



## 2026 and 2027 Women's Lacrosse Rules Changes

*The following rules changes were approved by the NCAA Women's Lacrosse Rules Committee and the NCAA Playing Rules Oversight Panel. All rules changes are effective with the 2026 season.*

Rule	Rules Change and Rationale
<b>The Playing Area and Goals</b>  Rule 1-16	<p>Change the current rule on goals to clarify that goal nets may be of any solid color, and logos (memorial, institutional or commercial) are only permitted to face outward centered on the back of the goal net, no higher than three feet from the ground.</p> <p><b>Rationale:</b> This proposed change will provide more clarification regarding nets and logos.</p>
<b>The Playing Area and Goals</b>  Rule 1-16	<p>Amend the current rule on goals to specify that no holes or gaps in the net may exceed the diameter of a game ball or be large enough to allow a ball to pass through. Officials shall have the final authority in determining whether goals meet rule specifications. It is the responsibility of the home team to address and correct any issues identified by officials prior to the start of the game.</p> <p><b>Rationale:</b> This proposed change will support the consistent application of rules by officials and reinforces the importance of support from game administrators, teams, and coaches in upholding officiating decisions.</p>
<b>Equipment and Uniforms</b>  Rule 2-13	<p>Change the procedure for managing a broken stick (including a detached head from the shaft or a broken shaft) to require that any player not in possession of the ball must immediately leave the field upon their stick breaking, regardless of their location on the field.</p> <p><b>Rationale:</b> This proposed change will simplify current procedures and administrative duties for officials, while enhancing consistency in game management.</p>
<b>Game Personnel</b>  Rule 3-2	<p>Clarify that a coach must be present on the sideline to commence or continue play. If a coach is not present on the sideline to commence or continue play, the team must forfeit. See NCAA Bylaws regarding who can serve as a coach.</p> <p><b>Rationale:</b> This proposed change will promote more consistent game administration.</p>
<b>Game Personnel</b>  Rule 3-7	<p>Effective with the 2027 season, require that all officials utilize headsets during games to facilitate improved communication and game management. The Rules Committee strongly encourages the use of headsets for the 2026 season.</p>

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	<p><b>Rationale:</b> This proposed change will enhance communication and game management, ultimately leading to more consistent and efficient administration of games. Delaying implementation will provide officials with additional time to manage the associated financial impact.</p>
<p><b>Game Personnel, Time Factors and Scoring</b></p> <p>Rules 3 and 4</p>	<p>Stop the game and possession clock for all fouls in the critical scoring area during the last minute of each quarter and overtime period. Run the game clock on all free positions in the critical scoring area (including all 8-meter free positions) except in the last minute of a quarter or overtime period.</p> <p><b>Rationale:</b> This proposed change will promote more consistent and efficient game administration while also helping to eliminate gamesmanship related to fouling in the critical scoring area at the end of quarters and overtime periods.</p>
<p><b>Time Factors and Scoring</b></p> <p>Rule 4-8</p>	<p>Revise overtime procedures such that when the score is tied at the end of regulation, teams will have a two-minute rest period followed by a five-minute sudden-victory overtime period. If no winner is determined after the first overtime period, an additional two-minute rest period will occur, and teams will switch ends before play resumes with an additional five-minute overtime period.</p> <p><b>Rationale:</b> This proposed change will promote more efficient game administration and help reduce the overall duration of the game.</p>
<p><b>Game Personnel, Time Factors and Scoring and Play of the Game</b></p> <p>Rules 3, 4 and 5</p>	<p>Implement a 30-second clock beginning with the signal of a goal and concluding at the start of the administration of the draw. If one team is not present at the center circle and ready for the draw by the expiration of the 30 seconds, possession shall be awarded to the opposing team. If neither team is ready, play will resume using the alternate possession rule.</p> <p><b>Rationale:</b> This proposed change will promote more efficient game administration and help reduce the overall duration of the game.</p>
<p><b>Play of Game</b></p> <p>Rules 5-22 and 5-23</p>	<p>Allow any team that has possession at the end of a quarter to retain possession at the start of the subsequent quarter, regardless of any numerical advantage. Play shall resume with a free position as follows: if the ball was in the team's offensive or defensive end, play will restart at the center of the closest restraining line; if the ball was between the</p>

Rule	Rules Change and Rationale
	<p>restraining lines, play will resume from the center line. Draws shall occur at the start of the game, halftime and at the beginning of each overtime period, and after each goal, unless possession is otherwise determined by rule.</p> <p><b>Rationale:</b> This proposed change will promote more efficient game administration and help reduce the overall duration of the game by eliminating the draw setup at the start of the 2nd and 4th quarters. It will also reduce the frequency of last-second shots at the end of each quarter, which can sometimes pose safety concerns. Additionally, this change provides teams with increased opportunities to implement strategic play across quarters.</p>
<p><b>Fouls and Penalty Administration</b></p> <p>Rules POE, 6-9.q and 6-40</p>	<p>Eliminate the requirement and/or option for officials to issue warnings prior to administering applicable penalties. Examples of this include, but are not limited to, team delays to the draw (e.g., too many players on the field), repeated false starts on 8-meter free positions, and coaches' misconduct. The non-engagement warning will remain.</p> <p><b>Rationale:</b> This proposed change will promote more consistent and fair penalty administration.</p>
<p><b>Fouls and Penalty Administration</b></p> <p>Rule 6-5</p>	<p>Align the definition of stick length used by officials when determining both shooting space and three seconds to be the combined length of the defender's stick and arm.</p> <p><b>Rationale:</b> This proposed change will simplify current procedures for officials, while enhancing consistency and fairness in game management.</p>
<p><b>Fouls and Penalty Administration</b></p> <p>Rule 6-9.j</p>	<p>Prohibit the switching of sticks on the field. Anytime a player needs to switch a stick, that player must enter and exit the field through the substitution area.</p> <p><b>Rationale:</b> This proposed change will require players with broken sticks to immediately exit the field, thereby promoting safety and minimizing game disruption. It will also discourage gamesmanship involving equipment, particularly the use of draw sticks in ways that compromise the fair administration of the draw.</p>
<p><b>Penalty Administration</b></p>	<p>Unless otherwise specified by rule, all fouls shall be administered at the spot of the foul. However, if administering the foul at that spot would disadvantage the non-offending team, the foul shall instead be administered at the spot of the ball.</p>

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	<b>Rationale:</b> This proposed change will simplify current procedures for officials, while enhancing consistency and fairness in game management.		
<b>Penalty Administration in the CSA</b>	8-meter free positions will be administered only from the hashes directly adjacent to the center hash. The hash used will be determined by the half of the critical scoring area in which the foul occurred.  <b>Rationale:</b> This proposed change will simplify current procedures for officials, while enhancing consistency and fairness in game management.		
<b>Penalty Administration in the CSA</b>	Permit the use of the slow whistle (flag) for shooting space, as well as for fouls that occur outside the critical scoring area when the ball is inside the critical scoring area.  <b>Rationale:</b> This proposed change will simplify current procedures for officials, while enhancing consistency and fairness in game management.		
<b>Fouls and Penalty Administration</b>  Rule 6-33	Require a one-game suspension for any individual who fails to serve the required next-game suspension resulting from a red card. Additionally, impose a one-game suspension on the team's head coach if a player required to serve such a suspension fails to do so. If the next-game suspension is not served due to the red card occurring during the team's final game of the season, the individual shall serve the suspension during the first game of the following spring season.  <b>Rationale:</b> This proposed change is in response to PROP's January directive to rules committees to establish penalties when an individual fails to serve a rule-required suspension.		
Penalty Categorization & Administration	<b><u>Penalty Restructure</u></b>		
	<b>Categorization</b>	<b>Included Fouls</b>	<b>Penalty Administration</b>
	Major	Blocking/Illegal Pick	Outside of the CSA, one-minute releasable penalty

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		Cross Check  Embellishment and Flopping  Holding  Illegal Use of the Stick (includes V-holds, empty stick check above the waist, slap checks, and hand checks)	8-meter free position if defensive foul in the CSA    Free position at the 12 if attacking foul in the CSA
	Minor	Charging  Covering  Empty stick check (below the waist)  False Start (attacking false starts and defensive false starts excluding 8-meters)  Forcing Through  Illegal Body Ball  Illegal Draw  Illegal Stick (pocket depth)  Pass From Out of Bounds  Pushing	Possession  *If non-offending team is in possession, then reset of possession clock    Free position at the 12 if attacking or defensive foul in the CSA

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		Unintentional Tripping Warding Off  <u>Minor Fouls will also include the following Procedural Delays:</u>  Delay from Timeout/Quarter Break/Halftime Delay to Pregame Meeting Eye Protection Goalkeeper Fouls Illegal Re-entry Jewelry Mouthpiece No stick Throwing a Stick		
	Delay of Game	Delay with Free Position in the CSA Delay After Cardable Penalty	One-minute releasable penalty  Administration in the CSA for defensive	

Rule	Rules Change and Rationale			
		False Starts on 8-Meter Free Positions  General Delay  Illegal Stick Request  Illegal Substitutes/Substitutions  Illegal Switching of Sticks  Illegal Timeout  Non-Engagement Fouls  Repetitive Self-Starts	foul in the CSA <i>will also</i> include free position at the 12	
	Technical	Goal Circle  Shooting Space  Three Seconds        Offside	8-meter free position if defensive foul in the CSA        Free position at the 12 if attacking foul in the CSA        <hr/> Outside CSA, one-minute releasable penalty and free position spot of the ball        Inside CSA, one-minute releasable penalty and free position at the 12	

Rule	Rules Change and Rationale		
	Flagrant 1	Dangerous Follow-Through Dangerous Propelling Dangerous Stick in the Sphere Illegal Stick (other than pocket depth) Misconduct (unless it rises to the level of a red card) Slash	Releasable fouls  Two-minute penalty  Administration in the CSA for defensive foul <i>will also</i> include 8-meter free position  *4th Flagrant 1 foul for a team will result in a two-minute non-releasable
	Flagrant 2	Dangerous Contact  Suspended Player Substitutes  Red Card <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Illegal Body Ball in the Goal Circle</li> <li>- Flagrant or repeated violation of the rules, dissent, excessive or dangerous misconduct fouls, or abusive language</li> </ul>	Non-releasable fouls  Dangerous Contact and Suspended Player Substitute are two-minute non-releasable penalties  A red card is a five-minute non-releasable penalty and ejection from the game  Administration in the CSA for defensive foul <i>will also</i> include



Rule	Rules Change and Rationale		
			8-meter free position
	<p><b>Key Notes:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>One-minute releasable penalties will be played on when a team has an advantage.</b></li> <li>- The secretary-rules editor and CWLOA are developing a protocol to ensure that the game clock is stopped for the shortest time necessary during the administration of a green card.</li> <li>- Possession clock will reset on any cardable foul.</li> <li>- A penalty administration may also include no goal, alternate possession, etc., as applicable within the rules.</li> <li>- <b>The secretary-rules editor, in collaboration with the Rules Committee, CWLOA, and IWLCA, will revise the definitions of illegal use of the stick, cross-check, pushing, and holding to ensure clarity around these fouls and to better define what constitutes legal physical contact.</b></li> </ul> <p><b>Rationale:</b> This proposed change will simplify current foul categorization, procedures, and administrative duties for officials, while enhancing consistency in game management. This proposed change also elevates the penalties for major fouls committed anywhere on the field, as well as for dangerous contact, thereby enhancing student-athlete safety.</p>		
<b>Video Review</b>	<p><b><u>Changes to Video Review</u></b></p> <p>Officials will be required — and only permitted — to utilize video review for the following situations:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To correct the game clock and/or possession clock when there is a malfunction of timing error.</li> <li>2. To determine when the release of a shot at the end of a possession, quarter, or overtime period occurred in relation to the expiration of time for the game clock and/or the possession clock.</li> <li>3. To identify or confirm the number of the offender for a cardable foul that results in ejection of the player (i.e., second yellow card or red card).</li> <li>4. To determine whether as a result of a shot the ball hits a pipe or deflects off of the goalkeeper's stick.</li> </ol>		

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	<p>Each team shall be permitted two video review requests per game. If a team's video review request results in the call being overturned, the team will retain the same number of review requests it had prior to the challenge. Teams will be able to request video reviews for the following situations:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To correct the game clock and/or possession clock when there is a malfunction of timing error.</li> <li>2. To determine when the release of a shot at the end of a possession, quarter, or overtime period occurred in relation to the expiration of time for the game clock and/or the possession clock.</li> <li>3. To determine whether the ball came off the body of a player of the attacking team.</li> <li>4. To determine whether the whole ball entered the front of the goal by passing over the goal line, between the posts, and underneath the crossbar.</li> <li>5. To determine whether the player shooting stepped on or into the goal circle, or any other player of the attacking team entered the goal circle, and if so, if the act of stepping onto or into the goal circle was the result of a foul and only in response to a goal or no goal signal.</li> <li>6. To determine whether as a result of a shot the ball hits a pipe or deflects off of the goalkeeper's stick.</li> <li>7. To determine if a team had possession at the end of a quarter.</li> <li>8. To identify or confirm the number of the offender of a yellow or red card foul.</li> <li>9. To confirm or overturn yellow or red cardable fouls after a card has been administered.</li> <li>10. To identify yellow and red card fouls during the act of shooting. Fouls during the act of shooting that shall be reviewed include dangerous contact, dangerous follow-through, dangerous propelling, dangerous stick in the sphere, misconduct, and slash.</li> </ol> <p>Note: This request is a distinct request and does not require a play to already be under review.</p> <p>*When conducting any video review, officials are instructed to correct any timing errors and to identify and administer any yellow or red cardable fouls observed in the provided video clips.</p> <p><b>Rationale:</b> This proposed change will support more consistent, fair, and efficient administration of video review, while also expanding opportunities for teams to challenge specific on-field calls — or no-calls — through the use of video review.</p>

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	<b>Final Note:</b> The secretary-rules editor, in collaboration with the Rules Committee, CWLOA, and IWLCA, will incorporate additional editorial changes and interpretations into the Rules Book to provide further clarification and simplify existing rules and procedures. These updates are intended to support officials, coaches, and players by promoting greater consistency and fairness in game management.