Rules Interpretations & Clarifications

- **September 29, 2026 – Sixes-003-09222026**
- **September 22, 2026 – Sixes-002-09222026**
- **September 11, 2026 – Sixes-001-09112026**

Questions regarding interpretations may be directed to Ruleschair@worldlacrosse.sport

Key

~~Red with strikethrough indicates where text has changed or been removed.~~

Green with underlining indicates the clarifying language that has been added and/or replaces previous text.

Orange and italics indicates an additional clarification of the rule, with no change to the existing language of the rule.

Rules Affected:

- **2.4.4 Stoppage of Play**
- **6.5.7 After a Goal**
- **6.8 Over and Back**
- **7.2.4 Withholding the Ball from Play**
- **7.2.14W Illegal Goal Crease Defending (Women's)**
- **9.2 The Slow Whistle Procedure**

Interpretation(s)

Rule 2.4.4 STOPPAGE OF PLAY

Play must be suspended immediately if a Player does not have any of the required equipment, or if during the duration of play, equipment becomes dislodged compromising safety or increasing the risk of injury. The official shall delay the sounding of their whistle as in the slow whistle technique, except that an arm signal is not made under these circumstances.

Clarification (Women's Game): *Protective eyewear is* ***not*** *a required piece of equipment for women's athletes until the 2027 Sixes World Championships. If an athlete opts to wear protective eyewear, and the eyewear is dislodged, or knocked off in any manner, the official shall delay the sounding of their whistle as in the slow whistle technique, unless they feel the goggles being dislodged, compromise safety or increase the risk of injury for that athlete.*

Rule 6.5.7 AFTER A GOAL

Following any goal, the Goalkeeper must retrieve the ball from the goal and ready it for play. The official shall verbally count and give a visual five-second count with chopping motion just below shoulder height and parallel to the ground. If the Goalkeeper does not retrieve and possess the ball within five-seconds, the ball will be awarded to the non-offending team. Once the goalie is ready and no violation of the five second count is observed the official will sound their whistle to start play and signal for a shot clock reset. The official will begin the five-second goal crease count.

Clarification: *Before officials whistle to restart play,* ***the Goalkeeper must retrieve and possess the ball****, and all restart requirements must be met. Under Rule 6.5.2, Delay of Game, no offensive player may be within three meters (3 m) of the player possessing the ball. The five-second count continues if another player possesses the ball, or if an offensive player remains within three meters (3 m) of the Goalkeeper. If the requirements are not met, officials shall call delay of game and award the ball to the opposing team.*

Rule 6.8 OVER AND BACK

Once the ball is in the Offensive Zone, the ball shall not touch or go over the center-line returning to the Defensive Zone through actions of the offensive team. If this occurs, it is an over and back violation.

The result is a change of possession and play shall be re-started 2 m from the nearest boundary where the ball was when play was stopped. The boundary line may also be the center-line.

An offensive Player may legally bat the ball to keep it in the Offensive Zone of the field prior to the ball crossing the center-line, but if it is possessed or touched and their feet are in the defensive half, it shall be a turnover.

Clarification: *An over and back violation shall be treated as a loose ball minor foul for purposes of the Play-On procedure according to Rule 9.1. If enforcing the violation immediately would cause the team entitled to possession to lose an advantage, the official shall withhold the whistle and signal Play-On, allowing play to continue until either the advantage no longer exists or that team gains possession — whichever occurs first.*

Rule 7.2.4 WITHHOLDING THE BALL FROM PLAY

Players may not withhold the ball from play by:

- Lying on a loose ball.
- Trapping a loose ball with their stick longer than needed to control and pick it up (raking is allowed).
- Holding the stick close to or against their body to shield the ball from an opponent.
- Grasping or “thumbing” the head of the stick to make it harder for an opponent to dislodge the ball.
- ~~Allowing the ball to become caught in any part of their stick, uniform, or equipment.~~
- **Women’s game:** Cradling the ball above their shoulders and in front of their face, making a legal check impossible.

Clarification: *This bullet is removed because a ball caught in a Player's stick, uniform, or equipment is already fully governed by Rule 6.11 Ball Stuck, which prescribes a fixed outcome (immediate whistle and possession awarded). Keeping it in 7.2.4 as a discretionary minor foul created two competing rules for the same situation.*

Rule 7.2.14W ILLEGAL GOAL CREASE DEFENDING (WOMEN’S)

Players on the defending team in their defensive end of the field may run through any portion of the goal crease while defending. Only the defensive players who are directly marking the ball carrier within a stick’s length may remain in the goal crease while defending. Defenders within the goal circle may play the ball **carrier** regardless of whether both of their feet are within the goal circle. Players on the defending team, in their defensive end of the field, may run through or remain in the goal crease when their team is in possession of the ball. Defenders must immediately leave the goal circle when their team loses possession of the ball.

Clarification: *Adds "carrier" to align 7.2.14W with the "ball carrier" language used elsewhere in the rule and in 6.16.5W. Previously, "play the ball" could have been construed as allowing defenders to play a loose ball, block a shot, or pass while positioned in the goal circle.*

Rule 9.2.1 SLOW WHISTLE PROCEDURE

9.2.1 THE SLOW WHISTLE PROCEDURE
If a defensive Player commits a foul, and the attacking team has possession of the ball at the time that the foul occurs, then the official will raise an arm straight into the air and hold the whistle until:

- A goal is scored by the offended team; or
- The ball goes out-of-bounds; or
- A change of possession; or
- The attacking team commits a foul; or
- The shot clock or quarter expires, or the attacking team requests a timeout.

Note: the shot clock reset criteria shall still apply during the slow whistle.

Clarification: *If, while a slow whistle is being held, the offending (defensive) team commits an additional foul(s), the slow whistle is not ended and play continues. A foul(s) committed by the offending (defensive) team does not appear among the criteria in 9.2.1 for ending the slow whistle — only a foul by the attacking team, a goal, an out-of-bounds ball, a change of possession, or the expiration of the shot clock/quarter will end it. The official shall note the additional defensive foul(s) and, once one of the listed criteria is met and the whistle is blown to stop play, shall call and administer the additional foul(s) along with the original foul.*

Rules Affected:

- **2.2.2 Goalkeeper Stick**
- **8.3.6 Illegal Stick**
- **5.3.1 Shot Clock Reset**
- **6.6 Scoring *(updates applied to 6.6.1, 6.6.2, and 6.6.3)***
- **7.2.5 Illegal Actions with the Stick**
- **7.2.7 Illegal Procedure**

Interpretation(s)

Rule 2.2.2 GOALKEEPER STICK

The stick of the designated Goalkeeper shall be an exception to Rules above regarding length and width. The designated Goalkeeper may use a stick that measures from 15.24 cm up to 38.10 cm inside measurement at its widest point and shall have an overall length from 100 cm up to 140 cm for Men and 90 cm up to 140 cm for Women.

Clarification: *The Goalkeeper's stick is also excluded from the pocket depth requirements set out in Rules 2.2.1M and 2.2.1W.*

Rule 8.3.6 ILLEGAL STICK

If the overall length of the stick, measurement of the stick head, or pocket depth has been determined to be illegal for any reason, or if the official has determined that a stick has been intentionally manipulated in violation of the Rules.

Clarification: *When a designated Goalkeeper's stick is requested for inspection or selected for a random check under Rule 2.3, officials shall inspect only the stick head width and the overall stick length.*

Rule 6.6 SCORING

What changed:

- *6.6.1 — The "valid shot" definition (stick above GLE, thrown with intent to score) is removed from the definition of how a goal is scored.*
- *6.6.2 — A clarification is added confirming that "force or impetus" includes batting, directing, or kicking the ball into the goal — not just a traditional stick shot.*
- *6.6.3 — A new disqualifying bullet is added: a goal doesn't count if the shot wasn't initiated with the stick head above GLE, thrown at the goal with intent to score.*

Net effect:
This effectively relocates the "above GLE with intent to score" requirement out of the affirmative definition of a valid shot (6.6.1, now removed) and into a disqualifying condition in 6.6.3.
Practically, this means:

- *The GLE/intent-to-score standard still applies specifically to stick shots — so a shot released from below GLE, or without intent to score, still doesn't count as a goal.*
- *But because it's no longer baked into the definition of how a goal is scored (6.6.1), it doesn't restrict the broader "force or impetus" standard in 6.6.2 — meaning batted, directed, or kicked balls that completely pass through the plane of the goal, by either the offense or the defense, will result in a goal.*

Rule 6.6.1 GOAL
A goal is scored when the ball, whether loose or not, completely passes through the plane of the goal.

~~A valid shot on goal is defined as a Player using their stick, with the head of the stick above GLE to throw the ball at their opponent's goal with the intent to score a goal.~~

6.6.2 SCORER
The last attacking Player who provided enough force or impetus to the ball for it to completely pass through the plane of the goal is the goal scorer and shall be credited with the goal. When a Player on the defensive team provides enough force or impetus to the ball for it to completely pass through the plane of the goal, this is considered an own goal, and the goal shall be credited to the designated In-Home of the offensive team.

Clarification: *For purposes of this Rule, a Player may bat, direct, or otherwise propel the ball into the goal by any legal means — including kicking the ball — and doing so shall satisfy the "force or impetus" standard for crediting a goal or own goal.*

6.6.3 NO GOAL
A goal is not scored when the ball passes through the plane of the goal in any of the following circumstances:

- If the ball is released from the shooter's stick after the quarter/period has ended or expiration of the shot clock, regardless of whether or not an official's whistle has sounded.
- After an official's whistle has sounded for any reason, even though the sounding of the whistle may have been inadvertent.
- If a Player from the attacking team interferes with the opposing Goalkeeper, while the Goalkeeper is within their goal crease.
- If the goal scorer is an ineligible or expelled Player.
- When the attacking team has more players than it should have on the actual field of play (excluding the Penalty Area) at the time of the goal.
- When the attacking team's Goalkeeper is in their team's Offensive Zone.
- When the head of the shooter's stick head comes off, or any portion of the stick breaks during the shot or the follow-through.
- If the shot was not initiated with the head of the stick above GLE to throw the ball at their opponent's goal with the intent to score a goal.
- If a goal has been scored by an attacking Player and, before the next live ball, the shooter's stick is declared illegal for any reason or if the shooter touches or adjusts their stick after an official has requested their stick for a stick check.

- If an offensive Player commits any violation of the Rules prior to the ball entering the goal.
- After a Player from the attacking team has released early from the Penalty Area, either on their own or due to a timekeeper's error:
    - If the penalized Player or their substitute left the Penalty Area on their own accord, the ball shall be awarded to the defense.
    - In the case of a timekeeper's error, the ball shall be awarded to the team in possession at time of the error or, if the ball was loose, by alternate-possession Rule. In all cases, the Player shall return to serve the remaining penalty time.

Rule 7.2.5 ILLEGAL ACTIONS WITH THE STICK

7.2.5 ILLEGAL ACTIONS WITH THE STICK

- A Player shall not throw their stick under any circumstances.
- All players (except the goalkeeper in the goal crease) must hold their stick with at least one hand to participate in play. If a goalkeeper loses their stick outside the goal crease, they must retrieve it before continuing.
- No player may play with a broken stick. If a stick breaks, the player must immediately leave the field with it. Play stops if the broken stick is a safety risk.
- To exchange a stick, players must leave the field and make the swap in the bench or substitution area.
- If a player loses their stick and retrieving it would break a rule, use the slow whistle. Play stops immediately if the stick is in the goal crease and interferes with the goalkeeper or an attempted shot.

Clarification: *A previous ruling under Rule 6.13.1, Substitution Procedure, conflicted with Rule 7.2.5 above. That ruling stated that players may exchange sticks on the field; this is incorrect. To exchange a stick, a player must leave the field and complete the exchange in the bench area or substitution area.*

Rule 7.2.7 ILLEGAL PROCEDURE

- A Player shall not touch the ball with their free hand while it is in play

Clarification: *The rule book omitted language addressing a field player touching or handling the ball with their free hand. This action is not permitted and shall be penalized as a Minor for Illegal Procedure. This clarification does not apply to the Goalkeeper, as provided in Rule 6.15.*

Rule Interpretation No: Sixes-001-09112026
Effective Date: September 11, 2026

Rules Affected:

- **2.3 Stick Check**
- **5.2 Game Clock Operation**
- **6.8 Over and Back**
- **6.10 Timeouts**
- **6.12 Alternate Possession**
- ~~**6.13 Substitution Procedure**~~ *(Rescinded on 9/22/2023)*

Interpretation(s)

Rule 2.3.2 Illegal Stick & Scored Goal

"If an attacking player scores a goal and before play resumes, a stick check measurement is requested and the goal scorer's stick is found to be illegal, then the goal is disallowed. If the goal is disallowed, the foul will not be imposed."

Clarification: *If a goal is scored and the scorer's stick is found to be illegal before play resumes, the goal is disallowed (2.3.2). The goal scorer's stick will be removed from the game (8.3.6), but the player with the illegal stick does not serve penalty time for an illegal stick major foul. Play will restart at the penalty dot (9.3.3).*

Rule 5.2.2 Clock Stoppage

"The stoppage of all clocks will occur:

- On timeouts of any kind, or
- During time-served penalty administration, or
- At the end of a quarter, or
- On the official's whistle whenever there is a dead ball during the last two (2) minutes of the fourth quarter or at all whistles during an overtime period."

Clarification: *If the ball is awarded by alternate possession due to it going out of bounds off a draw (6.4.5), the clock will continue to run. The officials may take an official's timeout if there is need for them to discuss the awarding of alternate possession or who caused the ball to go out of bounds (6.10.1).*

Rule 6.8.1 Over and Back Violation

"Once the ball is in the Offensive Zone, the ball shall not touch or go over the center-line returning to the Defensive Zone through actions of the offensive team. If this occurs, it is an over and back violation.

The result is a change of possession and play shall be re-started 2 m from the nearest boundary where the

ball was when play was stopped. The boundary line may also be the center-line.

An offensive Player may legally bat the ball to keep it in the Offensive Zone of the field prior to the ball crossing the center-line, but if it is possessed or touched and their feet are in the defensive half, it shall be a turnover."

When an over and back violation occurs the official will blow the whistle to stop play, the ball will be awarded to the non-offending team 2 m from the nearest boundary where the ball was when play was stopped (including the center-line as a boundary), and the official will blow their whistle to restart play.

Rule 6.10.5 Duration

"A team shall be limited to one timeout per half. A team timeout shall be 60 seconds long. A timeout taken between halves is charged to the preceding half. A team may call a timeout prior to the start of the game."

Overtime is not considered a part of the first or second half. They are a stand-alone period(s) of play. Teams are not entitled to a timeout in any overtime period(s).

Rule 6.12.1 Alternate Possession

"When the officials cannot determine which team should be awarded the ball or as dictated by other rule(s), possession shall alternate. The team that wins the opening game coin toss gets the choice of goal to defend or the first alternate possession. For overtime, the team that wins the coin toss gets the choice of goal to defend ~~or the first alternate possession~~. The Head Official and the Official Scorer's table personnel shall keep track of the alternating possessions. In the event of a dispute, the official's position shall prevail."

The removed text was a copy/paste error from the prior rulebook format and was missed in the update to the 2026-2028 rules. The team who has alternate possession (6.1.4) will maintain alternate possession in overtime play (6.1.4).

NOTE: THIS INTERPRETATION FOR RULE 6.13.1 HAS BEEN RESCINDED

~~**Rule 6.13.1 Substitution Procedure**~~

~~"Substitution may take place at any time through the Substitution Area. When substitution is imminent the substituting Player must wait in the Substitution Area for the Player whom they are replacing to leave the field of play and only then may they enter the field of play. Players may substitute on the fly and they may do so on either side of the center-line, except for a goalie-to-goalie substitution that must occur in the Defensive Zone."~~

~~*Stick exchanges, such as those occurring after a draw are not currently addressed within the Sixes Rules. For all intents and purposes, a stick exchange shall be treated similar to player substitution. The player exchanging their stick must completely leave the field of play through the substitution area before they can exchange their stick for a*~~

~~*stick not on the field of play. After the exchange, the player may reenter the field of play through the substitution area. Players may exchange sticks with a teammate on the field, but neither may have possession of the ball when the exchange occurs.*~~