



A Parent's Quick Guide to Men's Lacrosse

INTRODUCTION

Lacrosse, considered North America's first sport, originated with the American Indians and was christened by French explorers and trappers in the northeastern United States in the 1800s (hence the term "crosse" for the stick). While lacrosse has traditionally been viewed as an "east coast" sport for over a hundred years with traditional hot beds in Maryland, Long Island, and the upstate New York, the sport has seen an explosive growth due to the nature of the game. The fastest growing sport over the past decade, lacrosse has spread nationally as far as Alaska and Hawaii and well as internationally with 30 countries now having officially recognized lacrosse. Men's lacrosse is a contact game that blends many of the aspects of hockey, basketball, soccer, and football. It is a game where the athletes are not bound by their size – the big and the small can play and be successful. The game requires and rewards coordination and agility, not brawn. Quickness and speed are two highly prized qualities in lacrosse. An exhilarating sport, lacrosse is fast-paced and full of action. Long sprints up and down the field with abrupt starts and stops, precision passes and dodges are routine. Ten players play the game: a goalie, three defensemen, three midfielders and three attackmen. The object of the game is to shoot the ball into the opponent's goal with each score being worth one point. Standard field dimensions are 110 yards long by 60 yards wide and divided in half at the middle ("midline").

POSITIONS

Attack: The attackman's responsibility is to score goals and defend against the other team clearing the ball up field to their offense. The attackman generally restricts his play to the offensive end of the field.

Midfield: The midfielder's responsibility is to cover the entire field, playing both offense and defense. The midfielder is a key to the transition game, and is often called upon to clear the ball from defense to offense.

Defense: The defenseman's responsibility is to defend the goal. The defenseman generally restricts his play to the defensive end of the field.

Goalie: The goalie's responsibility is to protect the goal and stop the opposing team from scoring. He is often the on-field leader for defenses and clearing the ball up field.

BASIC RULES

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 (typically midfielders) may roam the entire field.

Generally, high school games are 48 minutes long, with 12-minute quarters. There is 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.

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 in" 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 into their restraining area, before they can release. A face-off occurs after each goal and to start each new period of play.

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 stick may also be stick checked if it is within five yards of a loose ball or a ball in the air.

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.** This is why you'll see good players sprinting to the sideline or end-line after a shot.

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

PERSONAL FOULS – Most of them anyway! (Result in a 1-3 minute suspension from play)

- **Slashing:** When a player's stick viciously contacts an opponent anywhere other than the stick/gloved hand on the stick.
- **Tripping:** When a player obstructs his opponent at or below the waist with the crosse, hands, arms, feet or legs.
- **Cross Checking:** 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:** When a player strikes an opponent with his stick or body using excessive or violent force.
- **Illegal Crosse:** 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, the shaft is too long or short, or if any other part 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 has excessive holes.

Some TECHNICAL FOULS (result in a 30-second suspension or loss of possession)

- **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.
- **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.

A FEW TERMS

- **Box:** An area between the two teams used to hold players who have been charged with personal penalties, and through which substitutions can be made "on the fly" directly from the sideline onto the field during play.
- **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.
- **Extra man Offense (EMO):** A man advantage that results from a timeserving penalty.
- **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.
- **"Horn":** The call used by coaches to the referee used during specific times during the game per the rules to call for a stoppage of play to allow a substitution.
- **Man Down Defense (MDD):** The situation that results from a timeserving penalty which causes the defense to play with at least a one man disadvantage.
- **On-The-Fly Substitution:** A substitution made during play while the clock is running.
- **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.