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Five Rules Changes Approved For 2026 High School Girls Lacrosse Season

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Improving game flow and pace of play are the primary focuses of the 2026 high school girls lacrosse rules changes.

Five rules changes were recommended by the NFHS Girls Lacrosse Rules Committee during its annual meeting June 23-25 at The Alexander in Indianapolis. All proposals were later approved by the NFHS Board of Directors.

A change to Rule 5-2 Penalty 1 (Starting Play – Draw) allows any player to take the free position when one player draws illegally. Also, for Rule 7-3 Penalties 1a and 3a (Deputy Rules), the offending player shall be placed 4 meters away (instead of behind) from the player taking the free position for a goal circle foul.

Rule 4-3-3d, e, aligns the restart procedure after a possession time-out when the goalkeeper has possession of the ball in the goal circle by requiring play to restart at the closest dot and allows any player to restart play.

Under Rule 2-4-5, regarding crosse inspection, the allowable times for stick check requests have been revised. Stick checks may only be requested “at any point during a quarter break, halftime, a team-called time-out, prior to the start of an overtime period, prior to the start of a draw, and shall include immediately following goals in regulation and overtime periods,” according to the new rules.

Finally, Rule 2-8-3 (New) & Penalty, regarding electronic equipment, clarifies that no on-field player shall wear any audio (microphone) or video (camera) device during a game. Violation will result in a coach misconduct penalty.

"Girls lacrosse continues to grow at the high school level in both individual participation and state association sponsorship of the sport," said Lindsey Atkinson, director of sports and liaison to the NFHS Girls Lacrosse Rules Committee. "The committee believes the rules of the game are in a good place and changes that support the pace of play for the players that do not create an advantage for the offense or defense or increase risk are in the best interest of the game."

A complete listing of the girls lacrosse rules changes will be available on the NFHS website at www.nfhs.org. Click on "Sports" at the top of the home page and select "Girls Lacrosse." The print version of the 2026 Girls Lacrosse Rules Book will be available for purchase in October at www.NFHS.com, and the digital version will be available in the same timeframe via NFHS Digital at www.nfhs.org/nfhsdigital.

According to the NFHS High School Athletics Participation Survey for the 2023-24 academic year, 101,204 girls participated in lacrosse at 3,206 high schools across the country.

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