



SOUTHERN MARYLAND YOUTH LACROSSE ASSOCIATION

2024 HANDBOOK AND RULES

REVISED March 3, 2024

www.smyla.net

I. MEMBERSHIP

Membership for the 2024 season shall consist of the following organizations:

Bowie Lacrosse Club

Cannons Select Lacrosse

Huntingtown Youth Club

Mechanicsville Youth Lacrosse Club

Silver Spring Lacrosse

Solomons Boys and Girls Club

St. Marys Lacrosse

II. SAFETY AND SPORTSMANSHIP GUIDELINES FOR 2024

It is important to remember that our SMYLA game fields are in multiple geographic regions and that special safety or capacity guidelines for fields may be imposed. SMYLA commissioners and coaches are responsible for sharing in advance any special safety mandates for their home fields and SMYLA organizations must support those guidelines or be at risk for not attending games.

- Coaches are responsible for management of their players and spectators.
- Coaches should check fields and remove any team trash after games.

Sportsmanship is an important foundation of our league. To support our commitment to implementing good sportsmanship we will:

- We WILL begin each game with a team lineup with the official at the center of the field. Players should exercise sportsmanship during this lineup.
- The team handshake at the end of game is a symbol of sportsmanship in our sport. At the end of games, teams should either line up for a team handshake or fist bump in place of a handshake.

III. DIVISIONS OF PLAY

For the 2024 season, SMYLA will offer the following levels of play.

- ***U14 Division (One Division During Regular Season and for League Championship)***
 - Players must be born on or after 9/1/2009
 - Full field. 10 v 10. Regulation goal.
 - All U14 teams will play in one division during the regular season.
 - Maintain standings. Use standings for seeding in the SMYLA Championship.

- ***U12 Division (One Division During Regular Season and for League Championship)***
 - Players must be born on or after 9/1/2011
 - Full field. 10 v 10. Regulation goal.
 - All U12 teams will play in one division during the regular season.
 - Maintain standings. Use standings for seeding in the SMYLA Championship.

- ***U10 Division (One Division During Regular Season and for League Championship)***
 - Players must be born on or after 9/1/2013
 - Full field. 10 v 10. Regulation goal.
 - All U10 teams will play in one division during the regular season.
 - Maintain standings. Use standings for seeding in the SMYLA Championship.

- ***U8 Division (One Division During Regular Season and for League Championship)***
 - Players must be born on or after 9/1/2015
 - All U8 teams will play in one division during the regular season.
 - Shortened field sideline to sideline with a smaller 4' x 4' goal.
 - 7 v 7 (2 attack, 2 midfield, 2 defense, 1 goalie).
 - U8 teams keep score and maintain standings which are used for seeding in the SMYLA Tournament.
 - Teams play in SMYLA End-of-Year Championship event to determine U8 League Championship

- ***U6 Scooper Division (One Division)***
 - Players must be born on or after 9/1/2017
 - All U6 teams will play in one division during the regular season
 - Shortened field sideline to sideline with smaller 4' x 4' goal.
 - 6 v 6 (2 attack, 2 midfield, 2 defense. No goalies at this level)
 - Keep score and report scores to league to monitor any imbalances.
 - Although scores are posted on the website, there are no standings and no seeded end-of-year championship.
 - Teams play in a round robin format event on SMYLA Championship weekend with no champion declared.
 - U6 lacrosse is intended to be instructional and fun.

U14, U12, U10 and U8 age groups maintain league standings and participate in a seeded end-of-year SMYLA Championship to determine league championships.

The U6 Divisions keep score, but do not compete for a league championship. Instead U6 teams are invited to participate in a round robin end-of-year event on SMYLA championship weekend.

IV. LEAGUE OFFICERS

Officers for the 2023 season are as follows:

President - Ken Frey (Solomons)
VP - Rob Frazier (St. Mary's)
Secretary/Webmaster - Priscilla Derr (Bowie)
Treasurer – Melissa Hutson (Solomons)

V. RULES AND DISCIPLINE COMMITTEE

The Rules and Discipline Committee is charged with maintaining the integrity of the league, mediating disputes, and imposing sanctions. The Rules and Discipline Committee for the 2023 season:

Chairman – Kris Bayer
Ken Frey (Solomons)
Dave Draley (Silver Spring)
Alternate: Ryan Derr (Bowie)
Ex Officio – SMYLA Directors

League Representatives shall register any protests by email to the League Directors within 48 hours of the incident for submission to the Rules and Discipline Committee. A detailed, written protest must be submitted within three days of the incident. The Rules and Discipline Committee will rule on protests and report to all League Representatives.

Inappropriate conduct and ejections shall be reported immediately to the League Directors who shall notify the Rules and Discipline Committee for immediate review and action.

VI. THE SEASON

The 2024 season shall run from January 1 to December 31, 2024.

- League games begin on Saturday, March 23rd and are scheduled on each Saturday through May 11th.
- No games are scheduled on Easter weekend.
- Commissioners are encouraged to reschedule rainouts asap after a cancellation. Any rainouts not already rescheduled will be scheduled to be played on Sunday, May 12th so results can be included in SMYLA Championship Weekend seeding.
- SMYLA All-Star teams for U14, U12 and U10 Divisions will be selected and play in a post season tournament to be determined by the Board of Directors.
- SMYLA Championship Weekend is May 18th at Lancaster Park in Lexington Park.

Outside conference games are encouraged, but scores are not reported, and results do not count in league standings.

SMYLA Scheduling Committee will create a regular season schedule of at least seven (7) official league games for all teams.

- 2024 SMYLA Scheduling Committee
 - Conor Loughran
 - Matt Zdziebko
 - Michael Minovitz
- Organizations must submit field availability to Scheduling Coordinator by March 9th.
- Final team commitments are due March 9th. No teams will be added after that date.
- Final rosters are due no later than March 22nd.

VII. TEAMS, AGE GUIDELINES, AND ROSTERS

Team Requirements

To qualify as voting members in SMYLA, organizations must field teams in three of the following age groups: U14, U12, U10, U8, and U6. Organizations are encouraged to field teams at all levels if possible.

Age Guidelines

Players must meet the following age guidelines to be eligible to play in the SMYLA league:

AGE REQUIREMENTS FOR 2024		
U14	14 yrs old or younger on 8/31/2021	Born on or after 9/1/09
U13	12 yrs old or younger on 8/31/2021	Born on or after 9/1/11
U11	10 yrs old or younger on 8/31/2021	Born on or after 9/1/13
U9	8 yrs old or younger on 8/31/2021	Born on or after 9/1/15
U7	6 yrs old or younger on 8/31/2021	Born on or after 9/1/17

Roster Requirements

- March 22nd - Final rosters are due to the League Directors (with copies being available to all League Commissioners upon request).
- Any team not submitting rosters by the due date is ineligible for play on opening day.
- Any player not listed on a team's Final Roster that is submitted to the league is not eligible for play on opening day or other games during the season.

- Players must be included on the roster of **every age group** for which they play. For example, if a U10 player is also playing up on an organization's U12 team, the player must be listed on BOTH the U10 and the U12 rosters.

Any program experiencing extraordinary hardship in having enough players to field a team, may apply to the Rules and Discipline Committee for an extension of the roster deadline to add a player. The petitioning team must supply full explanation of why they feel they should be granted permission to add a player after the deadline. In no event may a player be added after games begin on April 15. This rule applies to the hardship of the team, NOT the hardship of an individual player.

Players may play with only one SMYLA organization - no dual rosters between two organizations.

Teams fielding multiple teams at one age group may not dually roster any player within the same age group. Players must play **ONLY** for the team on which they are rostered.

If age eligible, a player may “play up” to a higher age group within the same organization as long as the player is listed on the official rosters for both teams.

Team rosters must be submitted in Excel format using the official league template (available on the SMYLA website Documents Page) and must include player's name, date of birth, team level (i.e. U14, U12, U10, U8, U6) and uniform number as soon as uniform information is available.

When submitting rosters, League Commissioners are certifying that they the roster information is correct, that they have verified age information, and that each player listed on the roster meets the age eligibility requirements outlined by the League. False information may lead to forfeited game and possibly team's exclusion from the league.

Coaches should carry a copy of their league-approved roster with them to all SMYLA league games. Prior to the start of each league game, coaches should exchange current team rosters. Players not listed on the exchanged roster and on the official roster that was submitted to the league prior to roster deadlines may not participate in the game. Failure to present a current roster or fielding a player not included on the roster may result in the game official declaring the game a forfeit.

VIII. LEAGUE FEES

League fees for the 2024 season will include league dues and referee fees for scheduled games. Additional teams entered into the league beyond an organization's initial three teams will be assessed the SMYLA per team add-on fee. League fees are due immediately upon invoicing and before league games begin.

IX. GAME REPORTING AND LEAGUE STANDINGS

Game scores must be confirmed between teams at the end of each game for consistency and for accurate reporting in the Score Reporting module on the SMYLA Website. Scores should be reported as soon as possible and no later than Sunday at noon following Saturday games. The earlier scores are reported, the earlier results and standings can be posted on the SMYLA website. Please report any reporting problems to the SMYLA Webmaster Priscilla Derr at Priscilla.derr@gmail.com.

All teams will be scheduled to play at least seven (7) official league games. Points shall be awarded for league games as follows: two points for a win / one point for a tie / zero points for a loss. Points are not awarded for non-league games.

The SMYLA Webmaster will maintain game results and league standings on the SMYLA website. The last day to report scores for inclusion in the seeding for SMYLA Championship Weekend is Monday May 13th. Any scores not reported by that date will not be included in the calculations for playoff seeding.

May 12th has been set aside for any makeup games not played prior to that time. Teams are encouraged to work together to reschedule games prior to that time if possible. If for any reason a cancelled game is not played by Monday, May 13th, both teams will receive zero points for that game as if both teams lost the game.

In the event one team or both teams feel they have made or are making reasonable attempts to reschedule and all attempts have been unsuccessful, either team may apply to the Rules and Discipline Committee for assistance. The Rules and Discipline Committee has authority to set a new game date, to require a double header at a future scheduled game, to declare either team or both teams to have forfeited the game, or to take other appropriate action it deems necessary.

X. RULES AND EXCEPTIONS

The rules of the National Federation of State High Schools Associations, the SMYLA By-Laws, and the SMYLA Handbook prevail over the play of SMYLA league games. Both teams should supply a copy of the 2024 SMYLA Rules to officials before each game. The following additions and/or exceptions to NFHS rules will be enforced:

Game Duration

1. Game duration:

U14 – Four quarters of 10-minute running clock. Last two minutes of each half are start/stop time.

U12 – Four quarters of 10-minute running clock. Last two minutes of each half are start/stop time.

U10 – Four quarters of 10-minute running clock. Last two minutes of each half are start/stop time.

U8 – Four quarters of 10-minute running clock, with stoppage of play every 5 minutes to allow

for substitution.

U6 – Four quarters of 10-minute running clock, with stoppage of play every 5 minutes to allow for substitution.

2. There shall be two minutes between quarters and five minutes between halves.

In the case of tie, one five-minute, sudden-victory overtime will be played. If the tie is not broken at that time, a second five-minute sudden-victory overtime will be played. If the tie is not broken after two overtime periods, the game will end and be recorded as a tie, with each team being awarded one point. No game official or coach has the authority to adjust the SMYLA league tiebreaker guidelines by adjusting game times, playing Braveheart, or suggesting any other tiebreaker not set out in the SMYLA Rules.

Officials

Two officials shall officiate U14, U12, U10 games.

One official shall officiate U8 games.

Coaches will officiate U6 games.

Play of Game

1. Sportsmanship and player development are priorities to the SMYLA organization.
2. We WILL begin each game with a team lineup with the official at the center of the field.
3. Players will line up for a team handshake at end of game.
4. One-handed stick checks are illegal and will be called a personal foul at all levels.
5. The rules allowing twenty seconds to clear the ball over the midfield line and ten seconds to enter the offensive box shall be enforced at the U14 and U12 only. This includes enforcement of the “over and back rule” intended to keep the ball in play in the offensive half of the field once possession has been established.
6. The twelve-goal mercy rule and running clock outlined in the NFHS Rules shall be replaced with the SMYLA 5-goal rule that says when one team leads the other team by five or more goals during a game, including the start of a quarter – but not during a penalty infraction against the trailing team - the team with the least amount of goals shall be awarded possession of the ball at the midfield line in lieu of a face-off.
7. Stop time continues throughout the game at the U14, U12, U10 levels. No official is authorized to change a game to running time or to “speed up the clock” because of a lopsided score.
8. For safety reasons, no player may jump in the crease to block a shot unless he is designated as the team goalie AND is wearing goalie equipment.

9. SMYLA strongly recommends all players to use NOCSAE pads, transitioning and final implementation are the responsibility of individual member organizations.

Conduct Violations

The Rules and Discipline Committee is charged with maintaining the integrity of the league. Although the SMYLA League Rules has suggested sanctions for violations, the Rules and Discipline Committee may impose additional sanctions if they feel a rule violation or inappropriate action warrants.

1. Should a player be ejected from a game, both teams are responsible for **immediately** notifying the League President who will report the incident to the Rules and Discipline Committee for review. The ejected player shall be suspended from participation in **at least the next league game (including tournament play) at the level of play that the violation occurred and any and all other games and levels of play at which he is participating** until the Rules and Discipline Committee makes a decision and the player has served his violation at the level at which the ejection occurred. The Rules and Discipline Committee has authority to increase the suspension time based on the circumstances of the ejection.

[Example: Player1 is rostered and plays on his organization's U14 and U12 teams throughout the season. Player1 plays on Saturday in a 1pm U14 game and a 230pm U12 game. Player1 is ejected during the 230pm U12 game on Saturday. The following Saturday, there is a U14 game at 10am and a U12 game at 230pm. Player1's suspension requires that he sit out for at least one U12 game (that would be the 230pm U12 game.) Therefore, Player1 must ALSO sit out from the 10am U14 game since that game is scheduled prior to the U12 game and he has not yet fulfilled his suspension requirement at the U12 level.]

2. Coaches are held to the highest possible standard and are expected to lead by example and act as role models to players. **Therefore, should a team's coach (head coach OR assistant coach OR other adult serving as one of the five allowed sideline adults) be ejected during a game, the game shall immediately be stopped, and that team shall forfeit the game at that point.**
3. League Commissioners and/or coaches are ultimately responsible for the behavior of a team's spectators and shall work together with the league to ensure an atmosphere of respect and sportsmanship.
4. It is the responsibility of each coach to ensure that his team acts in a sportsmanlike manner. Fighting is totally unacceptable and will not be tolerated. The following **MINIMUM** suspensions for fighting will be enforced:
 - ***First Offense*** – Mandatory two-game suspension from play. Rules and Discipline has the authority to suspend player for a longer period of time if they feel the facts warrant - including the balance of the season and the year-end tournament.
 - ***Second Offense*** – Mandatory four-game suspension from play. Rules and Discipline has the authority to suspend player for a longer period

of time if they feel the facts warrant - including the balance of the season and year-end tournament.

5. Game suspensions are for league games and will carry over into tournament play and can carry over to the following season. Suspensions shall be imposed and enforced at the level the violation occurred **and** any other levels of play at which the player/coach is participating simultaneously until the violation has been served in full at the level at which the ejection occurred. Both team coaches are responsible for notifying the League President immediately in the event of an ejection for fighting.
6. Any player ejected for leaving the bench area during an altercation shall be suspended for the season from participation in any SMYLA league activities at ALL levels.
7. Should the entire team leave its bench area during an altercation, that team shall immediately forfeit the game. Should both teams leave the bench area during an altercation, both teams shall forfeit the game and no points will be awarded to either team.

Player Equipment

All safety standards outlined in the NFHS rules shall be enforced, except the rules requiring mandatory uniformity in helmet color and uniform rules.

1. The NFHS Rules regarding stick length, gloves, and shoulder pads shall be enforced at the U14, U12, U10 levels.
2. SMYLA **STRONGLY** encourages players to use NOCSAE approved chest protectors, shoulder pads, and helmets based on the position they are playing.
3. SMYLA does not enforce the NFHS Rule prohibiting shooting strings below 4” from the top of stick (i.e. “V’s” and channels) and the rule requiring faceoff sticks to have 6” of contrast color tape from the top of the shaft. Although we do not enforce these rules, SMYLA does encourage players to adopt all NFHS standards in preparation for high school play and activities outside SMYLA.
4. SMYLA has adopted adjusted stick lengths for the U8 and U6 age groups that are outlined in their specific rules.
5. The home team shall be responsible for ensuring that there is no conflict in jersey colors. If there is a conflict, it is the responsibility of the home team to make a change in jerseys to avoid conflict (i.e. pinnies or reversibles). Because some games are played at neutral sites, identifying the home team may seem confusing. The SMYLA schedule specifies a home team and an away team and should be referenced to clarify any confusion.
6. If a player’s helmet comes off, play shall be immediately suspended. The Player must leave the field. That player may return AFTER the resumption of play using normal substitution procedures.

Field Preparation and Guidelines

1. The home team shall ensure that the field is properly lined and prepared for play. Fields should be ready for play 30 minutes prior to game time when possible. It is recommended that home teams assign a “Field Manager” on game days who will be communicate with the league and officials in the event of any cancellations, will be responsible for field set up and supplies, and will act as a point of contact for teams and officials on game day.

Failure to have a field prepared 30 minutes in advance could possibly result in a **three-minute non-releasable penalty** at the start of the game. This rule is not to be interpreted to imply that a field is necessarily going to be "available" for play 30 minutes prior to game time. When multiple games are scheduled, this may not be possible. However, this rule should be interpreted to imply that a field should be ready (i.e. goals strung and in place, field lined, etc.) for play 30 minutes prior to the first game of the day.

2. The field limit lines shall be strictly enforced on the team side of the field, especially surrounding the scorer's table area and the team area. Coaches shall instruct players to line up and remain outside of the substitution box/table area and behind the coaches' area.
3. No more than five (5) coaches shall be allowed in the coaches and team areas during the play of game. “Coaches” are defined as any personnel in the team bench area, including team parent, photographer, water boy, or whatever title is used. Absolutely no more than five non-players on the player sidelines during games.
4. During the play of game, spectators and photographers are required to remain on the side of the field opposite the players and scoring table. SMYLA encourages commissioners to educate their parents and fans of the SMYLA rules in advance to avoid uncomfortable situations on game day.
5. BOTH teams MUST supply a scorer and score book on game day and should compare scores at the end of games to ensure agreement on scores and consistency in scores reported. The team designated as the home team on the SMYLA schedule (even if game is played at a neutral site) is responsible for supplying a scoring table, the official scorer, game clock, penalty clock, a horn, and substitution box cones. Because some games may be played at neutral sites, it is important that both teams be aware of which team is designated as the home team on the schedule. The league has purchased tables and scoring flip charts that are stored at the Bowie Field. If the Bowie Field is your neutral site, coaches should contact Ryan or Priscilla Derr IN ADVANCE to coordinate how to get and return tables and flip charts on game day. Keep in mind that Ryan and Priscilla have their own Bowie teams to manage, so do not contact them 30 minutes prior to your game on gameday in a panic. This is true for games at any neutral site. Plan in advance.
6. To avoid clutter in the player substitution area, it is recommended that each team have a maximum of two people in the table area. Game table should be set back from the sideline to allow safe and ample substitution area for players. Table personnel should remain behind the scoring table and should not interfere with the free flow of substitution. Coaches are not allowed in the substitution area.
7. Head Coaches are ultimately responsible for the sportsmanlike behavior of players, assistant

coaches, game personnel and spectators.

Adjusted Rules for SMYLA U8 and U6 Age Groups

To promote player development and increased touches for our players, SMYLA has adopted short field play at the U8 and U6 age groups. These levels are intended to be instructional and inclusive, therefore SMYLA has adopted a modified set of rules for each of these levels of play. While the SMYLA Handbook and By-Laws govern all levels of play, the following modifications should be noted:

The U8 Age Group

- 7 on 7 format (2 attack / 2 midfield / 2 defense / 1 goalie)
- Coaches are encouraged (but not required) to rotate players at all positions and offer equal time for all players when possible.
- NO coaches are allowed on the field. Coaches should instruct from sidelines.
- Spectators should be on opposite side of field from players' bench.
- Shortened field – sideline to sideline on regulation fields.
- Creases must be visible whether painted or using portable creases and should be regulation size.
- Smaller 4' goals
- Four 10-minute running time quarters with stoppage every 5 minutes for substitutions and/or position change. Coaches may also substitute on the fly or during other stops in the game.
- 1 timeout per team, per half
- 1 official
- Full protective gear is mandatory, including helmet, shoulder pads, gloves, elbow pads and mouthpiece.
- Regulation lacrosse sticks (no fiddle or trick sticks).
- Modified stick length – Minimum 36" / Maximum 44"
- Faceoffs begin quarters and goalie clears after goals unless there is a 5-goal differential at which time the ball is awarded to trailing team
- All basic lacrosse rules apply, including offsides.
- No one-handed stick checks. No bodychecking. Player should not raise stick above shoulders to check.
- No time-serving penalties. Teams play at equal strength throughout the game, but official should remove from the field a player with repeated or egregious fouls for instruction by coach on the sidelines. Substitute with another player to maintain equal strength. Officials have the authority to remove a player for the remainder of a game if player continues to commit egregious fouls after coach's instruction.
- One pass attempt required on offensive side of the field before shooting on goal. A pass "across" the midfield line does not count. If games become lopsided, coach of dominating team should adjust to two pass attempts on offensive side and/or encourage off-hand use, ball movement, etc.
- Waive rule requiring 20 seconds to clear over midfield and 10 seconds to enter offensive box.

- Defensive players can run through the crease but cannot jump into the crease with the intent to block a shot.
- Both teams keep and report scores. Both teams should keep a scorebook and provide table staff (see SMYLA Handbook for specifics)
- Standings are maintained by the league and used for end-of-year tournament seeding.
- U9 teams play for a League Championship.

U6 Scooper Guidelines

- 6 on 6 format (2 attack, 2 middies, 2 defenders). No goalie.
- Coaches are encouraged to rotate players at positions and offer equal time for all players when possible.
- One coach per team allowed on the field but coach **MUST** stay as close to the sideline as possible, away from the play of the ball and crease area, and may not interfere with the play of the ball.
- Spectators should be on opposite side of field from players' bench.
- Shortened field – sideline to sideline on regulation field.
- Creases must be visible whether painted or using portable creases and should be regulation size.
- Smaller 4' goals
- Four 10-minute running time quarters with stoppage every 5 minutes for substitutions. Coaches may also substitute on the fly or during other stops in the game.
- 1 timeout per team, per half
- Officiating provided by coaches
- Full protective gear is mandatory, including helmet, shoulder pads, gloves, elbow pads and mouthpiece.
- Regulation lacrosse sticks (no fiddle or trick sticks).
- Modified stick length – Minimum 34" / Maximum 40"
- All basic lacrosse rules apply, including offsides.
- No one-handed stick checks. No bodychecking. Player should not raise stick above shoulders to check.
- No time-serving penalties. Teams play at equal strength throughout the game, but official may remove from the field a player with repeated or egregious fouls for instruction by coach on sidelines. Substitute with another player to maintain equal strength. Officials have the authority to remove a player for the remainder of a game if player continues to commit egregious fouls after coach's instruction.
- Faceoffs begin quarters and player clears after goals unless there is a 5-goal differential at which time the ball is awarded to trailing team. On faceoff, wings may attempt to scoop faceoff but may not bodycheck faceoff players.
- One pass attempt required on offensive side of the field before shooting on goal. A pass "across" the midfield line does not count. If games become lopsided, coach of dominating team should adjust to two pass attempts on offensive side, encourage off-hand use and ball movement, etc.
- Waive rule requiring 20 seconds to clear over midfield and 10 seconds to enter offensive box.
- Crease rule is strictly enforced. A defensive player may not step on crease line or jump in the goal or crease area to stop shots or act as goalie. (This is a safety issue)

- Both teams keep and report scores. Both teams should keep a scorebook and provide table staff (see SMYLA Handbook for specifics)
- Although scores are reported, there are no win/loss standings at the U6 level and no seeded tournament at the end of the season. Instead, U6 teams play in a round robin event. No champion is declared.

XI. SCHEDULING OFFICIALS, GAME CHANGES OR CANCELLATIONS

The SMYLA Scheduling Committee will submit the full league schedule to the officials for assigning. For each game scheduled, a home team is designated (even when playing at a neutral field). The home team is responsible for notifying the SMYLA Scheduling Committee and the Washington Area Lacrosse Officials Association (WALOA) Assigner of any change or cancellation of games.

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