

**RAISE YOUR GAME**



**US LACROSSE NATIONAL STANDARDS FOR YOUTH LACROSSE:  
RULES AND BEST PRACTICES FOR A POSITIVE AND SAFE PLAYING  
EXPERIENCE FOR KIDS – 11.13.11 NJJGLL Presentation**



## US Lacrosse's Mission

US Lacrosse is the national governing body of lacrosse. Through responsive and effective leadership, USL strives to provide programs and services to inspire participation while protecting the integrity of the sport.



RAISE YOUR GAME

# Rationale for National Standards and Best Practices

The establishment and adoption of consistent national standards and best practices will provide the best possible lacrosse playing experience for girls and boys



RAISE YOUR GAME

# Why Does The Sport Need National Standards?

1. Provide the best and safest playing experience possible
2. Provide a consistent national infrastructure for the sport
3. Better enable the national governing body of the sport to more effectively pursue our mission.
4. Help US Lacrosse to target areas in need of support and deliver affordable and accessible programs to those working to responsibly grow the sport .



RAISE YOUR GAME

# National Standards for Youth Lacrosse

1. Youth Rules
2. Diversification and Program Development
3. Education & Training of Coaches, Officials, Parents
4. National Structure / Regional Segmentation
5. Communications
6. Best Practices



RAISE YOUR GAME

# Why Is US Lacrosse Best Positioned To Develop National Standards for Youth Lacrosse?

- Our focus is ensuring kids having a safe and fun lacrosse experience
- The collective knowledge and wisdom specific to youth lacrosse that US Lacrosse represents through its volunteers leadership and staff is unparalleled
- We are committed to effectively and consistently educating and training those who teach and enforce the rules of the youth game
- The majority of US Lacrosse membership are kids under the age of 15 and the adults who support them.



RAISE YOUR GAME

# Who Are These Standards Intended to Help?

- Recreational elementary and middle school programs
  - Players
  - Youth League Administrators
  - Parents of youth players
  - Tournament Directors
  - Assignors
  - Officials and Coaches



RAISE YOUR GAME

# Developmentally and Age Appropriate Rules are Developed with Input From Youth Game Experts and Best Practice Leagues

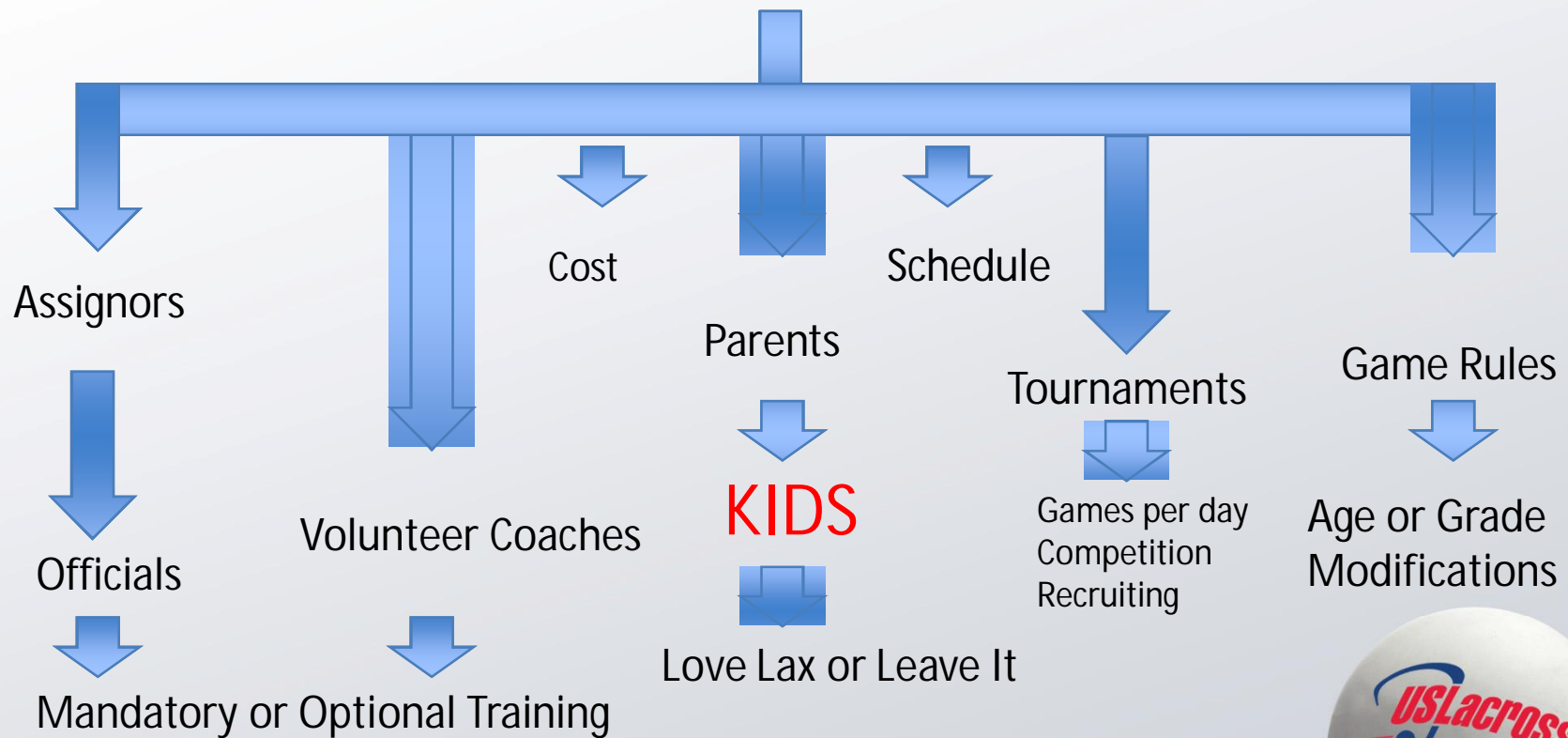
- USL Board and Game Leadership (W/M rules)
- Sport Science & Safety Experts
- Constituencies (Coaches, Officials, Parents, Players, Administrators)
- Chapters
- Youth Leagues
- Youth Event Organizers
- Youth Assignors
- NFHS



RAISE YOUR GAME

# Youth Rules: Key Influencers and Decision Makers

Youth League Program Administrators



RAISE YOUR GAME

# Early Adopters: Best Practice Leagues Raising Profile of Successful Youth Lacrosse Programs

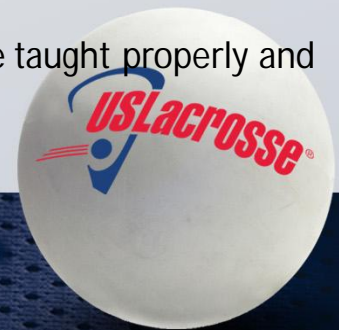
- Youth Leagues like NCJLA are Leaders in Youth Lacrosse
  - Established program with strong participation rates
  - Value responsible growth
  - Place safety first
  - Support and promote positive coaching and good sportsmanship
  - Use trained officials and coaches
  - Support US Lacrosse
  - Teach fundamentals and core skills
  - Place kids first



RAISE YOUR GAME

# US Lacrosse Youth Rules for 2012 and Beyond: Defined Minimum Standards, Age Groupings and Cut-off Date

- US Lacrosse Rules for boys/girls play are developmentally and age-appropriate adaptations of the high school game.
  - Sport Science & Safety provides medical guidance with the development of a Boys' and Girls Youth Lacrosse Participation paper (9.11)
- Age and Developmentally Appropriate Rules
  - Age versus Grade Groupings: U-15, U-13, U-11 and U-9
    - Players need opportunity to develop skills, learn rules and play well with peers.
    - Playing with friends is important, but without a minimum standard based on age, there could be as much as a 4 year age difference amongst players on a single team.
    - At U-9-11, body contact (boys) and stick checking (girls) is limited, but should be taught properly and introduced as the players develop



RAISE YOUR GAME

# US Lacrosse Youth Rules for 2012 and Beyond: Defined Minimum Standards, Age Groupings and Cut-off Date

US Lacrosse Cut-off Date for Participation in Age Groups  
Change from Dec. 31 to Aug. 31

- The Aug 31 date is in line with most schools and allows kids who are on a traditional education track (not held back or pushed forward a grade) to participate in the same age division.
- The Dec 31 date created a situation where kids born between Sept 1 and Dec 31 were pushed into a different division from the rest of their classmates.
- Traditionally people view the end of summer as the “close” of a competitive year in lacrosse and the fall as the beginning of a new competitive year.



RAISE YOUR GAME

# Main Areas of Changes for USL Youth Girls Rules (U-9 thru U-15)

- Age and Developmentally Appropriate Rules
  - Age versus Grade Groupings: U-15, U-13, U-11 and U-9)
  - Cut-off Date for Participation in Age Groups – Change to August 31
- Stick Contact (U-9 and U-11 no checking, U-13 -modified, U-15 full-checking, all levels no checking through sphere and towards body)
- Game Play (No Deputy in Goal for All Levels)
- Penalties (intentional hits to head at U-15 are an automatic red card)
- Addition of Best Practices to guide Acceptable Modifications of Minimum Rule Standards



RAISE YOUR GAME

## Main Areas of Changes for USL Girls Rules (HS, Youth, WCLA and PCC)

- Dangerous Checks: A player may not check towards the body. A player may not reach into the sphere to make a check or hold her crosse in the sphere so that a check can not be made.
- Failure to properly wear a mouthpiece and/or eyewear are minor fouls
- Misconduct Fouls: Any player or coach receiving two yellow cards will be suspended from the rest of the game. They may both participate in the next game. Any player or coach receiving a red card will be suspended from the rest of the game and shall be prohibited from participating in the team's next game.
- Manufacturer Specifications: Decorative holes may not be used to attach the pocket to the head. Sticks altered after certification must be re-certified as they no longer meet specifications.



RAISE YOUR GAME

# Guidebooks for Youth Rules and Best Practices

- USL Guidebooks to provide tools for ensuring Youth Rules and Best Practices are more accessible to youth coaches, parents and administrators.
- Explanation of rules will be available to reader in one location
- Rules will be presented from observers point of view, logically organized and quick and easy to locate
- Rules and Best Practices will be visually categorized for easy access, featuring images of kids and not adults
- Embedded bar-codes and url's for educational videos useful for coaches and parents with smart-phones
- Free as a member benefit to youth coaches, PA's, officials and parents



RAISE YOUR GAME

# Guidebooks for Youth Rules & Best Practices

## FOULS » STICK CHECKING

**WHAT IS IT?** Stick checking is an attempt to dislodge the ball from an opponent's stick by using controlled stick-to-stick contact.

**WHEN** an opponent has the ball

**WHERE** anywhere on the field

**WHO** any player defending the ball-carrier

**WHY** to regain possession of the ball by knocking the ball loose



### FUNDAMENTALS

**CONTROL** Checks must be under control and never toward an opponent's head

**PATIENCE** Good defensive body positioning can cause the ball carrier to drop ball without a check

**STICK UP** Players should hold sticks up to "shadow" ball carrier's stick to block passes and shots

**STICK DOWN** Modified checking allows a downward motion below the waist or shoulders.

### DEVELOPMENTAL

» U-9 NO CHECKING!

» U-11 Modified checking below the waist in downward motion away from the body

» U13 Modified checking below the shoulders in downward motion away from the body

» U15 Same as U13

### PLAY SAFE

» Sticks are hard and can cause serious injury

» Checks must be away from the 7-inch "sphere" surrounding the head

» No player's stick may hit or cause her opponent's stick to hit the opponent's body

» Players should only check using the sidewall of the head of the stick

» Rough and reckless checking can warrant a yellow or red card

### FOULS

1.a ROUGH/DANGEROUS CHECK

1.b CHECK TO THE HEAD mandatory [pictured]

1.c SLASH mandatory card

1.d HOLDING

1.e CROSSE IN THE SPHERE

1.f ILLEGAL CONTACT

1.g ILLEGAL USE OF THE CROSSE

1.h HOOKING

1.i REACH ACROSS THE BODY

1.z UNMODIFIED CHECKING

2.b EMPTY STICK CHECK

### BEST PRACTICES

» Stick checking should be taught as a progression as the player ages. Emphasis should be on Fundamental defensive positioning

» Modified checking allows youth players to develop proper checking and positioning skills while encouraging good cradling and stick handling for attack players

[For more information see page XX]

### PERSPECTIVES

**P** Don't get frustrated by frequent calls; they're essential to keeping the game fun and safe

**P** Officials may call a foul anytime they feel a player is using her stick in a dangerous or intimidating way

**C** Repeating phrases like "down and away" and "check and recoil" reinforce stick control

**O** Repeated dangerous checks should be carded

### SITUATIONS STICK CHECKING

A defense player is called for an illegal check. Play is stopped and ball carrier is awarded a free position. Before play restarts, the umpire notices that ball carrier is wearing jewelry. Ruling: A throw is awarded for offsetting fouls

4



GIRLS » YOUTH RULES GUIDE BOOK  
<http://www.uslacrosse.org/100000>

FOULS » STICK CHECKING  
5



RAISE YOUR GAME

# US Lacrosse Best Practices For Youth Lacrosse

US Lacrosse “Gold Stick” Standard Program: A comprehensive “certification/recognition” program to maximize adoption of USL Standards and Best Practices

- Benefits to Participants: Delivery of USL benchmark safe play experience, marketing advantage in competitive lacrosse environment, sport development programmatic support
- Targets: Youth lacrosse Leagues, Events, Camps, Clinics and Facilities
- Keys to Success: Region/Chapter involvement in management program; Effective AMS



RAISE YOUR GAME

# US Lacrosse Standards for Youth Lacrosse Programs

## Gold Stick Program

Recognition program for leagues, events, camps/clinics and facilities to promote adoption of USL standards and best practices.

Status: 2011 - Establish "USL Gold Stick Standard" criteria and program elements, priority target: spring youth leagues - seek early adoption in coordination with Youth Rules adoption efforts

2012 – Full activation Q2 2012, align with rules adoption efforts, promotion through chapters , expand outreach to summer tournaments/camps/clinics



RAISE YOUR GAME

# Standards For Coaching Youth Lacrosse

## Coaching Education Program

### Goals

- Establish certification/training as recognized national standard
- Increase % of certified and trained USL member coaches
- Retain 90% of all certified coaches annually

### Current Priorities

- Increase USL coach member value - expand coaching resources
- Streamline certification w/o sacrificing quality
- Establish “educational partnerships” with chapters and leagues
- Increase certified HS coaches - develop NFHS lacrosse online training course



RAISE YOUR GAME

# Standards For Officiating Youth Lacrosse

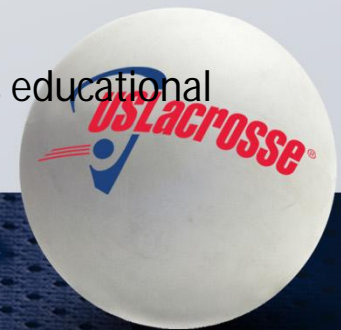
## Officials Training Program

### Goals

- Establish certification program for U19 officials as recognized national standard
- Elevate accountability, standardization, quality and advancement path

### Current Notable Priorities

- Evolve and improve women's game rating process
- Formalize women's game developmental clinic request and delivery process
- Deliver more training and rating opportunities in developing areas
- Expand observation program for men's and women's officials
- Online men's and women's training module for rules and fouls (fall 2012)/expand video resources
- Develop dynamic online interface with USL database (fall 2012)
- Explore Arbiter 360 /Central Hub collaboration to house men's and women's educational materials and allow assigners to view training and certification status



RAISE YOUR GAME

# US Lacrosse Best Practices/Gold Stick Brand



**RAISE YOUR GAME**

## Keys To Success: Financial Resources

Driving adoption of national standards will require a substantial increase in programmatic, human and other resources. Sources for those funds may include, but are not limited to:

- Reallocation of current resources
- Operational reserves
- USLF fundraising efforts
- Millions of Dollars Invested In Supporting Local Efforts to Work Towards Achieving National Standards



RAISE YOUR GAME

## Keys to Success: YOU!

- Developing National Standards for Youth Lacrosse is the most important and significant initiative US Lacrosse has ever engaged in
- Success will require collective, disciplined and unwavering effort, passion, fortitude, and sheer will to succeed of staff, USL volunteers, leagues, chapters, constituencies and others
- Support from Best Practice Youth Leagues like NCJLA



RAISE YOUR GAME

**Discussion and Feedback:  
What Can US Lacrosse Do Through  
its Efforts to Drive Adoption of  
National Standards, to Help  
NJJGLL Deliver The Best Playing  
Experience For Kids in  
New Jersey?**



**RAISE YOUR GAME**

# THANK YOU!

For More Information about US Lacrosse's Youth  
Game Initiative, visit

[www.uslacrosse.org/youthrules2012](http://www.uslacrosse.org/youthrules2012)

US Lacrosse Staff Contacts:

Ann Carpenetti, Managing Director of Games Administration

[acarpenetti@uslacrosse.org](mailto:acarpenetti@uslacrosse.org)

Melissa Coyne, Women's Game Director [mcoyne@uslacrosse.org](mailto:mcoyne@uslacrosse.org)



RAISE YOUR GAME