

The US Lacrosse Parent's Guide to Lacrosse

The Parents Role

You, the parent, are equally as important to your child's positive lacrosse experience as the coach of the team. In order for your child to get the most out of playing lacrosse, it is important that you do the following:

One: Be supportive of your child by giving encouragement and showing an interest in his or her team. Positive reinforcement encourages learning and fun. Research has shown that a ratio of five positive statements (compliments, positive recognition) for each negative statement (criticisms, corrections) is ideal for helping young athletes do their best. Try to maintain a 5:1 ratio in your comments to your child.

Two: Attend games whenever possible. If you cannot attend, ask about your child's experience, not whether the team won or lost. Some questions that you might ask before asking about the final score include: "Did you try as hard as you could? Did you have fun? Did you learn anything today that might make you a better player in the future?"

Three: Be a positive role model by displaying good sportsmanship at all times to coaches, officials, opponents and your child's teammates. "Honoring the Game" is an important part of what US Lacrosse represents. Help us by honoring the game in your behavior as a spectator.

Four: Let your child set his own goals and play the game for himself. Be your child's "home court advantage" by giving him your unconditional support regardless of how well he or she performs.

Five: Let the coach coach. Refrain from giving your child advice when he or she is playing. Use positive reinforcement with your child's coach. Let the coach know when he or she is doing a good job.

Six: Respect the decisions of the referee or umpire. This is an important part of honoring the game. Your child will pay more attention to how you act than to what you say.

Seven: Read the rulebook. A full understanding of the rules will help you enjoy the game and educate others.

Eight: Get to know who is in charge. Meet with the leadership of the program, whether it's school sponsored or recreational, to discuss topics such as cost, practice and game scheduling, insurance coverage, emergency procedures, etc.

Nine: Get involved! A great way to support your child's lacrosse experience is by becoming a volunteer for the program. Some of the ways you can get involved: keep the scorebook, run the clock, line the fields, manage equipment, chaperone trips, raise funds, organize clinics and team social events, update the team web site, photograph players and organize carpooling.

Ten: Sit back and enjoy the game. Remember, lacrosse is played for FUN.



The Coaches role

US Lacrosse is committed to the principles of "Honoring the Game" and works in partnership with **Positive Coaching Alliance (PCA)** to provide tools and resources to the lacrosse community for this purpose. PCA is a national non-profit organization based at Stanford University with a mission to "transform youth sports so sports can transform youth."

US Lacrosse wants all players to enjoy their experience with the sport of lacrosse and to learn positive character lessons that will help them in every aspect of their life. Coaches are expected to embody the principles of the Positive Coaching Alliance, including the following:

One: A Positive Coach is a positive motivator and refuses to motivate through fear, intimidation or shame. He establishes order and discipline in a positive manner.

Two: A Positive Coach works to remain positive even through losing streaks. She recognizes that it is often when things go wrong that a coach can have the most positive impact and teach the most important lessons. Regardless of the adversity involved, she refuses to demean herself or her players by resorting to fear, intimidation or shame. She always treats athletes with respect regardless of how well they perform.

Three: A Positive Coach coaches for mastery rather than victory, which he sees as a by-product of the pursuit of excellence. He focuses on effort rather than outcome, learning rather than comparison to others.

Four: A Positive Coach recognizes that mistakes are an important and inevitable part of learning and encourages an environment in which players are willing to risk making a mistake.

Five: A Positive Coach sets standards of continuous learning and improvement for herself and her players. She encourages and inspires her players, whatever their level of mastery, to strive to get better without threatening them. She is committed to becoming the best coach she can be and continually seeks to improve her own effectiveness.

Six: A Positive Coach "Honors the Game." He feels an obligation to the sport he coaches. He loves his sport and shares his love and enjoyment with his players. He feels privileged to be able to take part in his sport.

Seven: A Positive Coach respects her opponents, recognizing that a worthy opponent will push her and her team to do their best.

Eight: A Positive Coach understands the important role that officials play and strives to show them respect even when he disagrees with their decisions.

Nine: A Positive Coach values the rich tradition of her sport and works to honor the spirit as well as the letter of its rules.

Ten: A Positive Coach demonstrates personal integrity and would rather lose than win by dishonoring the game. Dishonoring the game is worse than defeat.



History of the Game

Lacrosse, considered to be America's first sport, was born of the North American Indian, christened by the French, and adapted and raised by the Canadians. Modern lacrosse has been embraced by athletes and enthusiasts of the United States and the British Commonwealth for over a century.

The sport of lacrosse is a combination of basketball, soccer and hockey. Anyone can play lacrosse--the big or the small. 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 in men's and women's lacrosse. Lacrosse is played with a stick, the crosse, which must be mastered by the player to throw, catch and scoop the ball.

Lacrosse is one of the fastest growing team sports in the United States. Youth participation in the sport has grown over 500% since 1999 to nearly 250,000. No sport has grown faster at the high school level over the last 10 years and there are now an estimated 200,000 high school players. Lacrosse is also the fastest-growing sport over the last six years at the NCAA level, and that's just the tip of the iceberg. There are more than 500 college club programs, including nearly 200 women's teams that compete at the US Lacrosse Intercollegiate Associates level.

Brief History

With a history that spans centuries, lacrosse is the oldest sport in North America. Rooted in Native American religion, lacrosse was often played to resolve conflicts, heal the sick, and develop strong, virile men. To Native Americans, lacrosse is still referred to as "The Creator's Game."

Ironically, lacrosse also served as a preparation for war. Legend tells of as many as 1,000 players per side, from the same or different tribes, who took turns engaging in a violent contest. Contestants played on a field from one to 15 miles in length, and games sometimes lasted for days. Some tribes used a single pole, tree or rock for a goal, while other tribes had two goalposts through which the ball had to pass. Balls were made out of wood, deerskin, baked clay or stone.

The evolution of the Native American game into modern lacrosse began in 1636 when Jean de Brebeuf, a Jesuit missionary, documented a Huron contest in what is now southeast Ontario, Canada. At that time, some type of lacrosse was played by at least 48 Native American tribes scattered throughout what is now southern Canada and all parts of the United States. French pioneers began playing the game avidly in the 1800s. Canadian dentist W. George Beers standardized the game in 1867 with the adoption of set field dimensions, limits to the number of players per team and other basic rules.

New York University fielded the nation's first college team in 1877, and Philips Academy, Andover (Massachusetts), Philips Exeter Academy (New Hampshire) and the Lawrenceville School (New Jersey) were the nation's first high school teams in 1882. There are 400 college and 1,200 high school men's lacrosse teams from coast to coast.

Men's and women's lacrosse were played under virtually the same rules, with no protective equipment, until the mid-1930s. At that time, men's lacrosse began evolving dramatically, while women's lacrosse continued to remain true to the game's original rules. Men's and women's lacrosse remain derivations of the same game today, but are played under different rules. Women's rules limit stick contact, prohibit body contact and, therefore, require little protective equipment. Men's lacrosse rules allow some degree of stick and body contact, although violence is neither condoned nor allowed.

Field lacrosse is sometimes perceived to be a violent and dangerous game, however, injury statistics prove otherwise. While serious injuries can and do occur in lacrosse, the game has evolved with an emphasis on safety, and the rate of injury is comparatively low. Ensuring the safety of participants is a major focus for US Lacrosse and its **Sports Science and Safety Committee**, which researches injury data in the sport and makes recommendations to make the game as safe as practicable.

Game Overview

Boys' 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 and to keep the other team from scoring. 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. Youth games vary by level; please refer to the **Boys' Youth Rules** section from the main index. Each team is given a two-minute break between the first and second quarters, and the third and fourth quarters. Halftime is 10 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/boys' 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. There are personal fouls and technical fouls in boys' 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 30-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.

The US Lacrosse Youth Council has adopted modified rules for play by youth ages 15 and under. The official rules can be found by following the rules link on the main index. The rules are provided as modifications to the National Federation of State High School Associations rule book, which governs high school play. College play is governed by the NCAA rulebook.



Field Positions

Attack:

The attackman's responsibility is to score goals and help his teammates score goals by passing the ball. The attackman generally restricts his play to the offensive end of the field. A good attackman demonstrates excellent stick work with both hands and has quick feet to maneuver around the goal. Each team has three attackmen on the field during play.

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. A good midfielder demonstrates good stick work including throwing, catching and scooping. Speed and stamina are essential. Each team has three midfielders on the field.

Defense:

The defenseman's responsibility is to defend the goal. The defenseman generally restricts his play to the defensive end of the field. A good defenseman should be able to react quickly in game situations. Agility and aggressiveness are necessary, but great stick work is more essential to attack. Each team has three defensemen on the field.

Goal:

The goalie's responsibility is to protect the goal and stop the opposing team from scoring. A good goalie also leads the defense by reading the situation and directing the defensemen to react. A good goalie should have excellent hand/eye coordination and a strong voice. Quickness, agility, confidence and the ability to concentrate are also essential. Each team has one goalie in the goal during play.

Equipment for Boys

The Crosse: The crosse (lacrosse stick) is made of wood, laminated wood or synthetic material, with a shaped net pocket at the end. The crosse must be an overall length of 40 - 42 inches for attackmen and midfielders, or 52 - 72 inches for defensemen. The head of the crosse must be 6.5 - 10 inches wide, except a goalie's crosse which may be 10 - 12 inches wide. The pocket of a crosse shall be deemed illegal if the top surface of a lacrosse ball, when placed in the head of the crosse, is below the bottom edge of the side wall.

The Ball: The ball must be made of solid rubber and can be white, yellow or orange. The ball is 7.75 - 8 inches in circumference and 5 - 5.25 ounces.

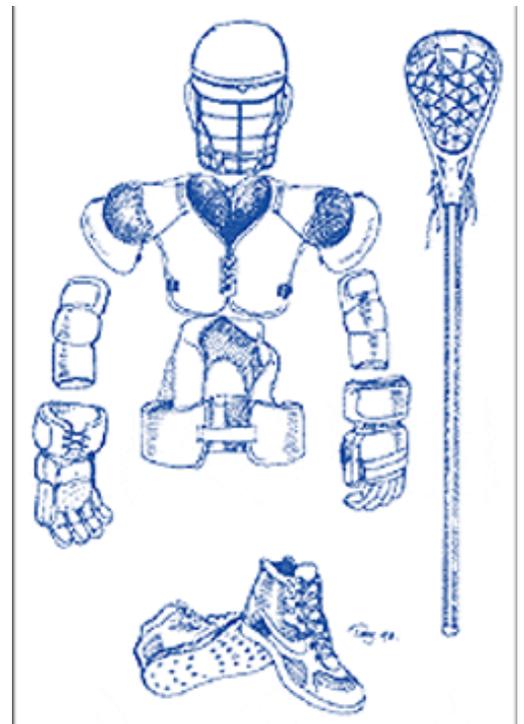
The Helmet: A protective helmet, equipped with face mask, chin pad and a cupped four point chin strap fastened to all four hookups, must be worn by all players. All helmets and face masks should be **NOCSAE** (National Operating Committee on Standards for Athletic Equipment) approved.

The Mouthpiece: The mouthpiece must be a highly visible color and is mandatory.

The Glove: All players are required to wear protective gloves. The cutting or altering of gloves is prohibited.

Other Protective Equipment: All players, with the exception of the goalkeeper, must wear shoulder pads. Arm pads are required and rib pads are strongly recommended, and often required, as are athletic supporters and protective cups for all players.

The goalkeeper is required to wear a throat protector and chest protector, in addition to a helmet, mouthpiece, gloves and a protective cup.



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 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 contact with his crosse.

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 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

Crease Violation: Occurs when an offensive player deliberately, through his own momentum, enters the opponent's goalcrease or a defensive player, including the goalkeeper, with the ball in his possession, enters from the surrounding playing field into his own goalcrease.

Holding: Illegally impedes the movement of an opponent with the ball.

Illegal Offensive Screening: Occurs when an offensive player, through moving contact of his body or equipment, blocks a defensive player from the man he is playing, or impedes his normal movements of playing defense.

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.

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.

Withholding The Ball From Play: Occurs when a player clamps a loose ball against the ground more than momentarily or clamps the ball against his body to prevent it from being dislodged.

Officials' Signals for Boys



tripping



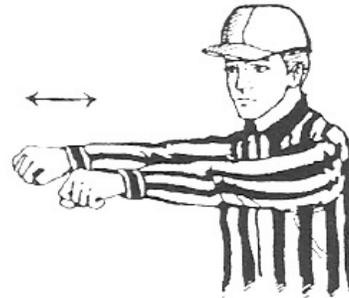
pushing



illegal body check



holding



cross checking



offsides



crease violation



play on

Officials' Signals for Boys (continued)



interference



slashing



unnecessary roughness



unsportsmanlike conduct



warding off



stalling



illegal pick

Boys Glossary of terms

Attack Goal Area: The area around the goal defined by the endline, the Goal Area Line and the two broken lines located 20 yards on either side of the goal. Once the offensive team crosses the midfield line, it has 10 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. At no time should a player initiate or receive body contact with his head.

Box: An area between the two team benches 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.

Check-Up: A call given by the goalie to tell each defender to find his man and call out his number.

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 offensive half of the field.

Crease: A circle around the goal with a radius of nine feet into which only defensive players may enter. Defensive players may not take the ball into the crease.

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

Defensive Clearing Area: The area defined by a line drawn sideline to sideline 20 yards from the face of the goal. Once the defensive team gains possession of the ball in this area, it has 10 seconds to move the ball beyond the Goal Area Line. Once beyond the Goal Area Line, the defensive team may not pass or run the ball back into the Defensive Clearing Area.

Extra Man Offense (EMO): A man advantage that results from a timeserving penalty by the other team.

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 used to catch, throw and shoot.

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.

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.

Play On: If a player commits a loose-ball technical foul or crease violation and an offended player may be disadvantaged by the immediate suspension of play, the official shall visually and verbally signal "play on" and withhold the whistle until such time as the situation of advantage, gained or lost, has been completed.

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 from the offensive half to defensive half of the field.

Release: The term used by an official to notify a penalized player in the box that he may re-enter the game occurs at the conclusion of a time-serving penalty.