

LAX 101

All About Lacrosse

Lacrosse is a team sport of Native American origin that is played using a small solid rubber ball and a long-handled racquet called a crosse or lacrosse stick. The head of the lacrosse stick is strung with loose netting that is designed to hold the lacrosse ball. Offensively, the objective of the game is to use the lacrosse stick to catch, carry, and pass the ball in an effort to score by shooting the ball into an opponent's goal. Defensively, the objective is to keep the opposing team from scoring and to dispossess them of the ball through the use of stick checking and body contact or positioning.

Men's lacrosse is played on a field 60 yd wide and 110 yd long, including 15 yd of clear space behind each goal. Each goal consists of two poles 6 ft tall, with a 6-ft crossbar at the top. A pyramid-shaped netting, open at the front, is attached to the poles and crossbar and is fastened to the ground at its apex, 7 ft beyond the goal line. The lacrosse ball is of hard rubber, generally 7 to 8 inches in circumference and 5 to 5.5 oz in weight. Players carry a stick, or crosse, that measures between 40 and 72 in long for men. The stick is hooked on top, with strings woven of rawhide, gut, clock string, or linen cord strung diagonally across the hooked portion to form a network. Players in field lacrosse today use a stick that is made of aluminum, or graphite only the goal keeper's crosse may exceed a width of 10 in.

Men's teams have ten players. In the American version of high school lacrosse the 48-minute playing time is divided into four periods, or quarters, with each team being allowed two time-outs per half. Two-minute rest periods separate the first and second and the third and fourth periods; a ten-minute interval separates the second and third periods.

Lacrosse originated with the Native Americans of the United States and Canada, mainly among the Huron and Iroquois Tribes. In many societies/tribes, the ball sport was often part of religious ritual, played to resolve conflicts, heal the sick, develop strong, virile men and prepare for war. Legend tells of games with more than 100 players from different tribes taking turns to play. It could be played on a field many miles in length and width (present day lacrosse is played on a field 60 yards wide and 110 yards

long); sometimes the game could last for days. Early lacrosse balls were made of deerskin, clay, stone, and sometimes wood.

Lacrosse, one of the oldest team sports in the Americas, may have developed as early as the 12th century, but since then has undergone many modifications. In the traditional Native American version, each team consisted of about 100 to 1,000 men on a field that stretched from about 500 yards to a couple of miles long. These lacrosse games lasted from sunup to sundown for two to three days straight. These games were played as part of ceremonial ritual to give thanks to the Creator.

Lacrosse played a significant role in the community and religious life of tribes across the continent for many years. Early lacrosse was characterized by deep spiritual involvement, befitting the spirit of combat in which it was undertaken. Those who took part did so in the role of warriors, with the goal of bringing glory and honor to themselves and their tribes. The game was said to be played "for the Creator" or was referred to as "The Creator's Game".

The French Jesuit missionary, Jean de Brébeuf, saw Iroquois tribesmen play it in 1637 and was the first European to write about the game. He called it *la crosse*. Some say the name originated from the French term for field hockey, *le jeu de la crosse*. Others suggest that it was named after the *crozier*, a staff carried by bishops.

In 1856, William George Beers, a Canadian dentist, founded the Montreal Lacrosse Club. In 1867 he codified the game, shortening the length of each game and reducing the number of players to twelve per team. The first game played under Beers' rules was at Upper Canada College in 1867, with Upper Canada College losing to the Toronto Cricket Club by a score of 3–1. By the 1900s, high schools, colleges, and universities began playing the game. Lacrosse was contested as a demonstration sport in the 1928 and 1932 Olympics. On each occasion, a playoff was held to determine the American representative to the Olympics and on each occasion the playoffs were won by the Johns Hopkins Blue Jays.

In the United States, lacrosse had primarily been a regional sport centered in and around Colorado, Florida, upstate New York, Texas, and mid-Atlantic states. In recent years, its popularity has started to spread south to Georgia, North Carolina, Alabama and Florida, and the Midwest. The sport has gained increasing visibility in the media, with a growth of college, high school, and youth programs throughout the country. The NCAA Men's Lacrosse Championship has the highest attendance of any NCAA Championship, outdrawing the Final Four of men's basketball. The growth of lacrosse was

also facilitated by the introduction of plastic stick heads in the 1970s by Baltimore-based STX. This innovation reduced the weight and cost of the lacrosse stick. It also allowed for faster passes and game play than traditional wooden sticks.

Up until the 1930s, all lacrosse was played on large fields outdoors. The owners of Canadian hockey arenas invented a reduced version of the game, called box lacrosse, as a means to make more profit from their arena investments. In a relatively short period of time, box lacrosse became the dominant form of the sport in Canada, in part due to the severe winter weather that limited outdoor play. More recently, field lacrosse has witnessed a revival in Canada as the Canadian University Field Lacrosse Association (CUFLA) began operating a collegiate men's league in 1985. It now includes 12 varsity teams. In 1994 Canada declared lacrosse its National Summer Sport with the passage of the National Sports Act (Bill C-212).

In 1987 a men's professional box lacrosse league was started, called the Eagle Pro Box Lacrosse League. This league changed its name to the Major Indoor Lacrosse League, then later to the National Lacrosse League and grew to encompass men's lacrosse clubs in twelve cities throughout the United States and Canada. In the summer of 2001, a men's professional field lacrosse league, known as Major League Lacrosse (MLL), was inaugurated. Initially starting with six teams, the MLL has grown to a total of ten clubs located in major metropolitan areas in the United States. On July 4, 2008, Major League Lacrosse set the professional lacrosse attendance record: 20,116 fans attended a game at Invesco Field in Denver, Colorado. In 2006 a field lacrosse league was developed in Quebec, Canada. Composed of the English colleges, this league came together to become the first official college field lacrosse league in Quebec.

GLOSSARY OF MEN'S LACROSSE TERMS:

Attack Goal Area: The area defined by a line drawn sideline to sideline 20 yards from the face of the goal. Once the offensive team crosses the midfield line, it has ten seconds to move the ball into its attack goal area.

Body Check: Contact with an opponent from the front - between the shoulders and waist - when the opponent has the ball or is within five yards of a loose ball.

Box: An area used to hold players who have been served with penalties, and through which substitutions "on the fly" are

permitted directly from the sideline onto the field.

Clamp: A face-off maneuver executed by quickly pushing the back of the stick on top of the ball.

Clearing: Running or passing the ball from the defensive half of the field to the attack goal area.

Crease: A circle around the goal with a radius of nine feet into which only defensive players may enter.

Crosse (Stick): The equipment used to throw, catch and carry the ball.

Extra man Offense (EMO): A man advantage that results from a time-serving penalty.

Face-Off: A technique used to put the ball in play at the start of each quarter, or after a goal is scored. The players squat down and the ball is placed between their crosses.

Fast-Break: A transition scoring opportunity in which the offense has at least a one-man advantage.

Ground Ball: A loose ball on the playing field.

Handle (Shaft): An aluminum, wooden or composite pole connected to the head of the crosse.

Head: The plastic or wood part of the stick connected to the handle.

Man Down Defense (MDD): The situation that results from a time-serving penalty which causes the defense to play with at least a one man disadvantage.

Midfield Line: The line which bisects the field of play.

On-The-Fly Substitution: A substitution made during play.

Pick: An offensive maneuver in which a stationary player attempts to block the path of a defender guarding another offensive player.

Pocket: The strung part of the head of the stick which holds the ball.

Rake: A face-off move in which a player sweeps the ball to the side.

Riding: The act of trying to prevent a team from clearing the ball.

Release: The term used by an official to notify a penalized player in the box that he may re-enter the game.

Unsettled Situation: Any situation in which the defense is not positioned correctly, usually due to a loose

Lacrosse Rules

Men's lacrosse is a contact game played by ten players: a goalie, three defensemen, three midfielders and three attackmen. The object of the game is to shoot the ball into the opponent's goal. The team scoring the most goals wins.

Each team must keep at least four players, including the goalie, in its defensive half of the field and three in its offensive half. Three players (midfielders) may roam the entire field.

Collegiate games are 60 minutes long, with 15-minute quarters. Generally, high school games are 48 minutes long, with 12-minute quarters. Likewise, youth games are 32 minutes long, with eight-minute quarters. Each team is given a two-minute break between the first and second quarters, and the third and fourth quarters. Halftime is ten minutes long.

Teams change sides between periods. Each team is permitted two timeouts each half. The team winning the coin toss chooses the end of the field it wants to defend first.

The players take their positions on the field: four in the defensive clearing area, one at the center, two in the wing areas and three in their attack goal area.

Men's lacrosse begins with a face-off. The ball is placed between the sticks of two squatting players at the center of the field. The official blows the whistle to begin play. Each face-off player tries to control the ball. The players in the wing areas can run after the ball when the whistle sounds. The other players must wait until one player has gained possession of the ball, or the ball has crossed a goal area

line, before they can release.

Center face-offs are also used at the start of each quarter and after a goal is scored. Field players must use their crosses to pass, catch and run with the ball. Only the goalkeeper may touch the ball with his hands. A player may gain possession of the ball by dislodging it from an opponent's crosse with a stick check. A stick check is the controlled poking and slapping of the stick and gloved hands of the player in possession of the ball.

Body checking is permitted if the opponent has the ball or is within five yards of a loose ball. All body contact must occur from the front or side, above the waist and below the shoulders, and with both hands on the stick. An opponent's crosse may also be stick checked if it is within five yards of a loose ball or ball in the air. Aggressive body checking is discouraged.

If the ball or a player in possession of the ball goes out of bounds, the other team is awarded possession. If the ball goes out of bounds after an unsuccessful shot, the player nearest to the ball when and where it goes out of bounds is awarded possession.

An attacking player cannot enter the crease around the goal, but may reach in with his stick to scoop a loose ball.

A referee, umpire and field judge supervise field play. A chief bench official, timekeepers and scorers assist.

MEN'S LACROSSE PERSONAL & TECHNICAL FOULS:

There are personal fouls and technical fouls in boy's lacrosse. The penalty for a personal foul results in a one to three minute suspension from play and possession to the team that was fouled. Players with five personal fouls are ejected from the game. The penalty for a technical foul is a thirty-second suspension if a team is in possession of the ball when the foul is committed, or possession of the ball to the team that was fouled if there was no possession when the foul was committed.

Personal Fouls

Slashing: Occurs when a player's stick viciously contacts an opponent in any area other than the stick or gloved hand on the stick.

Tripping: Occurs when a player obstructs his opponent at or below the waist with the crosse, hands, arms, feet or legs.

Cross Checking: Occurs when a player uses the handle of his crosse between his hands to make contact with an opponent.

Unsportsmanlike Conduct: Occurs when any player or coach commits an act which is considered unsportsmanlike by an official, including taunting, arguing, or obscene language or gestures.

Unnecessary Roughness: Occurs when a player strikes an opponent with his stick or body using excessive or violent force.

Illegal Crosse: Occurs when a player uses a crosse that does not conform to required specifications. A crosse may be found illegal if the pocket is too deep or if any other part of the crosse was altered to gain an advantage.

Illegal Body Checking: Occurs when any of the following actions takes place:

a. body checking an opponent who is not in possession of the ball or within five yards of a loose ball; b. avoidable body check of an opponent after he has passed or shot the ball; c. body checking an opponent from the rear or at or below the waist; d. body checking an opponent above the shoulders. A body check must be below the shoulders and above the waist, and both hands of the player applying the body check must remain in contact with his crosse.

Illegal Gloves: Occurs when a player uses gloves that do not conform to required specifications. A glove will be found illegal if the fingers and palms are cut out of the gloves, or if the glove has been altered in a way that compromises its protective features.

Technical Fouls

Holding: Occurs when a player impedes the movement of an opponent or an opponent's crosse.

Interference: Occurs when a player interferes in any manner with the free movement of an opponent, except when that opponent has possession of the ball, the ball is in flight and within five yards of the player, or both players are within five yards of a loose ball.

Offsides: Occurs when a team does not have at least four players on its defensive side of the midfield line or at least three players on its offensive side of the midfield line.

Pushing: Occurs when a player thrusts or shoves a player from behind.

Screening: Occurs when an offensive player moves into and makes contact with a defensive player with the purpose of blocking him from the man he is defending.

Stalling: Occurs when a team intentionally holds the ball, without conducting normal offensive play, with the intent of running time off the clock.

Warding Off: Occurs when a player in possession of the ball uses his free hand or arm to hold, push or control the direction of an opponent's stick check