

- FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE -

ONTARIO LACROSSE CREATES EARLIER OPPORTUNITY FOR GIRLS BY INTRODUCING GIRLS BOX AT U11

TORONTO, ON – February 11, 2026 – The Ontario Lacrosse Association (OLA) is proud to announce the introduction of Girls Rep Box Lacrosse at the U11 age division for the 2026 season, officially shifting the entry point for Girls Box and creating earlier opportunity within the provincial pathway.

The addition of U11 Girls Box directly supports the OLA's commitment to Long-Term Athlete Development (LTAD) by aligning age-appropriate training and competition with critical development stages. Providing a dedicated girls-only competitive environment at U11 strengthens skill development, confidence, and athlete retention, establishing a stronger foundation for continued participation at U13, U15, U17, U22 and Senior.

This expansion also advances the OLA's Strategic Direction, "**Lacrosse is for Everyone**," specifically the strategic goal of *celebrating and encouraging female participation*. By creating earlier entry into Girls Box, Ontario Lacrosse continues its commitment to achieving gender equity and driving meaningful change for women and girls across all aspects of programming, from grassroots to high performance.

The response from clubs across the province has already been significant. Based on preliminary team entries, participation at the U11 division is on track to reflect numbers comparable to U17 and U22 from last season, underscoring both demand and momentum within Girls Box.

For clubs considering participation, the introduction of U11 Girls Box does not require an overhaul of existing Rep Box programming. The structure closely mirrors co-ed Minor Box opportunities and includes league play (Zone games, Inter-Zone games, and Fun Days), invitational tournaments, and a season culminating at the Ontario Lacrosse Festival.

Teams are required to attend at least one tournament during the season to qualify for Provincial Championships. The season will conclude at the Ontario Lacrosse Festival, August 4–6 in Durham Region, where the first U11 Girls Box Provincial Champions will be crowned.

To further support participation during this transition, OLA Regulation MR4.05 allows female athletes moving from co-ed to girls-only box teams the opportunity to participate in both programs until the June 15 deadline.

With a strong inaugural season anticipated at U11, continued growth is expected in the years ahead as momentum behind Girls Box Lacrosse continues to build across the province.

Clubs interested in learning more about Girls Box Lacrosse are encouraged to contact Donelle Latimer, Girls Box Coordinator, at girlsbox@ontariolacrosse.com

About the Ontario Lacrosse Association

The Ontario Lacrosse Association (OLA) exists to grow, lead, promote and govern the sport of lacrosse within the province of Ontario. We bring together players, coaches, officials, volunteers, and fans in a shared commitment to uphold the values of respect, fair play, and community, ensuring a vibrant future for Canada's national summer sport. For more information or to become involved, visit ontariolacrosse.com.