

Beginners Guide to Boys' Lacrosse



Overview

Lacrosse, considered to be America's first sport, was born of the North American Indian and adapted and raised by the Canadians. American and Canadian Athletes have embraced lacrosse for over a century. Anyone can play lacrosse. The game requires and rewards agility, coordination, quickness and speed. Lacrosse is fast-paced and full of action, with long sprints across the field, abrupt starts and stops, precision passes and dodges. Lacrosse is played with a stick that must be mastered by the player to throw, catch and scoop the ball.

The Basics

Boy's lacrosse teams use netted sticks to carry, pass, and shoot a ball along a field in an effort to score goals. A goal counts as one point and is scored when the ball crosses the opposing goal line between the posts and under the crossbar. The team scoring the greater number of goals wins the game.

What's Needed?

Lacrosse stick and ball, helmet with face guard and chinstrap, gloves, shoulder and elbow pads, cleats, mouthguard, and athletic supporter cup.

The Game

Players

Each team must have at least four players (includes goalie) on the defensive end of the field; three players on offense and three midfielders may roam the entire field.



Attack: Attack's responsibility is to score. He generally restricts his play to the offensive end.

Midfield: Midfielder's responsibility is to cover the entire field playing both offense and defense.

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

Goalie: Goalie's responsibility is to protect the goal and stop the opposing team from scoring.

Length of Game

Generally, games are 48 minutes long, with 12-minute quarters (Games may be shorter for younger players). Each team is given a two-minute break between the first and second quarters, and the third and fourth quarters, half time is usually ten minutes long. Teams change sides between periods. Each team is permitted two time-outs per half.

Face-Off

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 release; the other players must wait until one player has gained possession of the ball or the ball has crossed the goal line. Center face-offs are also used after a goal and at the start of each quarter.

Game Play

Players may run with, pass and catch 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 stick with a stick check, which includes 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. However, all contact must occur from the front or side, above the waist and below the shoulders. An opponent's stick may also be stick checked if it is within five yards of a loose ball or 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 of the ball. If the ball goes out of bounds after an unsuccessful shot on goal, 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.

If a game ends in a tie, teams play overtime sudden death; the first team to score first wins. Another option is to play what is known as "Brave Heart" in which each team has one fielder and a goalie that plays until the first team scores.



Types of Checks



Body Check – A body heck is defensively using your body to hit an opponent carrying the ball or a player within fifteen feet of a loose ball. The body check must always be above the waist and from the front or side. Body checking is NOT permitted at the U11 and below level.



Stick Check - In an effort to dislodge the ball from the "pocket," the defending player strikes his stick against the stick of an opposing player carrying the ball.



Poke Check - A defender jabs his stick at the hands of an opposing player carrying the ball in an effort to jar the ball loose. If, in the act of going for the player's hands, the defender pokes the body, no foul is called. It is a foul if a player "slashes" his opponent.



Wrap Check - A stick check in which the defender's stick is swung over the head or around the body of the player carrying the ball.

Common Fouls

Any violation of the rules of play results in a penalty and the offending player can be removed from the game for a period time. The fouling player stay in a penalty area and his position on the field cannot be filled. His team plays "man down" until the penalty is over or the other team scores. If a player commits five fouls he is removed for the remainder of the game. The position may be filled by a teammate.

Personal Foul - A player may not trip, slash, recklessly charge, or use his stick or body to illegally check an opposing player. An illegal body check is a hit above an opponent's shoulders, below the waist, or from behind. It is further illegal to use the stick as a means to interfere with an advancing opponent. Depending on the severity, the violating player sits in the penalty box for one to three minutes.

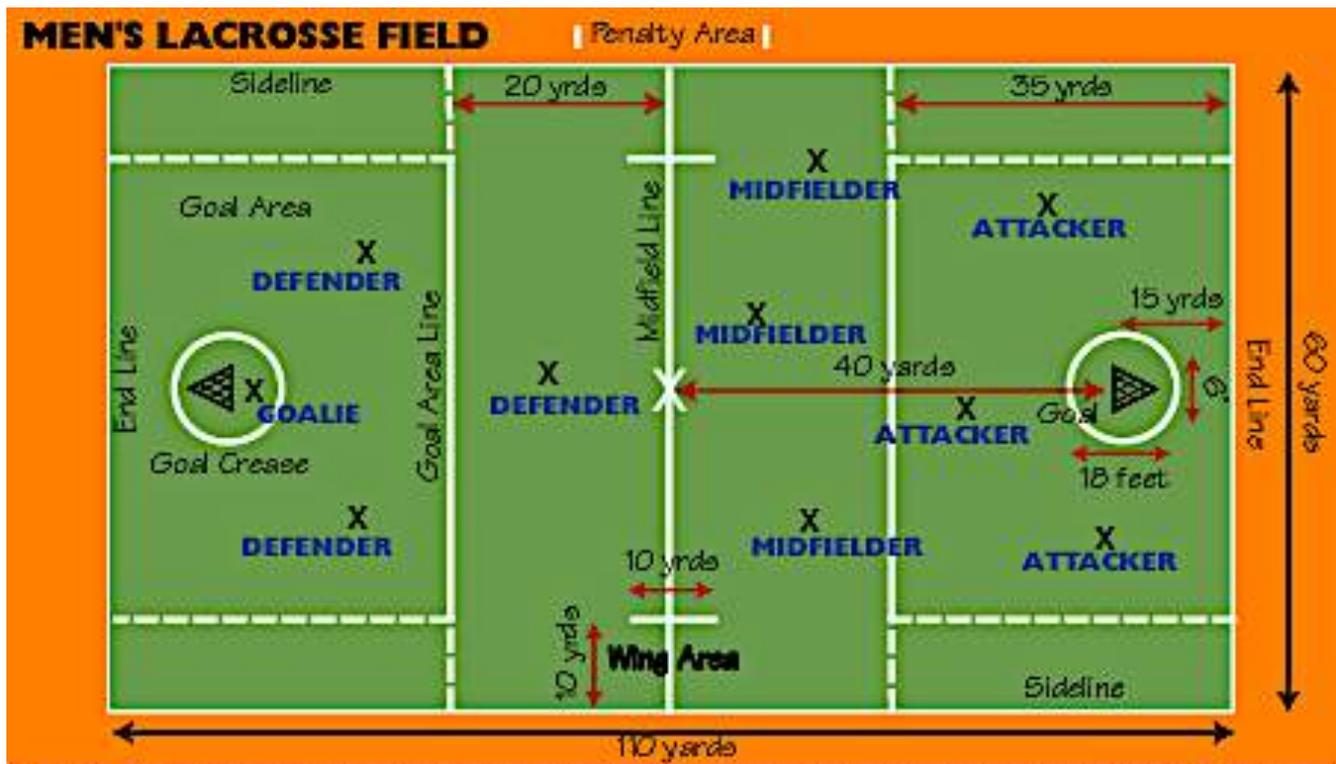
- a) **Slashing:** Occurs when a player's stick contacts an opponent in any area other than the stick or gloved hand on the stick.
- b) **Tripping:** Occurs when a player obstructs his opponent at or below the waist with the stick, hands, arms, feet or legs.
- c) **Cross Checking:** Occurs when a player uses the handle of his stick to make contact with an opponent.
- d) **Unsportsmanlike Conduct:** Occurs when any player or coach commits an act that is considered unsportsmanlike (i.e. taunting, obscene language/gestures, arguing).
- e) **Unnecessary Roughness:** Occurs when a player strikes an opponent with his stick or body using excessive or violent force.
- f) **Illegal Stick:** Occurs when a player uses a stick that doesn't meet specifications (i.e. pocket is too deep or was altered to gain an advantage.)
- g) **Illegal Body Checking:** Occurs when any of the following actions take 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 in which contact is made above the shoulders. A body check must be below the neck, and both hands of the player applying the body check must remain in contact with his stick.
- h) **Illegal Gloves:** Occurs when a player uses gloves that do not conform to specifications. A glove is illegal if the fingers and palms are cut out, or if the glove has been altered in a way that compromises its protective features.

Technical Foul – Called against a player, who pushes an opponent, holds him or his stick, touches the ball with his hands, or goes “offside” when his team does not possess the ball. Any of these fouls results in a 30-second penalty. If a player commits one of these fouls while his team has the ball, he stays on the field and the opposing team gains possession.

- a) **Holding:** Occurs when a player impedes the movement of an opponent or an opponent's stick.
- b) **Interference:** Occurs when a player interferes in any way 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 players, or both players are within five yards of a loose ball.
- c) **Offside:** Occurs when a team does not have four players on its defensive side or three players on its offensive side of the midfield line.
- d) **Pushing:** Occurs when a player thrusts or shoves a player from behind.
- e) **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.
- f) **Stalling:** Occurs when a team intentionally holds the ball without conducting normal offensive play, with the intent of running time off the clock.
- g) **Warding:** 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.
- h) **Expulsion Fouls** - Occurs if a player is overly aggressive in striking an opponent or is verbally abusive to an official. The offender is ejected for the duration of play. The player may be replaced after 3-minutes.
- i) **In The Crease** - Attacking players cannot enter the opponent’s goal crease. They can only reach in with their sticks when attempting to get control of the ball. Defensive players may not enter their own goal crease when carrying the ball and the goalie cannot hold the ball in his crease for more than 4-seconds. Such fouls result in the loss of ball possession.

Positions

On face-offs, players must remain in their playing zones until one team gains possession of the ball. Teams must have at least 4 players in their defending half and at least 3 players in their attacking half of the field at all times. Any player may score a goal and substitutions may take place any time.



Midfielders (Middies) - Main players carrying the ball, middies cover the entire field playing both offense and defense. Their responsibilities are to bring the ball up the field and set up offensive plays and scoring opportunities.

Attack - Positioned in the opposing goal area, they are typically the best stick handlers and the primary scorers. Together with the middies, the attackers work the ball offensively to score goals.

Defense - Play in the defending goal area, they generally use longer sticks that enable them to better "poke check" opposing players. Defenders constantly check attack players to prevent them from shooting on their goal. They also work with their goalie to "clear" the ball to the middies.

Goalkeeper (Goalie) - Plays inside the "goal crease" in front of the goal. He uses a larger headed stick to defend against oncoming shots. He is the only player allowed to touch the ball with his hands, but can only do so when blocking shots inside the crease. He may not control the ball with his hands, only with the stick.

Terminology

Clamping - On the face-off, a player pushes the back of his stick down on the ball in the attempt to gain control.

Clearing - A maneuver where defending players run or pass the ball out of their goal area. Clearing is best done along the sidelines, away from the front of the goal.

Cradling - Players turn their wrists and arms to cradle the ball in the stick pocket to maintain control of the ball when moving along the field.

Crank Shot - A shot on goal in which a player takes a backswing wind-up and fires the ball underhand or sidearm.

Crease - The eighteen-foot diameter circle around each team's goal.

Cutting - An attacking player without the ball darts around a defender toward the goal in order to receive a "feed pass."

Man Up - Describes the team with a player advantage in a penalty situation.

Face-Off - Takes place at the start of each quarter, after every goal, and after certain dead balls. Two opposing players crouch down at midfield, hold their sticks flat on the ground and press the backs of their stick pockets together. The ball is placed between the pockets and when signaled, the players "rake" or clamp on the ball to gain control.

Face Dodging - A player with the ball cradles the stick across his face in an attempt to dodge a stick-poking defender.

Fast Break - When the offense quickly mounts a scoring attack enabling them to gain a man advantage over the defense.

Feed Pass - An offensive play when one player passes the ball to a cutter for a "quick stick" shot on goal.

Ground Balls - Players compete for the control of loose ground balls by stick checking opponents away from the ball while trying to scoop it up.

Man Down - When a team that has lost a player to the penalty box and must play with fewer men on the field.

Man-to-Man - Is when each defending player guards a specific offensive opponent.

Out-of-Bounds - When a shot goes out, the player closest to where the ball went out gets the ball. When the ball or player carrying the ball goes out, the opposing team gets possession.

Passing - Players throw overhand, underhand, or sidearm to each other.

Pick - An offensive player without the ball positions himself against the body of a defender to allow a teammate to get open and receive a pass or take a shot. The player creating the pick must not move with the player, if they move they will be called for a moving pick.

Pocket - The head of the stick in which the ball is held and carried. The pocket is strung with leather and/or mesh netting.

Quick Stick - When the ball reaches an offensive player's stick on a feed pass, he catches it and then shoots it toward the goal in one swift motion.

Raking - A face-off move to sweep the ball away from his opponent and gain possession.

Riding - When an attacking team loses possession, it must quickly revert to playing defense in order to prevent the ball from being cleared.

Roll Dodge - An offensive move where the player with the ball, using his body as a shield between a defensive player and the cradled ball, spins around the defender.

Scooping - How a player picks up loose ground balls. He bends toward the ground, slides the pocket of his stick underneath the ball, and lifts it into the stick netting.

Screen - An attacking player without possession of the ball positions himself in front of the opposing goal crease in an effort to block the goalies view.

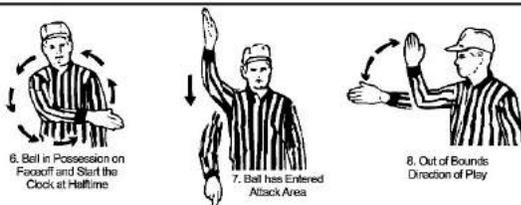
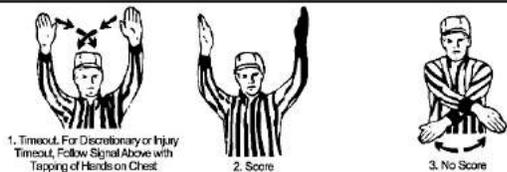
Slide - Is when an offensive player with the ball has gotten past his defender, a defending teammate will shift his position to pick up that advancing player.

Zone Defense - When defenders play in specific areas of their defensive zone, rather than covering man-to-man.



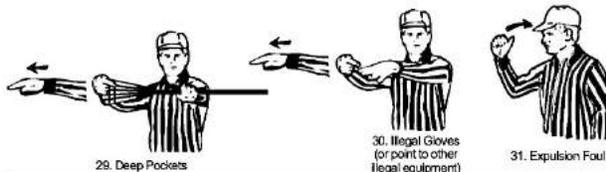
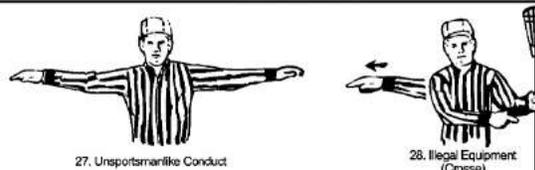
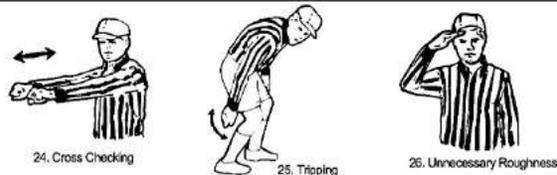
Referee Calls

OFFICIAL LACROSSE SIGNALS



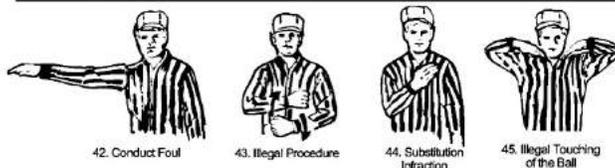
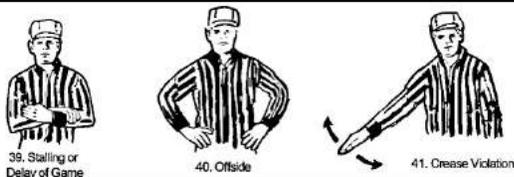
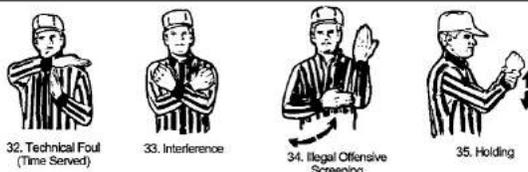
PROCEDURAL SIGNALS

OFFICIAL LACROSSE SIGNALS



PERSONAL FOULS

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TECHNICAL FOULS