

PAL 2026

GIRLS YOUTH RULES

GRADES 3 and 4

Updated 24Feb2026

EQUIPMENT:

- Minimum length is 35 1/2" and the maximum length is 43 "
- Third graders may have a minimum length of 32" and are allowed a modified pocket
- Headgear can be worn but is not Required. If headgear is worn the chinstrap must be securely fastened.
- Goggles are Required
- Mouthguards **CANNOT** be attached to the goggles or have protruding tabs
- Balls must be NOCSAE approved in the color of yellow, orange or green
- **GOALKEEPER:**
 - **Crosse**-Minimum length is 35" and the maximum length is 52"
 - **Helmet** – must meet NOCSAE standards, have a facemask, separate throat protector and properly secured chinstrap.
 - **Required Protective Padding** : chest, abdominal/pelvic protector, gloves, leg/shin/ thighs.
 - **FULL SHINGUARDS ARE REQUIRED**
 - Uniform shirt must be worn over the chest protector

PRE-GAME PROCEDURES:

- Officials will ask coaches if players are legally and properly equipped. Coaches need to assure officials their players are wearing the proper equipment to start the game.
- Officials will check coach's badges to confirm they are eligible to be on sidelines, a total of three coaches are allowed per team. If a coach does not have their credentials they will have to leave the team's sideline.
- Stick checks will be performed to ensure proper stick pockets, mouthguards and goalie equipment is being used.
- Coin toss will be done with no more than three captains. One coach is allowed to attend the captain's meeting at this level. Visiting team will call the toss and winner of toss will choose either side to defend or first Alternate Possession.
- Players are not allowed to wear Jewelry on the field unless it is a medic-alert bracelet. Band-aides over earrings is not acceptable, earrings must be removed.

DURATION OF PLAY:

GAME TIME:

- game consists of four 12 minute quarters.
- The clock will stop in the last minute of each quarter for a free position in the CSA, a card or a goal.
- The clock will stop for an injury if the official deems necessary
- A maximum of 3 minutes between quarters 1 and 2 and between quarters 3 and 4
- A maximum of 6 minutes at Halftime
- There is no overtime play.

GAME CLOCK:

- Should be kept by home team.
- Timer is responsible for counting down the last minute of each half for the referee and a horn is blown as time runs out.

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- Timer is responsible for keeping 2 minute time on carded players. When 2 minutes expires, they tell the player they are allowed to return to the field and shout "Card Released" so officials are aware the player has returned to the field.
- The referee should not maintain the clock on the field unless there is no timer available on sidelines

TIME OUTS:

- Each team shall be permitted two time outs per game of 2 minute duration.
- Unused time-outs from first half carry over to the second half.
- Teams may call a timeout if they are in possession of the ball or after a goal by either team.
- On a possession timeout the player will leave the ball on the field at the location it was when the timeout was called. Players will take their cross off the field, and a coach is allowed to substitute. Any player from the team with possession can start playing on the whistle where the ball lies unless the time out is called after a penalty. If called after a penalty, the player who was fouled must start with the ball and the fouling defender must go behind.
- If Goalie has possession of ball and a time out is called, play is restarted on the dot behind the goal and can be given to any player.

SUBSTITUTIONS:

- Substitution may take place after every goal, between quarters and injuries.
- You may substitute on the fly during play, but players must exit and enter through their own team's substitution area located by the scorer's table.
- Field player must be off the field before their substitute is allowed to enter
- Substitutions are now allowed on possession time outs, girls no longer need to drop their crosses, but the ball will remain on the field at the spot it was when the timeout was called.

COACHING

- Coaches may move along the full boundary line on the bench/table side of the field only, except for the area directly in front of the opposing team and either team's substitution area.
- Coaches may not stand near or walk in front of the opposing team area.
- Coaches may not stand behind the end line (behind the goalie).
- Coaches and players must remain behind the level of the scorer's table extended. Violation of this rule is misconduct foul (yellow card).
- Officials at their discretion may prohibit coaches from moving along the full boundary line

PLAYING FIELD:

- **Penalty Area** -The penalty area shall be directly in front of the scorers/timers table. A player serving a penalty must sit or kneel in this area.
- **Spectators** – spectators must be on the opposite side of the field from the team bench area and not behind the end lines.
- **Critical Scoring Area:** is defined by the 12 meter fan in front of the goal to the endline and 12 meters to each side of the goal circle
- **Soft/flexible cones,** pylons or cones must be used to mark the outside corner of the field. Team Substitution Area (TSA): Shall be in front of the scorer's table and centered at the midfield line. No player or coach may remain in the TSA except those involved in the imminent substitution.

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OUT OF BOUNDS:

- When a player in possession of the ball carries or propels the ball out of bounds or when the player is the last to touch a loose ball before it goes out of bounds, the opponents will be awarded the ball.
- When a player's foot/feet are out of bounds, she may not take an active part in the game.
- During the game, players may not run out of bounds and re-enter to a more advantageous position. To resume play, the opponent nearest the ball will place the ball in her crosse and can stand 2m inside the boundary line from the spot where the ball went out of bounds or she can choose to run the ball onto and down the field without breaking stride.
- A player cannot pass the ball to a teammate while she is out of bounds. This will result in a turnover but the ball will be brought back to the original spot for a restart.
- Any other player(s) directly involved in the play or in the immediate vicinity of the spot where the ball went out of bounds may also be moved, but they must maintain the same relative position to the player with the ball, when play had stopped and be at least 2m away from the player in possession of the ball.

THREE SECONDS WHEN CLOSELY GUARDED:

- Offensive player with the ball may not hold the ball for more than 3 seconds when closely guarded/checked by a defender who has both hands on her stick and who is in position to legally check were checking allowed.
- If the player with the ball takes the stick to the other side of her body and thus away from the defender making a legal check impossible, the 3-second count would be over.
- If the defender adjusts her position to where a legal could be made, or the stick is brought back to a checkable position, the count starts again.
- If another teammate joins the defender and that second defender (double team) is in good position to check, the count starts again.
- The attack player must try to keep the stick/ball away from the defender by extending her distance from the defensive player by more than a stick length, or by positioning her stick so that her body is between the ball and the defensive player, or by passing the ball to another team member.

THE DRAW:

- The ball must be placed in the upper third of each head at its widest point.
- The entire lengths of both crosses are between the ball and the goal they are defending. The entire length of both crosses must be contained within the vertical plane of the center line.
- On the whistle the two opponents must immediately draw their crosses up from the starting position.
- The number of players around the circle shall be limited to 2 players from each team. The remaining eight players from each team are not allowed to cross either restraining line until one of the six players around the circle has possession of the ball.
- The referee who is administering the draw will shout "POSSESSION" and at that time the players can cross the restraining line. If the ball rolls towards the player below the restraining line they can reach over the line with their crosse to play the ball but their feet must remain behind the line.
- They are allowed to play the ball if it crosses the restraining line even if the referee has not called POSSESSION
- If an illegal draw occurs, the team getting possession, will start where the ball lands, they do not need to go back to the center circle.

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PASSING REQUIREMENTS:

TWO PASS REQUIREMENT

- Each time a team gains possession of the ball it must attempt two passes before shooting.
- An attempted pass is described as a player from one team throwing a pass to another player on her team. The pass does not have to be caught.
- Both players must be over the midfield line for the second pass to count.
- If a player makes a pass and after attempts by both teams to pick up the ball, the player who originated the pass, picks it up, this is not considered an attempted pass.
- A teammate of the passer can pick up the loose ball from the ground thus maintaining control of the ball, will count as a pass.
- Transferring the ball from one girls stick to a teammates stick by turning the stick over and dropping the ball into the stick is NOT considered a pass.
- Players should be at least 5 yards apart. Passes that a referee considers extremely short and just an attempt to get around the two-pass rule will not count.
- The referee will use a defenders position in relation to the pass receiver to determine if it is just an attempt to get around the two-pass rule.

GOALIE'S CLEARING PASS

- A pass from within the goal circle will count as the first pass provided it is at least passed 5 yards.
- if the goalie's clearing pass is intercepted, the intercepting team must make 2 passes before going back to goal.

SHOT ON GOAL

- if a team takes a shot on goal and recovers the ball, either because the shot misses the goal or the goalie saves the ball but deflects it outside of the goal circle, then that shooting team can take an immediate shot on goal.

EXCEPTION TO TWO PASS RULE

- if a major foul occurs in the critical scoring area, the fouled player is placed on either the eight meter hash, if the foul occurred in the arc, or at the spot of the foul, if it occurred outside the arc but inside the critical scoring area, and a penalty lane is cleared. When the whistle blows starting play again no passes are required, the player may take the free position shot.

MERCY RULE:

- When a team attains a 4-goal lead, the trailing team is given possession of the ball at the center of the center circle. The opposing player (from the team that is ahead) is placed 4 meters away at a 45-degree angle to either side.
- The coach of the team that is behind can choose a draw instead of possession.
- All other girls must remain out of the center circle until the whistle blows restarting play. The player taking the free position may run or pass the ball.
- The leading team with the 4-goal differential may shoot only after completing 3 passes below the attacking side of the restraining line. The passes must be caught in the "air" but do not need to be consecutive. Attempted passes do not count.
- The trailing team is still required to make two attempted passes before going to goal.

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EMPTY STICK CHECK

- This minor foul is for intentional stick contact during pursuit of a playable ball.
- When the ball is in the air or on the ground and is playable by both teams, incidental stick contact by players who are actively pursuing possession of the ball is **legal**.
- When the ball is in a playable situation it is illegal for one player to initiate contact with the opponent's crosse in an effort to prevent them from gaining possession.

SHOT ON GOAL

- When a shot or deflected shot on goal goes out of bounds, the team whose stick is nearest to the ball when it crossed the boundary line will receive possession of the ball.
- The player can run directly onto the field or enter and stand 2 m inside the boundary line from the spot where the ball went out of bounds. Opponents must give the player with the ball at least 2 m of free space.
- If the goalkeeper while within her goal circle is nearest to the ball when it crosses the boundary line, her team will be awarded the ball to restart play. If no player is below the goal line extended, the goalie is considered nearest the ball.
- If a ball is touched by a player before it goes out of bounds but the ball's momentum never stopped the closest player is still awarded the ball.
- A goal is scored by the whole ball passing completely over the goal line, the shot must be released before time expires

OBSTRUCTION OF FREE SPACE TO GOAL:

- Free Space to Goal is a path defined by two imaginary lines extending from the ball to the outside edges of the goal circle. A defense player obstructing the free space to goal with any part of her body denies the attack the opportunity to shoot safely and encourages shooting at an unprotected player.
- The following points need to be considered before obstruction of free space is called:
 - The ball carrier must be within the critical scoring area (12 meters)
 - The ball carrier must be in active pursuit to goal and must have the opportunity to shoot.
 - A defender intentionally marking within a stick's length of the ball carrier is not obstructing the free space to goal.
 - Defenders who are being drawn into and through the free space by cutting attack players are marking are not obstructing the free space to goal.

PENALTY ZONE:

- The new penalty zone is the area 8 meters away from the goal circle above the goal line extended and the area created by the extension of the 8 meter mark to the dots and across the dots.
- This is to minimize the risk around the 8 meter free positions as well as to increase pace of play by limiting repeated obstruction calls, the penalty zone must be cleared when a defensive player commits a major foul in the 8 meter arc.
- The defense has first right to the hashes on either side of the player with the ball on a penalty shot.

FOULS IN THE CSA

- If a major foul occurs between the 8 meter and the 12 meter, the player is placed on the 12 meter and the penalty lane is cleared.
- Defensive players are given the hashes closest to the shooter on the 8 meter arc. Any other spot is given to the player who arrives there first.
- There is no longer any indirect shots. A minor foul in the CSA goes to the 12 meter and the penalty lane is cleared and the player is allowed to shoot.

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SELF START:

- Following a whistle blown for a foul outside of the critical scoring area, the player who is awarded the free position may continue the course of play without waiting for an additional whistle. The player no longer has to pause before moving forward.
- The player fouled must take the free position within playing distance of the spot of the foul. The offending player must move 4 meters from the player taking the free position as directed by the official.
- If the player with the ball continues without pause the defender may continue as well.
- All players must move 4 meters away from the free position.
- Play will commence once the ball carrier steps or passes. Once play has commenced the defenders may engage in play with the ball carrier. The player taking the free position may wait until all players are moved 4 meters away.
- Self Starts are not an option when: The game clock is stopped, Restraining Line Violations, Alternating Possession Restarts and Goalie Restart Possession.
- **Self Starts are not** an option on an offensive free position in the Critical Scoring Area
- **Self Starts are** allowed on a Defensive Free Position in the Critical Scoring Area.

FREE MOVEMENT:

- Field players are now allowed to move on the whistle.

THREE SECOND VIOLATION:

- The defense may not remain in the 8m arc for more than three seconds unless she is marking a player within a stick's length.
- Within a stick's length is when any part of the opponent's body is inside an extended crosses' length.
- The three-second rule is in effect when the team in possession of the ball crosses over the Restraining Line in their attacking half of the field.
- The intent of this rule is to prevent crowding by the defense in front of the goal. An offensive player in the 8 meter arc that does not have possession of the ball can be marked by only one defensive player.
- **An offensive player in the 8 meter arc that has possession of the ball can be marked by no more than 3 defensive players.**

THE GOALIE:

- Deputy is not allowed at the lower levels of lacrosse.
- If a goalie gains possession of the ball outside of the goal circle she is now allowed to run the ball back into the goal circle.
- If a goalie leaves the goal circle with the ball and she is played by her opponent she is allowed to run the ball back into the goal circle

THE PICK:

- This is a technique in which a player without the ball, who by her positioning, forces the opponent to take another route.
- To be legal it must be set within the visual field of the opponent allowing enough time and space to stop or change direction. It may be moving or stationary but not blind.
- The player setting the pick must be sure her crosse is within her body frame and not held in a horizontal position.

STICK TO BODY:

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- A defensive player is prohibited to initiate stick to body contact
- Horizontal Sticks placed on the body or on the opponents stick is an automatic whistle

ISSUANCE OF CARDS:

- Player receiving yellow card will serve a 2-minute penalty and a red card will serve a 4 minute penalty and the team will play short below each restraining line.
- A player who receives a yellow or red card will serve the penalty at the scorers table.
- All penalties are non-releasable.
- Anyone receiving 2 yellow cards in the game will be suspended from further participation in the game.
- Anyone receiving a Red card will be suspended from further participation in that game and the team's next game.
- Should a team receive its fourth card of the game they will play short for the remainder of the game, and an additional player will be removed from the game for each subsequent card received.
- Any card given to a player or head coach will count toward their team's cumulative total.
- The carded player will serve the 2 minute penalty time and she may return to the game only if she has not been suspended or ejected
- If the coach is carded, the coach must designate a player who will serve the penalty.
- If the player receiving the yellow card is the goalkeeper and there is no dressed goalkeeper for the team, the goalkeeper may remain in the game and the coach will designate another field player on the field to take the penalty