

RULES MODIFICATION: GOALTENDER EQUIPMENT (MINOR BOX)

TORONTO, ON – May 4th, 2023 – The Ontario Lacrosse Association (OLA) Board of Governors has taken action to modify a minor box playing rule for the 2023 season.

In 2022, Lacrosse Canada updated its goaltender equipment measurements exemption process for goaltenders wearing Category 1 (U11 and below) and Category 2 (U13) leg pads, pants and chest protectors. Under the previous category system, teams were required to submit individual athlete measurements to Lacrosse Canada for review in order to apply for an exemption. Under the updated system, athletes who meet minimum height requirements are now automatically eligible for equipment exemptions without needing to provide documentation to Lacrosse Canada. This update alleviated a backlog of goaltender equipment exemption requests.

Athletes are now automatically eligible to wear any category of equipment if they meet a minimum height requirement, regardless of which division they play in. The revised height requirements are:

Equipment Category	Previous Division Requirement	New Height Requirement
3	U15 and above	5ft 5in and above
2	U13	4ft 7in to 5ft 4in
1	U11 and below	4ft 6in and below

Using this system, if an equipment examination request happens in-game, there is no mechanism for the goaltender to prove that they are eligible to wear this level of equipment, since the height requirement requires the goaltender to be measured without equipment or shoes on. In-game, this would cause a significant delay while the officials and team trainer accompanied the goalie to the dressing room to completely undress (only allowed tshirt, shorts and bare feet) in order to be measured. Measuring ahead of the game would be an undue burden on participants, considering many referees are officiating the game prior and are unavailable until 3-5 minutes before the next game, when the goaltender is likely already dressed and ready to play. While the updated Lacrosse Canada system does alleviate the backlog of equipment exemptions, it has created a new issue whereby proving height by an independent/neutral party is now an issue.

Until further notice, minor box goaltenders competing in OLA-sanctioned events will be exempt from requiring category tags on their equipment. This does not mean that goaltender equipment examinations can't be requested by the opposing team. Equipment still must conform to the size/shape of the athlete (referee's discretion) and may not be modified in any way from the manufacturer's original condition (referee's discretion). Removing the category tag process simply means that goaltenders may wear the equipment that they have and are able to play safely in, with the understanding that if the referee has the sole determination of where equipment is being used that does not properly fit the goaltender. Because goaltender equipment has adjustable straps to ensure a safe and proper fit, the requirement to "conform to the shape of the athlete" remains the most important factor when a referee is conducting an equipment examination. All other information about goaltender equipment examinations (including the penalty for participating with illegal equipment at the discretion of the officials) remains the same. The only change is that the referees will not penalize a team solely for playing with equipment that is tagged with the wrong category for their age division or height. This policy will be revisited in the future in order to conform to Lacrosse Canada's direction for goaltender's equipment.