



NJLL Guidelines & Rules For 7 v 7 Play

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The NJLL instituted 7 v 7 play beginning in 2019. The decision to create a “smaller field, fewer players” format is consistent with USA Lacrosse’s *Athletic Development Model* as well as extensive experience and learning across a wide range of sports. Fewer players playing on smaller fields means higher engagement, more touches and enhanced skill development.

Below are specific guidelines and rules governing 7 v 7 play. These rules are consistent, in principle, with USA Lacrosse’s official rules for younger age groups.

Players: 7 v 7 play is composed of 1 goalie, 2 attackmen, 2 midfielders and 2 defensemen. Teams may only have 4 players in their offensive half of the field and thus must leave 3 players back on defense (this is usually the 2 defensemen and the goalie, but as in regulation lacrosse, a defenseman may cross the midline if a midfielder or attackman stays back on their defensive half of the field).

Because there are fewer players on the field at any one time, teams with fairly large rosters may want to consider playing two games in order to get sufficient playing time for all players. If this is the case, be sure to agree this in advance with the other team and schedule accordingly. Do NOT ask officials (if the game is to have officials) to stick around for a second game if it has not been scheduled appropriately.

Field: The playing field shall be rectangular, 60 – 80 yards max in length and 35 – 45 yards in width (a regulation field is 110 yards long and 60 – 70 yards wide). The center of the field shall be marked by approximately a four-inch circle, square or x. The goal creases shall be circular and painted on the field with a radius of 9 feet (same as regulation lacrosse). Portable creases may be used instead of painted creases. Goals shall be official regulation lacrosse goals, 6 feet by 6 feet in dimension.

In some cases, programs may choose to play “sideline to sideline” on a regulation size field, which dimensionally should be fine. Where painted lines are not available, mark boundaries (sidelines, midlines, end lines) using multiple flat discs (no restraining lines on a 7 v 7 field). As mentioned above, portable (pop up) creases are an excellent solution when painted crease lines are not possible.

Face-off wing lines are desired but not required. Where face-off wing lines are not available, midfielders should stand with one foot on the sideline.

Required Equipment: Field players shall have sticks 37 – 42 inches in length (no long poles at this level). Field players shall have the following equipment:

- NOCSAE approved helmet
- mouth protector (mouth guard)
- lacrosse gloves
- NOCSAE approved shoulder pads
- arm pads designed for lacrosse
- athletic protective cup

Goalie sticks should be cut down in length to a size appropriate for the player (minimum 37 inches). Besides the equipment above, goalies shall wear a throat protector and a NOCSAE approved goalie chest protector designed for boys lacrosse. It is recommended (but not required) that goalies wear arm pads.

Length of Game & Timeouts: All games are to be four 12-minute running time quarters. Each team gets 2 time-outs per half. The clock stops for all injuries and time outs. Running Time will become Stop Time during the last two minutes of the game if and only if there is a 2 goal or less difference (tied game - clock keeps running). There is no overtime at this level.

Counts: The only count in effect at this level is the 4-second count for goalies in possession of the ball while inside the crease and the 5-second “Hippo Rule” count (see below).

Face-Off: Face-offs will occur at the beginning of every quarter and after every goal. The exception to this is the Mercy Rule where the team behind may elect to receive the ball after a goal instead of facing off if the other team is leading by 6 or more goals (not applicable for face-offs that start every quarter).

On the face-off, attackmen and defensemen must stand behind goal line extended. One midfielder is facing off, and the other is positioned on the face-off wing line (either side – coaches choice). All players are released when the whistle is blown. All players must play the ball before possession is gained. Once possession is gained, all normal body contact rules apply.

No individual player may take two face-offs in a row.

Substitutions: A substitution horn can be called for whenever the ball goes out of bounds (either sideline or end line). The clock will continue to run during this period of time. Players may also be subbed out and in after a goal, during a time out, or of course, on the fly.

Body Checking & Contact: Body checks are NOT allowed at this level. However, body contact IS allowed when contact is made legally and to the player with the ball, or within 3

yards of the ball. Legal contact includes legal holds, legal pushes and boxing out. The defensive player making contact must keep both hands on the stick.

Poke checks and lift checks (to the stick or opponents hand) are permitted and should be emphasized. Sticks checks are allowed if the defensive player is in control of their stick and checks the opponents stick in a downward motion. One-handed checks are never allowed.

Penalties: Players committing a penalty shall be removed from the field and serve the full duration of their penalty (in the box). A replacement for that player will wait in the substitution box and will be released upon the official's restart of the game. The offended team starts with the ball on their offensive half of the field, and an additional pass is not required before a shot can be taken. There is no man-up/man-down at this level.

Any player who receives 3 personal fouls, or 5 minutes of personal foul time, has fouled out of the game and they are not allowed to return to play (for that game).

Coaches should give serious consideration to keeping players off the field for extended periods of time if they appear to be struggling with controlling their behavior and following rules of play. Note that an official may expel a player from the game for exceptionally violent personal fouls.

1-Pass Rule: Whenever a team gains possession of the ball, they must attempt at least one pass prior to taking a shot on goal. The receiver of this pass must be on the offensive side of the field, but the pass may originate in either the defensive or offensive zone. The pass does not need to be caught. If at any time a loose ball is created and the team who was in possession regains possession in their offensive zone, an additional pass is not required.

If the player taking the face-off is first to possess the ball, no pass is required regardless of where on the field they gain possession.

Hippo Rule: When the ball is in a team's offensive half of the field, no player on offense should hold the ball longer than 5 seconds. The game official will give a verbal count and visual hand signal. Failure to pass or shoot in five seconds will result in a turnover. A loose ball will reset the 5 second count as long as the player did not intentionally create a loose ball in the opinion of the official.

NOTE: The purpose of this rule is to encourage players to learn the importance of passing the ball. Judgement and some leeway should be considered when applying this rule.