

States May Adopt 90-Second Possession Clock Next Year for Girls Lacrosse

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Starting with the 2027 girls lacrosse season, state high school associations may establish a 90-second possession clock.

This was one of 10 changes approved by the NFHS Girls Lacrosse Rules Committee at its June 15-17 meeting in Indianapolis. All recommended changes were later approved by the NFHS Board of Directors.

“The implementation of a possession clock has been a topic of conversation within high school girls lacrosse over the last several years,” said Barb Martinichio, chair of the NFHS Girls Lacrosse Rules Committee. “The rules committee has been monitoring the New York State Public High School Athletic Association’s 90-second possession clock experiment over the past two years and with overwhelming state association support for state adoption, the committee felt this was the next step in the evolution of the game to support the development of the student-athletes.”

The new rule outlines the requirements for adopting a possession clock, giving states the option to implement the measure to help reduce stalling and increase the pace of play.

Changes were also made regarding uniforms. Beginning January 1, 2031, home team jerseys must be white. The update aligns girls lacrosse with other NFHS uniform requirements and removes ambiguity.

Another significant revision concerns pocket stringing. The change provides more detailed guidance on equipment, clarifying that the pocket must be attached directly to the head through stringing holes. The update aligns with USA Lacrosse standards and eliminates non-integral stringing that can create a competitive advantage. It also establishes clearer parameters for officials to reduce gamesmanship and addresses elastic filaments that allow the pocket shape to change dynamically during play.

Clarifying language was also added to the illegal switching of sticks. The revised rule explicitly states that players may not switch sticks with another player on the field or receive a stick from the bench area during live play without properly entering and exiting through the substitution area. Stick changes remain permitted after a goal is scored and during time-outs.

Additional changes addressed crosse inspection ensuring the ball is mobile from sidewall to sidewall on the front and upper third of the back of the pocket, allowing players suspected of injury to remain in the game when it is determined that no health-care provider or coach is needed to enter the field and attend to the player, and establishing guidance for when a goal counts following the release of a shot before the horn ending the quarter or overtime period.

“The rules committee prioritized creating equitable and fair rules around stick stringing and exchange rules, improving pace and game flow while creating consistency with other NFHS

rules codes,” said Lindsey Atkinson, NFHS director of sports and liaison to the NFHS Girls Lacrosse Rules Committee.

A complete listing of the girls lacrosse rules changes will be available on the NFHS website at www.nfhs.org. Click on “Sports” at the top of the home page and select “Girls Lacrosse” and then “Rules.” The print version of the 2027 Girls Lacrosse Rules Book will be available for purchase in October at www.NFHS.com, and the digital version will be available in the same timeframe via NFHS Digital at www.NFHS.org.

According to the 2024-25 NFHS High School Athletics Participation Survey, a total of 99,292 girls participated in girls lacrosse at 1,682 schools across the country.