

2025-26 GIRLS LACROSSE COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, October 8, 2025 – 9:30 a.m. – East Lansing

MEMBERS PRESENT

Paige Comito, Bloomfield Hills
Joe Curcuru, Grand Rapids
Ben Farkas, Hudsonville
Kaili Miller, Haslett
Zach Maghes, Saline
Eric Pierce, West Bloomfield

Reo Rodriguez, Grand Ledge
Daniel Russell, Jenison
Adrian Trzebiatowski, Swartz Creek
Rich Kieft, Lansing (MATS)

MHSAA STAFF

Kathy Vruggink Westdorp (Recorder)

GENERAL REVIEW/STATUS OF GIRLS LACROSSE

The 2025-26 Girls Lacrosse Committee met at the MHSAA to fulfill its responsibilities as a standing sports committee. Its work included reviewing prior Representative Council action and examining current MHSAA girls lacrosse policy. Members of this committee were provided with a history of the teams/schools participating in girls lacrosse and how the sport has grown. Also provided were the approved cooperative programs, important dates and times, and rules changes. According to NFHS data, girls' lacrosse ranks 10th in participation among the ten most popular girls' programs. There are currently 106 officials registered in girls lacrosse and 95 teams/134 schools participating in 2025-26. The committee generated information on possible upcoming programs throughout Michigan. There are currently 32 approved cooperative programs and questions were answered regarding the cooperative program limitations as well as Regulation I, Section 1(E), which provided information on the framework of cooperative programs.

The 2025-26 girls lacrosse rules changes were also reviewed and include the following:

- Stick checks may be requested at any point during a quarter break, halftime, a team time-out, prior to the start of an overtime period, prior to the start of a draw, and immediately following goals in regulation and overtime periods.
- No on-field player can wear an audio or video device during the game.
- If a possession time-out is called when the goalkeeper has possession of the ball in the goal circle, play will resume at the closest dot and any player may restart play.
- When one player draws illegally, the free position may be taken by any player on the opponent's team at the spot of the ball.
- When a goal circle foul is committed, the offending player shall move 4 meters away from the player taking the free position instead of behind.

The minutes of the October 2024 Girls Lacrosse Committee meeting were also reviewed to provide background on prior discussions and actions of the committee.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Additional health and safety topics were discussed, with an emphasis on the need for consistent enforcement of rules regarding stick-to-body contact. Coaches and officials were reminded to remain vigilant in applying safety regulations designed to protect players and uphold the integrity of the game.

Epidemiology summary reports from the MHSAA Head Injury Reporting System were reviewed, covering the 2021-22 through 2024-25 school years. The data indicated that in 2021-22, 3,053 girls participated in lacrosse, with a prevalence rate of head injuries of 2.12%. In comparison, during the 2024-25 school year, participation increased to 3,194 athletes, while the prevalence rate of head injuries decreased to 1.47%.

Girls lacrosse equipment compliance was also reviewed. Headgear remains optional; however, any headgear used must meet the ASTM performance standard F3137 and display the SEI certification mark. Field players who choose to wear headgear must do so as the manufacturer intends, with the chinstrap securely fastened. USA Lacrosse and the NFHS will continue to collaborate with sport science and safety organizations, rule-making bodies, and other leaders to assess how emerging data should inform future policy.

It was reiterated that headgear—whether for men’s or women’s lacrosse—is only one part of a comprehensive approach to player safety. Education, adherence to age-appropriate rules, sport-specific coach training, and the use of certified officials all play critical roles in reducing risk.

Girls lacrosse eyewear must be SEI-certified and listed on the SEI website. All eyewear is required to bear the SEI certification mark by **January 1, 2025**. Participants are responsible for maintaining their protective equipment in good condition, ensuring that it remains in its original, unmodified state and is worn as intended to maximize safety. The committee placed particular emphasis on calling dangerous play more strictly to enhance player protection.

The committee also discussed strategies to increase participation in girls lacrosse while maintaining a strong focus on player health and safety. Key points included the importance of consistent rule enforcement by officials and proactive emphasis on safety by coaches. A positive and inclusive team culture was identified as essential to retaining current players, attracting new participants, and encouraging additional coaches to join the sport. Collaboration between high schools and middle schools was seen as a valuable opportunity to expand programs and promote growth. It was noted that some of the secondary co-op program schools were not effectively highlighting or promoting the sport as a visible opportunity for their students.

The committee reaffirmed the importance of supporting coaches and maintaining the broader perspective of educational athletics. Reducing barriers to participation and creating opportunities for more young women to learn and enjoy the game remain central goals moving forward.

FIFTH QUARTER

The discussion also addressed the implementation of the 5th-quarter rule, which girls lacrosse adopted in the 2024-25 school year. Members discussed whether the rule is being utilized as intended and emphasized the importance of maintaining focus on its original purpose—supporting subvarsity programs and promoting player development. The regulation is designed to assist smaller teams in fielding competitive rosters and to help schools build and sustain subvarsity opportunities. Continued emphasis will be placed on adherence to both the letter and the spirit of the rule.

Under the rule, a student or team may participate in no more than five quarters in a single day, and in no more than three games and/or interscholastic scrimmages per week (Monday through Sunday), including regular-season and MHSAA tournament play. An individual team is limited to one game per school day. Additionally, a student or team may participate in no more than four interscholastic scrimmages and no more than 18 games, exclusive of MHSAA tournament play. Overtime is considered an extension of the fourth quarter.

MICHIGAN POWER RATING

The use of the MPR (Michigan Power Rating) system over the past few years was reviewed, along with a discussion of its current processes and impact. Committee members noted that the system has been instrumental in elevating the visibility of girls lacrosse, as more schools are consistently submitting scores to ensure accurate MPR data. This accuracy is essential for properly distinguishing the first and second seeds within each regional.

Further discussion highlighted that the MPR provides an objective method for assessing a team's strength relative to others, based on results against MHSAA tournament opponents and the overall strength of those opponents' schedules. Maintaining the core principles of scholastic competition within the MPR framework remains critical.

OVERTIME

Several years ago, the rule of "sudden victory" overtime was not adopted by the MHSAA Committee. The 2025-26 Girls Lacrosse Committee affirmed that the previous overtime rule will continue to be retained. This includes the scenario where the score is tied at the end of regular playing time and overtime is to be played. In this case, both teams will have a 5-minute rest and toss a coin (with the visiting captain calling) to determine the choice of ends. Two 3-minute "halves" of overtime will be played. The clock will be stopped after 3 minutes of play, allowing teams to change ends with no delay for coaching. The game will be restarted by a center draw. The team that is ahead at the end of six minutes wins the game. If the teams are still tied after six minutes have elapsed, the teams will have a 3-minute rest and change ends. The winner will then be decided on a "sudden victory" stop-clock overtime of no more than six minutes in length with the teams changing ends after 3 minutes. The team scoring the first goal wins the game. Play will continue with "sudden victory" overtime periods of six minutes in length (two 3-minute halves) with 3 minutes in between and change of ends until a winning goal is scored. The committee elected to retain the rule, citing there was equal opportunity for play in the established six minutes.

2026 MHSAA GIRLS LACROSSE TOURNAMENT

The teams and schools participating in the 2026 MHSAA Girls Lacrosse Tournament were shared with the committee. There may be additional schools that will still offer girls lacrosse in the 2025-26 season. Division 1 and Division 2 enrollment numbers were also studied, with 48 teams currently in Division 1 (enrollment 1,722 and above) and 47 teams in Division 2 (enrollment 1,721 and below). Schools participating in the MHSAA Girls Lacrosse Tournament have continued to increase in numbers over the years.

Girls Lacrosse Tournament dates were also reviewed. The online rules meeting for girls lacrosse will be available on February 9, 2026, and ends on April 16, 2026. Practice for girls lacrosse begins Monday, March 9, 2026, and the first available contest date is Wednesday, March 18, 2026. The 2025 Girls Lacrosse Tournament was also reviewed for additional points of information. The University of Michigan Lacrosse Stadium is not available for boys and girls lacrosse in 2026. A review of additional college and high school stadiums will be made for the 2026 Lacrosse Tournament.

The tournament format and expected Regional/Semifinal sites were evaluated, and there will be four Regionals in Division 1 and four Regionals in Division 2. Currently, several games will be played as "Pre-Regional" games. The Division 1 structure is currently at 12-12-12-12 (48) and the Division 2 structure is currently at 12-11-12-12 (47). The committee also reviewed the intended Regional sites and several sites for the Semifinal games. Host managers may host all levels of the Regional tournament if desired.

The alternate site travel accommodation rule for lacrosse was reviewed, which indicates that MHSAA staff may change the date, time, and location of a previously scheduled tournament game if the originally scheduled game involves extensive travel for both teams and an acceptable site can be secured. The determination includes consultation with both teams and the Tournament Manager and may require that the competing teams secure an acceptable field.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE MHSAA REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL

None.