



## MEMORANDUM

September 25, 2015

### VIA EMAIL

TO: Head Women's Lacrosse Coaches and Officials.

FROM: Julie Myers  
Chair, NCAA Women's Lacrosse Rules Committee.

Stefanie Sparks Smith  
Secretary-Rules Editor, NCAA Women's Lacrosse Rules Committee.

SUBJECT: 2016 Rules Changes and Clarifications.

This memorandum is being distributed to assist coaches and officials in preparation for the 2016 season and the introduction of new rules changes and selected clarifications. A separate memo outlining new rules changes and clarifications regarding stick stringing and stick check requests will be distributed in the coming weeks. In the meantime, if you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Stefanie Smith at (603) 494-1865 or [ssmithsre@gmail.com](mailto:ssmithsre@gmail.com). Note that there may be semantical differences between this memo and the 2016 and 2017 Rules Book, which will be available in November. Please also note that rules regarding the possession clock, which will not be implemented for Division I institutions until 2017 and for Division II and III institutions until 2018, are not included in this memo.

### **Critical Scoring Area**

The boundary of the critical scoring area has changed from 15m (16.3 yds.) to the 12m fan above goal line extended. The 9m (10 yds.) behind the goal line extended and 12m (13.1 yds.) to each side of the goal circle remain part of the critical scoring area.

### **Below Goal Markings**

Two small circles 5-6 inches in diameter must be added to the field behind each goal. The circles should mirror each other and be located 5 yards from the hash marks on the goal line extended. They shall be marked in the direction towards the end line and measured in a line perpendicular to the goal line extended. They may be marked in a temporary substance (i.e., spray paint, chalk, etc.). The circles are referred to in the 2016 and 2017 Rules Book as the "dot."

Free positions below the goal line extended and in the critical scoring area shall be taken at one of the dots.

### **Self-Start**

Following a whistle blown for a major or minor foul outside of the critical scoring area, the player who is awarded the ball may continue the course of play from a settled stance (both feet

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stationary on the ground) without waiting for an additional whistle. The offending player must immediately move 4m behind or to the side of the player taking the free position as indicated by the official. Any other player(s) within 4m must move to a position indicated by the official. All players farther than 4m from the foul must “stand.”

A delay in moving behind or to the side of the player taking the free position may result in a delay-of-game card.

The player who has been awarded the free position may self-start following the official’s signal of the foul, the official’s awarding of the free position, and set up of the ball at the spot of the foul by the player awarded the free position.

The player who has been awarded the ball has the option to wait until the penalty is fully administered. The penalty is fully administered when the offending player has moved either behind or to the side of the player who has been awarded the ball and all other defensive players have moved 4m away from the ball.

If the player who has been awarded the ball chooses to self-start, then defensive players may play that player immediately following the self-start. If a defender moves prior to the player who has been awarded the ball self-starting, that defender must then be placed 4m behind.

A self-start is not an option in the following circumstances:

- a) The ball has gone out of bounds;
- b) Offsides violation;
- c) Stoppage of the game clock; and
- d) Major or minor fouls occurring in the critical scoring area (including offensive fouls).

The option of self-starting is administered at the spot of the foul. However, if the ball is within playing distance (a stick and a half length away) from the player who is awarded the ball, the player who is awarded the ball may pick up the ball and from a settled stance, self-start.

If the player who is awarded the free position has to be brought back to the spot of the foul through the instruction of the official, or if the official has to otherwise set up the ball at the spot of the foul, the whistle of the official will administer the penalty.

A repeated attempt by a team to self-start from a position that is not the spot of the foul or playing distance from the spot of the foul may result in a delay-of-game card.

**Question:** Can you self-start after an illegal draw foul prior to the whistle?

**Ruling:** No. This ruling is the same even when there is a 10-goal differential and the clock is running.

### **Horizontal Stick**

Initiating crosse-to-body contact with the crosse parallel to the ground (3 and 9 o'clock) and hands apart is illegal.

Initiating contact with the crosse parallel to the ground (3 and 9 o'clock) and hands touching is legal.

Rule 6, Section 1(h) (3), which states that it is an illegal use of the crosse to lower the head of the crosse below shoulder level and initiate crosse-to-body contact, has been removed from the rules.

The Cross-Check still remains a major foul.

If you initiate contact with the crosse at, for example, 11 and 1 o'clock, and you are not using the shaft of the crosse to hit, push or displace your opponent, this may be deemed legal positioning.

If an offensive player charges into a defender with a horizontal stick, this is an offensive foul.

### **Alternate Possession**

Alternate possession will replace the Throw.

At the pre-game meeting with the captains, the team that wins the coin toss will be able to choose either the side that they want to defend in the first half or whether they want the first possession after any of the events listed under Rule 5, Section 20 (a)-(h) have occurred. After the initial possession is awarded, the possession will then alternate. Alternate possession is continuous through any overtime period (not reestablished at the coin toss that takes place prior to the first overtime period). The Head Official and table personnel will keep the record of alternate possession. If there is a discrepancy between the Head Umpire and table personnel, then the Head Umpire's record governs. A visible possession arrow is optional, but not required.

The alternate possession shall be taken by the two opponents closest to the foul/incident.

If the alternate possession would be awarded outside of the critical scoring area, it is taken where the incident or foul occurs that caused play to stop except that no alternate possession is taken within 4m of the boundaries. The opponent will stand 4m away and nearer to the goal she is defending.

If the alternate possession would be awarded inside of the critical scoring area and below the goal line extended, it shall be awarded at the closest dot. The opponent will stand 4m away and nearer to the goal she is defending.

If the alternate possession would be awarded inside of the critical scoring area and above the goal line extended (including the goal circle), it shall be awarded at the closest 8m mark on the goal line extended. The opponent will stand 4m away on the goal line extended on either side of the ball. No other players may be within 4m of the player awarded the alternate possession. The lane is cleared, if necessary.

Alternate possession occurs when:

- a) The ball goes into the goal off a nonplayer, with alternate possession being awarded at the closest 8m hash on the goal line extended.
- b) The ball goes out of bounds as the result of a shot or deflected shot, and two opposing players are equally near the ball.
- c) It cannot be determined which team caused the ball to go out of bounds.
- d) There is an incident unrelated to the ball, and players are equidistant from the ball.
- e) A ball lodges in the clothing of a field player or umpire.
- f) Two players commit offsetting fouls (major and/or minor), or after the attacking team fouls during a slow-whistle situation.
- g) The game is restarted after any incident related to the ball when neither team has possession and two opposing players are equally near the ball, unless the incident has been caused by a foul.
- h) The game is stopped for any reason not specified in the rules.

Note that only the team that is awarded the alternate possession may call a timeout.

### **Penalty Administration for 3 Seconds as a Minor Foul**

If the ball is outside the 12m fan when a 3 seconds violation occurs, the penalty shall be administered at the spot of the ball. All other players shall remain in their same positions with the exception of the offending defensive player who was in 3 seconds, who shall move 4m from the player taking the direct free position, relative to her position at the time of the foul.

If the ball is inside the 12m fan when a 3 seconds violation occurs, the player with the ball shall be placed at the 12m relative to her position at the time of the foul. All other players shall remain in their same positions with the exception of the offending defensive player who was in 3 seconds, who shall move to the 8m directly in front of the player taking the indirect free position.

If the ball is inside the critical scoring area but below goal line extended when a 3 seconds violation occurs, the player with the ball shall be placed at the closest dot relative to her position at the time of the foul. All other players shall remain in their same positions with the exception of the offending defensive player who was in 3 seconds, who shall move 4m (in the direction towards the sideline) from the dot where the player taking the direct free position has been moved.

### **Body Ball**

A player may use any part of her body to stop or otherwise control the ball except her hand or head.

Players may kick the ball.

A goal is not scored if the ball enters the goal as a result of a kick from an attacking player. If the defensive player kicks the ball in, it is a goal (just like if the goalkeeper scored on herself).

However, if a player blatantly attempts to stop a shot on goal by playing the ball off of her body while outside the goal circle, it shall be called a major foul (if inside the goal circle, it is a red card). The goalkeeper is exempt from this rule.

### **Head Ball**

Using her head to stop or otherwise control the ball, except the goalkeeper outside or inside the goal circle.

### **Hand Ball**

Touching the ball with her hand, except the goalkeeper outside or inside the goal circle. However, the goalkeeper may not bat, throw, catch, or carry the ball with her hand when outside the goal circle.

### **Goalkeeper Exemption and Restrictions**

Goalkeepers are exempt from Obstruction of Free Space to Goal. Goalkeepers may use their bodies to stop a shot outside of the goal circle. Attacking players may be called for Dangerous Propelling or Dangerous Follow-Through.

The following are restrictions for goalkeepers (these are all major fouls):

- a) Goalkeepers may not shoot.
- b) Goalkeepers may not score.
- c) Goalkeepers may not take the draw.
- d) Goalkeepers may not be between restraining lines during draw.

### **Goalkeeper Carding and Substitutions**

**Goalkeeper carded, second goalkeeper available:** If the goalkeeper is carded and the team has a second dressed goalkeeper, the second dressed goalkeeper must enter the game, and by rule, the coach must remove a field player to serve the two minute penalty. In this instance, both the carded goalkeeper and the field player who has been removed will enter the Penalty Area. They will both remain there until the penalty time is over or they are released (no release on red card).

**Goalkeeper carded, no second goalkeeper:** If the goalkeeper is yellow carded but the team has no second dressed goalkeeper, the goalkeeper must remain in the game. The coach must remove a field player to serve the two minute penalty.

**Goalkeeper red card, second yellow card:** If the goalkeeper receives a second yellow card or a red card, she must be removed from the game and enter the Penalty Area. The team must substitute another goalkeeper and the coach must designate another player who must leave the field and enter the Penalty Area. Both players will remain there until the penalty time is over or they are released (no release on red card). If there is no second dressed goalkeeper available, no field player may substitute for the goalkeeper who received the second yellow card or red card.

#### **Goalkeeper's Uniform**

The bottom uniform of a goalkeeper must be a solid official school color, white, black or gray.

#### **Draw**

Once the official's hands are on the drawers' sticks, the draw is being set, and no substitutions may occur.

#### **8-Meter Free Position**

On an 8-meter free position, the shooter's stick is permitted to be in the 8-meter arc.

#### **Legal Picks**

In establishing and maintaining legal picking tactics, the picker shall:

- a) Stay within her vertical plane with a stance no wider than shoulder width apart and shall not lean into the path of an opponent or extend hips into that path, even though the feet are stationary.
- b) Not be required to face in any particular direction at any time.
- c) Give her opponent a chance to stop or change direction.

Note: No player, while **moving**, shall set a pick that causes contact and delays an opponent from reaching a desired position.

An illegal pick is no longer a separate foul, but is categorized as the major foul, Blocking.

### **10 Goal Differential**

If a team is leading by 10 or more goals in the last two minutes of the game, the clock is not stopped.

### **Scoring Play**

*The bolded part below has been removed from Rule 7, Section 20.*

A scoring play is a continuous effort by the attacking team to move the ball toward the goal and to complete a shot on goal. The scoring play is completed when:

- a. A shot is taken.
- b. The attacking team loses possession of the ball. A bounce pass is not considered loss of possession.
- c. **The attacking team passes or carries the ball behind the level of the goal line and stops the continuous attempt to score.**
- d. The attacking team stops the continuous attempt to score, or the player with the ball is forced by the defense to lose her forward momentum.
- e. The attacking team fouls.

### **Empty Stick Check**

Incidental empty stick checks during 50/50 balls shall not be called.

The minor foul, Empty Stick Check, shall only be called for blatant empty stick checks where it is clear that rather than playing the ball, the player is preventing her opponent from playing the ball by checking/holding her opponent's crosse.

### **Sudden Victory Overtime**

The procedure for stop-clock sudden-victory overtime will include the following: When the score is tied at the end of regular playing time, both teams will have a five-minute rest and toss a coin (visiting captain calls) for choice of ends. The coin toss will not include a choice of possession. The alternate possession shall continue from regulation. Six minutes (two three-minute periods) of stop-clock sudden-victory overtime will be played. Teams will change ends after the first three minutes with no delay for coaching. No substitutions may take place at this time. The game will be restarted by a center draw. The winner will be decided by "sudden victory." The team that scores the first goal wins the game.

If neither team has scored after the first set of six minutes (two three-minute periods), there will be a three-minute rest followed by the teams switching ends again and beginning a second set of six minutes (two three-minute periods) of stop-clock sudden-victory overtime. Substitutions may occur at this time. The game will be restarted by a center draw.

This procedure of play will continue until the first goal is scored.

During overtime, the clock will stop on every whistle.

**Goal Scorer's Stick**

Every goal scorer's stick will be checked after each goal for pocket depth. Substitutions will not be allowed until the official has administered the stick check of the goal scorer's stick.

**Defense in Goal Circle**

There is no change to the main part of Rule 5, Section 15. This new rule affects the second note following Rule 5, Section 15.

This new rule permits a defensive player to play the ball in her team's goal circle when her team has possession of the ball (a ball on the ground or in the air within the goal circle constitutes possession for the defending team). Multiple defenders may be in the goal circle after the ball enters the goal circle and may stay until it is cleared. The ball must clear the goal circle within 10 seconds. Defenders must have both feet in the goal circle to play the ball in the goal circle.

If a defender is legally in the crease guarding her opponent and the ball enters the goal circle, she may go from playing her opponent to playing the ball (as long as both of her feet are in the goal circle). The defender does not need to exit the goal circle and re-enter the goal circle.

**Question:** Can a field player pick up a ball in the goal circle and place the ball into her stick?

**Ruling:** No. Hand ball.

JM/SS:rs

cc: NCAA Women's Lacrosse Rules Committee  
Selected NCAA Staff Members