



OWFL Common Rules Questions from Coaches

NOTE: As we say to officials when they ask a question, “*What does your rulebook say?*”. Always refer to the most up-to-date version of the [World Lacrosse Women’s Field Rules Book, 2025-2026 edition](#). Rule modifications contained in the [OWFL 2025 Rule Modifications Summary](#) document should be taken as the official OWFL rule when they conflict with the Rule Book. The text below has been taken directly from the Rule Book to provide clarification to OWFL coaches about commonly asked questions across all OWFL divisions. Blue text is presented as-is from the rule book and represents “guidance” (clarifications) in the rule book. OWFL-specific comments appear in red. Underlined text is for emphasis only. **NEW/changes for 2025 are highlighted in green.** Questions can be directed to owffofficiating@gmail.com. Please cc’ your Club Rep. Questions are encouraged!

Time-Outs

- 12.B.1 Each team may request two 90-second time-outs during regulation play.
- 12.B.1.a **Time-outs are not permitted in overtime.** Time-outs not used during regulation play cannot be used during overtime.
- 12.B.1.b A team may request a time-out:
- 12.B.1.b.i After a goal is scored, or
 - 12.B.1.b.ii When their team is entitled to Possession at the restart of play, following a Dead Ball, anywhere on the field outside the Advantage Flag Area (AFA), or
 - 12.B.1.b.iii **When in Possession of the ball outside the defensive or offensive AFA.**
- 12.B.1.c The coach may request a time-out through the score table, the player who is in Possession or entitled to Possession of the ball may request a time-out directly through a field official. (7.A.2.b) **In the OWFL, when there is a Table Official/Mentor at the table (U9, U11 or U13), a coach may request a timeout directly through that Table Official/Mentor.**
- 12.B.1.d Successive team time-outs are not allowed.
- ① *Play must resume before a following time-out can be requested.*

For more on time-outs, see pg. 19-20 of the Rule Book.

When Can Coaches & Captains Ask Questions?

- 7.A.2 The designated captain: [...]
- 7.A.2.c May approach the officials for clarification of rules during a team time-out, during the break between each quarter, and immediately following the game.
- 8.A The coach, or the captain if a coach is not present: [...]
- 8.A.2 May request a rule clarification from the officials during the break between each quarter and immediately following the game, but not during a team time-out.
- 9.A.11 [The officials] Be available to clarify rules for the captains during a team time-out and for captains and coaches during quarter breaks and immediately following the game.

Jewelry

For player safety, jewelry may NOT be taped.

- 6.A.7 Players may wear securely taped medical alert jewelry with information clearly visible and close-fitting cloth sweat bands. They must remove any other soft jewelry, necklaces, earrings, bracelets, and watches. Wedding rings and religious/ceremonial jewelry must be taped securely to the player or be removed. Flat barrettes or hair slides are legal. Hats/visors with soft neoprene brims may be worn. A hijab may be worn (preferably a sports hijab). The official may rule any hair or body decoration as dangerous to the player or to others and remove it from the field of play. If applicable, the player will be penalized for a minor foul. (19.A.3)
- 6.A.8 Sweat bands must not be worn to cover illegal jewelry.

Changing Sticks on the Field

- 19.A.3.d **Players may exchange Crosses on the field when they are not in Possession of the ball. A player may not take an active part in the game if they are holding multiple Crosses. A bench staff member in the coaching zone only may hand a Crosse to a player when the play is dead e.g. before a Draw. A Crosse may never be thrown in an attempt to exchange Crosses with a teammate or bench staff member. (19.A.6)**

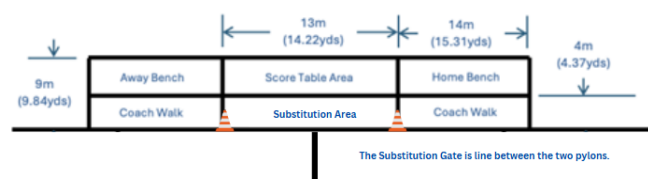
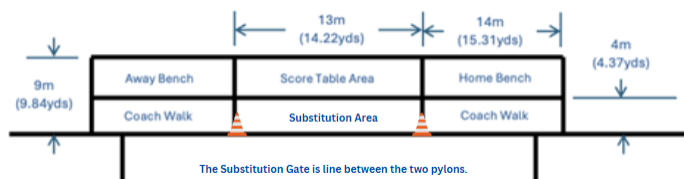
Substitution

In U9 and U11, which play on a smaller modified field, the shared substitution box will enable teams to not go offside while substituting, given their restraining line is the centre of the field.

- 14.A.2 Players substituting after a legal goal is scored may immediately enter the field through the Substitution Area and Substitution Gate and do not have to wait for the teammate(s) they are replacing to come off the field.
- 14.A.3 Players substituting must substitute from the *Team Bench Area* to the *Substitution Area*. As an on-field player approaches the *Substitution Gate*, the player in the *Substitution Area* may enter the *Substitution Area* and approach the *Substitution Gate*. As soon as the on-field player has exited the field and entered the *Substitution Area* (both feet), the substituting player may enter the field. Players substituting should not remain in the *Substitution Area* and should avoid collision with other players and must provide a clear view for scorers.
- 14.A.4 Only players in the process of substituting, are permitted in the *Substitution Area*.

Regular Field (U13, U15, U19, JEWL) Substitution Area Overview:

U9, U11 Substitution Area Overview:



For more on Substitution, see pg. 23-24 of the Rule Book.

Covering **Withholding** the Ball

Covering is no longer a foul. The Covering rule is now called “Withholding the Ball” and has been updated as follows:

- 19.A.8 **Withholding the Ball:** If an opponent is able to make a legal play on the ball:
- 19.A.8.a A player must not trap a loose ball on the ground with their Crosse longer than is necessary to control the ball and pick it up in one continuous motion. **Raking the ball is permitted.**
 - 19.A.8.b A player must not withhold the ball from play with any part of their body.

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- 19.A.8.c A player must not withhold the ball from play in any other manner.
- 19.A.8.d **Exception:** If the goalkeeper is Grounded in their Goal-Circle and the ball is inside the Goal-Circle, they may trap the ball as per *Rule 17.A.1.b*.

Requesting a Stick Inspection When an Opponent's Stick May be Illegal

Even though officials no longer do stick inspections before each game and players are no longer required to dop their sticks after goals, players are still responsible for their sticks to be legal, including the pocket depth. Most sticks built specifically for Women's Field Lacrosse are legal.

- 3.B.1 At any time during play, an official may take time-out to inspect the pocket of a field Crosse.
- 3.B.2 Any player on the field may request an official to inspect the pocket of an opponent's Crosse when their team has Possession of a Dead Ball or directly after a goal is scored.
- 3.B.3 If at any time during play the ball becomes lodged in a field player's Crosse, the Crosse no longer meets specifications. An official will take a time-out to remove the illegal Crosse to the scorer's table. To resume play, the opponent nearest to the ball will be awarded a Free Position for a minor foul. (19.A.3)

11.B A GOAL IS NOT SCORED WHEN:

- 11.B.8 The ball enters the goal from an attack player's illegal Crosse. (19.A.3.c)
- 11.B.9 The player who shot the goal, when requested by an official, does not drop or hand their Crosse to the nearest official immediately. (19.A.3.e)
- 11.B.10 The player who shot the goal, or any teammate, adjusts the players Crosse in any way before dropping the Crosse or handing it to the official. (19.A.3.e)

19.A.3 Illegal Equipment: A player must not take part in a game:

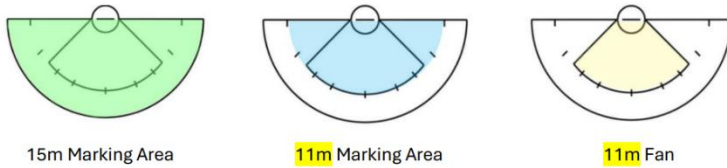
- 19.A.3.a Unless their equipment is legal. (APPENDIX H)
- 19.A.3.c Unless they are holding a legal Crosse.
- 19.A.3.e A player must not adjust the thongs of their Crosse after an official asks to inspect their Crosse. (11.B.9, 11.B.10).

19.A.4 **Illegal Crosse Request:** When their team has Possession of a dead ball, or directly after a goal is scored, a team must not request, for a second time, the inspection of an opponent's Crosse that has previously received a Crosse inspection, and where it met specifications.

- ① Any player on the field may request an official to inspect the pocket of an opponent's Crosse on a Dead Ball when their team has possession or directly after a goal is scored.
- ① The player requesting the Crosse inspection must provide the official with the shirt number of the opponent whose Crosse will be inspected, or indicate which Crosse should be inspected.
- ① An inspection may be requested against a specific Crosse, that does not have to be in use on the field at the time of the request. If the Crosse is deemed to be illegal, the penalty will be served by the nearest opponent, 4m to the side.
- ① When the Crosse is ruled illegal, it must be placed at the scorer's table for the remainder of the period. If the Crosse cannot be made legal, it must remain at the scorer's table for the remainder of the game.

When a Crosse is ruled illegal, it must be placed at the scorer's table for the remainder of the quarter. The pocket can be readjusted by a coach, member of the team bench staff, or player, and re-checked at the next break between quarters.

Areas of the Field

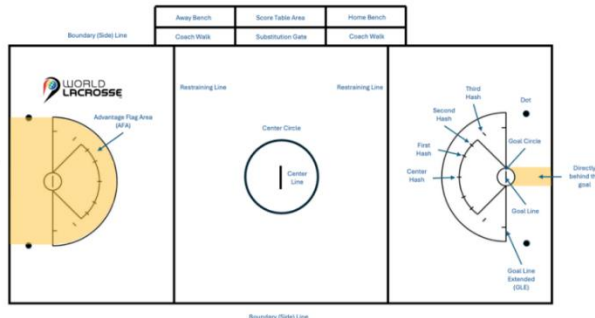


The old lines are back! All OWFL fields, including U9 and U11, will have a 15m MA (Marking Area), 11m MA, and an 11m Fan in 2025.

- ① Defenders are entitled to a position on the hash marks closest to the attack player who is awarded the Free Position.
- ① Note that a player awarded a Free Position within the AFA is not allowed to self-start.

For Major Fouls inside the 11m MA, **Rule 20.B.4.a:** The center hash mark, first hash mark and second hash mark are used for Free Position placement. The third hash mark is not used for the ball carrier (it is used to place the defender 4m away). The hash at 11m along GLE is not used for penalty administration.

Shooting Space



20.A.19 **Shooting Space:** A defender must not block or guard the goal, with any part of their body for the purpose of obstructing the shooting lane (Diagram 6). Obstructing this space denies the attacking team the opportunity to shoot safely.

- 20.A.19.a This rule is in effect only when the attacking team is in Possession of the ball within the 15m MA. (Diagram 7)
- 20.A.19.b Obstruction of the Shooting Space occurs when a defender is illegally in the Shooting Space at their own initiation.
- 20.A.19.c A defender is not obstructing the Shooting Space if they are:

- 20.A.19.c.i Drawn into and or through the shooting lane by an opponent they are legally marking Within a Crosse Length, approximately 1.5 m.
- 20.A.19.c.ii Standing below the GLE. (20.A.19, 20.A.20, Diagram 7)

- ① This call should be made only if the ball carrier is "looking" to shoot and has the opportunity to shoot.
- ① When approaching the ball carrier, a defender's body, not their Crosse, must be outside the Shooting Space until they are Within a Crosse Length of the ball carrier.
- ① Defenders who are Within a Crosse Length and double teaming a player without the ball are exempt from Shooting Space, but they must not stay in the 11m Fan for more than three seconds.

Three Seconds

- 20.A.20 A defender must not remain in the 11m Fan for more than three seconds unless they are marking an opponent Within a Crosse Length, approximately 1.5m. (Diagram 7)
- 20.A.20.a Only one defender may mark the same opponent without the ball in the **11m Fan.**
- 20.A.20.b **For a defensive player to be considered "inside" the 11m Fan both feet must be fully in the 11m Fan. Once one foot is on the 11m Fan line or beyond, this defensive player is considered "out" and is no longer eligible for Three Seconds.**
- 20.A.20.c The Three Seconds rule takes effect when the team in Possession of the ball crosses the ball over the Restraining-Line into their attacking end of the field.
- 20.A.20.d A defender who is marking an unmarked opponent standing directly behind the Goal-Circle is exempt from the Three Seconds rule but is not exempt from Shooting Space rule (Diagram 7, 20.A.19)

- ① When a defender is marking an unmarked attacker standing directly behind the Goal-Circle and one of their defensive teammates moves behind goal to directly mark that attack player Within a Crosse Length, the defender may not remain in the 11m Fan for more than three seconds.
- ① While an unmarked opponent remains directly behind the Goal-Circle, if a defender, who is marking that player is drawn into a double team in front of goal by other opponent(s) without the ball, that defender cannot be penalized for the Three Seconds rule.





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How Can Coaches Provide Feedback About Officiating?

The 24-hour rule is in effect for any negative or constructive feedback. Please wait 24 hours following the end of the game/incident to provide your feedback in writing to the Director of Officiating. Positive feedback and questions may be submitted any time. All feedback and inquiries can be sent to owflofficiating@gmail.com and ***be sure to cc' your club rep.*** A phone call may be scheduled after the preliminary email has been sent, but it is important to maintain a paper trail to ensure follow-up.

Officials are going to make mistakes. Odds are that rules will be misapplied in your game(s), particularly with less experienced officials. A reminder that over 50% of OWFL officials are under the age of 18, the youngest of whom could be 14 when our season starts. We are all learning all the time. Feedback is appreciated and will be considered, but one-off concerns over misapplied rules is not the intent of this feedback system, particularly if an Official's Coach (mentor) is able to address those concerns with the official in-person during or after the game.

The primary objective of providing feedback is to address *ongoing and/or repeated* misapplications of the rules, overarching concerns, or questions from coaches and clubs. We encourage and appreciate your questions.

