

NCAA MEN'S vs. NFHS BOYS' LACROSSE — RULES DIFFERENCES

2025–26 NCAA Men's Lacrosse Rules | 2026 NFHS Boys' Lacrosse Rules | Substantive differences only

TOPIC	NCAA MEN'S (2025–26)	NFHS BOYS' (2026)
GAME STRUCTURE & ADMINISTRATION		
Period Length	4 periods × 15 min = 60 min total	4 periods × 12 min = 48 min total
Shot Clock	Required. Two visible clocks settable to 80 sec and 60 sec.	No shot clock.
Ball Advance Rule	Ball must cross midfield when shot clock hits 60 seconds.	Must advance ball beyond center line within 20 seconds of gaining possession in defensive half.
Goal Area Advance	No separate goal-area rule; shot clock governs all possession timing.	After crossing midfield, team must bring ball into goal area within 10 seconds.
Over-and-Back	Yes — once shot clock is under 60 sec, offensive team may not return ball to defensive half.	Yes — after ball enters goal area, returning it to defensive half (last touched by offense) is an immediate turnover or play-on.
Running / Mercy Clock	None.	12-goal difference in second half.
Final 2-Min Stalling	None — shot clock manages stalling.	In final 2 minutes, when leading by 4 or fewer goals, automatic keep-it-in stalling rules apply.
General Stalling Rule	None outside the shot clock.	At any time, officials may apply "Get it in/Keep it in" on a team not attacking the goal.
Video Review / Challenge	Allowed; explicit protocols in rules.	Video review explicitly prohibited; no challenges.
Coach's Challenge	Yes — 1 per half, 1 per OT. Costs timeout if unsuccessful.	None.
Incomplete Game	Continued from point of interruption unless both teams agree otherwise.	[2026] Complete if 3 periods played and game cannot resume same day. State associations may modify.
Min Players to Continue	Any number (onside and stalling rules remain in effect).	Game stops if team has fewer than 7 on-field players.
Live-Ball Timeout Location	Only when player in possession is on or across restraining line in offensive end.	From anywhere on field by player in possession or head coach.
Dead-Ball TO After Tech Foul	Only team entitled to possession may request timeout when restart is interior to field.	No equivalent restriction.
Correction of Errors	Officials confer; no formal coach mechanism.	Formal process: head coach may request official time-out to discuss a possible rule misapplication.
FIELD		
Team Area Corner Cone	Not specifically required.	[2026] Required at corner of team area (10 yds from center line, 6 yds from sideline).
Ball Supply — Quantity	Min 6, max 10 balls at each end line and sideline.	Min 4 balls beyond each end line; min 4 at scorer's table.
OFFICIALS & GAME PERSONNEL		
Number of Officials	Minimum of 3 (referee, umpire, field judge).	2 standard; 3 recommended; optional 4th Chief Bench Official.
Pregame Arrival	30 minutes before game time; must meet with both head coaches and captains.	20 minutes before game time (recommended).
GK Replacement Delay	Reasonably lenient — no specific time limit.	Full one-minute delay allowed including warm-up.
EQUIPMENT — BALL		
Ball Colors	White, yellow, orange, lime green, or pink. White required unless coaches agree otherwise.	White, yellow, orange, or lime green. No pink.
Ball — NFHS Mark	Not required.	Ball must carry NFHS Authenticating Mark.
EQUIPMENT — CROSSE		
Adjustable Handles	Permitted; may not be adjusted during play.	Prohibited.
Illegal Crosse — Penalty	Deep pocket: 1-min NR, may be returned if corrected. Other illegal: 3-min NR, crosse removed.	All violations: 2-min NR. Crosse returned; may re-enter if corrected.
Faceoff Crosse Marking	Paint or a single wrap of contrasting-color tape required on the handle.	Contrasting color required; can be just handle color if it contrasts with gloves and head.
EQUIPMENT — PLAYER		
Arm Pads — Elbows	Required; no elbow-coverage specification.	Must be worn so that elbows are covered.
Jewelry	Not addressed.	Prohibited. Medical-alert medals may be taped to body. Religious medals under uniform, taped to body.
Hard Casts / Braces	Not addressed.	Permitted if padded with closed-cell foam, min 1/2-inch thick.

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Electronic Devices — Players	Not permitted for communication.	Audio or video devices worn by on-field players explicitly prohibited; 1-min NR penalty.
Electronic Devices — Coaches	Permitted for coaching; may not dispute officiating.	Allowed; audio communication with on-field players prohibited. Visual displays permitted.
Tinted Eye Shield	Permitted with documented medical condition.	Not permitted under any circumstances.
Eye Shade / Grease	Not addressed.	Solid stroke only; no words, numbers, logos; may not extend outside eye socket.
Jersey Number Height	Front: min 10 in.; back: min 12 in.	Front and back: min 8 in.
Jersey Number — Leading Zeros	0–99 recommended; no leading-zero restriction.	00 not legal; 01, 02 etc. not legal — only single-digit 0 permitted.
Undergarment Colors	White, gray, or official team color; teammates must match.	White, gray, black, or official team color; teammates must match.
Uniform Violations In-Game	Penalized as technical foul.	Not penalized once game begins (only enforced pre-game).
EQUIPMENT — GOALKEEPER		
GK Prohibited Equipment	Helmet not explicitly prohibited but implied by requirement of a helmet designed for lacrosse; gloves and shoulder pads not mentioned.	Ice hockey gloves, football shoulder pads, and football helmets are all explicitly prohibited; 1-min NR foul.
FACEOFF		
Faceoff Violation — Next FO	Violating player barred from the next faceoff.	Ball awarded to offended team; violating player not barred from next faceoff.
Body Check at FO Whistle	Not explicitly prohibited; overriding principle is to play the ball.	Explicitly illegal to body-check a crouched faceoff opponent.
3 Players Serving — FO Ball	Ball awarded to offensive half unless offended team has 3 players in penalty area.	[2026] Explicit note: if offended team has 3 players serving penalty, ball awarded in its defensive half.
PLAY OF THE GAME		
Non-GK Entering Crease	Legal, but player does not get GK privileges (bat with hand, interference protection).	[2026] Personal foul for illegal equipment; 1-min NR. Play-on until shot concludes.
Crease — Airborne Dive	Complex rules by type of contact; goal may be allowed depending on circumstances.	Goal disallowed if attacking player becomes airborne of own volition and lands in crease.
Goal — Free Hand Deflection	No explicit rule.	[New] Goal disallowed if ball deflected or batted by free hand of offensive player.
Defenseless Player Rule	No separate rule; covered under illegal body check/unnecessary roughness.	[New] Rule 5-4-5: illegal to body-check from blind side, player with head down, player turned to receive pass, or player on ground. 2–3 min NR.
Targeting Rule	No separate rule; covered under spearing/illegal body check.	[New] Rule 5-4-7: intentionally aiming body check at defenseless player. 3-min NR, possible ejection.
Injured Player Re-entry	May re-enter when bleeding corrected before timeout ends.	Must wait until next dead ball following resumption of play.
Slow Whistle — 2nd Def. Foul	Second flag thrown; play continues.	Ends slow whistle immediately, unless scoring play in progress.
FOULS & PENALTIES		
Holding — Hook/Lift Body	Covered generally under holding rule.	[2026] Explicitly added: hooking, lifting, or pinning opponent's body with crosse is illegal holding.
Helmet Loss Classification	Technical foul, unless caused by illegal contact by opponent.	[2026] Technical foul (illegal procedure), unless caused by direct contact to head by opponent.
Unsportsmanlike — Releasable	All unsportsmanlike fouls 1–3 min NR.	Some acts (coach obstructing, repeatedly same tech foul, failing to return to field) are releasable and don't count toward ejection.
Ejection Triggers	Fighting/flagrant misconduct. Tobacco is separate disqualification.	Fighting/flagrant misconduct; tobacco/smokeless tobacco; second NR unsportsmanlike foul.
Ejected Player/Coach Location	Suspended player: not in bench/sideline/spectator area. Suspended coach: barred from entire venue.	Ejected player: off premises if school personnel available; else confined to team area. Coach: removed from premises.
Multiple Equipment Violations	Penalized for both violations.	Penalized only for the most severe violation.
Inadvertent Whistle in Crease	Ball awarded by alternate-possession rule.	Ball awarded to the defensive team.