



March 25, 2026

NFHS Boys Lacrosse Weekly Rule Interpretations

Goalkeeper Rules

Two new rules impact goalkeepers and field players who attempt to serve as the goalkeeper. The first change minimizes risk by creating a more severe penalty for players who act as a goalkeeper. If a player, other than the properly equipped goalkeeper, enters the crease with the intent to block a shot, it is a personal foul for illegal equipment. The second change eliminates the five seconds awarded to a goalkeeper to re-enter the crease on any restart. This change aligns the treatment of a goalkeeper as a field player while outside the crease.

Goalkeeper equipment:

In addition to the equipment required for all players, goalkeepers must wear:

1. Throat protector designed for lacrosse.
2. Chest protector designed for lacrosse that is certified by SEI to the NOCSAE ND200 lacrosse standard at the time of manufacture.

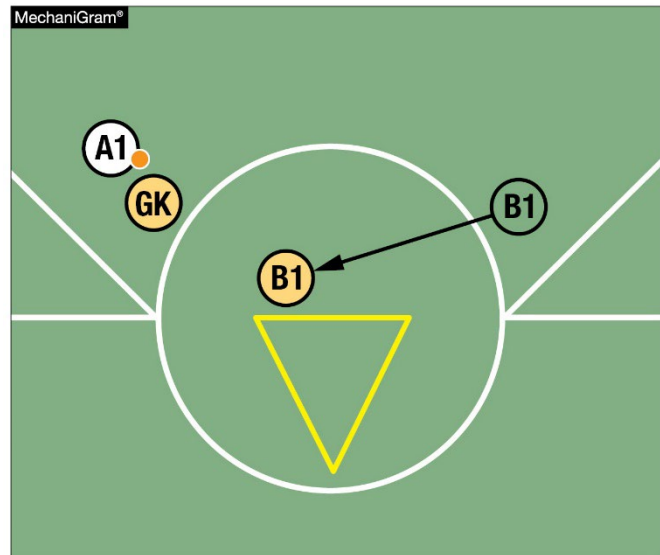
Optional:

1. Shin guards.
2. Football pants with or without pads.
3. Shoulder pads designed for lacrosse that are certified by SEI to the NOCSAE ND200 lacrosse standard at the time of manufacture.
4. Arm pads designed for lacrosse.

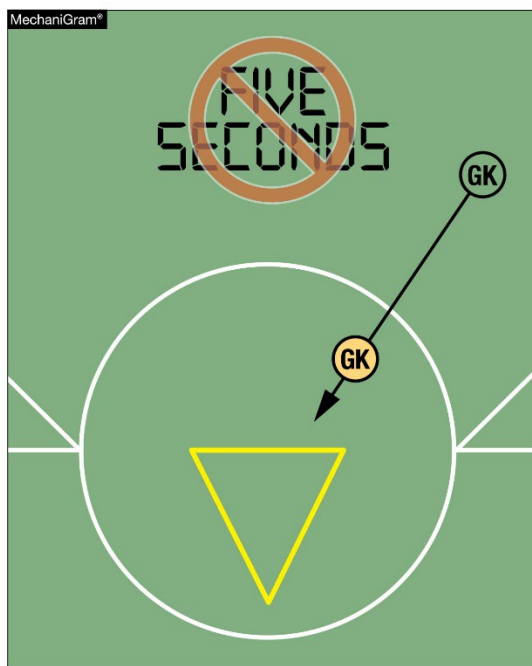
SITUATION 1: Team A begins the game with 10 players. Due to absences and injuries, Team A is down to nine eligible players. During an injury time-out, the coach for Team A directs the goalkeeper to remove the goalkeeper equipment and play the remainder of the game as a field player. The official reminds Team A's coach that they must have a legally equipped goalkeeper on the field at all times. **RULING:** Correct procedure. **COMMENT:** Team A may continue playing with fewer than ten players on the field and one of those players must be a legally equipped goalkeeper. If the team has fewer than seven on-field players, the game will not continue and the result of the game will be determined by the state association. (2-1-1 & 2-1-3)

SITUATION 2: Team A wants to substitute goalkeepers during play. While the ball is Team A's offensive end of the field, goalkeeper A1 runs off the field of play through the substitution area. Goalkeeper A2 is properly equipped and immediately enters the field of play from the substitution area. **RULING:** Legal substitution. **COMMENT:** Goalkeepers may substitute without waiting for suspension of play by an official as long as they follow the substitution procedure and a properly equipped substitute enters without delay. (2-1-1, 4-21-1)

SITUATION 3: A1 takes a shot while goalkeeper GK is away from the crease area. While the shot is in flight, B1 non-goalkeeper-defender steps in the crease to block the shot. **RULING:** Play-on until the shot comes to its normal conclusion. B1 is assessed a personal foul for illegal equipment and serves a one-minute non-releasable penalty. **COMMENT:** Non-goalkeeper-defenders are not equipped to safely enter the crease and block a shot.



ILLEGAL



SITUATION 4: Team A's goalkeeper is outside of the crease when Team B is awarded the ball for a restart. Should the official allow Team A's goalkeeper a maximum of five seconds to resume position?

RULING: No. **COMMENT:** The goalkeeper is treated as a field player while outside the crease. The game shall resume as quickly as possible. (4-22-1)