

## ***History of Lacrosse***

**Lacrosse** is a team sport played between two teams using a lacrosse stick and a lacrosse ball. Players' use the head of the lacrosse stick to carry (called cradling), pass, and catch the ball to score by shooting the ball into the opponent's goal. The sport has four major versions that have different sticks, fields, rules and equipment: men's field lacrosse, women's lacrosse, box lacrosse and [intercrosse](#). The men's games, field (outdoor) and box (indoor), are contact sports and all players wear protective gear: helmet, gloves, shoulder pads, and elbow pads. The women's game does not allow body contact but does allow stick to stick contact. All players wear protective eye-gear, while goalies wear helmets and protective pads. Intercrosse is a mixed gender sport and uses an all-plastic stick, a softer ball and is non-contact.

Lacrosse is a team sport of First Nations Iroquois origin played using a small rubber ball and a long-handled stick called a *Crosse* or lacrosse stick. It is often played as a contact sport. The head of the lacrosse stick is strung with loose mesh designed to catch and hold the lacrosse ball. Offensively, the objective of the game is to score by shooting the ball into an opponent's goal, using the lacrosse stick to catch, carry, and pass the ball to do so. Defensively, the objective is to keep the opposing team from scoring and to gain the ball through the use of stick checking and body contact or positioning. The sport has four major types: men's field lacrosse, women's lacrosse, box lacrosse and intercrosse. The sport consists of four positions: midfield, attack, defense, and goalie. 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 the game during 1637 in present-day New York. He was the first European to write about the game. He called it *la crosse* ("the stick"). 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 that bears a similarity to the sticks used in the sport.

In 1856, William George Beers, a Canadian dentist, founded the Montreal Lacrosse Club. In 1867, Beers codified the game, shortening the length of each game and reducing the number of players to 12 per team. The first game played under Beers' rules was at Upper Canada College in 1867; they lost to the Toronto Cricket Club by a score of 3–1. By the 20th century, teams in high schools, colleges, and universities in Canada and the United States began playing the game. Lacrosse was contested for medals in the 1904 and 1908 Olympics with teams from Canada, the United States, and Great Britain. In the summer of 2001, a men's professional field lacrosse league, known as Major League Lacrosse (MLL), was inaugurated in the United States. Initially starting with three teams, the MLL has grown to a current total of nine 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.

The rules of women's lacrosse differ significantly from men's lacrosse, most notably by equipment and the degree of allowable physical contact. Women's lacrosse rules also differ significantly between the US and all other countries, which play by the Federation of International Lacrosse, or FIL, rules. Women's lacrosse does not promote physical contact, primarily because the only protective equipment worn for this sport is a mouth guard, sometimes, and face guard (mandatory in the United States, optional internationally) and thin gloves. Recently, there has been discussion on requiring a padded cap or minimalistic helmet. Stick checking (with several rules applied), and not body checking as in men's lacrosse, is permitted in the women's game, but only in certain levels of play. Sometimes checking can lead to body checking; while this is still not permitted in a women's game, some referees will allow limited body checking. Women's lacrosse also does not allow players to have a pocket, or loose net, on the lacrosse stick. Another rule difference is that women start the game with a "draw" instead of a face-off. The primary difference is that while the crosses are held in the air above their hips the ball is placed between two players crosses (stick and head) instead of on the ground.

The first modern women's lacrosse game was held at St Leonards' School in Scotland in 1890. It was introduced by the school's headmistress Louisa Lumsden after a visit to Quebec, where she saw it played. The first women's lacrosse team in the United States was established at Bryn Mawr School in Baltimore, Maryland in 1926. Men's and women's lacrosse were played under virtually the same rules, with no protective equipment, until the mid-1930s.

Both the number of players on the field, as well as the general set up of the field, differs from men's lacrosse. Female players must abide by certain boundaries that do not exist in men's play. The three specific boundaries are the 8-meter "fan" in front of the goal (11 meters internationally), the 12-meter (15 meters internationally) half circle that surrounds the 8-meter half circle, and the draw circle in the center of the field, which is used for the women's version of "face-offs", known as "draws". The goal circle is also positioned slightly closer to the end line in women's lacrosse, compared to men's. In women's lacrosse on the offensive or defensive end, the players are not able to step inside the goal circle for any reason, except when the goalkeeper has stepped out of the circle and one defensive player has stepped in as her deputy; this becomes a "goal-circle violation". However, at the women's collegiate level, a new rule has been established that allows defenders to pass through the goal circle.

### **Positions**

**Attackers** - The responsibility of this position is to score goals. The attacker is usually restricted to the offensive end of the field. The person in this position has excellent sticks skills with both hands and is extremely agile. Each team will have three attackers on the field.

**Midfielders** - The midfielder will play both offense and defense. They are responsible for covering the entire field and are instrumental in clearing the ball from defense to offense. The person in this position must have speed and stamina. Boys' lacrosse should have three midfielders and girls lacrosse should have 5 midfielders on the field during play.

**Defenders** - The job of the defenseman is to defend the goal. The defenseman is usually restricted to the defensive end of the field. Agility and aggressiveness is imperative for this position but great stick skills are not necessary to be effective. Each team will have three defensemen on the field during a game.

**Goalie** - The goalie is responsible for stopping the opponent from scoring on his goal and directing his defenseman when necessary. A good goalie must have excellent coordination and should be quick and agile.

Men's lacrosse is a contact game played by ten players: a goalie, three defensemen, three midfielders and three attack men. 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.

Women's lacrosse is a **non-contact game** played by 12 players: six attackers, five defenders and a goalkeeper. The object of the game is to shoot the ball into the opponent's goal. The team scoring the most goals wins.

### **Personal 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.

- 1) **Slashing**: Occurs when a player's stick viciously contacts an opponent in any area other than the stick or gloved hand on the stick.
- 2) **Tripping**: Occurs when a player obstructs his opponent at or below the waist with the crosse, hands, arms, feet or legs.
- 3) **Cross Checking**: Occurs when a player uses the handle of his crosse between his hands to make contact with an opponent.
- 4) **Unsportsmanlike Conduct**: Lacrosse rules say that this occurs when any player or coach commits an act which is considered unsportsmanlike by an official, including taunting, arguing, or obscene language or gestures.
- 5) **Unnecessary Roughness**: Occurs when a player strikes an opponent with his stick or body using excessive or violent force.
- 6) **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.
- 7) **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.

8) **Illegal Gloves:** The rules of lacrosse say that this 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

- 1) **Holding:** Occurs when a player impedes the movement of an opponent or an opponent's crosse.
- 2) **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.
- 3) **Off-sides:** Lacrosse rules states that this 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.
- 4) **Pushing:** Occurs when a player thrusts or shoves a player from behind.
- 5) **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.
- 6) **Stalling:** Occurs when a team intentionally holds the ball, without conducting normal offensive play, with the intent of running time off the clock.
- 7) **Warding Off:** The rules of lacrosse says that this 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 Glossary of Terms

The following is a list of terms you may frequently hear while watching a lacrosse game. Some, you may be familiar with, others, may sound a little odd at first. But all are part of knowing the game of lacrosse.

- **Clear:** Any action taken by a player within the goal circle to pass or carry the ball out of the goal circle.
- **Crosse (Stick):** The equipment used to throw, catch, check and carry the ball.
- **Crosse Checking:** Stick to stick contact consisting of a series of controlled taps in an attempt to dislodge the ball from the crosse.
- **Deputy:** A player who enters the goal circle when the goalie is out of the goal circle and his/her team is in possession of the ball.
- **Draw:** A technique to start or resume play by which a ball is placed in between the sticks of two standing players and drawn up and away.
- **Free Position:** An opportunity awarded to the offense when a major or minor foul is committed by the defense. All players must move four meters away from the player with the ball. When the whistle sounds to resume play, the player may run, pass or shoot the ball.
- **Grounded:** Refers to any part of the goalkeeper's or deputy's body touching the ground for support outside of the goal circle when he/she attempts to play the ball from inside the goal circle.

- **Indirect Free Position:** An opportunity awarded to the offense when a minor foul is committed by the defense inside the 12 meter fan. When the whistle sounds to resume play, the player may run or pass, but may not shoot until a defender or one of his/her teammates has played the ball.
- **Marking:** Being within a stick's length of an opponent.
- **Penalty Lane:** The path to the goal that is cleared when a free position is awarded to the attacking team.
- **Ride:** Defensive coverage on player in possession
- **Warning Cards:** A yellow card presented by an umpire to a player is a warning which indicates that he/she will next receive a red card and be suspended from further participation if he/she continues to play dangerously and/or conduct himself/herself in an unsportsmanlike manner. A green card is presented by an umpire to the team captain indicating a team caution for delay of game