

GIRLS' LACROSSE SPECTATOR ORIENTATION

DR. JOHN WESLEY SLIDER

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HOW TO USE THIS MANUAL

This manual is for use in orienting persons who are spectators of Girls Lacrosse. The target audience is new spectators who come to the sport because a daughter is playing the game. Anyone interested in the game, however, may benefit from this manual.

The manual is designed to be short. It may be used as a supplement a one hour clinic with parents and players to begin the season.

A little knowledge, in this case, will go a long way. Girls Lacrosse is a complex game and can be confusing to those who are starting out – players, parents, other spectators, and even Umpires.

Use this manual as a starting point to increase your knowledge of the sport. Maybe your interest will grow to the point where you will want to help with the games, or coach, or become an Umpire.

John W. Slider

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Photographs by William Slider

THE FIELD

The complexity of Girls Lacrosse is readily noticeable when you arrive at the field. A Girls Lacrosse field will appear to the new spectator to be a confusing maze of lines – straight and curved. Add to this the reality that a Girls Lacrosse is often played on a field that is shared with other sports – football, soccer, field hockey, and boys Lacrosse – all with their different lines.

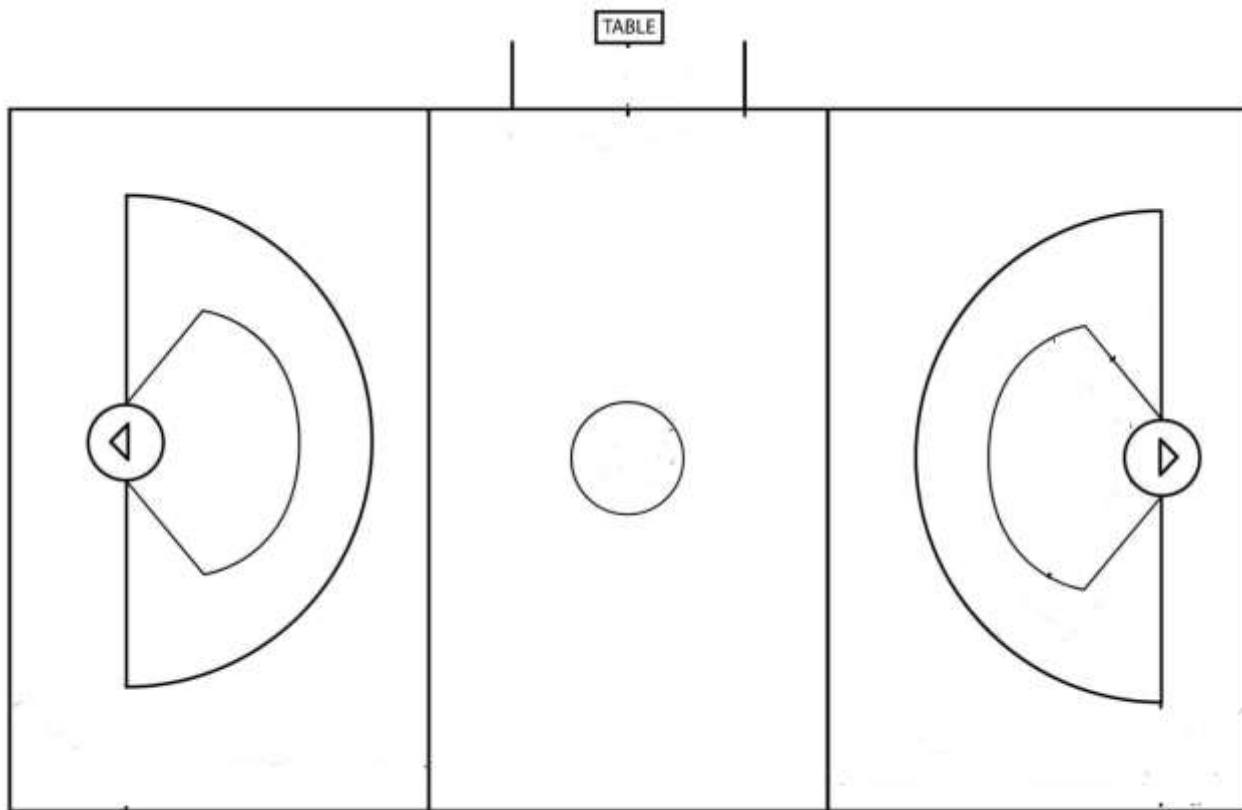
It could be worse! There was a time when Lacrosse was played without any boundary lines!

There is some flexibility in the size of the Girls Lacrosse Field. The maximum playing area is 140 x 70 yards and the minimum is 110 x 60 yards. The goals should be no less than 90 yards and no more than 100 yards apart. There must be a minimum of 10 yards or a maximum of 20 yards of space behind each goal line to the boundary line. There must be 4m of space between the sideline boundary and the scorer's table. There should be at least 4m of space between the

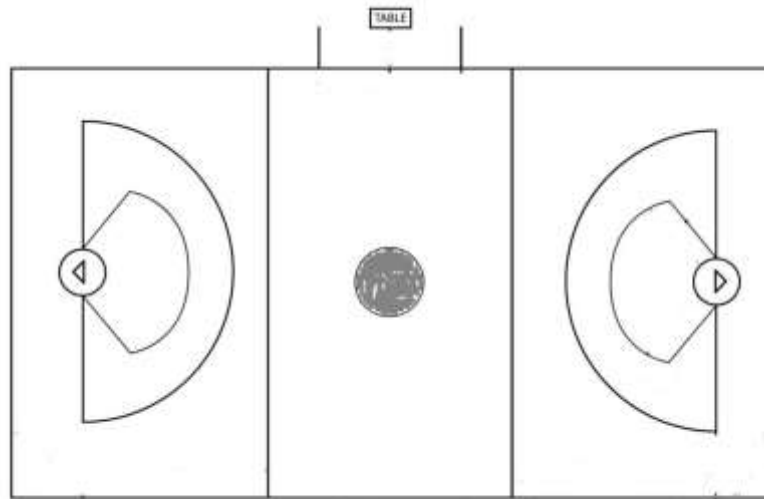
other sideline and any spectator area.¹ Typically a Girls Lacrosse field is played on a high school football field that measures 120 yards x 160 feet.

You will notice already a mixing of English and metric measurements. That mixture continues throughout the game and is illustrative of the complexity that is in part self-inflicted.

Let us look at the field without the measurements. Looks simple, right? We will not spend too much time on the field.

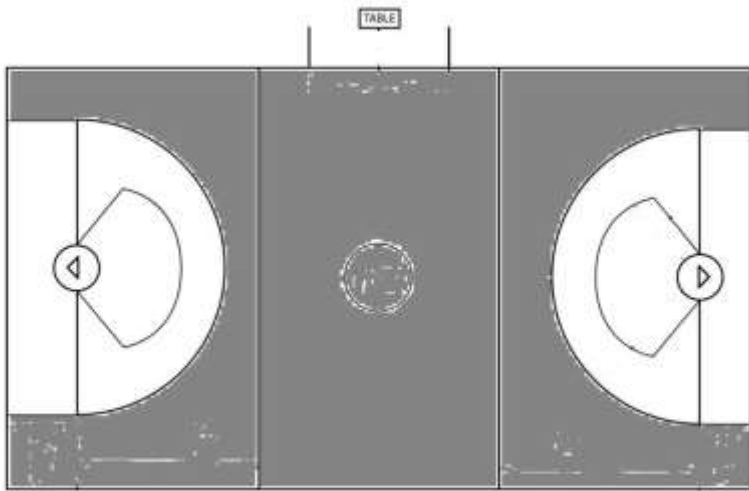


¹ US Lacrosse, *2018 Women's Game Officials Training Manual*.

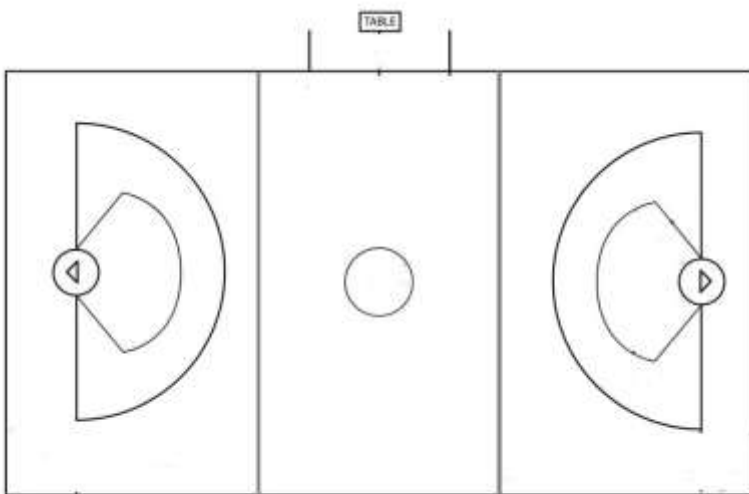


There are seven “areas” on the Girls Lacrosse field that shape play and penalty administration.

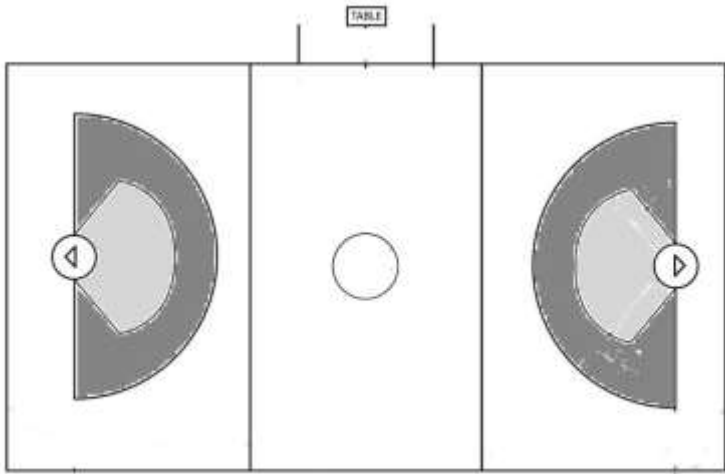
First, there is the Center Circle. The Draw occurs in this area. Once the Draw takes place this area “disappears into the Field.



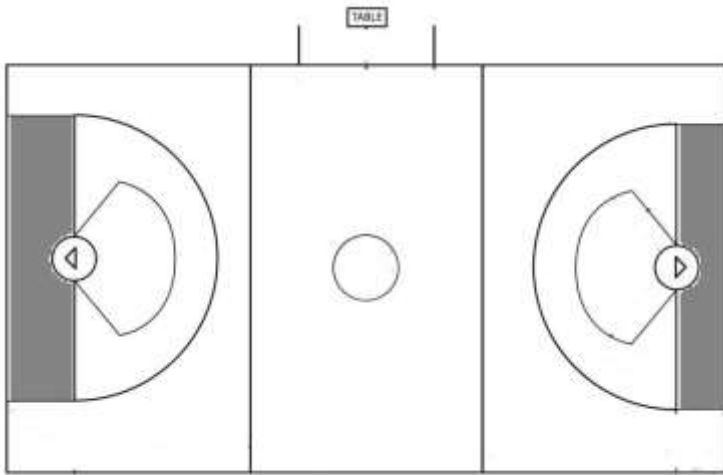
Once the Draw is completed, the Field is the next area to be considered. The Field can understood as all playing areas outside of the two Critical Scoring Areas.



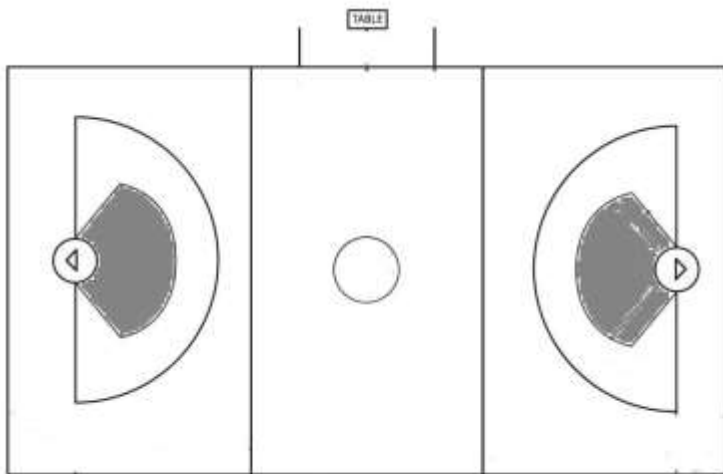
Then we must consider the two areas defined by the restraining lines.



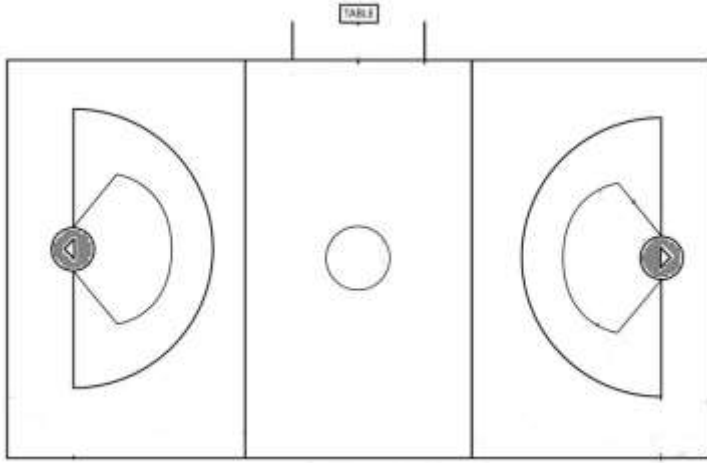
The Critical Scoring Area has already been mentioned. The CSA is defined as the area inside the 12m fan and extending to the end line.



The CSA is further divided into the CSA above the Goal Line Extended (GLE) and the CSA below the GLE.



Included in the CSA but also an area in itself is the area defined by the 8m arc.



Finally, there is the goal circle.

It important for the flow of the game and for spectator understanding for the lines that demarcate these areas to be clear and distinct.

GIRLS LACROSSE IS NOT BOYS LACROSSE

If you have seen a Boys Lacrosse game, you still have not seen a Girls Lacrosse game. The two sports are different in many ways.

The field markings are different. Often times field managers do not understand this important difference. There is a marking system that will allow for both Girls and Boys Lacrosse to be marked on the same field.

The contact that is allowed is different. You may approximate the contact allowed in American Football to the contact allowed in Boys Lacrosse. Contact in Girls Lacrosse is more like that of Basketball.

Because of the difference in contact that is allowed, the equipment is different. Boys wear helmets and other padding. Girls Lacrosse only requires eye protection (goggles) and mouth guards.

Girls play with one more field player than boys. Counting the Goalie there are twelve players in Girls Lacrosse and eleven players in Boys Lacrosse.

SAFETY AND FAIRNESS

A lot of the complexity of the sport of Girls Lacrosse has to do with the desire of US Lacrosse to make the game safe and fair. What may seem at first to be a random penalty administration is actually a reflection of those two desires.

“Fair” does not mean “equal.” Umpires hear all of the time, “Call it both ways.” What exactly does that mean?

Does it mean that each team should have the same number of calls against it? A lot of the determination of fouls and violations is the skill level of each team. It is not “fair” to penalize a higher skilled team to make the game even.

You will find that Umpires, for the most part, call fouls and violations regardless of the score. When a score is “out of hand” that is the time when the game can get sloppy and safety becomes a greater concern.

HOW UMPIRES WORK

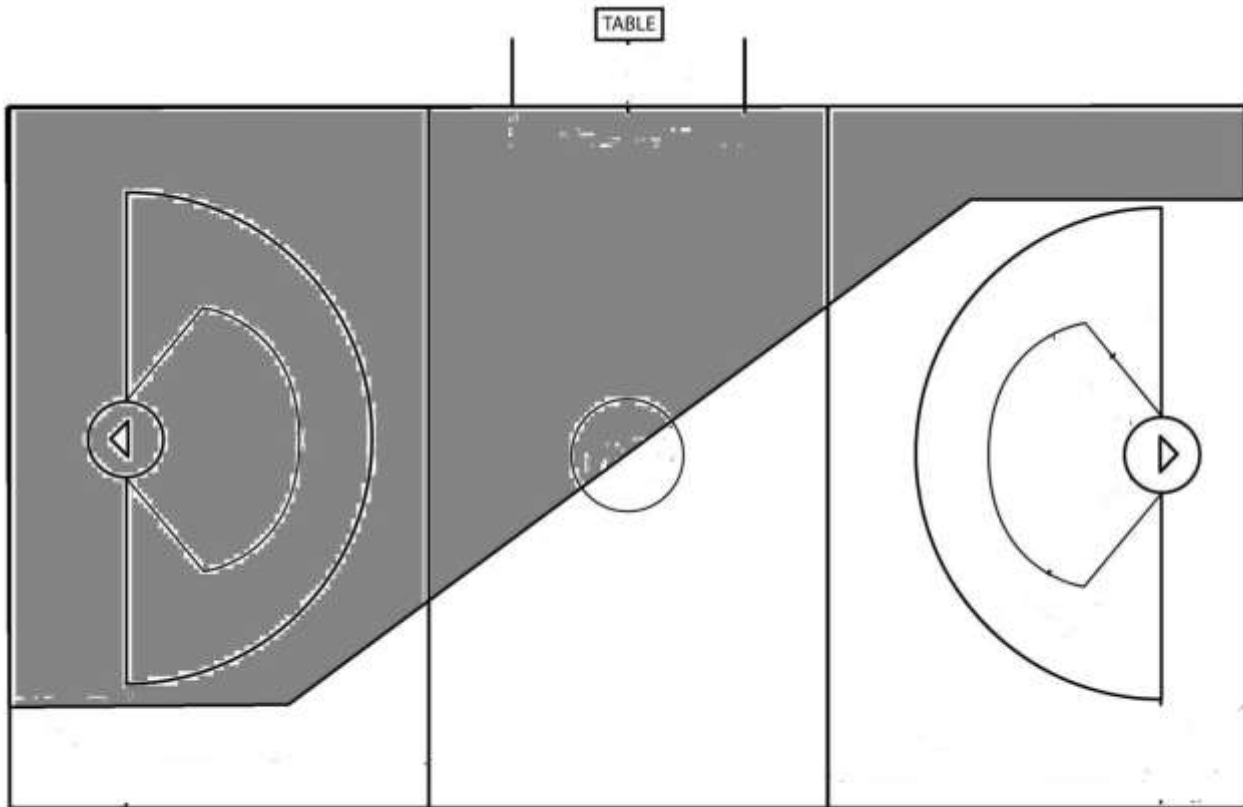
No one comes to a game to watch the Umpires. An Umpire's ideal is to become invisible and to let the players determine the outcome of the game.

In the area served by the Kentucky Lacrosse Umpires Board you may on rare occasions see one Umpire at a middle school game. Usually at the middle school level you will have two Umpires. Most high school games in our area will usually have two-person crews. At high-level and many high school post-season games you will see a three-person crew.

Two Umpires per game is the norm, so let us concentrate on that arrangement. With two Umpires in a game Girls Lacrosse has a very high player-to-Umpire ratio – twelve to one. This situation is made easier with the Restraining Lines that make the game around each goal a seven-on-eight game.

Each Umpire functions as both the "Lead" and the "Trail." An Umpire is the "Lead" when the ball is moving toward the goal to his or

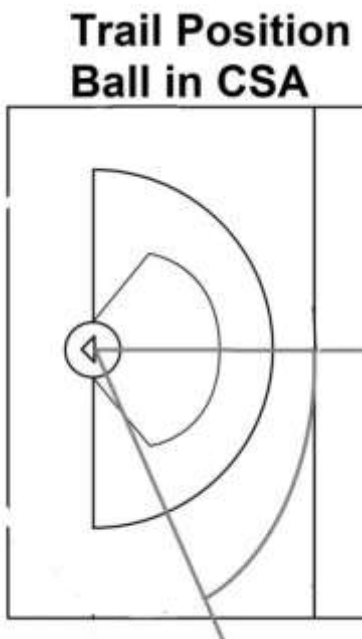
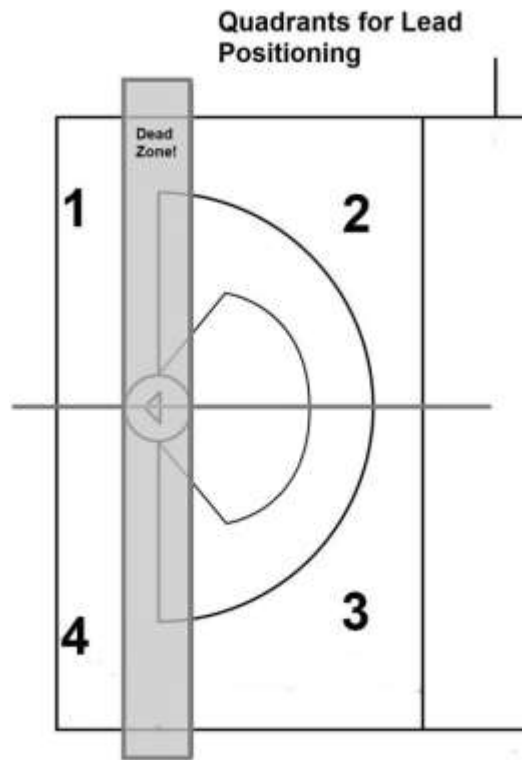
her right; and “Trail” when the ball is moving toward the goal to his or her left. Another way to divide “Lead” responsibilities is as shown in the image below.



The “Lead” focuses “on ball.” The “Lead” is always working to be able to see between the ball carrier and the player guarding her. The “Lead” mentally draws a line between the ball carrier and the defender and tries to position himself or herself and a perpendicular angle to that line. We call this the tangent.

Next, the “Lead” will divide his or her Critical Scoring Area into quadrants that come together at the goal. An Umpire will seek to be in the quadrant adjacent to where the ball is while also maintaining the tangent.

The “Trail” focuses “off ball.” He or she watches the Restraining Line and looks for off-ball fouls and violations such as three-seconds. Often times the “Trail” is aware of, but not watching the ball.



Both Umpires should always try to stay wide and outside of play and never turn his or her back on the partner. The “Lead” should be ahead of the play as well. Two experienced Umpires are adept at switching roles and know when they are “Lead” or “Trail,” and when to defer to the other Umpire.

SPECTATOR CONDUCT

Not much needs to be said about what is proper conduct. We all know what is respectful behavior. Spectators are expected to be a part of creating a healthy, safe, and respectful environment for everyone at the game.

Umpires are more likely to ignore poor behavior and words directed at them; and are more active in stopping behavior and words that are directed at players, coaches, and other game personnel. Most “gripping about a call” comes from a lack of knowledge of the rules. Any obscene, racial, or derogatory comment or action or anything that encourages dangerous play is considered misconduct by a spectator. There is an appropriate protocol in the rules for managing spectator misconduct. Spectator misconduct can result in the removal of the spectator or the carding of the head coach. Head coaches are held responsible for the behavior of their spectators.

LEGAL PROTECTIONS FOR SPORTS OFFICIALS
• KRS 518.090 – Assault on a sports official in the performance of his/her duties is a Class A Misdemeanor (more than 4 persons or repeat offender is a Class D Felony).
• KRS 532.090 – Class A Misdemeanor carries a maximum of 12 months imprisonment.
• KRS 534.040 – Class A Misdemeanor carries a maximum of a \$500 fine.

If spectator misconduct escalates, there are legal protections for Umpires. Here are the legal protections in Kentucky.

FOULS, SIGNALS, AND CARDS

Now we have come to what you really want to know – fouls, signals, and cards. There are eighteen minor fouls and eighteen major fouls. Minor fouls should be considered as procedural or ball-control fouls. Major fouls should be considered safety fouls. There are major fouls that require the offender to be carded. There is one major foul that requires an immediate whistle. There are also Team Fouls, Misconduct Fouls, Delay of Game Violations, Draw Fouls, and Goal Circle Violations.

What you will get here are the signals and brief description of ten fouls that you will see the most. Please remember that this list is by no means exhaustive, but it will get you started in identifying most of the calls during the game.



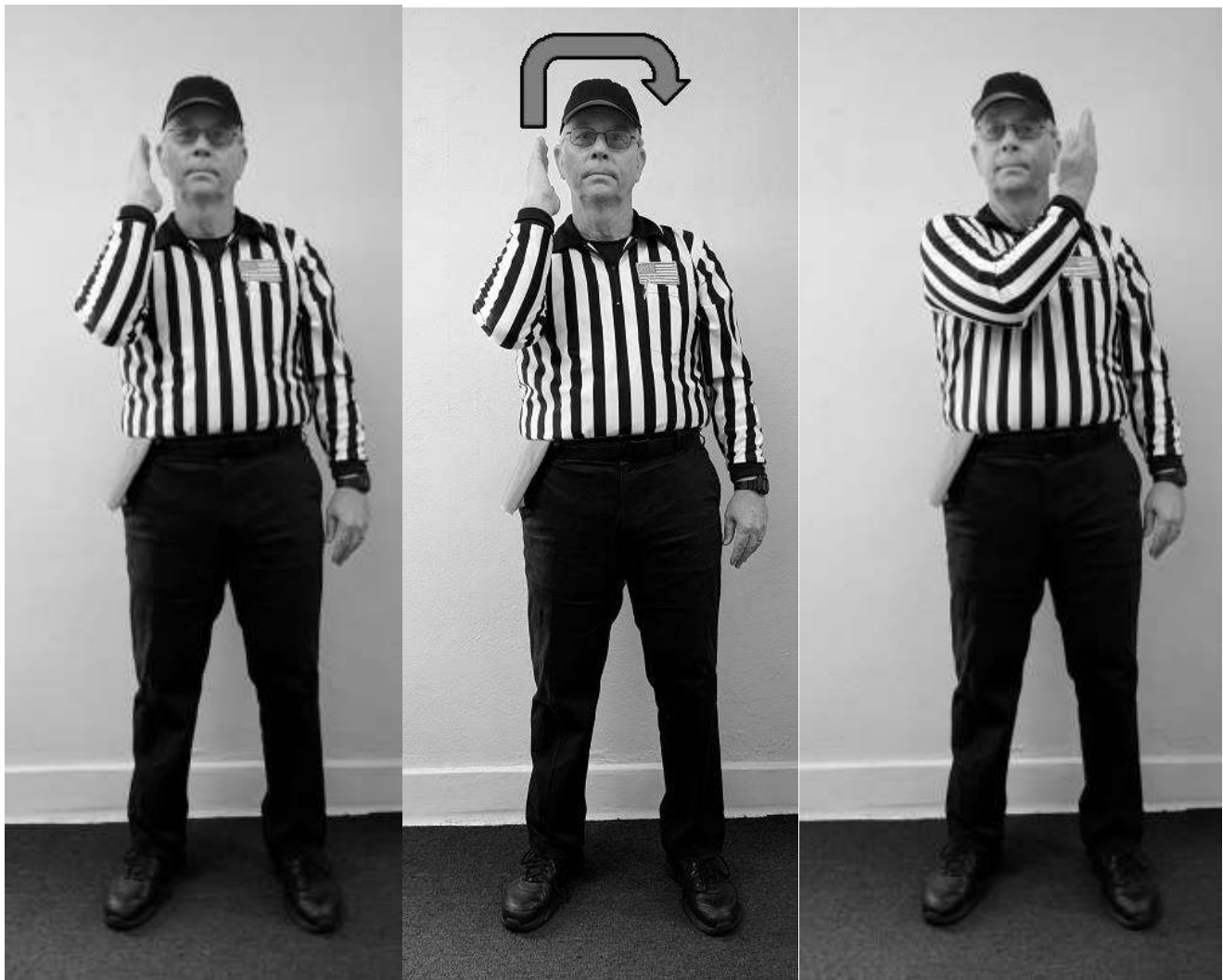
Covering – Minor Foul; guarding a free ball from an opponent.

Umpire's Action: Both arms extended, bringing palms together in a stick-on-stick motion.



Empty Crosse/Stick Check – Minor Foul; checking an opponent's crosse when the opponent's crosse is not in contact with the ball.

Umpire's Action: Both arms extended, bottom hand closed, bringing top hand on to bottom hand in a stick-on-ball motion.



#1

#2

#3

Crosse/Stick in the Sphere – Major Foul; passing or holding the crosse or stick in the area around the head and neck of an opponent. The sphere is a seven inch distance from the head in all directions.

Umpire’s Action: One hand tracing a sphere around the top of the head.



Three Seconds – Major Foul; a defender remaining within the 8m arc while not within a stick’s length of an attacker. **Umpire’s Action: One arm extended above the head with three fingers held up.**



Obstruction of Free Space to Goal (Shooting Space) – Violating the space between an attacker with the ball inside the 12m fan (Critical Scoring Area) and the goal when the defender is not within a stick's length of an attacking player and when the attacker with the ball has the opportunity to shoot safely. The space is demarcated by three points – the ball and the two outside limits of the goal circle. This foul requires an immediate whistle by the Umpire. **Umpire's Action:** **Holding both hands in front of the face in line to mimic the line of attacker, defender, and goal.**



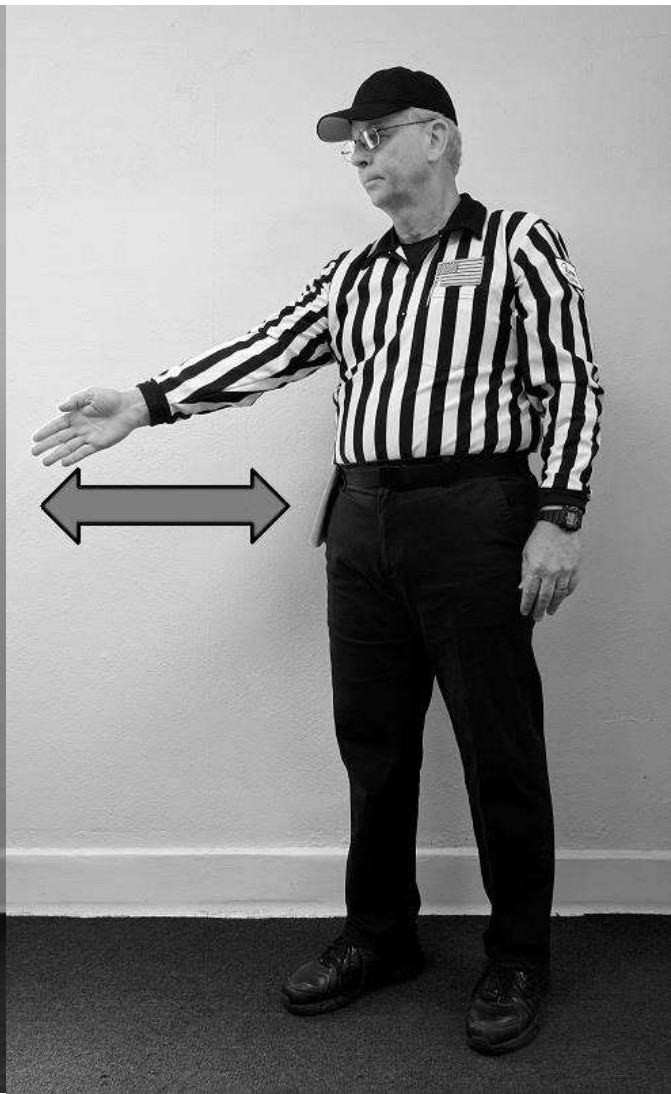
#1

#2

Off-Sides – Restraining Line Violation; either team having too many players in the area between the Restraining Line and the End Line. Usually each team may have seven players across the Restraining Line (not counting the Goalkeeper) unless a team is “playing down” because of a penalty. **Umpire’s Action: One arm held above the head, first with an open hand, and then closing the hand as the whistle is blown.**



#1



#2

Goal Circle Violation – Either team crossing into the Goal Circle.
Umpire's Action: Arm extended downward and sweeping back and forth.



Dangerous Play – Major Foul; anything that the Umpire determines is dangerous including checks from behind or across the body.

Umpire's Action: One arm held across the body with the hand touching the opposite shoulder.



Holding – Major Foul; detaining or impeding an opponent’s stick or body. Holding may be stick-to-stick, stick-to-body, body-to-body, or body-to-stick. “Playing larger than you are” or “chicken wing” defense may be holding. **Umpire’s Action: With one hand grabbing the wrist of the opposite hand in front of the body and pulling downward.**



Illegal Stick-to-Body – Major Foul; checking illegally to include horizontal checking. A horizontal check in middle school and high school is any contact with an opponent when the stick is held below the “10-to-2” position. A horizontal check is always called against the defender even when the attacker initiates contact with a “meet-and-greet” action. **Umpire’s Action: Both hands mimicking holding the stick in a horizontal position and pushing forward.**

Penalties for fouls and violations are administered depending on the type of foul or violation and the location on the field. Sometimes a penalty is administered at the location of the ball when the foul is committed, and sometimes at the location of the foul.

As a general rule the Umpire places the ball, then the offender, and then all others. For a Major Foul the offender is placed 4m behind the ball (in relation to the goal). Others are placed 4m away from the ball. For a Minor Foul the offender and others are placed 4m away from the ball.

Umpires use three cards for Girls Lacrosse – Green, Yellow, and Red. Green cards are used for Delay of Game. These cards are given for various reasons.



Green



Green/Yellow



Yellow



Red

Some Major Fouls require a yellow card as a part of the penalty. Yellow cards may be assessed for any foul depending on its severity or repetitive behavior. A yellow card requires the offender to leave the field for two minutes and her team plays down.

An Umpire may assess a red card for a foul. A red card requires the offender to sit in the penalty area for four minutes and the team plays down for that period. After four minutes the offender ejected from the remainder of the game and the next game, but the team may send a substitute into the game.

After an individual players second yellow card she is suspended from the remainder of the game. When a team has a total of four yellow or red cards, that team will play down one player.

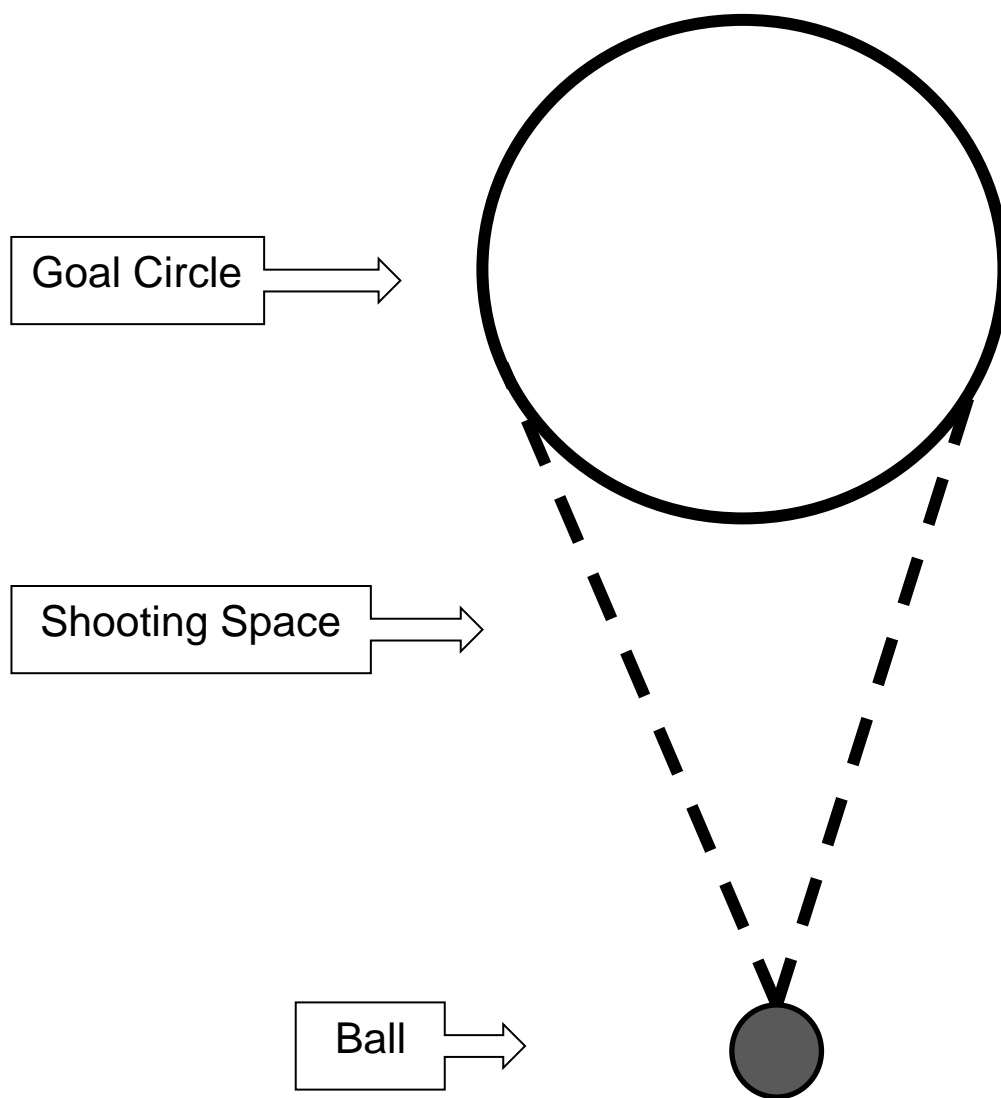
WHAT WILL DRIVE YOU CRAZY – SHOOTING SPACE

Obstruction of Free Space to Goal – sometimes called “FSG,” and usually called “Shooting Space” – is a frustrating call to make for Umpires and is often misunderstood by spectators, because of the required whistle. Calling the penalty as required many times takes away a goal. Why is this?

Shooting Space is called when a shooter is within the CSA above the GLE and a defender is not within a stick’s length of an attacking player and in the CSA above the GLE, the defender is within the area that is formed by a triangle with the ball and the two widest points of the goal circle, and the person with the ball has the opportunity to shoot safely (the “ice cream cone.” If these conditions exist, then Shooting Space must be called immediately. If a shooter shoots safely and scores, the goal is not counted and the penalty is administered.

The shooter has the responsibility to shoot safely. There can be a situation where a shooter does not have the opportunity to shoot safely, but shoots anyway. The shooter in this case may be called for Dangerous Propelling (a required card).

There can be a situation where offsetting penalties are charged – Shooting Space and Dangerous Propelling. This usually occurs when the shot hits a defender who is in Shooting Space.



WHAT WILL DRIVE YOU CRAZY – HELD WHISTLE

A Held Whistle happens in the field – not the either CSA. It is the acknowledgement that the Umpire has seen a foul that does not require a card and to stop play and administer the penalty would actually give an advantage to the offending team or take away the advantage from the offended team. An Umpire will raise his or her arm in the direction that play will continue. Another name for this action is “Advantage.”

The frustration enters when spectators do not see the Advantage or Held Whistle being given, but only the foul. Umpires are usually adept at seeing when their partners are giving an Advantage.



WHAT WILL DRIVE YOU CRAZY – SLOW WHISTLE

The Slow Whistle is similar to a Held Whistle. A Slow Whistle occurs when a defender in the CSA and usually above the GLE commits a Major Foul when the attacking team is on a scoring play. A Slow Whistle may be seen as another type of Advantage.

When the Umpire notices a Major Foul by the defense in the CSA above the GLE and the attacking team is on a scoring play, the Umpire shall raise his or her flag and allow the scoring play to continue. The flag is brought down ending the Slow Whistle when a shot is taken, or when the scoring play is ended, or when another Major Foul is committed. If a scoring play is stopped, then the Umpire with the raised flag will blow the whistle and administer the foul.

Many teams and coaches do not recognize the Held Whistle when it occurs and simply continue play. Skilled teams and coaches will see a Held Whistle (flag) and stop their scoring play (maybe

dropping the ball intentionally) in order to get a penalty administered close to the goal.



WHAT WILL DRIVE YOU CRAZY – LEVELS OF PLAY

There are different levels of play in the area that may cause some confusion to spectators. Middle school, high school, and college rules have some nuanced differences that may be confusing.

Rules on checking and the Goal Circle, for example, in 5/6 grade, 7/8 grade, high school, and college are somewhat different. Goal Circle Violations differ from middle school, to high school, to college. If that is not enough, the rules for college club play and college varsity play are similar, but still have some nuanced differences.

When in doubt, ask. Remember, rules at each level are created to enhance safety and fairness, and also to teach the game of Lacrosse.

US LACROSSE RESOURCES

US Lacrosse² is the national governing body of men and women's Lacrosse in the United States, primarily serving the youth game. It provides a leadership role in virtually every aspect of the game. The organization offers programs and services to grow participation in the sport. US Lacrosse also oversees the U.S. National Teams.

You are encouraged to go to the website and browse. On the homepage you will find across the top a banner menu that includes a category for Parents. You may become a member of US Lacrosse and receive many benefits that includes videos and publications that help explain the game. As a Parent Member you may take the Level 1 Coaches' course for free.

The National Federation of State High School Associations publishes the annual NFHS High School Rules Book for Girls Lacrosse. This book may be purchased through the NFHS or online in

² www.USA Lacrosse.org

paperback or eBook format. There is also a companion Case Book for the Rules Book.

US Lacrosse still publishes the Girls Youth Lacrosse Rules Book for the various age levels (6u, 8u, 10u, 12u, and 14u). This rules book is a free download from the US Lacrosse website. In Kentucky middle school Girls Lacrosse uses the NFHS Rules Book with some modifications that are consistent with the US Lacrosse rules for younger levels.

US Lacrosse publishes an annual Women's Game Officials Training Manual as a supplement to the NFHS Rules Book to assist in training umpires and interpreting the rules. You may download this Manual in pdf format for free from the US Lacrosse website or ask a Lacrosse Umpire to send it to you. It is a large and very helpful reference book for those who want to get deep into the rules.

GETTING MORE INVOLVED – WORKING THE TABLE

If you are enjoying your involvement in Girls Lacrosse as a spectator, you may want to take the next step and offer to “work the table.” There are two Table Officials at each game that are supplied by the home team or host management. These two Table Officials, the Scorer and the Timer, are critical for the smooth management of the game. Good Table Officials allow the Umpires to focus on the play on the field. These officials are considered a part of the officiating crew for the game.

Umpires dread weak Table Officials and having to teach someone how to work the clock. Umpires appreciate strong Table Officials who often double as unofficial hosts of the Umpires for the home team.

Umpires recognize that Table Officials are from the home team and have an interest in the outcome of the game. All that is asked is

that Table Officials not get too loud in cheering or argue with the Umpires!

The Scorer

The Official Scorer will be from the home team and will sit at the table between the benches at the center line. The Scorer records warnings, cards, suspensions, and ejections; and assists in timing the carded penalties.

The Official Scorer communicates frequently with the table-side Umpire. The Scorer notifies the Umpire immediately when a second yellow card is given to the same player and when a team receives its fourth card.

The Official Scorer also controls the Alternate Possession indicator. After the coin toss the Scorer will be informed by the Umpires which team has the first Alternate Possession, and makes certain that the indicator is changed when appropriate.

If the Scorer is not seated at field level, the home team is responsible for ensuring that the scorer's table is has someone present, and that this person has communication to the scorer and timer.³

³ 2018 US Lacrosse Women's Game Officials Training Manual, pp18-19.

The Timer

The Official Timer will be from the home team and will sit at the table between the benches at the center line. The Timer will review clock functions and timing considerations and signals with the Umpires prior to the game.

The rules now allow for a coach to request a time-out through the Timer. If you work as the Timer, make certain you understand and are comfortable with doing so. If not, the coaches will need to be told.

Before the game begins the Timer and the Umpires will decide who will time a time out – an Umpire or the Timer at the table. It is not unusual, especially at the high school level and below, for the officials to handle the times out.

The timer may sound the horn to indicate a time out request by the team in possession of the ball. The head coach or any player on the field may request a time out.

The Timer should be aware of how substitutions are made and advise the Umpires if there are any issues regarding substitutions. Substitutes must always enter the game through the Substitution Area, whether during play, during a time out, or after a goal. A player who is substituting “on the fly” must be an “imminent substitute” and remain in the team substitution area until the player she is replacing has entered the team substitution area. Substitutes may enter the game during a

team time out after a goal provided there is no delay of game. During a time out to issue a card, during an injury time out or a dead ball possession time out, no substitutes will be allowed. No substitutions are allowed during the time for switching of ends in overtime play.

The Official Timer will inform coaches and players when penalty time is completed. Either Table Official should notify the Umpires of an early re-entry on a penalty, by sounding a horn at the first stoppage of play.

GETTING MORE INVOLVED – BECOMING AN UMPIRE

You may also enjoy Girls Lacrosse so much that you want to become an Umpire. We encourage you to look into this opportunity when you are ready.

Umpires come to this sport through various ways. We look forward to you joining our ranks! Umpiring is a good way to stay connected to the sport, and to give back to it. It is a hobby that pays well.

When you are ready, ask an Umpire how to get started. The process we have in place will help you determine if you want to become an Umpire.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr. John Wesley Slider is a US Lacrosse certified Umpire. He is a member of the Kentucky Lacrosse Umpires Board; and is US Lacrosse certified as Trainer and an Observer/Rater for Women's Lacrosse.

John has earned a B.A. in history, and a masters and doctorate in theology. He has been coaching, teaching, and mentoring at various levels and in different venues for over four decades. He has taught academic subjects in middle school and high school classrooms. He taught theology as a member of the adjunct faculty of Lindsey Wilson College.

John played football and ran track in high school. He also played club soccer. At Hanover College he was a receiver on the football team, and a sprinter on the track team. He set three school records on the track.

John spent twenty-four years in the US Marine Corps, retiring in 1996 as a Lt. Colonel. His specialties were armor, infantry, and legal services. He has completed graduate level courses at Marine Corps, Navy, Army, and joint command schools. One of Lt. Colonel Slider's roles in the Marine Corps was as a course and curriculum developer and instructor in the Marine Corps University system. He has commanded platoons and companies, and been a staff officer at the battalion and division levels.

In civilian life, John has served as a Methodist pastor for four decades. He has taught classes and led groups for adults and youth. He has served as senior pastor for small churches and large multi-staff, multi-lingual, and multi-cultural appointments. He has written and published Sunday School curriculum for all ages.

John has coached many sports at various levels. He has coached individuals and teams to state tournaments and national competitions. He has three books on coaching that are currently available.

John is beginning his eighth year as a girls' Lacrosse Umpire. At the end of seven years he had officiated 561 girls' Lacrosse games. John spent nineteen years as a high school, club, and college Volleyball Referee. He is also a high school Field Hockey Umpire. With 1,468 matches or games as a sports official and a life-time of teaching, coaching, and mentoring, John brings a wealth of experience to this effort to prepare new Lacrosse Umpires for a long career.

John is married to Lillian. Their daughter is Heather. Their son and daughter-in-law are William and Tina.

