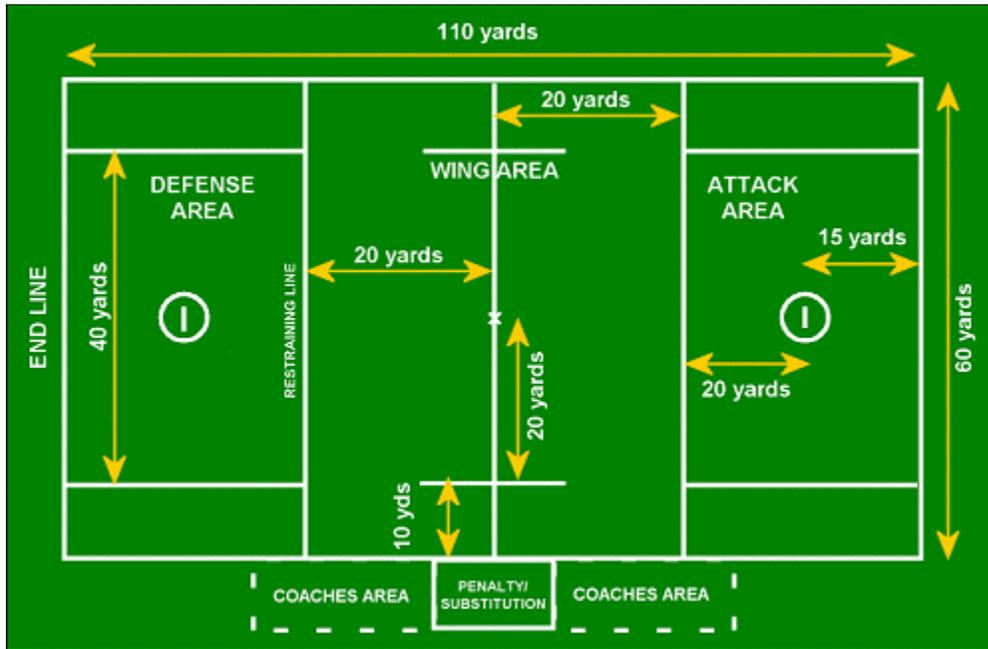


# A Lacrosse Primer



## The Field

Lacrosse is played on a field approximately the size of a football field: 110 yards long by 60 yards wide. The goals are 6 feet square and are placed in a crease, which is a circle with a 9-foot radius. Offensive players are not allowed in the crease at any time during the game.

## The Game

The fastest game on two feet ... a combination of the speed of basketball and the contact of football ... a game in which a scoring opportunity on one end of the field can be transformed into a goal at the other end in a matter of seconds ... skill, power, speed, endurance and intelligence ... This Is Lacrosse.

Originally called **baggataway**, lacrosse was played by Native Americans for a variety of purposes: religious rituals, training of warriors, or to settle inter-tribal disputes. Often the games were played without any boundaries and with goals separated by many miles. It was not unusual to have players injured or killed during baggataway contests. The game acquired its present name because the sticks originally resembled the staffs, or croziers, carried by the French Jesuit missionaries who first observed the game. Thus, we have **lacrosse**.

## The Players

There are 10 players in action at one time on a lacrosse team: a goalie, three defensemen, three midfielders, and three attackmen. At all times, a team must have three men on its offensive half of the field and four men on its defensive half.

**Goalie:** Also called a goalkeeper, the goalie uses a wider stick and wears a chest protector, as his job is to stop the opponents' shots, which may come flying at him at over 100 mph. The best goalies are either brave or crazy ... or a little of both. After making a save and gaining possession of the ball, the goalie is allowed to stay in the crease for only four seconds. During that time, no one is allowed to touch him.

**Defensemen:** Defensemen use a longer stick (52-72 inches) and generally stay on the defensive half of the field. Their job is to guard the opponent's attackmen and take the ball away from them. Defensemen need to be quick, aggressive and tough. Middies use a short stick (40-42 inches).

**Midfielders:** Middies, as they are also called, play both offense and defense, thus, they must run the length of the field. They are usually substituted frequently in units so as to keep them fresh. Speed and endurance are essential for middies. In recent years coaches have begun using "long-stick middies" -- middies with defense sticks -- as defensive specialists.

**Attackmen:** Attackmen use the shortest stick so as to limit the chance of losing the ball. They generally stay on the offensive half of the field and coordinate the offense. They are usually the best stick handlers and must be quick and agile. Attackmen use a short stick (40-42 inches).

## The Equipment

All players must wear helmets, shoulder pads, gloves and mouthpieces. Arm pads are usually worn, especially by middies and attackmen, and rib pads have also become popular in more recent times. In addition, goalies wear a chest protector and a throat protector. The sticks used today are generally made of molded plastic with either a nylon mesh or a leather and nylon woven pocket, with either an aluminum, titanium or alloy handle. The sticks vary in length from 40 to 72 inches, depending upon the position played. Sticks can be ruled illegal for either a deep pocket or an illegal crosse. A deep pocket brings a 1-minute non-releasable penalty. An illegal crosse brings a 3-minute non-releasable penalty.

## The Terminology

**Face-off:** The game begins with the ball placed at the middle of the field between the sticks of two opposing midfielders. At the sound of the official's whistle, the two players try to clamp the ball under their sticks and gain control of it. Face-offs also occur after each goal. Attack and defensemen must stay in their "restraining area" until someone has possession of the ball.

**Clearing:** Trying to get the ball from your defensive end of the field to the offensive end.

**Riding:** Trying to stop an opponent's effort to clear.

**Slide:** When a defender moves from his offensive man to another to help a teammate double-team an opponent threatening to score.

**Checking:** Using your stick to hit the stick of an opponent in possession of the ball.

**Body checking:** Using your body to hit an opponent in possession of the ball or within five yards of a loose ball.

**EMO:** EMO means extra-man offense. When the opposing team has a player in the penalty box, the offensive team goes to its EMO.

**Man-down:** When a team has a player in the penalty box then it is in a man-down situation.

## Play

**Offensively:** On offense, the attacking team will run set plays and formations just as a basketball team would, with cutters, picks (no moving picks allowed), and feeders. They will usually go one-on-one, or free-lance. Naturally, there are numerous opportunities for fast breaks, or unsettled situations.

**Defensively:** On defense, teams usually play man-to-man with a team concept of backups and slides to assist a teammate. When a person has the ball, a defensive player may check (hit) his stick or his hands in order to try to dislodge the ball. He may also deliver a body check to the player from the front between the waist and the shoulders. In addition, in a loose-ball situation, a player may hit any opponent within 5 yards of the ball in the same manner.

## Penalties

Penalties are classified as either technical or personal fouls. Technical fouls either cause the offending team to lose possession of the ball, award the other team the ball, or place the offending player in the "penalty box" for

30 seconds if the opponents had possession of the ball at the time of the infraction. Personal fouls result in a one-minute penalty. Severe abuse (fighting, etc.) may result in either a three-minute penalty or expulsion from the game. In the case of a time penalty, the offending team must play a man short, thus yielding the opponents an "extra-man" opportunity.

### **Personal Fouls**

**Slashing:** Striking an opponent's body other than his hand with your stick. (To an extent, striking the arms is allowed.) One-minute penalty.

**Tripping:** Obstructing the opponent below the knee with your body or stick. One-minute penalty.

**Illegal body checking:** Hitting an opponent from the rear, below the waist, above the shoulders, or when the opponent neither has the ball nor is within 5 yards of a loose ball. One-minute penalty.

**Crosschecking:** Hitting the opponent with the part of the stick between your hands. One-minute penalty.

**Unsportsmanlike conduct:** Official's discretion. One-minute penalty.

### **Technical Fouls**

**Offside:** Failure to have either three players on your offensive half of the field or four players on your defensive half. The normal position of these players is not significant, only the number is. An offside against your team when you have the ball brings a change of possession. An offside call on your team when the opponent has the ball brings a 30-second penalty.

**Holding:** Holding an opponent or his stick with your body or stick. This does not eliminate body checks or holding your position, but you may not wrap your stick around an opponent and thus stop his movement. Holding brings a 30-second penalty.

**Pushing:** Pushing an opponent from the rear, or when he is not within five yards of the ball. All body contact must occur with both hands on your stick. You may not use your free hand to push off. A push with possession brings a 30-second penalty. A push without possession brings a change of possession.

**Interference:** Moving picks, preventing cutters free movement, etc. Also, hitting the goalie in the crease when he has possession of the ball. Calls can bring change of possession or a 30-second penalty, depending upon the circumstance.

There are also technical fouls from throwing the stick, lying on a loose ball, illegal substitutions, playing without a stick, delay of game, etc.

### **Timed infractions**

**Failure to advance:** When a team gains possession of the ball in the defensive end, it has 20 seconds to cross midfield. Failure to do this results in a "failure to advance" call and the possession is lost. Once past midfield, the team has 10 seconds to get the ball into the "box," meaning across the restraining line and inside the rectangle made up of the endline and the two inner lines that make up the attack area. Failure to do this also results in a "failure to advance" call and loss of possession. In addition, the offensive team must never keep the ball out of the "box" for more than 10 seconds. If they do, a "failure to advance" call will be made.

**Four-second call:** When the goalie makes a save or assumes control of the ball in any way while in the crease he may remain in the crease for only four seconds. If he does not vacate the crease in that time, possession is lost.