

NFHS and USA Lacrosse Boys' High School Lacrosse Rules Interpretations, Approved Rulings and Officiating Mechanics | February 5, 2024

Please note the comments, interpretations, and approved rulings that appear below are intended to clarify items not explicitly covered in the 2024 NFHS Boys' Lacrosse Rules Book for the 2024 season.

Rules Book Corrections

P. 46 rule 4.14 ART. 3 . . . Once the ball has been successfully advanced into the goal area, a team is provided the opportunity to run its offense in its offensive half of the field.

If the offensive team carries, passes or propels the ball to its defensive half of the field and the offensive team was last in possession, and last touched the ball (except on shot), the result will be an immediate turnover or play-on.

If the ball does not touch the center line or something over the center line, no infraction has occurred. A defensive player may reach over the center line with the crosse and bat the ball to keep it in the team's offensive half and thus prevent an over-and-back violation. However, that player may NOT reach over the center line and bat the ball with a foot or any other part of the body excluding the gloved hand wrapped around the crosse. If that player does so, it shall be a turnover

P. 52 - 4.19.5 SITUATION B: The goalkeeper makes a save. When out of the crease, A1 legally checks B1 back into the crease, while B1 is still in possession of the ball.

RULING: The ball is awarded to Team A.

P. 75 - 6.5.2 SITUATION D: During the course of play, goalkeeper B1, while in the crease has his stick broken or any other mandatory equipment becomes broken or dislodged.

RULING: The officials will stop play as soon as they notice the problem. However, if a shot is already in flight when the equipment becomes broken or dislodged, the shot will be allowed to come to its normal conclusion before the whistle blows to stop play.

Rule Interpretations

Question #1: What happens when the goalie leaves the crease during live play? How is the goalie treated once the whistle is blown to stop play and we have a dead ball?

Answer:

1. Live Ball - When the goalie leaves the crease during live ball play, they assume the role of a field player. (Rule 4-24-1)
2. Dead Ball - Once play is stopped with a whistle, while anywhere on the field, the goalkeeper privileges apply again. The following situation may occur.
 - a. If the crosse was lost in a legal way, the goalie may retrieve their crosse and officials should then give the goalie up to five seconds to return to their crease.
 - b. If the goalie's stick is broken, they can get a replacement from the sideline officials should initiate a 20-second countdown. (Rule 4.24.1 Situation D)

Question #2: What is the consequence if the goalie, while outside the crease, breaks or loses their stick and continues to participate in live-ball play without it?

Answer: This is a technical foul. (Rule 4.24.1 Situation B and Rule 6.5.2 Situation K)

Question #3: What happens if a helmet comes off during live play? Is the play stopped immediately, must the player leave the field, and can they return before the next dead ball?

Answer: The objective of this new Rule/Procedure is to encourage proper equipment usage. There are no exceptions to this rule. For the 2024 season, the NFHS rule is as follows;

- For the NFHS Rule, there is no foul for a helmet coming off as a result of normal play. This is different from the NCAA rule, which treats it as a technical foul.
- If a helmet unintentionally comes off during play, the game is stopped immediately, and the player whose helmet came off must leave the field.
 - If Team A had possession, Team A maintains possession.
 - If Team B had possession, Team B maintains possession.
 - If the ball is loose, the officials will use alternate possession (AP) to determine possession.
- Helmets being removed intentionally to stop play, like to prevent a goal, are subject to a 1,2, or 3-minute non-releasable unsportsmanlike conduct penalty at the official's discretion.
- For helmets that are knocked off as the result of a foul, the player who lost the helmet must still leave the field and may not return until the next dead ball. The officials will adjudicate the foul as they would in any other situation.

- When a player's helmet comes off during live play, a timeout called during the stoppage does not permit that player to remain in the game. However once the player has left the game and play resumes, if the team is entitled to a timeout, they can do so, and the player that lost his helmet can then return to the game.

2024 Approved Helmet Situations

Rule 4-24 ART. 11. . . If a player has the helmet come off during play, play shall be suspended immediately, and the player shall leave the field until after the next dead ball following the resumption of play.

SITUATION 1: A1 loses their helmet, play is stopped, and A1 must leave the field until after the next dead ball following the resumption of play. (a) Is Team A allowed 20 seconds for the substitution? (b) Is Team B allowed to substitute on the same stoppage?

RULING: (a) Yes. (b) Yes.

SITUATION 2 : A1, with possession of the ball, loses their helmet as he is about to shoot on goal. A1 shoots after losing their helmet, and the ball enters the goal.

RULING: Immediate whistle upon the loss of the helmet. No goal. A1 must leave the field until after the next dead ball following the resumption of play. Award the ball to Team A outside the goal area.

SITUATION 3: A1, with possession of the ball, is legally checked by B1, and A1 loses their helmet.

RULING: Immediate whistle upon the loss of the helmet. A1 must leave the field until after the next dead ball following the resumption of play. Award the ball to Team A outside the goal area.

SITUATION 4: A1, with possession of the ball, is illegally checked by B1, and A1 loses their helmet.

RULING: Immediate whistle upon the loss of the helmet. B1 serves 1 to 3 minutes, depending on the illegal check. A1 must leave the field until after the next dead ball following the resumption of play. Award the ball to Team A outside the goal area.

SITUATION 5: A1, with possession of the ball, is illegally checked by B1, and A1 loses their helmet as they are about to shoot on goal. A1 shoots after losing their helmet and the ball enters the goal.

RULING: Immediate whistle upon the loss of the helmet. No goal. A1 must leave the field until after the next dead ball following the resumption of play. B1 serves 1 to 3 minutes, depending on the illegal check. Award the ball to Team A outside the goal area.

SITUATION 6: While the ball is loose, A1 loses their helmet.

RULING: Immediate whistle upon the loss of the helmet. A1 must leave the field until after the next dead ball following the resumption of play. Award the ball by Alternate Possession.

SITUATION 7: A1 has possession of the ball, and B1 loses their helmet.

RULING: Immediate whistle upon the loss of the helmet. B1 must leave the field until after the next dead ball following the resumption of play. Award the ball to Team A outside the goal area. No penalty time is served by B1.

SITUATION 8: A1 shoots on goal. While the shot is in the air, A1 is checked by B1 (a) legally, or (b) illegally; and A1 loses their helmet.

RULING: Since the shot is released before A1's helmet comes off, the shot is allowed to continue to its natural conclusion (see Rule 4-5-6 for the definition of a shot). If the ball enters the goal, the goal counts. If the shot does not result in a goal, the whistle is blown. A1 must leave the field until after the next dead ball following the resumption of play.

(a) If B1's check was legal, award the ball by Alternate Possession since a shot in the air is a loose ball.

(b) If B1's check was illegal, B1 serves 1 to 3 minutes. Award the ball to Team A outside the goal area if no goal was scored; at midfield if a goal was scored.

SITUATION 9: A1 shoots on goal as time is expiring. While the shot is in the air, the horn sounds as time expires, then A1 is checked by B1 (a) legally, or (b) illegally; and A1 loses their helmet.

RULING: Since the shot is released before A1's helmet comes off, the shot is allowed to continue to its natural conclusion. If the ball enters the goal, the goal counts. If the

shot does not result in a goal, the whistle is blown to end the period. A1 must leave the field until after the next dead ball following the resumption of play.

(a) If B1's check was legal, the next period will start with a face-off.

(b) If B1's check was illegal, B1 serves 1 to 3 minutes. Award the ball to Team A in the same relative position on the field (but outside the goal area) to start the next quarter if no goal was scored; at midfield if a goal was scored.

SITUATION 10: A1, with possession of the ball, loses their helmet. A1 leaves the field until after the next dead ball following the resumption of play. (a) Before play resumes after the whistle, or (b) after play resumes after the whistle, Team A Head Coach requests a time out, hoping to create a dead ball to keep A1 in the game.

RULING: (a) Since no time has come off the clock between the whistle for the loss of helmet and the time out, the time out does not count as a dead ball for the purpose of allowing A1 back in the game. A1 must remain off the field until after the next dead ball following the resumption of play after the time out. (b) Since time has come off the clock between the whistle for the loss of helmet and the time out, the time out counts as a dead ball for the purpose of allowing A1 back in the game. A1 may re-enter the game after the time-out.

SITUATION 11: A1 loses their helmet, play is stopped, and A1 is substituted for and leaves the field but returns to the game before the next dead ball. **RULING:** Technical Foul on A1

Officiating Mechanics

- To ensure consistent handling of play restarts when a player's helmet comes off during live play, officials will use their timers which will provide players up to 20 seconds to exit the field and restart play. Factors like injuries or field location might affect the restart time, but the goal of this officiating method is to ensure consistency on restarts.
- If a player's helmet comes off during live play, officials will collaborate with the table crew and his coach to ensure the player stays off the field until the next stoppage. If the player returns prematurely and participates before the next stoppage, it will be treated as a technical foul for Illegal Procedure.