2026 NFHS Boys Lacrosse

Coaches Preseason Rules Meeting Brief

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1. Crease Rule Change

Defensive players may not enter their own crease to block a shot or act as a goalkeeper.

Only a properly equipped goalkeeper is allowed to play inside the crease.

Penalty

Personal foul

Illegal equipment

Non releasable

Coaching point

Stop teaching players to step into the crease to save a goal. That habit is now a guaranteed penalty.

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2. Goalkeeper Restarts

The old five second allowance for a goalkeeper to re enter the crease on a restart is gone.

If your goalie is outside the crease at restart, he is treated as a field player.

Coaching point

Have your goalie aware of positioning before dead ball restarts. Officials will not wait for him to jog back.

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3. Helmet Comes Off

If a player’s helmet comes off during live play:

Immediate whistle

Technical foul for illegal procedure

Exception

If it comes off due to direct contact by an opponent, it is not a foul.

Coaching point

Make sure chin straps are secured and helmets fit correctly. Loose equipment is now a liability.

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4. Mouthguard Update

Color restrictions are gone.

Still required

Must be worn properly

No decorative items that do not serve a protective purpose

Coaching point

Officials are looking for proper use, not color.

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5. Holding Clarified

Holding now clearly includes:

Hooking

Lifting

Pinning the body with the crosse

If your player uses the stick to control the opponent’s body instead of playing the stick, it will be called.

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6. Faceoff Administration

Repeated adjustments at the faceoff X can now result in delay of game.

Coaching point

Have your faceoff athletes set correctly the first time. Officials will not tolerate prolonged setup.

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7. Penalty Restarts

All penalty restarts will be administered laterally outside the goal area.

This is about consistency and faster administration.

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8. Bench and Field Requirements

Required for 2026:

Cones at the corners of team areas

Working horn at the scorer’s table

If the horn does not work, it must be fixed before play.

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9. Interrupted Games

If a game cannot resume the same day and the score is not tied:

Game becomes official once 75 percent of regulation time has been played.

State associations may adjust.

Points of Emphasis

Proper equipment wear

Head and neck safety

Sportsmanship

Coach conduct

Pregame administrative readiness

This year’s direction is clear. Safety and game control.

What This Means for Coaches

1. Eliminate crease entry habits immediately.
2. Secure helmets every practice.
3. Clean up faceoff mechanics.
4. Reinforce sportsmanship from the sideline.

Officials will be consistent early to set the tone. The smoother your team operates, the fewer problems you will have.