

US Lacrosse Men's Game Post Collegiate (POCO) Club Rules

These rules are based primarily on the NCAA Lacrosse Rules, except where changed herein. Some of the variations are based on other established rules, including prior NCAA, International, and other rules. For clarity, certain rules are repeated or summarized herein. The US Lacrosse Men's Game Committee has approved these rules. The age brackets and corresponding rules, including the contact permitted, are designed to allow players to continue to be active and participate in lacrosse, to play competitively with players close to their ages and capabilities, and to enjoy the camaraderie of the lacrosse community.

Age Levels and Body Checking

Suggested age groupings are determined by the player's age as of December 31 prior to competition. Tournaments and leagues may set league or event appropriate ages for each level of contact and body checking. Above age 30, US Lacrosse suggests that the age spread between players should be kept as close as possible, ideally a 5-year or similar spread.

- 30 years of age and under
- 31-35 years of age
- 36 to 45 years of age
- Over 45 years of age

NOTE: *A player may play in a younger age grouping and rule set, but not in an older age grouping.*

Defenseless Player: There shall be no body checking at any level on a player in a defenseless position (a "defenseless player"). This includes but is not limited to:

- (i) body checking a player from his "blind side";
- (ii) body checking a player who has his head down in an attempt to play a loose ball;
- (iii) body checking a player whose head is turned away to receive a pass, even if that player turns toward the contact immediately before the body check.

NOTE: *Sports medicine research indicates that the severity of certain injuries may be reduced if a player can anticipate and prepare himself for an oncoming hit. Game officials should be especially alert to blind side checks.*

There shall be three (3) levels of body checking and contact allowed:

Level A: 35 years of age and younger

Normal NCAA rules on body checking apply, but no body checks on a defenseless player.

Level B: 36 to 45 years of age (Suggest 5-year Groupings—36 to 40 and 41 to 45)

Restricted body checking:

1. No body checks on a defenseless player.
2. No Excessive Body Checks (“Takeout Checks”) are permitted.

Excessive Body Checks/“Takeout Checks” include, but are not limited to, contact such as the following:

Any body checks considered more aggressive or more physical than necessary to stop the advancement of the player carrying the ball or to keep or move a player away from a loose ball.

This includes but is not limited to:

- (i) any check in which a player makes contact with sufficient force and perceived intent to knock down the opposing player;
- (ii) any check in which a player makes contact with sufficient force and perceived intent to injure the opposing player; and
- (iii) any check made in a reckless or intimidating manner.

Level C: Over 45 years of age (Suggest 5-year Groupings)

No Body Checking allowed; all legal pushes and holds are allowed.

Targeting the Head/Neck: US Lacrosse draws special attention to NCAA Rule 5 Section 3 that prohibits targeting the head or neck, quoted below:

A player shall not initiate contact to an opponent’s head or neck with a cross-check, or any part of his body (head, elbow, shoulder, etc.) or stick. Any follow-through that contacts the head or neck shall also be considered a violation of this rule.

PENALTY — One, two, or three minute non-releasable foul, at the referee’s discretion. Excessive violation of this rule may result in an ejection from the game.

Field

The Fields should be as provided for NCAA play. (110 Yards by 60 Yards)

However, Fields 110 yards by 53 1/3 Yards are legal.

With consent of the teams, or sanctioning body (leagues, tournaments, etc.) smaller fields may be used (for example 100 Yards by 50 Yards). If a smaller field is used, it is suggested that the reduce space be taken from the midfield area and/or the alleys, so that the Attack/Defensive areas are the normal size. Lines should be consistent with NCAA Rules. Where possible, the table area/special substitution area should be 20 yards (10 yards on each side of the center line.) Cones and/or Pylons are strongly suggested. The 4-inch square at center of the field is suggested, but not required.

Goals and Nets

An NCAA specification as to construction and color of goals and nets is preferred; however the color of nets and goals may vary from NCAA Rules. The size of the goal pipes may vary slightly from NCAA provisions.

The Ball

The balls shall be in accordance with NCAA Rules, including the requirement that all balls must specify that the ball meets the NOCSAE standard. If the home team does not provide any ball retrievers, that team must supply and maintain during the game an adequate number of balls on the end lines and sidelines to prevent undue delays of play (on the bench sideline, balls should be placed at the scorer's table).

Crosses

Crosses shall be as in the NCAA Rules (stick head at least 6 inches wide). However the graduated head widths (2010 rules) and the 2013 rule with respect to shooting strings, single sidewall string rule, the restrictions on tape on sticks and the required tape on shaft on sticks used for face-offs is not enforced. Only four long crosses may be in the game, not counting the goalie's crosse.

Personal Equipment

It is desirable, but not required, that the helmets, gloves, shorts, and sweatpants colors be consistent with NCAA Rules. Team Jerseys should have proper numbers on front and back

Equipment to be worn

Equipment is to be in accordance with NCAA Rules, except as noted. Mouth Guards, Arm Pads, Gloves, and NOCSAE Helmets are required. However, Shoulder Pads are recommended, but not required, as are Rib Pads, and Protective Cups. Goalies are not required to wear Arm Pads, but must wear all other equipment required for goalies including Throat Protectors and Chest Protectors.

Coach's Certification

(Rule 1 Section 22) If a team does not have a coach at a game, the Captain or other person having administrative responsibilities may make the certification.

Game Officials

The game should be officiated with three "on field" officials. A fourth official, chief bench official (CBO), may be used.

Chief Bench Official

If used, the CBO shall have these duties and authority:

- The CBO shall wear the same uniform as the other officials.
- The CBO shall be equipped with a signal flag and a whistle.
- The CBO shall supervise over and hold complete jurisdiction over the timekeeper, penalty timekeepers, scorers, coaches, substitutes, and any other persons within the bench areas, the special substitution area, and the penalty box.

The CBO shall:

- (i) check the substitution of players going onto and off the field;
- (ii) check that each team has the correct number of players and no more than four long crosses on the field of play;
- (iii) assist the officials in checking that each team obeys the offside rule;
- (iv) check that no illegal crosse exchange occurs;
- (v) check that no illegal actions are carried out by a coach or official member of either squad;
- (vi) check that no foul is committed by a player or substitute who is in the act of leaving the field of play or in the act of entering the field of play, or who is in the bench area, the special substitution area or the penalty box.

If the CBO becomes aware of any of the above six infringements, he shall, depending on the circumstances, either throw a signal flag or blow his whistle, and apply the appropriate penalty.

Exceptionally, where the CBO becomes aware of a player committing an act of flagrant misconduct, then, if the act is away from the current area of play and is unlikely to have been seen by the on-field referees, the CBO shall either throw a signal flag or blow his whistle, as appropriate, and, when a whistle has stopped the play, the CBO shall inform the referee of what has happened and the CBO shall make the appropriate call.

When a team requests a time-out...

- (i) if the request is legal the CBO shall blow his whistle; or
- (ii) if the request is not legal the CBO shall apply the provisions of rules for Technical Fouls, and if appropriate Slow Whistle Technique. Where the CBO sees an on-field situation, which could affect safety, and none of the on-field officials have taken any action, then the CBO shall take the appropriate action.

Suspension of Play

Any of the officials or the chief bench official may suspend the play of the game and stop the game clock and any penalty clock(s) for any reason which he deems necessary for the proper enforcement of the rules of the game or the safe conduct of the game. This would include delays caused by having to retrieve a ball out of bounds, etc.

Game and Penalty Times

With consent of the teams or sanctioning body (leagues, tournaments, etc.), shorter times or running times may be used. For example 10 or 12 minute stop time or 15 or 20 minute running time quarters, or other periods appropriate for local requirements. In stop time games penalties should be stop time also. In running time games, running time penalties should be used. If running time is used, the game time and any penalties will stop for timeouts, injury stoppages, or other delays in restarting play. The timing of a penalty will begin when the whistle blows to restart play.

Faceoffs

Faceoffs shall be conducted as summarized below.

- The officials shall place the ball down at the middle of the center line.
- The players shall stand on their defensive side of the field.
- When the official indicates, they shall assume their respective positions simultaneously.
- Players may not back out and reset their positions once the official has initiated the face off positioning.
- Crosses and gloves shall be up to but not touching the center line.
- The crosses shall be parallel to each other, with the reverse surfaces of the crosse heads matched evenly.
- Both hands and fingers must be wrapped around the handle of each player's own crosse, not touching the strings or the head of the crosse.

- The player's hands, feet and entire body must be to the left of their crosse head and the feet may not touch the crosse or center line.
- Once the official says "set" the players shall remain motionless until the official sounds the whistle to start play. The officials shall vary the cadence of sounding the whistle to start play on the faceoff.

The NCAA rule regarding the third or more "pre-whistle" violations shall not apply. However, during a faceoff in all penalty situations, there must be four players in the defensive area and three players in the offensive area. Exception: When a team has three or more players in the penalty area, a player may come out of its defensive area to take the faceoff.

Restarts

The officials shall endeavor to have quick restarts. However, except on an end line out of bounds situation, no restart shall be initiated within 20 yards of the goal if awarded to the offense. If awarded to the defense, play may restart within 20 yards of the goal. However, no player may be within 5 yards of the player with the ball on any restart, and no "running restarts" are permitted. The NCAA restart procedures are not used. The goalkeeper shall be given a maximum of five seconds to reenter the crease on any restart.

Team Timeouts

When the ball is dead, any member of either team (on or off the field) or a team's head coach may request an official to call timeout. During play, a team timeout may be called for, anywhere on the field, by a player of the team (on or off the field) in possession of the ball, or by that team's head coach.

Penalties

NCAA Penalty Rules apply, except as changed in these rules. Goalies need not serve their own penalties unless the penalty time is for Unsportsmanlike Conduct or 2 minutes or more of Personal Foul time is assessed against the goalie during a single play or stop situation. Except in these situations, the In-Home shall serve the goalie's penalty. (NOTE: In running time games, running time penalties should be used.)

Stalling

The NCAA "shot clock" or prior "timer on," "over and back", and end of period "basketball shot" rules are not used. The stalling rules shall be as described below.

It shall be the responsibility of the team in possession to attack the goal, whether or not they have fewer players than the other team due to penalties or otherwise. The defensive team is not required to play the team on offense, within or outside the attack area, in order for a stalling warning to be issued.

At any time during the course of the game, if in the judgment of the officials, a team is keeping the ball from play by not attacking the goal, game officials may administer the “get it in/keep it in” command. (Note: In some leagues/events/facilities, the entire area on the goal side of the Restraining Line serves as the “attack area” for the purpose of these rules.)

- a) **“Get It In.”** This warning is used when the ball is outside the attack area. An official signals and verbally announces “get it in.” The team in possession must advance the ball into the attack area within 10 seconds and keep it in the attack area.
- b) **“Keep It In.”** This warning is used when the ball is inside the attack area. An official signals and verbally announces “keep it in.” The team in possession must keep the ball in the attack area.
- c) Once a stalling warning has been issued it will remain in effect until:
 1. The defensive team gains possession;
 2. A goal is scored by the offensive team;
 3. The period ends, resulting in a faceoff; or
 4. The offensive team causes the ball to go outside the attack goal area and touches the ball before the defensive team gains possession. In this case a stalling violation is called, and the defensive team is awarded the ball.

NOTE: A team in possession of the ball in the attack goal area, after it has been warned to “keep it in,” cannot be penalized for stalling unless it causes the ball to go outside the attack goal area.

- d) Once a warning has been issued, a stalling violation will be called if the ball comes out of the attack goal area in any manner, except for the following:
 1. A shot by the offensive team; or
 2. A loose ball leaves the attack area after last being touched (or deflected) by the defensive team. If the offensive team regains possession, the stalling warning remains in effect and the team shall have 10 seconds to “get it in” and then “keep it in”

Final Two Minutes

During the final two minutes of regulation play, stalling rules will be in effect for the team that is ahead, whether or not they have fewer players than the other team due to penalties or otherwise. (See above *Stalling* rules for procedures.)

Slow Whistle/ Flag Down Rule

If a defending player commits a foul against an offensive player, while an offensive player has possession of the ball, and in the judgment of the official a scoring play is in progress or imminent, the official must drop a signal flag, make the verbal signal “flag-down” and withhold his whistle until, in the judgment of the official, the initial or imminent scoring play is over. Thus if the team loses possession of the ball, the ball touches the ground, other than on shot or pass, or is no longer “going to the goal” on the initial attempt the scoring play, the “slow whistle / flag down” is over. In addition if the official must stop play for any other reason, for example, ball out of bounds, a foul by the team on offense, a player is apparently injured or loses any required equipment in the scrimmage area, etc., the scoring play the “slow whistle / flag down” is over.

Note: The rationale for the rule is to prevent a defensive player being able stop an in progress or immediately imminent scoring play by committing a foul and causing an immediate whistle. The slow whistle/flag down situation should only last for a short time and only to allow the attacking team to continue the initial or imminent scoring attempt.

Continued Unsportsmanlike Conduct

If a player or other person has been penalized for Unsportsmanlike Conduct and continues to act in an unsportsmanlike manner, in addition to any other actions under the rules, the official(s) may banish the player or person from the bench, field, and/or spectator area.

Rules Changes and Modification

- a) The US Lacrosse Men’s Game Rules Subcommittee reviews the US Lacrosse Post Collegiate (POCO) Club Rules annually and may adopt any changes or modifications deemed necessary to ensure safe play at all levels.
- b) Coaches, officials, or other parties may submit comments or suggestions regarding the POCO Club Rules for consideration by the USL Men’s Game Rules Subcommittee. Any changes or modifications that are recommended by the Rules Subcommittee and approved by the USL Men’s Game Committee will be effective for the next season.
- c) Please send all comments or suggestions regarding the POCO Club Rules to the US Lacrosse Men’s Game Rules Subcommittee at the address below, or to honorthegame@uslacrosse.org.

US Lacrosse Men’s Game Rules Subcommittee

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