

Rule changes for Spring 2025 – Varsity only – ISL AA and WCAC

Goal Circle

- Purpose of change: allow defender to move through goal circle when playing defense.
- Defenders may run through any portion of the goal circle when defending.
 - Defenders **must move through the goal circle** and cannot stop or stand in the goal circle.
 - Only the defensive player who is directly marking the ball carrier **within a stick's length** may remain in the goal circle while defending.
 - Defenders **may not stand in the goal circle** when marking an opponent (with or without the ball) opponent behind the goal. Defenders can still mirror opponent behind goal but must remain outside the goal circle.
- Defenders running through the goal circle are **not exempt from shooting space**.
- Defenders **may not run into the goal circle to avoid three-seconds**, they must exit the 8-meter arc.
- Defenders, when their team is in possession of the ball in their defensive end, may run through or remain in the goal circle when their team is in possession of the ball.
- Defenders may play the ball when it is within the goal circle. Feet positioning DOES NOT matter. Feet can be inside or outside or both.
- Defenders, in their defensive end, may go into the goal circle to prevent a **rolling ball** from crossing the goal line.
- A ball on the ground or in the air within the goal circle constitutes possession for the defending team.
- Offense is still responsible for taking a “safe” shot when a defender is in the goal circle legally or illegally.
- 10-second count to clear the ball does not change. If ball originates in the goal circle, it cannot be returned to the goal circle until it is played.

Administration of a goal circle violation on defense

- *Note:* There will be no changes to adjudication of offense goal circle fouls.
- *Note:* Yellow card procedure will remain the same if shooter commits dangerous follow-through or dangerous propel on a defender inside the goal circle.
- For goal circle fouls by defense, when a free position is awarded at the closest dot.
 - The offending player will be placed 4 meters behind the player taking the free position.
 - Goalie remains in the goal circle. All other players must exit the goal circle.
 - Whistle to restart play.
 - This is direct and player may shoot.

Possession Clock (PC)

- Purpose of change: allow for a 90-second PC
- Criteria that must be met to allow for PC:
 - There **MUST** at least one visible possession clock for both teams to see the 90- second possession. If school only has one PC, then it must be located at center field opposite team benches.
 - Best option is to have two possession clocks, one at either end of the field, below end line and off to the side of each goal facing the team bench area. This will ensure both teams can visibly see the PC at both ends.
 - PC should have its own horn or horn at table to sound when PC expires.

- Game procedures:
 - The game clock procedure will not change.
 - Game clock will continue to stop after goals, when there is an offside penalty, alternate possession, or issuance of a card, or when a team or official timeout is called.
 - Game clock will continue to run and will only stop (when goal differential is less than 10) in the last 1 minute of each quarter on all fouls in the CSA, along with the PC.

90-Second Possession Clock

- After a team has gained possession after a draw, a visible 90-second possession clock will begin. [Signal: Winding arm]
- At the expiration of the 90-second PC, a change of possession will be awarded to the opposing team at the spot of the ball. [Signal: Illegal procedure]
 - Expiration of the PC is an illegal procedure (minor foul).
 - Team in possession will not delay in putting the ball down on the ground relative to the position when the PC horn sounds.
 - Team who is gaining possession can self-start when self-start is allowed.
- The possession clock resets: [Reset signal: Twirl of one straight arm above head]
 - When there is a change in possession, including a save by the goalie inside the goal circle;
 - OR a rebounded/deflected shot off the goalie, her stick, or the post whether the ball remains in the goal circle or goes back into field of play.
 - *Note:* Shots that go wide of the goal or above the crossbar do not reset the possession clock.
- If shot rebounds/deflects, a reset signal will occur to reset the PC, but will not start until a team gains possession. [If the PC does run, the official will reset PC once possession is established.]
- Shot on goal is when the ball released from the shooter's stick prior to the expiration of the PC or expiration of game clock for the end of the quarter, game or OT.
- Possession clock will stop on all fouls in the Critical Scoring Area, but game clock will continue to run. Officials will tap their heads to stop the PC. Both PC and game clock will stop in the last minute of each quarter for any fouls in the Critical Scoring Area.

Administration of 90-second PC violation

- If the 90-second PC expires before any of the above occurs:
 - Horn will sound and official will blow the whistle immediately to stop play.
 - Free position will be awarded to the opposing team at the spot of the ball.
 - Any opposing player on the field at time of expiration, may take the free position.
 - No player may be closer than 4 meters to the free position.
 - If the ball is in the air at the time of the violation, the free position will be administered at the spot of the ball when it lands and if the ball is out of bounds than the free position will be taken 2 meters from the boundary.
 - The player taking the free position may self-start when self-start is allowed.
- The PC will not reset on offsides and reset only on alternate possession if there is a change of possession.
- The PC will reset when a yellow or red card is given.
- The PC will only reset when a team has clear possession (cradle, throw, shot) of the ball.