

# 2026 Great Northern Lacrosse League Girls Season Overview + Operations Meeting

Wednesday, November 12 · 7:00 – 8:30pm

Time zone: America/Chicago

Google Meet joining info

Video call link: <https://meet.google.com/cpt-eouw-rsa>

Or dial: (US) +1 209-841-0591 PIN: 444 537 596#

More phone numbers: <https://tel.meet/cpt-eouw-rsa?pin=8873300811897>



# Agenda

- Introductions
  - Jing Peng - Director of Leagues and Events
  - Kathryn Knippenberg- Girls Director
  - Matt Burke- USA Lacrosse Midwest Regional Manager
  - Holly Souza - MLUA Board Chair
  - Will Donovan - MLUA Board Member
  - Hailey Hults - Homegrown Lacrosse Program Director
- [Attendance Form](#)
- USA Lacrosse Updates- Matt Burke
- MLUA Officials Rules Review & Updates
- Homegrown Initiatives
- Glance at the 2025 Season & History of GNLL/Homegrown
- Overview of GNLL Spring League
- Overview of GNLL Summer League
- Operating Policy & General Updates
- Points of Emphasis
- Resources for Program Leaders
- Resources for Coaches
- Questions/Challenges/Discussions

# USA Lacrosse Updates



 **USA  
LACROSSE**

**OUR MISSION**

As the governing body of lacrosse in the United States, USA Lacrosse fuels the growth, enriches the experience, and fields the best national teams.

**OUR VISION**

We envision a future that offers everyone a lifelong opportunity to enjoy the sport of lacrosse.


ELIZABETH

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# USA Lacrosse Updates


## Program Leader Functions

### MATTHEW BURKE'S PROFILE



**MATTHEW BURKE**

Player  
Coach  
Official  
Program Leader



Membership Number:  
**000008271305**

Valid Thru: 09/2028  
DOB: 01/1992













Background Check Expiration: 10/17/2027  
Abuse Prevention Expires: 04/10/2028

Certifications:  
BOYS COACHES - SILVER CERTIFICATION

Age Verified

[VIEW/EDIT PROFILE](#)[AFFILIATIONS](#)[BACKGROUND CHECK](#)[ABUSE PREVENTION](#)[TRANSCRIPT](#)

### CLEVELAND COMMUNITY LACROSSE ACCOUNT SETTINGS

 USER MANAGEMENT	 MANAGE MEMBERSHIPS	 PAYMENT OPTIONS	 ACCOUNT ADDRESSES	 NOTIFICATION PREFERENCES
 TRANSACTIONS HISTORY	 BULK PURCHASES	 MEMBERSHIP VALIDATION	 ROSTER MANAGEMENT	 ACCOUNT SETTING
 RESOURCE LIBRARY	 HELP			

Your Feed


# USA Lacrosse Updates

## Coach Development




REQUIRED COURSES		
Complete 5 from list below:		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Abuse Prevention Training</b> (Comp-2394)	✓	Completed: 04/10/2024 📄
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Cultural Competency</b> (Comp-2236)	✓	Completed: 10/14/2025 📄
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>All Coaches - Concussion Awareness</b> (Comp-9036)	✓	Completed: 10/14/2025 📄
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>All Coaches - Sudden Cardiac Arrest</b> (Comp-9037)	✓	Completed: 10/14/2025 📄
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Boys Coaches - Rules Exam</b> (Comp-9075)	✓	Completed: 10/14/2025 📄

## Player Age Verification

 **USA**  
LACROSSE

**JOHNNY**  
**LACROSSE**

 **PLAYER**

MEMBERSHIP NUMBER:  
**010030002183**

VALID THRU: 02/2025  
DOB: 11/2014

**AGE VERIFIED**

# USA Lacrosse Updates

## Member Program Compliance

- Submit a Member organization agreement (MOA) each calendar year.
- Request a Certificate of Insurance (COI) using the link received after submitting the above agreement
- Verify membership per the 100% guidelines via the USAL Roster Management tool – roster uploads (players and coaches) are required for claims to be approved.
- For introductory types of clinics (where not all player participants will be members) you'll submit a separate form directly to WTW. (Non-member event form)

# USA Lacrosse Updates

## BEST PRACTICES FOR SUCCESS

Here's what Program Leaders can do to ensure YOUR program thrives

### START YOUNG

- Invest in pick up and play clinics with low barriers to entry (Flex 6)
- Participate in USAL's NCLW this November!
- Provide information to help educate parents about the sport

### INVEST IN COACHES

- The better the training, the better the experience
- Retention is less onerous than recruiting new players
- Ensure a succession plan is in place

### COLLABORATE

- Leverage data and best practices to grow programs
- Continue to partner with USAL to address emerging issues
- Ask for help!



# USA Lacrosse Questions?

## MIDWEST REGION CONTACTS



**MATT BURKE**

Regional Manager

410.235.6882 x189

[mburke@usalacrosse.com](mailto:mburke@usalacrosse.com)

# Officiating Points of Emphasis

## 2025 Recap

- +50 Officials dedicated to Youth games
- +35 New Youth Officials
- > 2000 GNLL Youth Games

## Focus

- Recruiting new officials
- Covering all games (+98%)
- Key Rules Focus
  - Horizontal Stick
  - Rough & Dangerous Play
  - Offensive Fouls

## 2026 Focus

- Improve rule knowledge and consistency
- Continue to recruit new officials
- Execute a stronger training program

## Partnership with Teams -'26 Season Mtg 3/18/26

- Coaches - Teach
- Players - Execute
- Officials - Reinforce

## Conduct

- Honor the Game through Honesty and Integrity

# Girls Officiating & Rules Updates

## USA Lacrosse Rules Interpretation

Thursday, December 11, 2025 7pm CST:

**[REGISTER](#)**

Monday, February 23, 2026 7pm CST: **[REGISTER](#)**

## Training Info:

- Register on MLUA Website- [mlualacrosse.org](https://mlualacrosse.org)
- Training
  - 3 - One hour online classes
  - 1 - Field training - March 8, 2026 (AM)
- Observation Program Implementation

# Homegrown Initiatives



Grow the game! Get more players.

- [School Of Lax](#) is a fun, hands-on PE unit that introduces 3rd–6th graders to the sport of lacrosse. We bring all the necessary equipment, professional coaching staff, and a ready-to-use curriculum to meet the kids where they are at.
- [Homegrown Academy](#) is the logical next step for players looking to get some on-field experience during the winter months to show up prepared for the spring season.
- [TryLax](#) clinics in late winter / early spring is where it all comes together and gets players to sign up for their association and play on a real team.

# Homegrown Staff



**Ben MacLean**  
Executive Director

[ben@homegrownlacrosse.org](mailto:ben@homegrownlacrosse.org)

612-730-9495



**Hailey Hults**  
Program Director

[hailey@homegrownlacrosse.org](mailto:hailey@homegrownlacrosse.org)

507-497-2644

## Glance at the 2025 Season By the Numbers & History of Homegrown Lacrosse and GNLL

The Great Northern Lacrosse League (GNLL) represents the League and Events division of Homegrown Lacrosse, a Twin Cities-based 501(c)(3) non-profit organization founded in 2003. Guided by two dedicated full-time directors and one part-time director, GNLL currently administers 14 leagues and 12 tournaments, catering to a wide spectrum of participants, including youth associations, high school teams, club lacrosse programs, and 31 adult teams within the scope of our 2023-2024 fiscal year (September to August).

[MN Youth Association List](#)

[2021-2025 Program Chart](#)



# 2026 GNLL Girls Spring League (Mid April–Early June)

## GNLL Girls Spring Field League

### League Dates:

**Spring Regular Season:** Saturday April 11-Sunday May 17, 2026  
No Games May 23-24, 2025

**Spring Youth State Tournament:** Friday-Sunday May 29-31, 2026

### Administrative Dates:

**Association Registration Open/Close:** Thursday January 1-Friday February 13, 2026

**Team Registration Deadline:** Saturday February 28, 2026

**Spring Scheduling Meeting:** Saturday February 28, 2026 1-4 PM

### League Fees:

	8U	10U	12U	14U
Team Fee	<b>\$100</b>	<b>\$100</b>	<b>\$100</b>	<b>\$100</b>
Game Fee	\$30/game	\$48/game	\$80/game	\$80/game

2024: 35 Associations; 118 teams

2025: 39 Associations; 122 teams

### Out of Metro Known Hosting Dates:

- Grand Rapids (Boys and Girls on Separate Days- April 25-26
- Rochester (Boys and Girls Jamboree)- May 9-10
- Duluth (Boys and Girls Jamboree)- May 9-10 or May 16-17th, TBD

West	NW	N/NE	South/East
ACYLA	Andover	218	Hudson
Blake	Anoka Ramsey	Blaine	Farmington
Breck	Becker	Centennial	Owatonna
Buffalo	Champlin Park	Duluth	Rochester
C3	Elk River	Forest Lake	Rosemount
Delano	Monticello	Grand Rapids	Stillwater
Hutchinson	Rogers-Otsego	Moorhead	Woodbury
Maple Grove	Monticello	Mounds View Irondale	
Minneapolis	St. Michael Albertville	Superior	
Minnetonka		White Bear Lake	
Orono			
St. Louis Park			
Wayzata			

# 2026 GNLL Girls Summer League (Mid June–End of July)

Girls Summer Field League

League Dates:

**Summer Regular Season:** Monday June 8-Wednesday July 22, 2026  
(Wednesday July 15 for 8/10U)

No games on Fridays

**Summer 8U Jamboree (Saturday Only) & 10U Tournament:** Saturday & Sunday July 18-19, 2026

**Summer 12/14/18U State Tournament:** Saturday & Sunday July 25-26, 2026

Administrative Dates:

**Association Registration Open/Close:** Thursday January 1-Friday February 13, 2026

**Host Availability/Scheduling Form:** Sunday April 19, 2026

**Team Registration:** Monday March 2- Sunday April 26, 2026

League Fees:

	8U	10U	12U	14U	18U
Team Fee	\$700	\$1,150	\$1,300		
		\$950 (6 games)	\$1,100 (6 games)		

West	Northwest	Central/South	North/Northeast
ACYLA	Anoka	Blaine	218 Valkyries
Buffalo	Elk River	Capital City	Centennial
Delano	Maple Grove	Minneapolis	Chisago Lakes
St. Louis Park	Monticello	Mounds View Irondale	Forest Lake
Wayzata	Rogers	Rochester	Hudson
Westonka	STMA	Roseville	Mahtomedi
			White Bear Lake

2024: 24 Associations; 82 Teams  
2025: 25 Associations; 94 Teams

# 2026 Girls Operating Policy and League Updates

## 10U Novice & Experienced Divisions

- Our goal is to place teams in the division that gives them the best opportunity to develop and play in competitive games- not blowouts **without implementing tryouts**. Programs with a single team should use the rubric below to place their team. Programs with multiple teams should either split by grade if possible, or some other "random i.e grouping by elementary school etc" metric and then use the rubric to place their teams.
- Host sites for the scheduling meeting will be labeled as well, or for host sites with plenty of time/space, slots will be allotted for at least 3 teams for each division. We will do our best to keep divisions separate if numbers allow, but there may need to be some cross division play.

10U Division Tiering Rubric		
Factor	Criteria	Points
Returning Players	6+ players with 2+ years	+2
Mostly 4th Graders	75% of the roster or more	+1
Coach Assessment	Experienced (Mixed skill with some game awareness or strong skill, understands game flows, can clear)	+1
Requested "Novice" Division	NA	-1
New Program/ Mostly Beginners	50% or more of the team is new to lacrosse	-2

Total Score  $\geq 2 \rightarrow$  Experienced

Total Score  $\leq 0 \rightarrow$  Novice

Score = 1  $\rightarrow$  League Judgment Call

# 2026 Girls Operating Policy and League Updates

## Optional Changes to # 10-14U Summer League Games

- GNLL will offer 10U-14U teams the option of 6 or 8 games to improve the practice-to-game ratio to allow better skill development, team play/strategy, minimize burnout and injury, along with building confidence.
  - Costs will be prorated accordingly
- Still working on keeping 8/10U to M/W when possible and 12/14U to Tues/Thur

## Game Day Roster Enforcements (12U & 14U Only)

- Coaches have the option to bring a physical printed roster to games, or else, rosters must be visible on their program website with name and jersey number.
- Players who have been approved to play down or across teams must be marked with an asterisk or other symbol on the roster
- Main goal is to improve fairness, consistency and accountability across programs, but also understand need to support reasonable flexibility for developmental and logistical situations when done transparently.
- [Girls 12/14U Roster Concern Form](#)
  - Must be submitted within 24 hours of a game
  - Violation Process for unrostered or ineligible players
    - First Offense: Warning & Removal from Game
    - Second Offense: Game Forfeiture and 2 Game Coach Suspension
    - Third Offense: Game Forfeiture and Potential Indefinite Coach Suspension

## Addition of 18U Summer Season

- Many of our summer associations support 18U teams and would like us to offer 18U for next season to allow for easier team administration and scheduling. This spring I will be reaching out to HS programs in March to gauge interest to make sure we have enough teams to support the 18U programs.

# 2026 Girls Operating Policy and League Updates

## Update to the Score Report Process

- To streamline the process and timeline of getting scores reported for league games, we will be enabling the "Allow Public to Post Scores" feature. This will allow scores to be entered immediately after the completion of games. While we ask that both teams input the score, the first person to post the score will be accepted. Should an error be made on the score of a game, please email myself or KK to make the correction as the public cannot change scores once submitted.
- This will take the place of the Game Score Report Form.

# 2026 Girls League Points of Emphasis

## 12/14U Guidelines for Team Placement

### Purpose

Our goal is to provide an environment where players grow as athletes, teammates, and people. We believe that **player development and a positive experience are the highest priorities** — when young athletes enjoy the sport, they are more likely to stay engaged, improve, and build lifelong connections.

At the same time, we recognize that **challenge is essential to growth**. Facing strong competition helps players develop resilience, sharpen skills, and expand their understanding of the game. The most impactful development happens when athletes are placed in the “challenge zone” — where the game is competitive enough to stretch their abilities, but not so mismatched that it discourages participation.

### Philosophy

- Player development and a positive experience are the highest priorities but keep in mind that challenging games can also bring a lot of positive growth such as resilience, adaptability, and problem-solving.
- Competitive balance benefits both stronger and developing players.
- Placement decisions should consider *team as a whole*, not only individual standouts.
- Flexibility is built in: every association has unique roster sizes, skill distributions, and program structures.

### Guideline Examples

- **A Level (“Advanced”)**: Typically includes a majority of players with 2+ years of experience. Several may also participate in club or off-season lacrosse. Teams at this level demonstrate strong stick skills, faster pace, and higher game awareness.
- **B1 Level (“Intermediate”)**: Often a mix of newer players and those with 1–2 years of experience. Some may have exposure to extra lacrosse opportunities outside the season. Teams are developing stick skills and game understanding, and are ready for a moderate challenge.
- **B Level (“Developing/Beginner”)**: Frequently includes many players in their first year, or with limited prior experience. Few, if any, participate outside the community program. Teams are still building fundamentals, confidence, and game awareness.

### Additional Notes

- These categories are meant to describe *general team profiles*, not hard thresholds.
- Associations with smaller player pools may need to place teams outside these guidelines due to roster realities.
- If possible, programs are encouraged to revisit placements after the first few games to ensure competitive fit.

# 2026 Girls League Points of Emphasis

When is “playing up” permitted?

- Allowed when:
  - The player’s skill, speed, and game awareness exceed their current level.
  - The association lacks enough players to field a full team in the player’s age division.
  - The player’s parents and coaches agree it benefits development and safety.
- Not allowed When:
  - It’s to form a “super team” for competitive advantage.
  - It skips multiple age divisions (e.g. 10U -> 14U)

When is “playing down” permitted?

- In order for players to play down, a [Player Age Division Waiver Request](#) must be submitted AND approved ahead of the season and must be re-approved annually.
- Allowed when:
  - There is a medical, safety, or developmental need (e.g. late physical growth, first year experience).
  - The player’s skill or physical maturity level makes their participation in their true age group unsafe.
- Not allowed when:
  - For competitive reasons or to dominate a lower level
  - To maintain a large roster at a weaker division

# 2026 Girls League Points of Emphasis

## Support of Out-Of-Metro Associations

- The growth of lacrosse associations in all communities should be important to all of us but we want to emphasize support for out-of-metro associations due to their increased time and cost commitments among other barriers. We already do this through some financial means but here are additional ways for associations to support.
  - Support through travel during Spring host days
    - Working to have back to back days in northern areas to allow teams to make a weekend team bonding trip
    - Associations are asked to self select travel at this time and are asked to travel once every three seasons to ensure out-of-metro teams get at least one home date. Records are shared in January for planning purposes.

## Sharing of Players - best practices if more than one team at an age level

- [Operating Policies](#) - II. H. Team Structure 9.
  9. In most circumstances, players can only play on one team in any given season. It is illegal for a player to participate for two different GNLL teams during the same season without GNLL Director approval unless it is in the case of programs with A & B teams at 12 and 14U. B team players may be pulled up to the A team roster as substitutes if needed. If an association has two even 12/14U teams or 10U and under and will not have enough players for one of the teams to play a game, it is illegal to have players from the other team “fill in” in order to have enough players to play, without GNLL Director approval. The team will have to forfeit the game, and then a scrimmage can be held provided it can be done safely.

# 2026 Girls League Points of Emphasis

## Officiating - Getting Coaches and Officials on the same page

- Coaches & Officials Pre-Season Meeting
  - Officials will walk coaches through points of emphasis for the season. Highlight issues that can arise and best practices on how to handle them on game day. Also, a time for coaches to ask clarifying questions regarding any rules.
  - March 18, 2026 @ 7PM - Virtual on Google Meet; will also be recorded and put on our [GNLL Youtube Page](#).
    - **GNLL Girls Coaches & Officials Pre-Season Meeting**  
Wednesday, March 18, 2026 · 7:00 – 8:00pm  
Time zone: America/Chicago  
Google Meet joining info  
Video call link: <https://meet.google.com/gjj-fkpp-xnk>  
Or dial: (US) +1 318-490-8176 PIN: 355 932 877#  
More phone numbers: <https://tel.meet/gjj-fkpp-xnk?pin=8203015229266>
- Proper Contact at Each Division
  - Another point the officials will cover in their meeting above.
    - [USA Lacrosse's Guidebook](#) is a great reference for coaches to understand the goals at each level and the amount of contact officials are expected to call.

# 2026 Points of Emphasis Continued

## Associations Should Focus on Creating the Proper Environment for Athletes

- Focus on fun- this doesn't necessarily mean "games" and less structure
  - Athlete Improvement
  - Having coaches who believe in them
  - Being a part of a team that supports each other
- Praising controllables like effort, hustle, and growth, not just talent or wins
- If kids enjoy the process, they stay. Staying creates growth, and growth doesn't just make your program bigger, it makes it stronger too.

# RESOURCES FOR PROGRAM LEADERS

## USA Lacrosse

- [Grant Options](#)
  - Equipment Grants
  - Player Clinic Grants
  - Financial Support
- [Certificates of Insurance](#)
  - Liability protection for facility rentals and events
  - Medical coverage for player injuries during organized lacrosse activities
  - New coverage starting January 1, more info to come
- Midwest Regional Manager Support from Matt Burke
  - [mburke@usalacrosse.com](mailto:mburke@usalacrosse.com)
- [Online Lacrosse Team Management System](#)
- [League Standards and Best Practice Guidelines](#)
- [Flex 6](#)
- Hardship Memberships
  - Contact [mburke@usalacrosse.com](mailto:mburke@usalacrosse.com)

## Homegrown Lacrosse

- Private Clinics
  - Contact [hailey@homegrownlacrosse.org](mailto:hailey@homegrownlacrosse.org)

## Great Northern Lacrosse Leagues

- [Operating Policies](#)
- [Association Grant Applications](#)
- TryLax Support
  - Equipment and Volunteer Coaches
- Clinic Support
  - Equipment and Volunteer Coaches

# OFFICIALS' RECRUITMENT

## USA Lacrosse

- [USA Lacrosse Officials Resources](#)

## Girls Officials in Minnesota

- [Minnesota Lacrosse Umpires Association](#) (MLUA)



# RESOURCES FOR COACHES

## Great Northern Lacrosse Leagues

- [On-Field Coaches Clinic](#) Saturday February 28, 2026 9-11:30 AM at Concordia Seafoam Stadium (more information to be sent by Jan 1)
- Virtual Preseason Coaches Meetings
  - Spring Season - Wednesday April 1, 2026
  - Summer Season - Wednesday May 27, 2026
- Virtual Coaching Series
  - Sessions focused on both coaching and administrative duties for directors
    - <https://www.youtube.com/@GreatNorthernLacrosseLeague>
- [Boys Drill Compilation & Coaching Resources](#)
- [Girls Drill Compilation & Coaching Resources](#)



# RESOURCES FOR COACHES

## USA Lacrosse

- [Coaching Resources](#)
  - Mobile Coach
  - Rule Changes
  - USA Lacrosse Academy -
    - [Denver](#), CO - December 6 & 7th, 2025
    - [Fairfield](#), CT - January 17 & 18, 2026

## Homegrown Lacrosse

- Shadow [Homegrown Academy Sessions](#)
  - Contact [hailey@homegrownlacrosse.org](mailto:hailey@homegrownlacrosse.org) if interested



# 2026 Association Spring/Summer Tournaments

- May 2-3 [Kirk Watson Memorial Shootout](#)
- May 15-17 [Wayzata Invitational](#)
- May 16-17 [Moorhead Spud Spring Showdown](#)
- May 29-31 [GNLL Girls Spring State Tournament](#)
- June 5-7 [Shakopee River Valley Rumble](#)
- June 5-7 [GNLL Boys Spring State Tournament](#)
- June 20-21 [Champlin Park Icebreaker](#) (Boys Only)
- June 26-28 [Prior Lake Lax by the Lake](#)
- June 26-28 [Woodbury Black & Blue](#)
- July 10-12 [Centennial Sizzle](#)
- July 28-19 GNLL Boys & Girls 6U-10U Jamboree & Summer State Tournament
- July 24-26 GNLL Boys & Girls 12U-14U Summer State Tournament

Questions/Challenges/Discussion

