



# 2012 » PARTICIPATION SURVEY



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*RaiseYourGAME™*

## ABOUT THIS SURVEY

The US Lacrosse Participation Report is produced annually to monitor participation at different levels of the sport across the country. This report counts only participation on organized teams and does not include leisure time play of lacrosse.

The primary source of data for this report is provided by the 64 US Lacrosse regional chapters. Each chapter reports participation at the youth level. Significant data is also obtained from US Lacrosse membership records, the National Collegiate Athletic Association, the National Federation of State High School Associations and [www.laxpower.com](http://www.laxpower.com).

## ABOUT US LACROSSE

US Lacrosse was founded on January 1, 1998, as the national governing body of men's and women's lacrosse. US Lacrosse is the result of a three-year strategic initiative to unify all national lacrosse associations in an effort to maximize human and financial resources, and maximize the efficiency and effectiveness of lacrosse promotion and development.



US Lacrosse provides a leadership role in virtually every aspect of the game throughout the United States, and offers a number of programs and information services to its national membership and more than one million lacrosse enthusiasts.

The US Lacrosse national headquarters is located in Baltimore and features a three-story administrative center, as well as the sport's national archives, the Lacrosse Museum and National Hall of Fame. US Lacrosse currently employs a staff of 70 at its national office and benefits from regular volunteer and intern assistance. Additionally, US Lacrosse has a network of 64 regional chapters throughout the country that help develop and promote the game at the grassroots level.

US Lacrosse, a 501 (c)(3) organization, relies on the growing membership support of more than 400,000 lacrosse players, coaches, officials and enthusiasts for a large portion of its operational funding. Additional funding programs include annual giving, planned giving, foundation and corporate giving, capital drives, grants, sponsorship, advertising and special events.

**MISSION:** US Lacrosse is the national governing body of lacrosse. Through responsive and effective leadership, we provide programs and services to inspire participation while protecting the integrity of the sport.

**VISION:** We envision a future which offers people everywhere the opportunity to discover, learn, participate in, enjoy and ultimately embrace the shared passion of the lacrosse experience.

# LACROSSE TODAY

For more than a decade, lacrosse has been one of the fastest-growing team sports in the country, and that trend continued last year. In 2012, more than 720,000 players participated in lacrosse on organized teams, an increase of nearly 40,000 players from the year before. More than half of the total players compete at the youth level (age 15 and below), but every segment of the game is showing continued growth patterns.

At the youth level, the US Lacrosse survey reveals nearly 390,000 players on organized teams in 2012, an increase of nearly eight percent over the previous year. The number of high school players topped 280,000 in 2012, and the sport continues to be the fastest-growing sport in the NFHS. The number of collegiate players (varsity and club) was just under 35,000, growing 3.1 percent, with new varsity programs continuing to reach all corners of the country.

Major League Lacrosse, one of two professional lacrosse leagues, added expansion franchises in Charlotte, N.C., and Columbus, Ohio, for the 2012 season, and thousands of players continue to participate on the field at the post-collegiate level.

Beyond the sheer participation numbers, lacrosse continues to grow in terms of exposure. Led by the ESPN family of networks, nearly 100 collegiate and professional lacrosse games will be broadcast nationally in 2013, with scores more streamed on the web. CBS Sports Network and NBC Sports will also air games in 2013. The sport is also highlighted through print and Internet vehicles, led by *Lacrosse Magazine*, which is read each month by the more than 400,000 members of US Lacrosse.



**US Lacrosse reports that more than 720,000 people played on organized teams in 2012.**

## Total Number of Lacrosse Players

Year	Players	% 1-yr Growth	Year	Players	% 1-yr Growth
2001	253,931	—	2009	568,021	8.4
2002	288,104	13.5	2010	624,593	10.0
2003	301,560	4.7	2011	684,730	9.6
2004	351,852	16.7	2012	722,205	5.5
2005	381,568	8.4			
2006	426,022	11.7			
2007	480,627	12.8			
2008	524,230	9.1			

# LACROSSE PARTICIPATION IN 2012

Level	Male Players	Female Players	Total Players	% 1-Yr Growth
Youth	252,060	137,570	389,275	7.8
High School	166,471	115,677	282,148	2.5
College	21,080	13,887	34,967	3.1
Professional	240	0	240	33.3
Post-Collegiate	10,997	4,223	15,220	8.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>450,848</b>	<b>271,357</b>	<b>722,205</b>	<b>5.5</b>

## Youth

Youth lacrosse participation (15 and under) rose to nearly 390,000 players in 2012 and remains the age level with the highest participation rates in the sport. Roughly 65 percent of youth players are boys, but both boys' and girls' youth lacrosse are growing at high rates. The number of boys playing lacrosse has risen 81 percent since 2006 and the number of girls playing lacrosse has risen 69 percent in that time frame.

The geographic expansion of the sport is evident. In 2001, the first year of the US Lacrosse Participation Report, there were just five chapters that reported more than 5,000 youth players in their chapter area. In 2012, that number has grown to 23 and includes chapters from Colorado, Georgia, Minnesota, Texas and Utah.

Among the states with the most youth players according to the US Lacrosse chapter surveys in 2012 were New York (52,449), Massachusetts (40,259), Maryland (40,021), New Jersey (32,439), Pennsylvania (23,358), Connecticut (21,985), Virginia (17,331), California (16,218), Florida (13,190) and Ohio (12,857).



**More than half of all lacrosse players are age 15 or younger.**

### US Lacrosse Annual Participation Survey

Year	Youth Boys	Youth Girls	Total Youth Players
2006	139,188	81,609	220,797
2007	155,866	85,715	241,581
2008	168,768	96,446	265,214
2009	182,249	115,022	297,271
2010	201,727	122,946	324,673
2011	230,356	130,919	361,275
2012	252,060	137,570	389,275

## High School

The 2011 National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) annual participation report listed girls' lacrosse as having the 10th most number of participants of all high school sports. That was the first time that lacrosse reached into the top 10 of any category in terms of participation since the NFHS began tracking data in 1971. Girls' lacrosse was back at No. 10 in 2012 and boys' lacrosse is knocking on the door as the 11th most played sport.

Over the last five years, lacrosse is the fastest-growing team sport among NFHS member schools. The number of schools sponsoring boys' lacrosse has increased 47.2 percent, considerably ahead of the second-fastest growing sport of bowling (18.1 percent). On the girls' side, the number of schools has increased 43.1 percent with bowling again coming in second (21.8).

As of 2012, the governing bodies for high school sports in 22 states have either formally sanctioned or recognized lacrosse. That number continues to grow with California, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Minnesota, Missouri, North Carolina, Pennsylvania and South Carolina among the states added to that list since 2000. Lacrosse also continues to grow dramatically at schools and states not under the NFHS umbrella for lacrosse with tens of thousands playing for these programs.



**Since 2006, more than 1,400 new high school lacrosse teams have been added.**

### NFHS Growth Rates (2007 to 2012) • Number of Schools Sponsoring the Sport

Boys' Sports	2007	2012	Growth Rate	Girls' Sports	2007	2012	Growth Rate
Lacrosse	1,588	2,338	47.2%	Lacrosse	1,480	2,118	43.1%
Bowling	2,089	2,467	18.1%	Bowling	2,012	2,451	21.8%
Swimming	6,358	7,001	10.1%	Field Hockey	1,493	1,788	19.8%
Volleyball	2,006	2,180	8.7%	Ice Hockey	504	600	19.1%
Water Polo	725	783	8.0%	Water Polo	716	785	9.6%

### US Lacrosse Annual Participation Survey (Varsity, JV, Freshmen and Club Players)

Year	HS Boys	HS Girls	Total HS Players
2006	96,777	65,244	162,021
2007	112,496	74,550	187,046
2008	131,092	87,731	218,823
2009	136,710	90,914	227,624
2010	149,400	105,914	255,314
2011	162,416	112,865	275,281
2012	166,471	115,677	282,148

**States with high school associations that sanction/recognize lacrosse:**

- |               |                       |          |
|---------------|-----------------------|----------|
| *California   | Michigan              | Vermont  |
| Colorado      | Minnesota             | Virginia |
| Connecticut   | Missouri (girls only) |          |
| Delaware      | New Hampshire         |          |
| Florida       | New Jersey            |          |
| Georgia       | New York              |          |
| Illinois      | North Carolina        |          |
| Maine         | Pennsylvania          |          |
| Maryland      | Rhode Island          |          |
| Massachusetts | South Carolina        |          |

\* - Individual sections within the state can choose whether or not to sponsor the sport.

**College**

In an era of difficult financial challenges, lacrosse has continued to blossom at the collegiate level. The NCAA Men’s Lacrosse Championship Weekend has become the envy of just about every other NCAA sport with crowds of more than 40,000 routinely filling NFL stadiums to see the games. Colleges large and small, in almost every corner of the country, have added programs in recent years.

One of the landmark additions to the college lacrosse scene was the University of Michigan adding both men’s and women’s varsity programs. The men began play in 2012 and the women will begin play in 2014.

“The more we dug into it, the more we believed that this is just a sport of the future,” said Dave Brandon, Michigan’s athletic director. “Lacrosse’s trend lines in every way we could measure were impressive and made us believe that this is a place where we could grow and be a part of something that would over time be very big.”

Michigan is hardly alone. Thirty new collegiate varsity programs began play in 2012 and a staggering 60 began in 2013. Over the last five years, lacrosse is the fastest growing sport at the NCAA level, and hundreds more compete at the club level.

The addition of eight new women’s NCAA Division I programs in 2013 will bring the total number of teams at that level to 100, and nine more schools have already announced they are starting programs in the next three years. Men’s lacrosse has seen smaller growth at the Division I level than other levels of the sport, but even that is beginning to change. High Point and Marquette began playing in 2013 and five more schools have announced new programs.



**Michigan became the first school with a BCS football team to add varsity men’s lacrosse since 1981.**

## NCAA Growth Rates (2007 to 2012) • Number of Schools Sponsoring the Sport

Men's Sports	2007	2012	Growth Rate	Women's Sports	2007	2012	Growth Rate
Lacrosse	226	295	30.5%	Lacrosse	286	376	31.5%
Volleyball	80	98	22.5%	Indoor Track	641	711	10.9%
Indoor Track	575	634	10.3%	Ice Hockey	79	86	8.9%
Cross Country	898	960	6.9%	Cross Country	967	1,035	7.0%
Swimming	390	413	5.9%	Soccer	941	996	5.8%

## US Lacrosse Annual Participation Report (Varsity, Junior College and Club Players)

Year	College Men	College Women	Total College Players
2006	16,444	10,207	26,651
2007	16,961	11,321	28,282
2008	18,148	11,674	29,822
2009	18,746	12,868	31,614
2010	19,326	13,105	32,431
2011	20,397	13,532	33,929
2012	21,080	13,887	34,967

## Professional

There are two professional lacrosse leagues operating in North America — Major League Lacrosse and the National Lacrosse League.

Major League Lacrosse is an outdoor league that played its first season in 2001. The league currently has eight franchises (Boston, Charlotte, Chesapeake, Denver, Hamilton, Long Island, Ohio and Rochester) and will hold its 2013 Championship Weekend at PPL Park outside of Philadelphia in August. The MLL is regularly featured on ESPN networks and also added a television deal with CBS Sports Network beginning with the 2012 season. MLL teams play a 14-game schedule from April through August followed by a four-team single elimination playoff.

The National Lacrosse League is an indoor league that dates to 1987. The NLL features teams in both the U.S. and Canada with a heavy percentage of players coming from Canada, where box lacrosse is the country's official summer sport. The season runs from January through April and is then followed by the playoffs in May. For the 2012-13 season, the league has nine franchises (Buffalo, Calgary, Colorado, Edmonton, Minnesota, Philadelphia, Rochester, Toronto and Washington state).



**Major League Lacrosse is one of two professional lacrosse leagues in North America.**

## Post-Collegiate Club

There are numerous former high school and college lacrosse players that give back to the game as coaches and officials, and many also continue to play at the post-collegiate club level. On the men’s side there are more than a dozen adult leagues that primarily take place in the spring and summer, including the American Lacrosse League, a league of nearly 50 teams that stretches from Maine to Virginia. Men’s post-collegiate play also includes competition for older players in Masters, Grandmasters and Supermasters divisions, and there are numerous tournaments around the country for all levels of play. There are nearly 100 organized women’s post-collegiate club teams around the country that play in both local/regional leagues and tournaments throughout the year. More information about post-collegiate club playing opportunities for men and women are available on the US Lacrosse website at [uslacrosse.org/postcollegiatelax](http://uslacrosse.org/postcollegiatelax)

## International

The Federation of International Lacrosse (FIL) was formed in the summer of 2008 as the new governing body for men’s and women’s lacrosse at the international level. The organization is the result of a merger between the International Federation of Women’s Lacrosse Associations (IFWLA) and the International Lacrosse Federation (ILF). The IFWLA had been sponsoring women’s world championships since 1982 and the ILF had been sponsoring men’s world championships since 1974.

US Lacrosse governs all aspects of the U.S. men’s and women’s national teams and plays a leading role in supporting men’s and women’s lacrosse development internationally.

World Championships are conducted through the FIL at the senior and U19 level every four years for both men and women. The United States has been dominant on the world stage, winning a total of 26 world championships since 1974.

Listed below are the most recent world championship results in the five divisions that the FIL sponsors.

<b>Year</b>	<b>Event</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Champion</b>	<b>U.S. Finish</b>
2012	Men’s U19	Turku, Finland	U.S.	1st
2011	Women’s U19	Hannover, Germany	U.S.	1st
2011	Men’s Indoor	Prague, Czech Republic	Canada	3rd
2010	Men’s Senior	Manchester, England	U.S.	1st
2009	Women’s Senior	Prague, Czech Republic	U.S.	1st



***The United States has won 26 world championships since 1974.***

## Upcoming World Championships

Year	Event	Location	Dates
2013	Women's Senior	Oshawa, Canada	July 11-20, 2013
2014	Men's Senior	Denver, Colorado	July 10-19, 2014
2015	Women's U19	Edinburgh, Scotland	July 23 - August 1, 2015

## Federation of International Lacrosse

### Member Nations (25)

Australia  
Austria  
Bermuda  
Canada  
Czech Republic  
Denmark  
England  
Finland  
France  
Germany  
Hong Kong  
Ireland  
Iroquois/Haudenosaunee  
Italy  
Japan  
Korea  
Latvia  
Netherlands  
New Zealand  
Norway  
Scotland  
Slovakia  
Spain  
Sweden  
United States  
Wales

### Associate Members (19)

Argentina  
Belgium  
Bulgaria  
China  
Costa Rica  
Guatemala  
Hungary  
Israel  
Mexico  
Peru  
Poland  
Portugal  
Russia  
Serbia  
Slovenia  
Switzerland  
Thailand  
Turkey  
Uganda

## Did You Know?

### Record Setting Attendance

Since moving to NFL stadiums in 2003, the NCAA Men's Lacrosse Championships have attracted at least 90,000 fans for the weekend and more than 35,000 fans for the championship game in nine of the last 10 years. The only NCAA championship with higher attendance figures is Division I men's basketball. The record weekend attendance for the championships was set in 2007 when 123,225 fans came to M&T Bank Stadium in Baltimore over a three-day stretch. The record for the championship game attendance was set in 2008 with 48,970 fans heading to Gillette Stadium in Foxborough, Mass.

### Private No More

Lacrosse was often stereotyped as a prep school sport, but it has grown way beyond those roots over the years. Maryland has traditionally had some of the strongest private school programs in the country, but in 2012, nearly 70 percent of the boys' programs in the state were at public schools. North Carolina, one of the states that has recently sanctioned high school lacrosse, has seen an increase of 93 percent in the number of public schools with boys' lacrosse programs since 2006. Approximately 80 percent of the programs in the state are at public schools. New York is the state with the largest number of high school lacrosse teams and nearly 85 percent of the programs are at public schools.

### The Women Move West

The University of Colorado (2014) and the University of Southern California (2013) have both recently started varsity women's programs, bringing the number of women's programs in the Pac 12 to five. Beginning in 2014, there will be a total of 10 women's NCAA Division I teams in the West, and a total of 12 college teams at the Division I and III levels in California alone.

## For More Information

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***The NCAA Men's Lacrosse Championship Weekend has averaged crowds of over 106,000 over the last 10 years.***