

Equipment and Rule Comparison for Men and Women's Lacrosse

Updated: 7.14.14

	WOMEN'S RULES	MEN'S RULES	RATIONALE
EQUIPMENT	No pocket in stick is allowed. Shallow pocket rule allows for easier ball dislodgement. Mesh pockets are not allowed.	Deeper pocket rule requires more aggressive checking.	Pockets impact the ease at which the ball will dislodge from the stick (when shooting or passing or after being checked) and the speed the ball travels.
	Length of stick is defined and is the same for all field players	The length of the stick is different for positions	The stick/shaft is not used the same way in men/ women's lacrosse. Cross-checking is not allowed in women's lacrosse and the stick cannot be used to hold, hit or detain other players in women's lacrosse. In men's lacrosse, stick-on-body play is permitted, as long as player is in the act of passing, shooting or attempting to scoop the ball.
	Protective eyewear and mouth guards are required	Mouth guards are required	Eyewear is required in the women's game to prevent orbital eye injuries, where the helmet and facemask provides the same function in the men's game. Properly fitted mouth guards covering the top set of teeth are required to prevent serious dental injuries.
	Soft head gear is optional	Men's lacrosse helmets certified to the NOCSAE standard are required	While there is currently no performance specification for women's lacrosse soft headgear, soft headgear is allowed to prevent facial and head lacerations. Because contact to the head or body is illegal in the women's game, and catastrophic head injuries have not been an issue, hard helmets have not been required or deemed necessary. In women's lacrosse, a field player would not be permitted to wear a men's lacrosse helmet because the women's rules

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			<p>prohibit it based on the concerns that it would be deemed dangerous to other non-helmeted players on the field due to the fact that a hard shell helmet has parts that protrude (face mask). A men's lacrosse helmet standard was developed to address the types of head injuries seen in full-contact men's lacrosse: skull fractures, contusions and other catastrophic head injuries. The most common types of head injuries in women's lacrosse are caused by stick or ball to head impacts, rather than collision/contact – and catastrophic head injuries have not been documented. Given the emphasis of safety and limited contact in rules of the women's game, it is believed that allowing helmets would place athletes at a greater risk of bodily injury. In men's lacrosse, body contact and collision is part of the game, and because of this, protective helmets and equipment is necessary.</p>
	Soft fitted gloves are allowed.	Arm pads, shoulder pads and heavy gloves are required.	
	Goalie: helmets certified to the NOCSAE standard, chest protectors, mouth guards, gloves, shin pads are required	Goalie: helmets certified to the NOCSAE standard, chest protectors, mouth guards, gloves, shin pads are required	
CONTACT	Aggressive stick checking and body contact are illegal	Aggressive stick checking & body contact are legal	

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	Cross Checking is illegal	Cross Checking is illegal	
	Any contact with the head from a stick will result in a yellow or red card (time -loss) penalty	A player shall not initiate contact to an opponent's head or neck with a cross-check, or with any part of his body. Any follow-through that makes contact the head or neck shall is also a rule violation, resulting in a 2 or 3 minute non-releasable penalty.	
	Body checks and slashes are major fouls and will result in a yellow or red card (time -loss) penalty.	High hits or any contact initiated by the head will result in an automatic 2 or 3 minute non-releasable penalty.	