

USA<sup>TM</sup>  
LACROSSE



LEAGUE STANDARDS

FOR MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS

USA Lacrosse, in collaboration with leading experts in the sports industry and the country's most impactful member leagues, has developed standards that should be incorporated by youth lacrosse programs nationally. They are criterion for every league to measure progress and create a plan for continued success.



## MEMBERSHIP

**All players, coaches, and officials are current USA Lacrosse members.**

### ACTIONS:

- Leagues and Programs will utilize the USA Lacrosse [Program Leader Portal](#) or [API Partners](#) to verify membership at point of transaction resulting in 100% USA Lacrosse membership of all participants (players and coaches)
- Have written by-laws or guidelines that require all players and coaches to be registered members of USA Lacrosse in order to participate.
- Ensure that membership is valid through the end of the playing season and that you are verifying pre-season and mid-season. This confirms compliance for insurance coverage of all participants as well as the entire member organization.

### ADDITIONAL STANDARDS:

- Properly maintain member organization records each season in the USA Lacrosse Program Leader portal by uploading rosters of players and coaches. Ensure that your regional manager is informed of current board and administrative contacts so that they can update the USAL database
- Complete registration with enough lead time to ensure current membership that covers the entire season.
- Use the online tracking tools in the USA Lacrosse [Program Leader Portal](#) to view the status of your coaches background screening, Athlete Abuse prevention training and other certification courses as required by your league.



## RULES

**Member Organizations will adhere to all current rules and age guidelines as published for each level of play, have them publicly available and regularly communicated to program coaches, administrators, players and parents.**

### ACTIONS:

- Use and endorse the current [USA Lacrosse Age Segments](#) \*
- Post rules to website and communicate to players, coaches, parents and administrators.
- Organizations should follow USA Lacrosse or NFHS rules. At the youth level, they may implement minor rule modifications that do not impact safety rules of the game.

- Strive to provide league representation at USA Lacrosse Convention (Rules Interpretation, Coaching certification opportunities, etc).

*\*Please note that USA Lacrosse Sanctioned events follow these rules.*



## ADMINISTRATION

**Organization maintains current, written governance policies that are publicly available and regularly communicated to program administrators, coaches, parents and players through a multi-faceted communication system.**

### ACTIONS:

- Maintain a website that provides public access to all administrative policies, rules, emergency, safety and schedule information. Contact your regional manager about the free [USA Lacrosse League Management System](#) for member programs.
  - » Site is updated regularly to house current and accurate league information
  - » Post link to Bylaws on website
  - » Post [Mission & Vision Statement](#) to website
  - » Add current board Contacts to website.
  - » Post volunteer positions: descriptions and application process (samples are [here](#)).
- Utilize a reliable communication platform.
  - » Maintain current and accurate contact database for all parents, coaches and players
  - » Develop system to annually collect contact information for families at the local level (member/town programs) to be shared with the league.
  - » Leagues should strive to host two general meetings each year (in person and/or virtual), and will publish content of these meetings.
  - » Pre-season coaches/administrators meeting
    - Focus: Address and highlight any rule changes (USA Lacrosse rules interpretation video presented), share any changes made during Leadership meeting, review upcoming season requirements and expectations.
  - » End of season meeting
    - Focus: Season debrief, any changes to rules or policy proposed for next season.
  - » Strongly encourage town programs to have a pre-season parents meeting.
    - Focus: In addition to standard coach-parent content (i.e. when and where practices are, etc.), use parents meetings to disseminate:
      - Any program-wide philosophies, policies, and rules
      - Any program-wide expectations for parent behavior and conduct
      - Collect and communicate source of participation increases and losses [Sample Analysis](#)
  - » Provide a system for program evaluation for both players and parents
    - Ask the kids what they want going forward
    - Survey parents and players on their experiences from the year



## SAFETY & RISK MANAGEMENT

Establish well-written policies and plans for safety and risk management that are publicly available and regularly communicated to program coaches, administrators, players and parents.

### ACTIONS:

- Establish an [Emergency Action Plan \(EAP\)](#) that includes:
  - » Coach on-field checklist: includes items coaches need at all times at each practice and game.
  - » AED education and sudden cardiac arrest and commotio cordis protocol.
  - » CPR awareness and protocol (AHA training kit is [here](#)). First Aid plan, including a stocked First Aid Kit - Suggested Contents.
  - » [Heat illness protocol and dehydration policy](#).
  - » Extreme weather policies and protocol: [lightning, tornado/severe storm](#).
  - » [Incident reporting](#) and documentation protocol.
  - » Emergency Action Plan guidelines to include Active Shooter plan -- consult with your local law enforcement agency for guidelines.
- Establish a [Concussion Management Plan \(CMP\)](#) that includes:
  - » Concussion education for athletes, parents, coaches, players and program administrators including: the signs and symptoms, possible prevention, mechanisms of injury, treatment, return to activity guidelines, and limitations of protective equipment.
  - » A process that removes an athlete who exhibits signs of a concussion from athletic activities and does not allow return to play until that athlete is evaluated and cleared (in writing) by a healthcare professional.
  - » Return-to-play policy that precludes an athlete diagnosed with a concussion from returning to athletic activity for at least the remainder of that calendar day, and outlines the responsibilities of the players, coaches and parents to manage this process.
- Follow [USA Lacrosse Athlete Protection](#) guidelines which include:
  - » All coaches must complete USA Lacrosse NCSI National Background Check - included in all USA Lacrosse coach and official memberships.
  - » Athlete Abuse Prevention online course training for all coach members – included in all USA Lacrosse coach memberships.
  - » Utilize the [Athlete Protection and Safety Policy](#).
  - » Adopt the Minor Athlete Abuse Prevention Policy ([MAAPP](#)).
- Reference USALacrosse.com frequently for updates on Equipment Standards.

### ADDITIONAL STANDARDS:

- [Implement Lower Extremity/ACL Injury Prevention Plan \(Lax Fit\)](#) as standard practice.
- Require First Aid/AED/CPR training for all coaches and all on-field personnel before commencement of their first season.
- COVID-19 Return to Play: Follow USA Lacrosse [evidence-based return to play guidelines](#) for youth athletes and community programs so that play can resume safely after the covid-19 pandemic.



## SPORTSMANSHIP CONDUCT

Organization provides the USA Lacrosse sportsmanship and conduct policy to players, parents, coaches, officials and administrators. Additionally, the organization has an established and publicized process to receive, review and address all incidents relating to violations.

### ACTIONS:

- Provide a [Code of Conduct](#): clearly defines expectations; annually signed by all [players](#), [coaches](#) and [parents](#)
- Establish a Grievance and Conduct Violation Policy: clearly outlining how constituents can submit issues/concerns, the process by which they will be reviewed and addressed, and the timeline and format that will be followed to return the outcome and/or information.
- Adopt the USA Lacrosse Anti-Harassment and Discrimination Policy (corrective action plan for leagues and lacrosse organizations.) Template is [here](#).
- Establish Game day policies that include:
  - » [Game sportsmanship message](#) to be read prior to each game.
  - » Sideline Conduct policies, posted at game site, along with [USAL Sportsmanship message/signage](#).
- Establish Sideline manager program
- Develop an Inclusion Statement ([Diversity & Inclusion Standards](#))
  - » Communicate the importance of inclusion within your board and organization. Engage in continuous discussion on how to strategically implement diversity as a priority from the top down and create an inclusion mission statement that displays your commitment to access and opportunity for all.
  - » Allocate funds specifically for outreach initiatives to alleviate barriers to participation.
  - » Allocate money in advance to go towards scholarships and assistance to invest in participants with financial needs.

### ADDITIONAL ACTIONS:

- Establish and communicate [participation limits and rest guidelines](#).
- Announce Sportsmanship Award Recipient annually as part of end of season awards.
- [All coaches to complete the USA Lacrosse Cultural Competency course](#).



## CERTIFIED COACHES

All head coaches are [Level 1 certified](#) through the USA Lacrosse Coaching Development Program.  
All other coaches are USA Lacrosse trained.

### ACTIONS:

- Communicate that all head coaches must complete USA Lacrosse Level 1 Certification [USA Lacrosse Coaching Development Program](#).
- Ensure that individual program's timelines for identifying coaches allows enough time prior to season start that most coaches can make plans to attend a Level 1 instructional clinic (talk to your Regional Manager about hosting/identifying hosts in appropriate geographic areas to allow all coaches the opportunity to attend instructional clinics, in addition to virtual clinic options.)
  - » Communicate the process for becoming Level 1 certified.
  - » Develop Coach Certification policy to include formal written procedure for verifying and tracking the USA Lacrosse Certifications at both the member organization and league level.
- Use the Program Leader Portal to view coaches' training progress and certifications.
- Provide guidance and the progression that should be followed to prepare for game play.
  - » [Mobile Coach](#) - encourage use of the Mobile Coach app as a resource for new and returning coaches.

### ADDITIONAL ACTIONS:

- Encourage your coaches to continue their coaching education beyond Level 1 Certification.
- Before "hiring" a coach, it is strongly recommended that programs have a formal application process, [interview process](#) and reference check of prior coaching positions.
- Recommend that all Coaches take the annual [USA Lacrosse rules exam](#) for the game and level that they coach.



## CERTIFIED OFFICIALS

All officials assigned to games are USA Lacrosse certified and assigned by a USA Lacrosse Certified Assignor.

### ACTIONS:

- Utilize only USA Lacrosse Certified Officials [USA Lacrosse Officials Page](#)
  - » All contests (with the exception of 8U on a shortened field) will have a minimum of two officials assigned.
  - » Meet with the Local Officials Organization (LOO) leadership to establish a relationship and rapport. Communicate early and often with the LOO regarding your play dates and tournaments.
  - » The league should recruit officials and refer them to the USA Lacrosse officials' development program or their LOO. All participants share the responsibility to grow and service the game. An ideal time to recruit new officials is in conjunction with recruiting coaches and volunteers for your league [Become an Official](#)

- Organizations should either utilize the services of a LOO and a [Certified Assignor](#), or should follow the standards set forth for appropriately assigning games by both the level of play and rules the players will be using, as well as the level of certification currently held by the official. [Sample contract](#).
- Establish [guidelines for conduct regarding parent/coach interactions with officials](#).

#### **ADDITIONAL ACTIONS:**

- Provide [scholarships](#) for promising officials to attend ongoing training opportunities through USA Lacrosse or grants for new officials to purchase the necessary equipment.
- Assist your LOO in establishing a [Junior Officials program](#) if one does not already exist.
- Recognize officials for their part in the success of your program by including them in any award or recognition programs, including Sportsmanship awards.
- Provide or offset the cost the LOO incurs to put on the officials training – classroom space, clinician compensation, classroom materials, new official's registration fees, field space and play days.
- Encourage officials in the local officiating organization to submit for a [background screening with NCSI](#) (this is a free member benefit for USA Lacrosse officials.)
- All officials to complete the USA Lacrosse [Cultural Competency](#) course.



## **ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

The following resources should prove useful to program administrators in maximizing the effectiveness of their program.

#### **ACTIONS:**

- [Athlete Development](#)
- [Flex 6](#)