

# **Rules and Regulations of the Greater Houston Youth Lacrosse Association 2017-2018**

## **Section I – Definitions**

Organization – An independent system that fields at least one team within the Greater Houston Youth Lacrosse League (GHYLA). Each Organization in GHYLA will operate and maintain its teams and be responsible for its own sign-up registrations, insurance, equipment, fields, and coaches. GHYLA Organizations will operate their own boards, conduct fundraisers, and maintain their own separate finances. Each Organization of the GHYLA will abide by all decisions voted on by the Board of Directors or otherwise stated in the Bylaws by the Executive Committee. Each member Organization must have one Director on the GHYLA Board and is entitled to one vote.

Team – A single squad of players within an Organization.

## **Section II – GHYLA Administration**

GHYLA will be comprised of Organizations that are independent, each with its own board of directors and financial resources to fund its respective program.

All GHYLA Organizations must sign the “Compliance Agreement” which certifies that all coaches and staff have read and understand these rules, and agree to abide by them. Failure to sign this agreement will result in the exclusion of the Organization from GHYLA.

The name Greater Houston Youth Lacrosse League (GHYLA) refers to the league as a whole. Organizations operate under their own name with their own identity. GHYLA allows Organizations to share in the planning and decision making while playing under its rules and regulations

GHYLA has a policy that we DO NOT share the coach’s or players contact lists with anyone. This is a matter of privacy. People who give their e-mail addresses to GHYLA have an expectation that their contact information will not be passed on to for-profit Organizations or companies.

## **Section III – Organization Costs**

The GHYLA Board of Directors will determine dues and fees for each league or playing division. Every Organization in GHYLA will pay these dues and fees for its teams to the Treasurer prior to the first game of the season on the date announced by the Executive Committee. Failure to pay regular fees or dues shall cause the team’s games to be forfeited until all fees and dues are paid.

Each GHYLA Organization will pay for officials at all regular season home games. Officials’ fees may vary depending on how teams are aligned within the GHYLA (by division, conference, etc.). Failure to pay officials’ fees in a timely fashion shall cause the team’s games to be forfeited until all official’s fees are paid.

All home field scheduling and home field usage costs are the responsibility of the home team Organization. All playoff and tournament-style league-wide play shall have been paid for by the league as part of the GHYLA organizational dues. The league shall pay for fields, officials, trophies, other awards, and other related costs to such events. GHYLA member teams will each be allocated an equitable share of these costs as determined by the GHYLA.

## **Section IV – Organization Eligibility**

The GHYLA will be comprised of independent Organizations playing together as a league. Any Organization that wishes to play in GHYLA will be welcome to join as a member Organization if agreed upon the GHYLA Board, as specified in Article 3 of the Bylaws.

Any vote on a new Organization admitted to the league will be taken after a current season ends but before a new season begins. A simple majority vote is needed to accept a new Organization into GHYLA based on the criteria set forth in the GHYLA Bylaws.

Each new member Organization will be on a one-season probationary term. At the end of the probationary term the GHYLA Board will then take a vote at the end-of-season meeting. A majority vote will be required to give the new member Organization regular status.

No Organization may be disciplined (including expulsion) from GHYLA without a majority vote by the GHYLA Board of Directors. This vote will take place at the end-of-season meeting.

A vote to discipline an Organization (including expulsion) may be called if one or more of the following conditions are met:

1. An Organization shows a repeated disregard for the By-laws, rules, and codes set forth by the GHYLA Board. This can be quantified by an unusually high number of grievances brought against an Organization and formally submitted to the GHYLA Board.
2. Repeated attempts are made by the GHYLA Executive Committee to get the offending Organization to comply, and the offending Organization fails to take reasonable action or fails to make reasonable progress to address the issue.

Unresolved issues requiring GHYLA intervention will be reviewed at the end-of-season meeting. If a resolution is not reached, the GHYLA Board of Directors shall call for a silent majority vote regarding expulsion. The result of the vote will be final.

If an Organization is expelled, a letter from the GHYLA Executive Committee will be sent to the expelled Organization president detailing the reasons. An expelled Organization can re-apply for membership after serving a one-year suspension.

All GHYLA member teams are required to carry team liability/medical insurance. If a team or Organization is found not to have liability insurance, the team will be immediately suspended from all league activities. Requiring the coaches and players to have a current US Lacrosse membership satisfies this liability/medical insurance requirement.

## Section V – Player Divisions, Player Eligibility, Rosters, Coaches Eligibility, First Aid

The Greater Houston Youth Lacrosse League will be based on the following divisions primarily based on grade and with the age limitations noted. No player who is fifteen (15) years on August 31<sup>st</sup> in the year prior to the start of the regular season, which usually begins in late January or early February, or who is enrolled in school in the 9<sup>th</sup> grade or above shall be allowed to play in the GHYLA. A valid birth certificate must be produced for the Executive Committee within seventy-two (72) hours upon request. The age limitations are intended to protect the safety of the children. A player who does not meet the age restrictions for his own grade or an Organization that desires to have player participate in a lower division may petition the Executive Committee for a waiver by contacting the GHYLA President.

Teams shall be as follows:

1. 8<sup>th</sup> Grade: Team: An 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Team shall be a team whose players are:
  - a. In the 7<sup>th</sup> or 8<sup>th</sup> Grade or under during the season of competition.
  - b. Not members of a team from another GHYLA member program.
2. 7<sup>th</sup> Grade: Team: A 7<sup>th</sup> Grade Team shall be a team whose players are:
  - a. In the 7<sup>th</sup> or under during the season of competition
  - b. Not members of a team from another GHYLA member program.
3. 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Team: A 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Team shall be a team whose players are:
  - a. In the 6<sup>th</sup> Grade or under during the season of competition
  - b. Not members of a team from another GHYLA program.
4. 4<sup>th</sup> Grade Team: A 4<sup>th</sup> Grade Team shall be a team whose players are:
  - a. In the 4<sup>th</sup> Grade or under during the season of competition
  - b. Not members of a team from another GHYLA program.
5. 2nd Grade Team: A 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade Team shall be a team whose players are:
  - a. In the 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade or under during the season of competitionNot members of a team from another GHYLA program.

In each grade based division (other than 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade), a Team may be designated “Playoff Eligible” or “Non-Playoff Eligible”. Each Playoff Eligible Team will be eligible to participate in the end of the season Playoff Tournament. No player may play on more than one Playoff Eligible team. Players may be on a Playoff Eligible Team’s roster and participate in games on a Non-Playoff Eligible team; provided that such player is not getting sufficient playing time on the Playoff Eligible Team. The purpose of this rule is to be able to provide such players with proper game exposure. However, no player is permitted to play on two Teams in multiple Grade based divisions without the approval of the Executive Committee and subject to the rules below.

Head coaches must have their team’s official roster with player’s name, grade and game jersey number available on game day to verify his players’ eligibility. Only the opposing head coach can challenge a player’s status. The head coach must then follow the procedures relating to grievances included within these rules. In the event that official rosters are not filed on time, all playoff eligible conference games will be entered as a 0-1 loss if a team wins the game until the roster is filed. If both teams have not filed their rosters, it will be a 0-0 tie.

In the event a coach or organization wants a player required to play down on a lower team, the coach or organization may do so based on size, skill, or other relevant consideration. However, the coach or organization must inform the other team’s coach or Board representative prior to the game starting and provide the basis for that decision. If the other team objects, it may file a grievance with the league claiming that the decision to play down was not reasonable. The team wanting the player to play down is then open to appropriate sanctions including, but not limited to, forfeiture of that game.

All Organizations are strongly encouraged to have their coaches submit to a State of Texas background check before having contact with players. At each game, the home team Organization will have present at least one person certified in “CPR and First Aid” and hold a valid current card. Each team will have a properly-stocked first aid kit with emergency plan and a cell phone on the sidelines of all GHYLA league games and practices. If possible, each team should have an Automated External Defibrillator (AED) on the sidelines. For purposes of contacting emergency vehicles, each team will have the property address of the playing field available at all times.

## **Section VI – Boundaries**

### **a. Organizational Boundaries**

The GHYLA requires its member Organizations to abide by the boundary guidelines established by the GHYLA. All players shall join the team that is zoned to provide players to the applicable public high school program.

The alignment of GHYLA members to specific public high school boundaries shall be determined annually by the GHYLA Board of Directors. This alignment shall be set as early as practicable following the vote of new members and must be confirmed no later than the first day October of each year. The alignment is intended to follow the THSLL guidelines, though the GHYLA Board of Directors in its boundary vote may elect an alignment that differs from that of the THSLL. In cases where member Organizations cannot agree on boundaries in their area, each Organization will submit its proposal for its boundaries for that area to a vote of the Board of Directors, which will determine by majority vote the boundaries for such Organizations.

### **b. Boundary Changes**

Any player impacted by a boundary change will have a one-time opportunity to choose an affiliation with his previous team or the newly-zoned team.

### **c. Player Waivers**

Starting the 2018 Spring season, the GHYLA will no longer be accepting waivers from players to waive out of his zoned team.

Players that have played for a program prior to the 2018 Spring season will be grandfathered-in and will be allowed to continue to play for the program for which he has played prior to the 2018 Spring season.

### **d. Enforcement**

All teams are required to submit a team roster to GHYLA that includes the high school designation for each player and the current school attended. All rosters will be open to inspection by any GHYLA member.

Any organization which violates the GHYLA boundary and eligibility policy will be subject to disciplinary action by the executive committee up to and including removal from GHYLA.

#### e. Non GHYLA-Member Play

During the GHYLA season through and including the date(s) of the Playoffs and All-Stars, no GHYLA Member Team shall play, including scrimmages, a non-GHYLA team without the prior written consent of the GHYLA Board, with the exception of:

- (i) playing in tournaments that were not organized simply to circumvent this rule,
- (ii) (ii) playing games or scrimmages against teams that are members, in good standing, with the Houston private school league, and
- (iii) (iii) playing games or scrimmages against teams that are members, in good standing, with the CTYL (Austin Youth Lacrosse League), the South Texas Youth Lacrosse Association (San Antonio Youth Lacrosse), the DFW Youth Lacrosse League (Dallas Fort Worth Youth Lacrosse League) or any other recreational lacrosse league that does not operate, in any capacity, within the Greater Houston, Texas area.

### **Section VII – Game and Practice Regulations/Officials**

Each Organization will provide its own home field and will be responsible for field markings and field supervision. It is also encouraged that all home fields have access to toilet facilities for all participants

Each Organization that does not have an operating scoreboard must furnish a regulation clock as well as a penalty clock and horn with an adult to run them.

The home team is responsible for accommodating the visiting team by making sure that the home team has a different colored jersey than the visiting team. Each Organization must submit its team jersey colors for home games to the GHYLA Coordinator before its first regular season game. In the interest of cost, it is desirable to use one color for home and away. However, the use of pinnies or reversible jerseys is acceptable.

All GHYLA member teams must provide a site administrator, as defined by U.S. Lacrosse, for every game.

Each Organization will operate its home field as the host and may elect to offer concessions. It is not a requirement that an Organization offer concessions. All teams must make sure that all trash on their sidelines is cleaned up after each game.

### **Section VIII – Ethics**

In any document one can find loopholes or ways to get around a rule. It is up to the individual Organizations to police themselves so as not to break the spirit of the bylaws, rules, and regulations. An Organization is only as good as the people in it who are willing to play above board in an honest and trusting manner. The GHYLA was created to bring together strong independent youth lacrosse Organizations that are willing to work within an environment of mutual cooperation in which the advancement of Lacrosse, and not just the individual Organization, is the main priority. The dynamics of youth lacrosse demands that a youth lacrosse league be operated in this manner. This allows the community in which the Organization resides to better serve its local area, grow within that area, and have a sense of ownership with the community.

Member Organizations are expected to induce a spirit of high ideals in their teams. Member Organizations are expected to practice the highest standards of sportsmanship and coaching ethics.

Altercations between parents, players, coaches, officials, or any other spectators will not be tolerated. Organizations must police themselves and make it clear to their Organization that bad behavior will not be tolerated.

The highest degree of ethical conduct is expected of all that participate in the league. This includes strict adherence to both the letter and the spirit of the rules and regulations. The use of alcohol, illegal drugs, tobacco products, and the use of profanity at GHYLA-sanctioned events is prohibited.

## **Section IX – Playing Rules**

Playing rules will be the US Lacrosse Boys Youth Rules, as amended by any waivers adopted by the GHYLA. Adoption of waivers will be voted on by the GHYLA board of directors as early as practicable and prior to the beginning of the regular season. The GHYLA will advise officials of any waivers before the start of the regular season. For the 2016-2017 Season the GHYLA will be using the US Lacrosse Boys Youth Rules as adopted for the 2015-2016 season as modified by the Grade-based nomenclature of these rules and regulations.

## **Section X – Playoffs**

Each year at the Pre-season meeting, the Board of Directors shall determine the basis for eligibility and format for playoffs for each division described in Section V. Information regarding playoff-related costs are addressed in Section III of this document.