

**WHO** the attacking team

**WHY** learn offensive strategies and create scoring opportunities



## FUNDAMENTALS

**MOVEMENT** Players should pass and move off the ball to create open lanes to goal.

**ASSIST** An assist is a pass that leads directly to a goal.

**BALANCE** The attackers should spread out around the critical scoring area.

**PATIENCE** Players should be patient when looking for scoring opportunities. Forcing poor shots can lead to fouls, turnovers and unsafe play.

## DEVELOPMENTAL

- » Passes should be kept short to learn the basic skills required to catch and throw on the run.
- » Introduce concepts of cutting and setting picks away from the ball to create open spaces to goal.

## PLAY SAFE

- » A fast break occurs when the ball is turned over and one player gets ahead of the pack, looking to take advantage of a player-up situation.
- » When a team settles its attack, there should always be at least one player behind the goal-line to back up errant shots, pass to open cutters, and look to roll around the crease and score.
- » Set plays should be introduced slowly and used wisely.
- » When dodging, the ball carrier must be in control of her body and stick.
- » When dodging, the ball carrier must be in control of her body and stick.

## VIOLATIONS

Safety drives automatic cards:

- DANGEROUS PROPELLING
- DANGEROUS FOLLOW THROUGH

Calls on the offense might be:

- 🚫 OFFSIDE: more than 7 players on offense below restraining line.
- 🚫 BLOCKING: an opponent's path
- 🚫 CHARGING: into an opponent
- 🚫 ILLEGAL PICK: of an opponent
- 🚫 FORCING THROUGH: force her crosse into an opponent's crosse causing contact.
- 🚫 ILLEGAL SHOT: from indirect free position

## BEST PRACTICES

- » It is a good discipline for teams to have their own "pass rule" to limit the length of passes and ensure passes are made before shooting, ensuring more players are involved in the game.
- » Players should always look for assists on goals and should receive praise for both goals and assists.

## PERSPECTIVES

- P** During games, players are working on implementing offensive strategies. Individual instruction from the spectators can be confusing and may conflict with coach instruction.
- C** Develop teamwork in your attack by allowing all players the opportunity to participate in scoring plays.
- C** Use a building block approach by starting with smaller situations such as 2v1, 2v2, etc.
- O** Strictly enforce and explain dangerous propelling calls.

## SITUATIONS OFFENSE

When the attacking team turns the ball over, the attack players become the first line of defense and must redefend.



# GAME SKILLS » SETTLED DEFENSE

**WHAT IS IT?** Team defense means all players are working to prevent the opposing team from taking high percentage shots and trying to create turnovers to regain ball possession.

**WHEN** the opposing team has possession of the ball

**WHERE** below the restraining line on the defensive end of the field

**WHO** 8 players (7 field players and a goalkeeper) are allowed on defensive end of the restraining line

**WHY** to limit an opponent's scoring opportunities



## FUNDAMENTALS

**COMMUNICATION** The defensive players must talk so they can support each other.

**FOOTWORK** All defenders should stay balanced on their feet, ready to move.

**VISION** Field players must see the ball and the girl they are marking at all times.

**GOAL SIDE** Generally, each defender should position herself between her defensive goal and the player she is marking.

## DEVELOPMENTAL

» U9/U11 - Coaches should discourage double teaming before players have mastered player to player defensive concepts.

» Stick shadowing and solid body positioning should be taught and encouraged everywhere on the field.

» Defenders who are marking the ball carrier should have two hands on their stick. Defenders who are marking off-ball should learn to be big with their stick, holding it high with one hand on the bottom of their stick.

» Body contact of any kind should not occur in practice or games.

## PLAY SAFE

» Team defense can be player-to-player (each player marks-up an attacker), or zone (defender marks any player who enters her area).

» Marking up means defender is matching herself up within a stick's length to an opponent.

» Defensive team will want to clear the ball (passing or running) out of their defensive end quickly.

» The obstruction of free space to goal (shooting space) rule is in place to keep defenders safe and to encourage safe shooting by the attacker.

## VIOLATIONS

**OBSTRUCTION OF FREE SPACE TO GOAL (SHOOTING SPACE):** a player may not stand in the free space to goal if she is not marking an opponent within a stick's length.

**3 SECONDS:** while defending in the 8-meter arc, a player cannot remain in that area unless marking within a stick's length.

**DETAINING:** a player may not detain an opponent at any time by holding or pushing against her body, clothing, or stick.

**ILLEGAL USE OF THE CROSSE:** If contact is made with a stick that is being held in a horizontal position, the foul shall be on the player who's stick is in that horizontal position.

## SITUATIONS DEFENSE

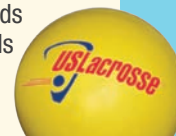
A defensive player marking the player directly behind the goal is exempt from 3 seconds, but not from shooting space.

## BEST PRACTICES

- » Footwork, body and stick positioning should be taught and mastered before checking.
- » Good defenses are always talking loudly! They should have common terminology that everyone understands, such as "I've got ball," "ball is right," "slide" and "ball down."

## PERSPECTIVES

- P** Shooting space violations require an immediate whistle to ensure player's safety. If a goal is scored during this violation, the goal will be disallowed.
- C** Teach your players to avoid shooting space violations by leading with their stick as they move to ball carrier.
- C** Watch for players who "ball watch" and lose sight of the player they are marking.
- O** Make sure to see a bigger picture than just the ball carrier and her defender. Seeing shooting space, 3 seconds and other violations leads to a safer game.



# GAME SKILLS » GOALKEEPER

**WHAT IS IT?** This is a critical position requiring special skills, protective equipment and a big stick with a deep pocket.

**WHEN** games and practices

**WHERE** in the goal circle

**WHO** courageous athletes with quick hands and good eye-hand dexterity

**WHY** to stop the ball from entering her team's goal



## FUNDAMENTALS

**STANCE** A goalkeeper should have her feet shoulder-width apart with her knees and elbows bent.

**BODY MOVEMENT** A goalkeeper should step toward the ball. She may stop the ball with her hand, body or stick when she is within the goal circle.

**STICK** Both hands are on the stick extended to make the save, then “give” as the ball lands in her stick.

**COMMUNICATION** The goalkeeper needs to help her teammates by telling them where the ball is.

## DEVELOPMENTAL

» U9 - Goalkeeper optional

» U11 - All players should experience playing goal

» U13 - Goalkeeper required

» U15 - Goalkeeper required

» Teach the shooting angles in practice in front of the goal to help goalkeepers block more shots and to help attackers take better shots.

## PLAY SAFE

» Goalkeepers should always get their bodies behind the save, in case the ball bounces out of their stick.

» If the ball carrier goes behind the goal circle, the goalkeeper should stay in front of the open net and can face the player to mirror her as she moves around the goal circle.

» After a saved shot, the goalkeeper has 10 seconds to quickly clear the ball out of the goal circle.

» Goalkeepers should always be properly equipped with lacrosse specific gear that fits properly and is in good condition.

## VIOLATIONS

⚠️ Penalty for a goal circle foul by the defense is a free position 8 meters out to either side of the goal line, offender 4 meters behind, clear lane (above goal line).

⚠️ Penalty for a goal circle foul by the offense is a free position awarded to the goalkeeper within her goal circle, offender 4 meters behind goal circle.

⚠️ Goalkeeper must clear ball within 10 seconds of it entering the goal circle.

⚠️ The goalkeeper may not step back into the goal circle when she has possession of the ball, she must first roll the ball into the goal circle before she may enter.

## SITUATIONS GOALKEEPER

The goalkeeper may leave her goal circle to be a passing option, get ground balls and interceptions, and chase the ball before it goes out of bounds. When the goalkeeper is out of the goal circle, she assumes all responsibilities of a field player.

## BEST PRACTICES

» All young players should try playing goalkeeper in games and practice. Even if they don't play the position, learning shooting angles and saves, clears and communication will provide a better understanding of field positions.

» A goalkeeper must communicate to her defense at all times (including practices) where the ball is, where cutters might be going, and where and when to move.

## PERSPECTIVES

**P** The best athletes are often the best goalkeepers.

**C** The best goalkeepers have quick reaction time and minimal flinch/blink reflexes.

**C** In drills, let the play continue after the shot to help the goalkeeper work on clears and rebounded shots.

**O** Youth goalkeepers are often scared and may need reminders to clear.



## BEST PRACTICES » SAFETY

Participants in girls' lacrosse must be aware of the "Official Rules for Girls' & Women's Lacrosse," published by US Lacrosse. Participants are expected to play, coach, officiate and watch games according to the spirit and intent of women's lacrosse.

Emphasis is placed on safety and good sportsmanship. Everyone involved with the women's game must act with consideration for the safety of others.

- » Players must ensure that their behavior, equipment and uniform conform to all required and allowable standards, as defined by US Lacrosse rules.
- » Coaches must ensure that they are teaching their players to play by the rules. Coaches should participate in continuing lacrosse-specific education and training that helps them to understand and teach new rules and address safety concerns.
- » Officials must ensure fair and safe play by consistently enforcing the rules. Officials must take part in continuing lacrosse-specific education that helps them understand and interpret new rules.
- » Spectators must contribute to a safe-play environment by demonstrating positive and sportsmanlike conduct. Those watching girls' lacrosse must understand and appreciate the unique rules and culture of the girls' game.

The girls' and women's rules annually are voted on in September by the US Lacrosse Board of Directors, and are issued under the authority of US Lacrosse as the official rules for Women's Collegiate Lacrosse Associates (college club) team play and girls' youth (U15 and below) play. They are endorsed by the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) as the official rules for girls' and women's lacrosse.



**GIRLS » YOUTH RULES GUIDEBOOK**  
USLacrosse.org/HealthAndSafety

## BEST PRACTICES » CONCUSSION

A concussion is a traumatic brain injury that interferes with normal brain function. An athlete does not have to lose consciousness to have suffered a concussion.

### COMMON SYMPTOMS OF CONCUSSION

- » headache
- » fogginess
- » difficulty concentrating
- » easily confused
- » slowed thought processes
- » difficulty with memory
- » nausea
- » lack of energy, tiredness
- » dizziness, poor balance
- » blurred vision
- » sensitive to light and sounds
- » mood changes; irritable, anxious, or tearful

### SUGGESTED CONCUSSION MANAGEMENT

- 1) No athlete may return to game play or practice on the same day of a concussion.
- 2) Any athlete suspected of having a concussion should be evaluated by an appropriate health care professional that day.
- 3) Any athlete with a concussion must be medically cleared by an appropriate health care professional prior to resuming participation in any practice or competition.
- 4) After medical clearance, the decision for a player to return to play should follow a step-wise protocol. There should also be provisions for delaying a player's return based on any signs or symptoms of a concussion.
- 5) Return to play guidelines are subject to state regulations.



USLacrosse.org/ConcussionAwareness



## BEST PRACTICES » BLOOD

The official US Lacrosse policy regarding the handling of blood/bleeding situations during games is as follows.

- » When a player suffers a laceration or wound where oozing or bleeding occurs, the game should be stopped, and the player should be given appropriate medical treatment. The player may return to the game with the approval of medical personnel (team doctor, trainer, or other designated person with medical training). She may re-enter the game in the same half.
- » If the official stops the game because a player is bleeding, the player must leave the game and a substitute may enter. If the official stops the game because an injury has occurred, the regular injury time out procedure is followed. If an injury time out has been called because of a bleeding problem, the player must leave the game, even if medical personnel/coach have not come onto the field. A substitute must enter.
- » In cases where a goalkeeper is bleeding, and is the only dressed goalkeeper, the game should be stopped. Then, the goalkeeper should be given appropriate medical treatment, and she may remain in the game.
- » If there is blood on any part of a player's uniform or personal equipment, medical personnel should determine whether it has soaked through the uniform to the player's skin or is capable of being transferred to another player and a change is required. In the absence of medical personnel, the official(s) will make this determination. A uniform is considered saturated when blood can't be removed. The same criteria should be applied to a player's personal equipment (stick, gloves, knee brace, etc.). If a uniform shirt is changed, the player's new number must be recorded in the scorebook before she re-enters the game.

## BEST PRACTICES » PREVENTION

Lacrosse is considered a “moderate risk” sport, but injuries can and do occur. Minor bruises and strained hamstrings, quadriceps, and groins are common, and ankle and knee ligament sprains occur frequently. Like most athletes, lacrosse players deal with small injuries, such as shin splints, foot blisters, and abrasions.

Players occasionally suffer head and face injuries, including concussions. These types of injuries are usually the result of inadvertent stick or ball contact.

Here are some general rules for reducing injuries in girls' lacrosse:

- » Obey the rules. Illegal play can result in injuries.
  - » Discuss goals and health concerns with your coach, trainer, parents, and health provider.
  - » Stay in shape.
  - » Warm up properly, drink water, and rest after games and practices.
  - » Wear the right equipment. Make sure it fits.
  - » Players should take at least one or two days a week and one or two months a year away from lacrosse to recover and prevent injuries.
  - » If you're hurt, speak up. Also, if you experience strain or discomfort, cut back on playing and training time.
  - » Lacrosse leagues and organizations should prepare plans for medical situations and emergencies. Coaches, assistants, athletes and others involved in the game should be aware of these procedures.
- Coaches, assistants, and players should be aware of injuries and conditions specific to female athletes:
- » **MENSTRUAL CYCLE CHANGES:** some female athletes experience longer than normal menstrual cycles. Low estrogen levels associated with missed periods can affect muscle function.
  - » **INADEQUATE CALORIE INTAKE:** some female athletes do not consume enough calories to have the energy to play competitive sports.
  - » **BONE DENSITY:** some girls have lower bone density, which can lead to stress fractures now or later in life.



# BEST PRACTICES » DISEASES

## INFECTIOUS DISEASES

Athletes and coaches are in regular, close contact with one another, which increases the risk that communicable diseases can be spread. For this reason, everyone involved in competitive lacrosse should take steps to prevent the transmission of disease.

Common ways that infections can be transmitted include coughing, sneezing, and spitting, and coming in direct, physical contact with a sick person or a contaminated object. Body-contact sports like lacrosse present many opportunities for disease to be transmitted. An on-field injury could force someone to come in contact with an ill player's blood or mucus, or an athlete or coach may touch a sick teammate while in the locker room, on the sidelines, or riding to a game.

To prevent the spread of disease, teams should develop guidelines. Proper cleaning equipment should be available at games and practices, and coaches and staff members should be trained to safely and effectively deal with wounds and injuries. In addition, rules should be set to exclude players from games and practices if they exhibit:

- » a fever greater than 100.5
- » vomiting
- » stiff neck or headache with fever
- » a rash
- » irritability or lethargy
- » jaundice, diarrhea, skin lesions
- » drainage from the eyes or nose

In addition, players and coaches should shower and wash thoroughly after every game and practice. A strong emphasis should be placed on regular hand-washing, one of the most effective safeguards against the transmission of disease. Here are some hand-washing tips:

- » Use plenty of soap and water.
- » Wash the wrists, tops of hands, between fingers, under and around rings, palms, and fingernails.
- » Scrub vigorously for at least 30 seconds, rinse well, dry.
- » Turn off the faucet with a paper towel.

# BEST PRACTICES » GENDER

## POSITION STATEMENT WITH RESPECT TO GENDER CLASSIFICATIONS IN LACROSSE

### OVERVIEW

The issue of gender classifications has been the subject of periodic inquiries received by US Lacrosse. The Executive Committee of the USL Board voted to adopt the following position on Gender Classification in Lacrosse in January of 2006:

- A) Lacrosse as a sport encompasses two separate and distinct games, the women's game and the men's game.
- B) US Lacrosse respects and supports the integrity of both the women's game and the men's game and the fact that both tradition and the rules of play for the women's game are intended to limit participation in the women's game to females and tradition and the rules of play for the men's game are intended to limit participation in the men's game to males.
- C) It is the position of US Lacrosse that consistent with applicable laws, participation in the game of women's lacrosse should be limited to females and participation in the game of men's lacrosse should be limited to males. US Lacrosse therefore supports separate teams for males and females, and encourages and supports development of separate programs for both genders at youth, scholastic, non-scholastic, collegiate and post collegiate levels.

### BACKGROUND

The issue of gender classifications in men's lacrosse and women's lacrosse is largely determined on a state-by-state basis, and the particular facts and circumstances of each situation will largely determine the outcome. As a result, it is not possible for US Lacrosse to provide definitive guidance on this issue to local youth lacrosse organizations. It is clear that a completely private lacrosse program with no connections to the state (including cities and towns) or federal government is not subject to the equal protection laws. Therefore, if it chooses to do so, such a private program should be able to enforce gender classifications in relation to men's lacrosse and women's lacrosse.





## BEST PRACTICES » EMERGENCY

US Lacrosse recommends that all organizations, facilities, teams, and coaches develop an Emergency Action Plan (EAP) that includes management of adverse weather conditions such as lightning, as well as other emergencies. Circumstances differ at different levels of lacrosse in terms of medical support, proximity to help, and training of those in charge, but at all levels an EAP is valuable to the management and outcome of emergencies.

Below is an outline that can be used to develop and provide this information on site.

- 1) Designate someone in charge of management of an emergency.
- 2) Ideally, an adult with a minimum of basic first aid training should be on site.
- 3) At a minimum, a basic first aid kit with materials to clean, cover, or immobilize an injured body part should be on site.
- 4) Make sure cell phone access is available for 911 calls. If not, have a back-up plan for making calls in case of an emergency. Have needed emergency numbers on site.
- 5) At the youth level, more than one adult should be present to deal with the emergency and the other team members.
  - a. Number of Emergency service if not 911 \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. Number of first person to begin emergency chain \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. Number of back-up person to call if needed \_\_\_\_\_
- 6) At the youth level, a phone chain should be established to notify parents of appropriate situation.
- 7) Know where the closest emergency care is located and how to give directions to emergency personnel, if necessary.
- 8) Make sure gates are open and access to the field and the athletes is not blocked.
- 9) Person in charge must control the scene and initiate the EAP.



**GIRLS » YOUTH RULES GUIDEBOOK**  
USLacrosse.org/RiskManagement

## BEST PRACTICES » LIGHTNING

US Lacrosse recommends following an emergency action plan (EAP) to deal with severe weather, including lightning. The EAP should include the following:

- 1) Individuals responsible for game management and medical issues should be designated. The official usually makes the call to leave the field in inclement weather, but coaches and others should provide input.
- 2) A person should be designated to watch the weather. If a thunderstorm is imminent, the practice/game should be suspended or postponed. If lightning is seen or thunder is heard, activities should stop and everyone should seek shelter.
- 3) The designated “weather watcher” should consult television news, Internet, cable and satellite weather programming, lightning monitoring systems, and the National Weather Service ([www.weather.gov](http://www.weather.gov)).
- 4) In case of lightening, people should move to safe locations like buildings with grounded wiring and plumbing and vehicles, including school buses, with a hard metal roof and closed windows.

Some unsafe locations to avoid are the showers or plumbing of a building, small covered outdoor shelters, areas connected to or near light poles, towers and fences, and any location that is at the highest point in the area.

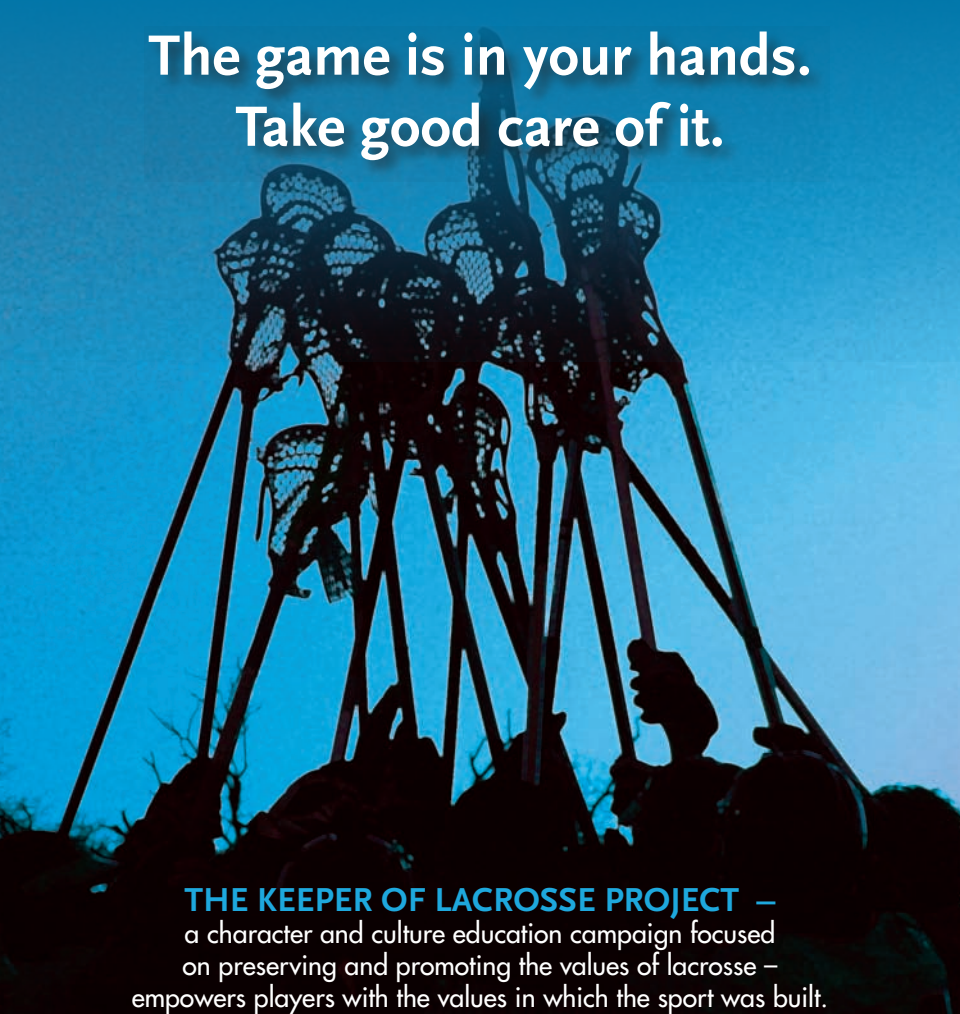
- 5) To reduce the chance of lightning-related injury:
  - Thunder may be hard to hear, and lightning may be difficult to see.
  - Cell phones and cordless phones are preferred over landlines.
  - If one feels the hair on the head, neck or arms stand on end, or feels skin tingling, then a lightning strike may be imminent.
  - Everyone must wait 30 minutes between the last sound of thunder and/or the last flash of lightning before resuming activity.
  - Initiate emergency treatment immediately if a person is struck.



USLacrosse.org/RiskManagement



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# USL » SPORTSMANSHIP

## US LACROSSE WOMEN'S GAME SPORTSMANSHIP INITIATIVES

### SIDELINE MANAGER AND SPORTSMANSHIP CARD

The US Lacrosse Sideline Manager and Sportsmanship Card concepts have been designed to be preventative tools at youth games. Sideline Managers help to maintain a positive environment and issue the Sportsmanship Card as a warning to an individual coach, athlete, fan, or group of fans.

Most often, the Sportsmanship Card Program will correct the unacceptable, unsportsmanlike behavior that threatens to ruin the game, but is also available to support the unfortunate circumstance of game termination as a consequence of an initial incident of or continued unsportsmanlike behavior.

The Sportsmanship Card is a resource for men's and women's program administrators and officials working youth games, and designed to work in conjunction with and to help clarify the Official Rules for Girls' & Women's Lacrosse. When used in conjunction with the rules, the Sportsmanship Card procedures serve as an effective deterrent to abusive behaviors. The program was created with the goal of establishing constraints that should:

- 1) eradicate the "unsportsmanlike behavior" that is creeping into sport,
- 2) strengthen sportsmanship,
- 3) contribute to the retention of officials, and
- 4) honor the game.

Since 2005, informational resources about the Sideline Manager and Sportsmanship Card concepts has been distributed to US Lacrosse chapters, coaches, program administrators, players and fans. Written into the Boys' and Girls' Youth Rules, the success of the Sideline Manager and Sportsmanship Card concepts will be as strong as the commitment of organizations and individuals to implement them — thanks for doing your part.



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