



Fall 2012 – 2013 Boys Youth Rules FAQ's

Where can I find the Fall 2012 – Spring 2013 US Lacrosse Boy's Youth Rules? Who develops, writes and approves these rules?

The Boy's Youth Lacrosse Rules can be found in the back of the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) Boy's Lacrosse Rule Book. The US Lacrosse Men's Game Committee has approved those exceptions to the NFHS Rules. Send questions about the US Lacrosse Rules for Boys Youth Lacrosse to the US Lacrosse Men's Game Rules Subcommittee at boysyouthrules@uslacrosse.org. Please do not contact NFHS about the youth rules.

If I have a rule suggestion or a rule change proposal to be considered for next year, where can I submit them?

The NFHS rules and the US Lacrosse supplemental rules are reviewed annually by the US Lacrosse Men's Game Rules Subcommittee, which may adopt any changes or modifications deemed necessary to ensure safe play at all levels.

Coaches, officials or other parties may submit comments or suggestions regarding the Rules for Boys' Youth Lacrosse at any time before May 15, 2013 for consideration by the USL Men's Game Rules Sub Committee. 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 Boys' Youth Rules and will be included in the 2014 NFHS rules book.

To make comments or suggestions regarding the Rules for Boys' Youth Lacrosse, please contact the US Lacrosse Men's Game Rules Subcommittee at the address below, or at boysyouthrules@uslacrosse.org to receive the link to the US Lacrosse website's Boys' Youth Rules Input Form. Please do not contact NFHS about these rules.

US Lacrosse Men's Game Rules Subcommittee

c/o US Lacrosse

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Do we have to follow USL rules to be USL members and use USL Insurance?

No, eligibility for USL insurance is not dependent on using USL age appropriate rules at this time.

Does Boy's Youth Lacrosse have Points of Emphasis similar to the NFHS and NCAA each year?

Yes, the US Lacrosse Men's Game Rules Subcommittee has developed Points of Emphasis concerning the boy's youth rules based on feedback from the previous year and concerns or items they want to address for the upcoming season.

2012 -- 2013 Points of Emphasis

Checks To The Head/Neck - There has been a growing awareness in the medical and lacrosse communities of the potentially harmful long-term effects of concussions and other head injuries, including those caused by repeated blows to the head that may not result in immediate concussions. In light of this the rules have been revised to further discourage such contact and provide more guidance to officials on when more severe penalties are appropriate. Officials are encouraged to call such violations strictly, including multiple minute penalties or ejections as warranted. Coaches are encouraged to coach players to avoid delivering such checks, and to support the officials when they call such penalties. All participants must work together to reduce or eliminate such dangerous contact from the game.

Unnecessary Roughness - Some body contact is permitted at all levels of boys' youth lacrosse, with progressively more contact permitted as players grow and learn proper checking techniques. However, there is no justification for deliberate and excessively violent contact by any player at any youth level. Failure to properly instruct and enforce appropriate defensive techniques can result in an increased risk of injury to both the attacking and defending youth player. Therefore, to further discourage excessively violent contact, **any penalty for unnecessary roughness shall be non-releasable**

Cross Check - When a player uses the part of the handle that is between his hands to check an opponent, serious injury may result. The use of this illegal technique should be neither taught nor permitted.

Cross Check Hold - The cross-check hold (NFHS Rule 6-3 Art 2a) is being employed with increasing regularity on the field and clearly gives an unfair advantage to the defender. Because this call has not been enforced uniformly, coaches may have felt it was appropriate to permit, or not discourage, this technique. Officials are encouraged to call this penalty and coaches are encouraged to teach their players not to employ this technique, and to support officials when they call such penalties.



How do I know what division my son should be in?

Leagues and associations should organize competition by age, and consider physical, cognitive, and emotional maturity when grouping players. For leagues or associations in which some local programs choose to organize their teams by grade, those teams should play in the age division determined by the oldest player on their roster.

Teams organized by single birth year or single grade are suggested, but if a league needs to group two years/grades together, it should strive to limit the maximum age difference between players in a youth game to no more than twenty-four (24) months.

Players who are participating in any high-school level program such as a high school freshman, JV-B, junior varsity, varsity or club team should not be eligible for U15 competition in the same season. This means that a player who is age-eligible for U15 but plays on a high school level team should not concurrently play on a youth league U15 team. At other times of the year this player may be U15 eligible; for example, for summer ball or fall ball play, depending on the guidelines of the sponsoring league or organization.

The following age groupings are determined as of August 31st preceding competition:

U15:

All players must be 14 years old or younger on August 31st preceding competition. It is recommended that when multiple teams exist within a program, the program should consider physical size, skill, and maturity when organizing teams.

U13:

All players must be 12 years old or younger on August 31st preceding competition. It is recommended that when multiple teams exist within a program, the program should consider physical size, skill, and maturity when organizing teams.

U11:

All players must be 10 years old or younger on August 31st preceding competition. It is recommended that when multiple teams exist within a program, the program should consider physical size, skill, and maturity when organizing teams.

U9:

All players must be 8 years old or younger on August 31st preceding competition. It is recommended that when multiple teams exist within a program, teams should consider physical size, skill, and maturity.



NOTE: Age group references used in this section are in common usage but should not be understood literally. The U15 (read: "Under 15") grouping means that, if a player is 14 years old on the cutoff date, he may participate in U15 competition as a 15-year old.

****Special Consideration**

Although it is not recommended that any athlete play below his age group, US Lacrosse recognizes the need for special consideration due to the physical and/or cognitive development of an athlete. It would be up to the league to establish a waiver process through which it can review such cases. Ultimately it is up to the league and athlete's parents to come to an agreement in the best interest of all athletes participating in said league.

Do you have a chart that shows the cutoff for each age division?

Fall 2012 –2013 Age Grouping Quick Reference Table

Birthdate	Age Bracket
Born on or after 9/1/1997	U15
Born on or after 9/1/1999	U13
Born on or after 9/1/2001	U11
Born on or after 9/1/2003	U9

Can High School players compete in U15 if they are age eligible?

Players who are participating in any high-school level program such as a high school freshman, JV-B, junior varsity, varsity or club team should not be eligible for U15 competition in the same season.

All of the USL age divisions contain two ages; can we divide our players into single age groups?

Yes, as long as the individual divisions play under the same age appropriate rules.

The new rules state "It is recommended that when multiple teams exist within a program, the program should consider physical size, skill, and maturity when organizing teams." Does this effectively permit tier programs at the younger levels (U9 & U11)?

Tiered play can be very valuable when used to benefit all players. Several of the biggest/best leagues around the country have both A and B divisions. This can help new players enter the sport, provide a safer environment for smaller or less mature players and also provide more equitable competition for new programs joining the league. There are some key factors however, that must be considered properly. First, is that there are actually two divisions not just towns making A and B squads that ultimately play in the same division with the A team having great success while the B team consistently loses. Secondly, it is important that the A



and B divisions are treated equally with an emphasis on quality coaching at both levels. Field quality, officiating etc should all be carefully maintained to ensure all players have a quality playing experience.

What we are saying in the section of rule you quoted is that often a big, strong, more mature players belong on the A team even if he is not yet a skilled lacrosse player. These players tend to find success at the higher level and physically could create issues on a B squad. US Lacrosse's position is that leagues should consider all contributing factors when/if operating A/B divisions.

Why would you define divisions by age when youth players just want to play with their classmates?

We agree that it is great for youth players to play with their classmates on teams and that there can be much gained from this experience. However, when this issue was addressed in making rules, safety of the players was the primary concern of the rules subcommittee. **GROUPING PLAYERS BY AGE RATHER THAN GRADE, ELIMINATES THE OPPORTUNITY FOR PLAYERS TO BE HELD BACK IN SCHOOL TO GAIN A PERCEIVED COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE.**

This particular instance involved a player who was two years "behind" in school. While this is uncommon, having players one year "behind" (often intentionally held back by parents to gain an advantage) is something we hear on a daily basis. By grouping players by age rather than grade we eliminate parent's ability to gain a competitive advantage for their children by holding them back in school (at least until High School). This best practice has widespread support throughout the lacrosse community.

Will USL be creating age eligibility ID cards?

We recognize that there is a need for age verification but it is a complex issue and we have a lot of work to do to get to the point where everyone requires ID cards for participation. We do believe it is a step that has to be taken in our sport for both competitive and safety reasons and we are actively looking at the best ways to implement such a system.

Are youth players allowed to "play up"?

The standard answer is that youth players should compete in their appropriate age based division. That said, this is one of those "rules" that has exceptions and your son may be one of those. Over the years I have seen players who although "playing up" were still the biggest fastest player on the field. We specifically did not state anything about playing up in the rules for this reason. It is a decision local league, coaches and most importantly parents need to make. You know your son's ability to be in physical competitive situations with older kids and should be able to make the best choice for your son. We do have concerns around this and I am sure you are aware of parents who might push a kid who is not ready into an older group thinking it will "toughen him up" or give him an advantage down the road.



Why not use U14 as the top division and then U12, U10, U8 as this is more like the old grade divisions?

There is a sizable group of students who do not qualify for U14 during their 8th grade year. In order to capture all of the “youth lacrosse eligible” players we needed to start with U15 as the oldest division and move down from there.

Why was the Age cutoff moved from December 31 to August 31?

This was done for three reasons:

First was to get in line with the school cut off for most states and it being a youth best practice strongly recommended by our Sports Science and Safety committee.

The second reason was to make the fall and start of a new school year the time the players shift divisions. The shift takes place after the summer tournament season and before the new fall seasons starts. We found that most people consider the summer season the end of a cycle with the fall being the beginning of a new cycle.

Finally, FIL (the international governing body of Lacrosse) uses Aug 31 as the cut off for U19 play and in theory will use that cut off if they ever sponsor any other levels of international play. We use that cut off for U19 play to line up with FIL so it made sense to make the date consistent across the board.

Why is USL taking body checking out of the game?

USL does not want to remove body checking from lacrosse. The USL age appropriate rules are designed to provide an environment that fosters development of critical skills in our youngest athletes. Body contact is introduced over time to prepare players for higher levels of play in High school and College but does so in a manner that creates the best playing experience at the younger ages. Research in a variety of sports has proven that player development and a positive playing experience are maximized when violent contact is limited or removed in the younger age divisions. This is also a fundamental best practice that US Lacrosse is emphasizing with regards to player safety and skill development.

Are we “breaking the rules” if we schedule games on the hour and just play 20 minute halves at all age divisions?

The USL age appropriate rules were written to provide a great deal of flexibility in game times. USL recognizes that there are many factors at play locally when it comes to scheduling games. Leagues must have the ability to do what works for their specific situation.



If I have any more questions where can I send them?

Please do not hesitate to [contact](#) the Men's Game Committee with any questions or concerns you may have regarding the best practices and rules of boy's youth lacrosse.

What is the annual timeline for the development of the Youth Rules??

JAN – JUNE 2012 –

- Youth Rules are LIVE!
- US Lacrosse Men's Game Rules Subcommittee accepts all recommended changes/submissions to be considered for the upcoming season...
 - Click here for submission form:
<http://www.uslacrosse.org/TopNav2Right/Rules/MensRules/RequestaRuleChange.aspx>

APRIL – JUNE 2012 --- Youth Rules Survey and Questionnaire blasted out to the entire men's game committee, subcommittees (youth, safety, coaches, officials) and the sports science and safety committee. The survey was posted on the US Lacrosse website, blasted through our monthly newsletters (coaches, officials, PA's), and through social media (Facebook, Twitter).

JUNE 2012 – USL MG Rules Subcommittee annual meeting

- Tom Dolan, NFHS Rules Chair was in attendance
- Jack Couch, Youth Subcommittee liaison was in attendance

JUNE -- JULY 2012 – the Men's Game Rules subcommittee developed a rules survey to gain feedback from the Lacrosse Community – regarding the recommended changes the committee was considering for the upcoming season.

JULY 2012 --- US Lacrosse Men's Game Director Stephen Berger and US Lacrosse Men's Game Rules Chair Eric Rudolph attended the annual NFHS Rules meeting.

JULY 2012 – SEPTEMBER 2012 --- US Lacrosse Men's Game Rules subcommittee works together to finalize the youth rules for the upcoming season.

SEPTEMBER 2012 – the Youth Rules are Voted on and approved by the USL BOD

- The rules go into effect as soon as the youth rules are approved in September and should be used for fall, winter, and spring play.

DECEMBER 2012 – All Rulebooks are mailed out to appropriate constituency's to get ready for the season.



LINKS - RESOURCES

US Lacrosse Rules: <http://www.uslacrosse.org/TopNav2Right/Rules.aspx>

Youth Rules info and FAQ <http://www.uslacrosse.org/TopNav2Right/Rules/YouthRules.aspx>

US Lacrosse Guidebook: <http://www.uslacrosse.org/TopNav2Right/Rules/Guidebook.aspx>

Sports Science & Safety:

<http://www.uslacrosse.org/UtilityNav/AboutTheSport/HealthSafety.aspx>

Coaches Education Program:

<http://www.uslacrosse.org/TopNav2Right/EducationTraining/USLCoachingEducationProgram.aspx>

Officials Education Program:

<http://www.uslacrosse.org/TopNav2Left/Officials/BecomeanOfficial.aspx>

Programs and Grants: <http://www.uslacrosse.org/TopNav2Right/ProgramsGrants.aspx>

Keeper of Lacrosse:

<http://www.uslacrosse.org/TopNav/USLacrosseFoundation/KeeperofLacrosse.aspx>



As of 12.3.12