



2020 and 2021 NCAA Women's Lacrosse Rules Changes

The following rules changes were approved by the NCAA Women's Lacrosse Rules Committee and the Playing Rules Oversight Panel. They will be incorporated into the rules book for the 2020 and 2021 seasons.

Rule(s)	Page(s)	Rule Change and Rationale
2-6 2-7 2-13 2-19	19 19 21 23	<p>To change the pregame stick check protocol to a pocket-depth check, close examination of the stringing and head, and specified measurements of eight sticks per team, as well as remove Rule 2-19. The eight sticks will be selected at random. The pregame examination will be identical to the team requested stick check.</p> <p>Rationale: Currently, officials do a brief examination of every stick from each team in addition to a closer inspection of five sticks selected at random. The closer inspection is also different from the team requested stick check. This proposed change will allow for a more consistent, objective, and efficient administration of pregame stick checks and team requested stick checks. Furthermore, with this proposed change, Rule 2-19 is superfluous.</p>
2-13	21-22	<p>To reduce the number of team requested sticks checks from three to two. Team requested stick checks will no longer be permitted before the game after the field has been cleared for the pregame stick check. Additionally, a team will no longer be permitted to request a stick check during an opponent's timeout.</p> <p>Rationale: Currently, the number of stick checks permitted has slowed down the pace of play and interrupted the overall flow of the game. This proposed change will address the unintended consequence to pace and flow while providing a sufficient number of opportunities for stick checks to be conducted.</p>
2-14	22-23	<p>If a team requests a stick check and the stick is deemed legal, the team will lose a timeout. If the team has no timeouts remaining, their opponent will be awarded possession.</p> <p>Rationale: Currently, stick checks have been utilized to slow down the pace of play, interrupt the overall flow of the game, and, in many ways, serve as another timeout. This proposed change will address these unintended consequences while providing the necessary opportunity for teams to check the legality of an opponent's stick and protect the integrity of the game.</p>
2-24	25	<p>Beginning January 1, 2021, goalkeepers will be required to wear chest protectors that meet the NOCSAE standard and contain the SEI certification mark.</p> <p>Rationale: Commotio cordis, though rare, is a typically fatal condition caused by the impact of a high velocity object (e.g., lacrosse ball) to the anterior chest causing cardiac arrest and death. Newly developed performance standards for chest protectors can mitigate or eliminate the risk of this preventable condition.</p>

2-32	27	<p>To delete the requirement that all team members, with the exception of the goalkeeper, shall be dressed uniformly and allow field players the choice of wearing shorts <u>or</u> kilt/skirt as long as the shorts/kilt/skirt are of the same color and similar design, trim, and cut.</p> <p>Rationale: While noting the historical perspective of the uniform rule, the current rule does not support inclusive practices for transgender/gender nonconforming individuals. The NCAA best practices document, “Inclusion of Transgender Student-Athletes,” shares the following: “Uniforms – all team members should have access to uniforms that are appropriate for their sport and that they feel comfortable wearing. No student-athlete should be required to wear a gendered uniform that conflicts with the student’s gender identity.” Currently, the only way for a student-athlete to wear a different style uniform bottom in women’s lacrosse is to request a waiver. While waivers have been granted, the current rule stands as a barrier to inclusion. The difference in uniform bottom does not alter the competitiveness or outcome of a contest. Field players would still be required to wear uniform jerseys or shirts.</p>
5-9	41	<p>To change the penalty administration for illegal draws from the center line to the spot of the ball.</p> <p>Rationale: This proposed change will improve the pace of play as the ball will no longer have to be brought back to the center line prior to the self-start. It will also provide for better administration of games.</p>
5-12 5-20.i	42 44	<p>Following a foul or 90-second possession clock violation, permit a team to self-start when awarded possession in their defensive critical scoring area. The game clock will no longer stop. The 90-second possession clock will commence upon the self-start.</p> <p>Rationale: Currently, the game clock is stopped on every whistle in the critical scoring area and self-starts are not permitted following an offensive foul or 90-second possession clock violation in the critical scoring area. This proposed change will improve the pace of play and allow for better administration of games. Additionally, this proposed change will provide more fairness and clarity with regards to offensive fouls in the critical scoring area. As the current rule stands, once a defensive player is awarded possession of the ball, all players, excluding the offender, are permitted to run up the field. Furthermore, if the defensive player self-starts unintentionally, they lose possession of the ball.</p>
5-29 6	44 50-52	<p>To make passing the ball from out of bounds a foul.</p>

		<p>Rationale: Currently, passing the ball from out of bounds is prohibited, but there is no penalty for the action because it is not a foul. This proposed change will provide for more consistency, clarification, and better administration of games.</p>
5-34 5-36.f 5-37	45 46 46	<p>When offsetting fouls are committed, if one of the fouls requires the issuance of a yellow or red card, alternate possession will not apply; rather, the team that was NOT issued the yellow or red card will be awarded possession of the ball.</p> <p>Rationale: Currently, alternate possession applies to all offsetting fouls, and as such, a team that receives a yellow or red card can be awarded possession of the ball. This proposed change will provide for more fairness and better administration of games.</p>
5-39.b	46	<p>Permit substitutions during injury timeouts.</p> <p>Rationale: With the rules change last year, substitutions are permitted more freely throughout the game. Currently, it isn’t until the official calls timeout, or in some instances, not until an athletic trainer comes onto the field, that substitutions cease. Substitutions are then permitted immediately upon the official’s whistle to commence play following the injury timeout. This proposed change will allow for better administration of games, and help provide for more consistency and clarification regarding substitutions and injury timeouts.</p>
6-7 6-22	55 62-63	<p>To issue a yellow card to the head coach if a suspended player (a player who receives two yellow cards or a red card) enters the field of play during the course of the game.</p> <p>Rationale: Currently, if a suspended player enters the field of play during the course of the game, the team is issued a green card. The harsher penalty of this proposed change will encourage compliance with the rules regarding a suspended player.</p>
6-16.d 6-17.c 6-20	61 61 62	<p>Permit the goalkeeper/defender to enter the goal circle with the ball without first propelling the ball into the goal circle. Permit the goalkeeper/defender to play the ball if it is inside the goal circle without returning to the goal circle. Specifically, delete Rule 6-20 and 6-17.c, and remove the part of Rule 6-16.d that requires a defender to have both feet within the goal circle. The requirement to clear the ball within 10 seconds after it has entered the goal circle (Rule 6-17.a) will still apply. Additionally, following a clear, a team will still not be permitted to return the ball to the goal circle until an opponent has played the ball.</p>

		Rationale: The current rule is confusing and difficult to call. This proposed change will provide for more consistency, clarification, and better administration of games.
6-40	68	<p>With regards to a simultaneous whistle for shooting space, eliminate the requirement that the goalkeeper must maintain possession of the ball in the goal circle following the save.</p> <p>Rationale: Currently, if there is a whistle blown for shooting space that is simultaneous with or immediately following a shot and the goalie saves the ball, but does not maintain possession of the ball within the goal circle, the opposing team is awarded a free position shot. This proposed change will provide for better competitive balance between the attack and defense and allow for better and simpler administration of games.</p>
Penalty Administration Throughout the Rules		<p>Eliminate the requirement that draw positioning apply for free positions awarded at the center line.</p> <p>Rationale: This proposed change will eliminate the restriction of free movement when possession is awarded at the center line and allow for better administration of games.</p>
Penalty Administration Throughout the Rules		<p>On a free position shot within 8 meters from the goal circle, the Rules Committee proposes that in addition to the current placement of players, all players’ bodies and sticks will be prohibited from being positioned within 8 meters of the goal circle above goal line extended. See diagram below (not drawn to scale). Players’ bodies and sticks must be positioned outside of the red lines.</p> <p>Pursuant to the current positioning of players, bodies and sticks (except for the shooter’s stick) must remain outside of the 8-meter arc and restricted area. Defenders are entitled to the adjacent hashes.</p>

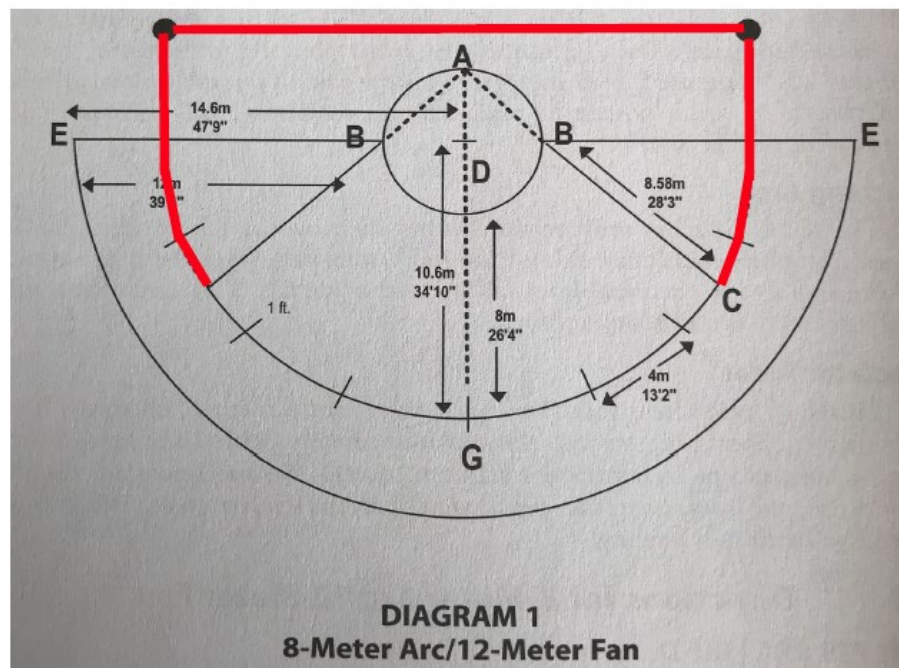


DIAGRAM 1
8-Meter Arc/12-Meter Fan

Rationale: This proposed change will help eliminate shooting space fouls during free positions within 8 meters of the goal circle and above goal line extended, which ultimately promotes student-athlete safety. This proposed change will also allow for better and simpler administration of games. Finally, this proposed change should help address the challenges of officiating the timing and physical play of stack like formations that became more common and troublesome during free position shots this past season.