



Helmet Regulations, Equipment Clarifications Lead High School Boys Lacrosse Rules Changes

Beginning next year, if a player's helmet comes off during a play in high school boys lacrosse, the play will be suspended immediately. The player will then need to leave the field until after the next dead ball following the resumption of play.

This change in Rule 4-24-11 headlines a set of 17 rules changes recommended by the NFHS Boys Lacrosse Rules Committee at its June 19-21 meeting at the Conrad Hotel in downtown Indianapolis. All changes were subsequently approved by the NFHS Board of Directors.

"Risk minimization is always at the forefront of our committee meetings," said Dr. James Weaver, NFHS director of performing arts and sports, and liaison to the Boys Lacrosse Rules Committee. "This year's rules committee meeting focused on clarification of safety measures regarding body positioning and protective equipment to make the game easier to officiate and safer for student participants."

Several equipment changes will be implemented in the 2024 season to ensure that all equipment is designed for lacrosse and is being worn appropriately in the way the manufacturer intended.

Rule 1-6-1 separates the measurements for the goalkeeper's crosse from the field player's crosse. The measurements of the goalkeeper's crosse shall be 40-72 inches in length, with the head 10-12 inches wide and maximum 16.5 inches long. Additionally, there are no restrictions on goalkeeper's crosse stringing and no restrictions on pocket depth.

Weaver said this proposal simplifies the rule and eliminates confusion of legality of pocket, stringing, etc. unique to the goalkeeper.

The protective helmet chin strap must be worn under the chin and remain firmly attached at all of the helmet's manufactured attachment points, securely enough so that the helmet is unable to be removed without detaching the chin strap from the attachment point(s) (Rule 1-9-1a). The rule further specifies that protective gloves and arm pads must be designed for lacrosse.

Another notable change for the 2024 season is the clarification on body positioning during a faceoff. Rule 4-3-3i now states that upon the whistle starting play, players shall not initiate a bodycheck against their opponent. The change specifies that a bodycheck against a crouched player is illegal.

A penalty has been added to Rule 5-4-2 stating that a player who makes indirect contact to an opponent's head and/or neck when the initial force of the contact is to the body of the opponent

then slides up to the head and/or neck area will result in a one-minute non-releasable foul. An excessively violent violation may result in a longer non-releasable penalty or an ejection. This change gives officials the ability to assess a penalty that would be more appropriate and encourages officials to make the call when contact occurs.

A number of other boys lacrosse rules changes pertaining to uniforms, equipment and gameplay clarifications were approved by the committee and will be available on the NFHS website at www.nfhs.org. Click on “Activities & Sports” at the top of the home page and select “Lacrosse-Boys.”

According to the most recent NFHS High School Athletics Participation Survey, 107,865 boys participate in lacrosse in 3,077 high schools across the country.