

NHILA GIRLS YOUTH RULES 2026

March 12, 2026

This is **NOT** an all-encompassing “cheat sheet.”

2026 USA Lacrosse Girls Youth Rule Book: This is a summary of all critical rules* that NHILA defers to, with the exception of items referenced below, which are unique to or modified by NHILA.

**Please note: In some cases, the USA Lacrosse Girls Youth Guidebook further defers to the [NFHS Girls Lacrosse Rulebook](#), a rulebook that all Coaches and Officials are encouraged to purchase through USA Lacrosse.*

	8U SHORT FIELD	10U SHORT FIELD
Players	7 v 7 including the Goalie	7 v 7 including the Goalie
Field Markers/Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 x 4 / NO UPSIDE-DOWN GOAL • Field Size 60-70 yards by 30-40 yards • 8-meter arc – Yes • 12-meter fan – No • Restraining Line - Yes, Center line • Goal Circle and Goal Line 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 x 4 / NO UPSIDE-DOWN GOAL • Field Size 60-70 yards by 30-40 yards • 8-meter arc – Yes • 12-meter fan – No • Restraining Line - Yes, Center line • Goal Circle and Goal Line
Sticks & Equipment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Boys, Girls, or Unified Sticks are permitted for play • No stick checks • Uniforms must be same color shirt with a visible number 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stick – USL Specifications w/modified pocket • Stick checks • Uniforms must be same color shirt with a visible number
Eye Black / Face Paint	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Players may have any eye blacking as long as it is not deemed obscene by officials and coaches 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Players may have any eye blacking as long as it is not deemed obscene by officials and coaches
Exchange Rosters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes: At the beginning of the game • Penalty = Play down by one (1) player for first half of game 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes: At the beginning of the game • Penalty = Play down by one (1) player for first half of game
Coaches	No more than 3 coaches – 1 of which can assist on field, and must remain within 5 YARDS OF EITHER SIDELINE	No more than 3 coaches – Must remain behind and within your sideline between sub box and endline
Officials	1 official	2 officials
Deputy	No: Only goalie in the goal circle	No: Only goalie in the goal circle
Game Time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Four (4) 12-minute quarters, running clock, except last 1 minute of each quarter for fouls in CSA*; Players change ends after each quarter. • If any quarter ends and there is a foul in the Critical Scoring Area (CSA), the player will be allowed to take the shot with a 3-second time limit from the whistle. • <i>*Keep running clock if Mercy Rule is in effect</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Four (4) 12-minute quarters, running clock, except last 1 minute of each quarter for fouls in CSA*; Players change ends after each quarter. • If any quarter ends and there is a foul in the Critical Scoring Area (CSA), the player will be allowed to take the shot with a 3-second time limit from the whistle. • <i>*Keep running clock if Mercy Rule is in effect</i>
Time Outs	1 per game	1 per game
Overtime	None	None
Start/Draw	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draw at start of each quarter • Only 2 at the draw circle, the rest hold for possession at 8m arc • After a goal, non-scoring team gets the ball at the goal line extended (all players 4M away) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draw at start of each quarter and after every goal • Only 2 at the draw circle, the rest hold for possession at 8m arc

Mercy Rule	After 6 Goal differential, team w/ less goals may elect to take possession at midfield without a draw; one-pass over restraining line not required	After 6 Goal differential, team w/ less goals may elect to take possession at midfield without a draw; one-pass over restraining line is still required
Passing Rule	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One attempted pass required after the ball and the ball carrier completely cross their respective offensive restraining line before a shot can be taken at the goal. • An additional pass is not required until the ball leaves the offensive side of the field beyond the restraining line. • If a shot is taken before the pass is attempted, it is considered a goal circle violation, and the ball is awarded to the goalkeeper. • If a goal is scored, it is considered a reset - if the attacking team regains possession, they must make one pass before shooting again. • "Hand offs" are not sufficient to be considered a pass. An attempted pass occurs when a player attempts to pass using the mechanics of a throwing motion in the direction of a teammate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One attempted pass required after the ball and the ball carrier completely cross their respective offensive restraining line before a shot can be taken at the goal. • An additional pass is not required until the ball leaves the offensive side of the field beyond the restraining line. • If a shot is taken before the pass is attempted, it is considered a goal circle violation, and the ball is awarded to the goalkeeper. • "Hand offs" are not sufficient to be considered a pass. An attempted pass occurs when a player attempts to pass using the mechanics of a throwing motion in the direction of a teammate.
Checking & Body Contact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No checking • No stick to stick, body to body, or body to stick contact 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No checking • No stick to stick, body to body, or body to stick contact
1 v 1 Defense	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 v 1 defense required over the entire field • 3-Second defense count 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 v 1 defense required over the entire field • 3-Second defense count • Can double in the 8 M only
Restraining Line	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 back behind the restraining (Center) line • If Goalie crosses restraining line, additional field player must remain back to avoid offsides • Only players sticks may cross the line on draw and restraining line; NO FEET 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 back behind the restraining (Center) line • If Goalie crosses restraining line, additional field player must remain back to avoid offsides • Only players sticks may cross the line on draw and restraining line; NO FEET
Substitution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All subs must be made through the substitution area. • <i>During play</i>, all players, including goalkeeper, must come off the field and exit between the cones before a substitute may go onto the field • <i>After a goal</i>, players may immediately enter the game and do not have to wait for the teammate they are replacing to come completely off the field 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All subs must be made through the substitution area. • <i>During play</i>, all players, including goalkeeper, must come off the field and exit between the cones before a substitute may go onto the field • <i>After a goal</i>, players may immediately enter the game and do not have to wait for the teammate they are replacing to come completely off the field
Carding	NONE: Player leaves briefly while replaced	Carded Player leaves the field for the full penalty, but CAN BE REPLACED; NO PLAYING SHORT/DOWN A PLAYER
Kicking the ball	Yes	Yes
Covering ball	Not allowed	Not allowed
False Start on a whistle start	False start on whistle results in NO change of possession	False start on whistle results in NO change of possession

	10U REGULATION FIELD
Players	12 v 12 including the Goalie Can have less at the start of a draw
Field Markers/Goals	Field/Goal Markings the Same as USL / NFHS
Sticks & Equipment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stick – USL Specifications w/modified pocket • Stick checks • Uniforms must be same color shirt with a visible number
Eye Black / Face Paint	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Players may have any eye blacking as long as it is not deemed obscene by officials and coaches
Exchange Rosters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes: At the beginning of the game • Penalty = Play down by one (1) player for first half of game
Coaches	No more than 3 coaches – Must remain behind and within your sideline between sub box and endline
Officials	2 Officials
Deputy	No: Only goalie in the goal circle
Game Time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Four (4) 12-minute quarters, running clock, except last 1 minute of each quarter for fouls in CSA*; Players change ends after each quarter. • If any quarter ends and there is a foul in the Critical Scoring Area (CSA), the player will be allowed to take the shot with a 3-second time limit from the whistle. • <i>*Keep running clock if Mercy Rule is in effect</i>
Time Outs	2 per game
Overtime	None
Start/Draw	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draw at start of each quarter and after every goal • Only 2 at the draw circle, the rest hold for possession
Mercy Rule	After 6 Goal differential, team w/ less goals may elect to take possession at midfield without a draw; one-pass over restraining line is still required
Pass Rule	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One attempted pass required after the ball and the ball carrier completely cross their respective offensive restraining line before a shot can be taken at the goal. • An additional pass is not required until the ball leaves the offensive side of the field beyond the restraining line. • If a shot is taken before the pass is attempted, it is considered a goal circle violation, and the ball is awarded to the goalkeeper. • If a goal is scored, it is considered a reset - if the attacking team regains possession, they must make one pass before shooting again. • "Hand offs" are not sufficient to be considered a pass. An attempted pass occurs when a player attempts to pass using the mechanics of a throwing motion in the direction of a teammate.
Checking & Body Contact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No checking • No stick to stick, body to body, or body to stick contact
1 v 1 Defense	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 v 1 Defense players must mark up in the midfield • CAN DOUBLE IN THE CRITICAL SCORING AREA ONLY
Restraining line	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Players sticks may cross the line on draw and restraining line; NO FEET • If Goalie crosses restraining line, additional field player must remain back to avoid offsides
Substitution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All subs must be made through the substitution area. • <i>During play</i>, all players, including goalkeeper, must come off the field and exit between the cones before a substitute may go onto the field • <i>After a goal</i>, players may immediately enter the game and do not have to wait for the teammate they are replacing to come completely off the field
Carding	Carded Players leave the field for the full penalty, but CAN BE REPLACED, NO PLAYING SHORT/DOWN A PLAYER
Kicking the ball	Yes
Covering the ball	Not allowed

False Start on a whistle start	False start on whistle results in NO change of possession
---------------------------------------	--

	12U	14U
Players	12 v 12 including the Goalie Can have less at the start of a draw	12 v 12 including the Goalie Can have less at the start of a draw
Field Markers/Goals	Field/Goal Markings the Same as USL / NFHS	Field/Goal Markings the Same as USL / NFHS
Sticks & Equipment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stick – USL Specifications Stick checks Uniforms must be same color shirt with a visible number 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stick – USL Specifications Stick checks Uniforms must be same color shirt with a visible number
Eye Black / Face Paint	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Players may have any eye blacking as long as it is not deemed obscene by officials and coaches 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Players may have any eye blacking as long as it is not deemed obscene by officials and coaches
Exchange Rosters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Yes: At the beginning of the game Penalty = Play down by one (1) player for first half of game 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Yes: At the beginning of the game Penalty = Play down by one (1) player for first half of game
Coaches	No more than 3 coaches – Must remain behind and within your sideline between sub box and endline	No more than 3 coaches – Must remain behind and within your sideline between sub box and endline
Officials	2 Officials	2 Officials required; 1 must be a High School Official Level 1 or higher
Deputy	No: Only goalie in the goal circle	Yes: Deputy goalkeepers allowed for 14U
Game Time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Four (4) 12-minute quarters, running clock, except last 1 minute of each quarter for fouls in CSA*; Players change ends after each quarter. If any quarter ends and there is a foul in the Critical Scoring Area (CSA), the player will be allowed to take the shot with a 3-second time limit from the whistle. <i>*Keep running clock if Mercy Rule is in effect</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Four (4) 12-minutes quarters, running clock, except last 1 minute of each quarter for fouls in CSA*; Players change ends after each quarter. If any quarter ends and there is a foul in the Critical Scoring Area (CSA), the player will be allowed to take the shot with a 3-second time limit from the whistle. <i>*Keep running clock if Mercy Rule is in effect</i>
Time Outs	2 per game	2 per game
Overtime	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Yes - Two (2) 3-minute overtimes (switch sides at the end of 3 minutes), SUDDEN VICTORY (if neither team scores, remains a tie) Rest 5-minutes after regulation game Coin toss for choice of field side Alternate and cards stay the same 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Yes - Two (2) 3-minute overtimes (switch sides at the end of 3 minutes), SUDDEN VICTORY (if neither team scores, remains a tie) Rest 5-minutes after regulation game Coin toss for choice of field side Alternate and cards stay the same
Start/Draw	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Draw at start of each quarter and after every goal Only 3 at the draw circle, the rest hold for possession 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Draw at start of each quarter and after every goal Only 3 at the draw circle, the rest hold for possession
Mercy Rule	After 6 Goal differential, team w/ less goals may elect to take possession at midfield without a draw	After 6 Goal differential, team w/ less goals may elect to take possession at midfield without a draw
Pass Rule	None	None
Checking & Body Contact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MODIFIED CHECKING: Checking below the shoulder, not across the body Stick to body contact initiated by the defense is prohibited 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> TRANSITIONAL CHECKING: 12-inch sphere, not across the body If defender is behind, check must be down and away from the body, below the shoulder

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Defensive players may not contact an opponent's body with the defender's stick held in a horizontal position One-handed check = Slash 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stick to body contact initiated by the defense is prohibited Defensive players may not contact an opponent's body with the defender's stick held in a horizontal position One-handed check = Slash
Restraining Line	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Players sticks may cross the line on draw and restraining line; NO FEET If Goalie crosses restraining line, additional field player must remain back to avoid offsides 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Players sticks may cross the line on draw and restraining line; NO FEET If Goalie crosses restraining line, additional field player must remain back to avoid offsides
Substitution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All subs must be made through the substitution area. <i>During play</i>, all players, including goalkeeper, must come off the field and exit between the cones before a substitute may go onto the field <i>After a goal</i>, players may immediately enter the game and do not have to wait for the teammate they are replacing to come completely off the field 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All subs must be made through the substitution area. <i>During play</i>, all players, including goalkeeper, must come off the field and exit between the cones before a substitute may go onto the field <i>After a goal</i>, players may immediately enter the game and do not have to wait for the teammate they are replacing to come completely off the field
Carding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Carded Players leave the field for the full penalty Team plays short/down a player for the duration of the penalty; Must keep 4 back plus goalie in the defensive end and attack end Goes towards team Card Count 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Carded Players leave the field for the full penalty; Team plays short/down a player for the duration of the penalty Must keep 4 back plus goalie in the defensive end and attack end Goes towards team Card Count
Kicking the ball	Yes	Yes
Covering the ball	Yes, but only if alone	Yes, but only if alone
False Start on a whistle start	Change of possession	14U Administered as a penalty; Change of possession

This is **NOT** an all-encompassing "cheat sheet."

2026 USA Lacrosse Girls Youth Rule Book: This is a summary of all critical rules* that NHYLA defers to, with the exception of items referenced below, which are unique to or modified by NHYLA.

**Please note: In some cases, the USA Lacrosse Girls Youth Guidebook further defers to the [NFHS Girls Lacrosse Rulebook](#), a rulebook that all Coaches and Officials are encouraged to purchase through USA Lacrosse.*