

Boys' Lacrosse

In boys' lacrosse, a typical full-scale game features one goalie, three defenders, three midfielders, and three attackers. Starting from your own goal and working out, the following section outlines each position in boys' lacrosse.

Positions:

Goalie

This player positions himself between the goal posts, and his top responsibility is to stop the ball from going into the net. Good hand-eye coordination and quick reflexes are musts for faring well in this position, because the goalie faces shots from all angles and at varied speeds. Along with defending the net, goalies are counted on to perform other tasks, including the following:

- Communicating with the defense: When the team is defending an attack, the goalie must communicate to his teammates what is unfolding on the field (because the goalie has the best view of the field).
- Fueling the offensive attack: When your goalie stops a shot, he should be looking upfield to see whether a teammate is available to receive a clearing pass that begins an attack, catching the opponent out of position.

Defenders

These players typically don't receive as much recognition as the attackers and midfielders because they aren't directly involved in the plays that produce the goals. Because a team must keep at least four players (including the goalie) on its defensive half of the field at all times, defenders rarely stray past midfield. Instead, their responsibilities include covering opposing players on the attack. Defenders rely on good footwork to shadow opponents all over the field, and they use a variety of checks. Good passing skills also enable defenders to ignite attacks by getting the ball to their midfielders and attackers running down the field.

Midfielders

Midfielders cover the most territory of any position—they roam all over the field—the quicker they recognize situations, the more effective they'll be. For example, when a midfielder anticipates a teammate gaining control of the ball, the player can begin moving toward the opponent's goal to try to create a scoring opportunity. Midfielders typically aren't counted on to provide a lot of scoring punch. The more important qualities for this position are good stick skills, accurate passing skills, and the stamina to stick with opposing attackers.

Attackers

The responsibility for scoring goals falls on the attackers, who spend games roaming in the opponent's half of the field. Attackers must rely on the defenders to stop the opposition and

the midfielders to feed them the ball. The most productive attackers are able to spin free to score when they're closing in on the opponent's goal and defenders are bumping and stick-checking them.

10 Important Boys Youth Lacrosse Rules:

Offside. Midfielders can enter any area of the field, but attackmen, defensemen and goalies are confined to their area of the field. To prevent an offside, a team must have four players on each side of the field at all times.

Face-offs. When the official blows his whistle on a face-off, the four players in the wing area (two from each team) that surrounds the two face-off players at midfield can release to get the ball, but the other players must wait until a player has gained possession of the ball or the ball has crossed the goal line.

Body checks. Think of a baseball player's hitting zone. A boys' lacrosse player can make only a body check to the front side of an opposing player and between the knees and shoulders. It is illegal to check to the head or back side. Also, if a player is in an unprotected position – say he's scooping a ground ball – it is illegal to check him.

Slashing and spearing. In boys' lacrosse, an illegal slash is a stick check to the helmet or back, or a poke check to an opponent's body other than his gloved hand as he holds the stick. In the bantam division, a one-handed check is considered a slash. A spear, hitting an opponent with the helmet, also is illegal.

Holding. Just as a boys' lacrosse player cannot hold another player with his hands, he can't use his stick to hold a player with or without the ball. On ground balls, it is considered holding if a player uses his stick to deny another player the ball.

Unnecessary roughness. This lacrosse rule often is a judgment call of the referee. Basically, a lacrosse player can't make an excessive check against an opponent. He can't step into a check from more than five yards or two steps away. Also, he must attempt to slow down if the offensive player has just released the ball.

Offensive interference or screen? An offensive player cannot purposely impede a defensive player's path with his body or stick. Although this is not a time-serving penalty, the offensive team loses possession of the ball. An offensive player can screen a defender if the two are near the ball, but the screener must have his feet stationary and hold his stick up straight.

Kicking a stick. Obviously, kicking is not allowed in boys' lacrosse. It also is illegal to kick an opposing player's lacrosse stick, even inadvertently. This happens when players are tightly bunched and trying to move a ground ball to open space.

Crease violation. Many shots are taken from close range and attackmen cannot step on or within the lacrosse goalie's crease until the ball goes into the net. This does not pertain to an offensive

player being pushed inside the crease by the defense. It's best to practice footwork around the crease, so attackmen learn to avoid stepping on and into the crease.

Goalie clear. When a lacrosse goalie gains possession of the ball, he has four seconds to clear the ball from his crease or must step outside the crease with the ball.

Girls' Lacrosse

Girls' lacrosse is played with 12 girls on the field from each team. In order to better understand the roles of the different positions, as well as where they are on the field, it is helpful to understand the layout of the playing surface. A girls' lacrosse field is typically 120 yards in length and 60 yards wide, with a center circle and a half field line. There are two restraining lines in each half. Each restraining line is 30 yards from its respective goal. At any given time, there may only be a maximum of seven offensive players and eight defensive players (including the goalie) in this area.

A circle known as the crease surrounds the goals, and in front of the goal is a 12-meter fan (semi-circle) used for administering minor fouls. Inside the 12-meter fan, is the eight-meter arc. Within this arc, defenders must be within a stick length of their attacker. The critical scoring area is an unmarked area 15 meters in front of the goal, 15 meters on each side of the goal and 9 meters behind it. Defenders in the critical scoring area have to allow the other team's attackers a free space to the goal when they are on offense.

Positions:

Attackers

There are three attackers, five midfielders, three defenders and one goalie. The three attackers line up in a straight line just beyond the restraining line in their attacking half of the field. These three positions are called 1st home, 2nd home and 3rd home. These players are typically the team's goal scorers. Their role is to get into scoring positions around the goal.

Midfielders

The midfielders consist of two defensive wings, two attacking wingers and one center. When a face off takes place, the defensive wings line up just outside the center circle on the defensive half of the field. The attacking wings line up on the outside of the center circle in the other team's half. The center stands in the middle of the circle and takes the face off. The midfielders are the team's primary ball carriers and control the pace of the game. Because they have to play both offense and defense, these girls must be extremely fit in order to cover the whole length of the field.

Defenders

Like the attackers, the defense also lines up in a straight line, this time behind the restraining line in their team's defensive half. The 3rd man is closest to the half line, the point is closest to the goal and the cover point is in the middle. These players remain in the defensive half of the field.

Goalie

Finally, there is the goalie, who stands in the crease. The goalie is the only player that is able to touch the ball with her hands, but she may only do so while inside the crease. Once the

goalie gets control of the ball she has ten seconds to either pass the ball to a teammate or to run it out of the crease herself.

How to Play Girls' Lacrosse

Draw control motion. On draw controls, the two opposing players must move the ball with an up-and-away motion with their lacrosse sticks. A downward or outward motion is illegal, and the ball is awarded to the non-offending team with a free position.

Restraining line. An offside is called when a team has more than seven players on or over the restraining line in its offensive end or more than eight players on or over the restraining line in its defensive end.

3-second rule. Girls' lacrosse encourages ball movement when the person with the ball is closely guarded within the restraining area. The offensive player has three seconds to pass the ball or change her cradle – either switching her hands or the level she is holding the ball. If the ball remains stationary for more than three seconds, the referee awards the defense with a free position. This lacrosse rule is exempt if the offensive player is behind the goal and the defensive player guarding her is in front of the goal and mirroring her.

Avoid the goalie circle. Players must stay out of the goalie circle. A goal does not count if the shooter or another offensive player steps on or into the goal circle or interferes with the goalie. A defensive player can reach her stick inside the goal circle to block or redirect a shot. Below the ninth-grade level, a shooter may not follow through with her lacrosse stick into the goalie circle.

Free position or indirect free position. The penalty for fouls is a free position. When a team is awarded the ball after a foul, the player can run, pass or shoot it. However, an indirect free position is awarded for minor defensive fouls inside the 12-meter fan, and the player who restarts the ball can't shoot until a defensive player or a teammate touches it. Only a goalie can take a free position within the 8-meter circle and no free position can be taken within four meters of a field boundary.

Major or minor fouls. All players must stand at least four meters away from the player restarting a free position or indirect free position. On a major foul, the offending player must stand four meters behind the player taking the free position. On a minor foul, the offending player stands four meters away in the direction from which she approached before committing the foul.

Empty stick check. A girls' lacrosse player can't check another player's stick that isn't in contact with the ball. This applies only when the opponent could have gained possession of the ball.

Offensive charging. A girls' lacrosse player with the ball cannot push into a defensive player who has established position. This major foul often occurs within the 12-meter fan when a player is going toward the goal.

Dangerous propelling. A player cannot maneuver the ball in her lacrosse stick in a dangerous manner and without regard to the people around her.

Pick or screen? An illegal screen occurs when a player without the ball, by her positioning, forces an opponent to take another route. To be legal, the player must be set within the visual field of the opponent, allowing the defender time and space to change her direction.

Understanding How Lacrosse Is Played

The lacrosse team that ends the game with the most goals wins. A game clock dictates the length of the game, and scoring goals is the sole determiner of who wins and who loses. The following list offers a few of the technical essentials that you need to know to better understand the game.

- Four quarters equals a game: The length of a lacrosse game is either 4 10 minutes stop/start or 15 minute running quarters. Games at the ½ level are 2-25 minute halves
- For the girls game, there are 2 halves, running time. Halves are 20 or 25 minutes, depending on the level.

Whatever the length of the game, remember that any individual contest will include at least one intermission. There's a lot of running and bumping and hitting and missing to recuperate from.

Facing down the opposition: A faceoff is an organized, if sometimes frenetic, way to initiate play at the beginning of a game, or to restart play that has been stopped for some reason (opening a new playing period, after a scored goal, in a dead-ball situation, and so on). They consist of two players at the center X and two players from each team perched on the wing area lines (20 yards from the middle of the field and 20 yards long, parallel with the sideline). Once possession is gained by one of these eight players, the rest of the players can cross the restraining lines that are perpendicular to the sideline and 20 yards from the midline.

Games don't end in ties: Well, at least not generally. Except for minor lacrosse, when games end regulation play with the two teams tied, a sudden-death overtime period determines the winner. In sudden death, the first team to score a goal wins. Minor lacrosse leagues typically allow a single sudden-death overtime period; however, if the game is still tied at the end of the period, the game is called a tie.

Stay out of the crease: Offensive players must stay out of the crease area in front of the goal. The crease is a 9-foot semicircle that arcs from goalpost to goalpost. Players are not allowed to step into or land in the crease, unless they are forced in by a defender. If this violation occurs, goals are waived off and possession is given to the defense.

Stay in your own backyard: Field lacrosse defenders always stay in the opposition's offensive zone, and the offensive players always stay in their own offensive zone. Only midfielders can run the entire field without restriction.

Penalties regulate the game's physical tendencies: Referees monitor the physical play to help prevent injuries and out-and-out brawls.

Out-of-Bounds: If the ball or a player in possession of the ball goes out of bounds, play is stopped and the other team is awarded possession. The clock is not stopped unless there is less than 2 minutes left in the game. However, an out-of-bounds ball resulting from a shot will be awarded to the team whose player is closest to the ball when and where it goes out of bounds.

This rule provides either team with an opportunity to gain possession of the ball after a missed shot. The clock is not stopped unless there is less than 2 minutes left in the game. Offensive players should be keenly aware of their responsibility to back up missed shots taken by their teammates in these situations. They are scoring opportunities.

