



NEWS RELEASE

Risk Minimization at Forefront of High School Boys Lacrosse Rules Changes

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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INDIANAPOLIS, IN (June 26, 2024) — Risk minimization – particularly as it relates to lost equipment during play, proper wearing of the helmet and appropriate instances for checking an opponent’s crosse – was the focus of the rules changes forwarded by the NFHS Boys Lacrosse Rules Committee for the 2025 season.

These topic areas headlined the eight total rules changes recommended by the committee, which discussed and compiled its proposals at its annual rules meeting held June 4-6 at The Alexander hotel in Indianapolis. All eight changes were subsequently accepted by the NFHS Board of Directors.

“This year, the committee focused on equipment and making sure that student-athletes are protected when it comes to what they are wearing,” said Dr. James Weaver, NFHS director of performing arts and sports and liaison to the Boys Lacrosse Rules Committee. “The committee has done an excellent job in reducing the risks for players, coaches and officials. The committee also continued its goal of simplifying the way lacrosse is officiated by simplifying certain rules and simplifying more complex rules.”

Rule 4-24-7 was edited to mandate that officials stop play any time a player in the scrimmage area loses a piece of mandatory equipment, regardless of how the equipment is lost or whether other players are in the immediate vicinity. Previously, the rule stated that a player must lose the equipment

“in a legal way” for a stoppage to occur and that no stoppage was required if the player was deemed far enough away from the action. Now, play may only continue if the player who lost the mandatory equipment did so outside the scrimmage area.

A small but impactful change was made to Rule 1-9-1a clarifying that the helmet must be worn with the chin strap “on” the chin rather than “under,” as previously written, while being firmly attached at all the helmet’s manufactured attachment points. Regarding player safety, the slight alteration to this rule should make for a more secure helmet fit.

The three instances where a player can use his crosse to check an opponent’s crosse are now more clearly laid out in Rule 4-16. According to the new listing, a legal check of an opponent’s crosse can be performed when the opponent: (a) has possession of the ball; (b) is within 5 yards of a loose ball; or (c) is within 5 yards of a ball in flight.

Rules 1-2-7 and 1-2-8 will now feature an accompanying diagram that will aid in the correct field setup for the table and coaches’ areas along the sideline. The diagram will also reflect minor adjustments to the table area measurements that will align it with the markings in the NCAA and USA Lacrosse rules books and are intended to streamline the on-the-fly substitution process.

The table area was also the focus of the new Rule 4-22-4 stating that “any restart within the confines of the table area, or within 5 yards on either side of the table area, shall be moved 5 yards into the field from the sideline.” Previously, the only mention of this particular type of restart was found in Rule 4-6-2 Situation A – the section of the rules book that deals with “out-of-bounds” scenarios – highlighting the need to provide official rules language in Rule 4-22 regarding restarts.

Rule 4 was the subject of a third change, as a portion of Rule 4-3-1 was reverted to its previous language. The rule, which establishes that faceoffs be held at the center of the field to start a period or following a goal, also features four infraction-related exceptions that nullify the ensuing faceoff and award possession to the non-offending team. Those exceptions were shortened and simplified as part of the 2023 NFHS Boys Lacrosse Rules Changes but have now been reinstated in their expanded, fully defined form to provide additional context for new officials.

Finally, two changes were applied to different sections of Rule 7, amending protocols for the “slow whistle technique” used by officials as well as inadvertent whistles. The slow whistle technique covered in Rule 7-8-3 will now be used “when a personal foul is committed against the team last in possession during a shot or pass” in addition to “when a foul is committed against the player in

possession of the ball or some other member of the attacking team.” Rule 7-13-3 addresses inadvertent whistles and now includes a clause that calls for a new faceoff if an inadvertent whistle is blown during the faceoff process.

A complete listing of the boys lacrosse rules changes will be available on the NFHS website at www.nfhs.org. Click on “Activities & Sports” at the top of the home page and select “Lacrosse-Boys.”

According to the NFHS High School Athletics Participation Survey for the 2022-23 academic year, 111,108 boys participate in lacrosse in 3,086 high schools across the country.

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About the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS)

The NFHS, based in Indianapolis, Indiana, is the national leadership organization for high school sports and performing arts activities. Since 1920, the NFHS has led the development of education-based interscholastic sports and performing arts activities that help students succeed in their lives. The NFHS sets direction for the future by building awareness and support, improving the participation experience, establishing consistent standards and rules for competition, and helping those who oversee high school sports and activities. The NFHS writes playing rules for 17 sports for boys and girls at the high school level. Through its 50 member state associations and the District of Columbia, the NFHS reaches more than 19,800 high schools and 12 million participants in high school activity programs, including more than 7.8 million in high school sports. As the recognized national authority on interscholastic activity programs, the NFHS conducts national meetings; sanctions interstate events; offers online publications and services for high school coaches and officials; sponsors professional organizations for high school coaches, officials, speech and debate coaches, and music adjudicators; serves as the national source for interscholastic coach training; and serves as a national information resource of interscholastic athletics and activities. For more information, visit the NFHS website at www.nfhs.org.

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