



Lacrosse

Lacrosse is a [contact team sport](#) played between two teams using a small rubber ball (62.8-64.77 mm, 140-147 g) and a long-handled stick called a *crosse* or [lacrosse stick](#). It is often considered as a rough sport, although injuries are less frequent than in American football and other contact sports. 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, cradle, 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, goalie. In field lacrosse, attackmen are solely offensive players (except on the "ride", when the opposition tries to bring the ball upfield and attackmen must stop them), defensemen or defenders are solely defensive players (except when bringing up the ball, which is called a "clear"), the goalie is the last line of defense, directly defending the goal, and midfielders or "middies" can go anywhere on the field and play offense and defense, although in higher levels of lacrosse there are specialized offensive and defensive middies.

Types of players

Field lacrosse

Diagram of a men's college lacrosse field

There are ten players in each team: three attackers, three midfielders, three defenders, and one goalie.

Each player carries a [lacrosse stick](#) (or crosse). A "short crosse" (or "short stick") measures between 40 inches (1.0 m) and 42 inches (1.1 m) long (head and shaft together) and is typically used by attackers or midfielders. A maximum of four players on the field per team may carry a "long crosse" (sometimes called "long pole", "long stick" or "d-pole") which is 52 inches (1.3 m) to 72 inches (1.8 m) long; typically used by defenders or midfielders.

The head of the crosse on both long and short crosses must be 6.5 inches (17 cm) or larger at its widest point. The throat of the lacrosse head for college must be at least 3 inches wide. For high school play, there is no minimum width at its narrowest point; the only provision is that the ball must roll out unimpeded. The designated goalkeeper is allowed to have a stick from 40 inches (1.0 m) to 72 inches (1.8 m) long and the head of a goalkeeper's crosse may measure up to 12 inches (30 cm) wide, significantly larger than field players' heads, to assist in blocking shots.^{[17][18][19]}

A face-off

The field of play is 110 yards (100 m) long and 60 yards (55 m) wide. The goals are 6 feet (1.8 m) by 6 feet (1.8 m). The goal sits inside a circular "crease", measuring 18 feet (5.5 m) in diameter.^{[17][18][19]} Each offensive and defensive area is surrounded by a "restraining box." Each quarter, and after each goal scored, play is restarted with a [face-off](#). During a face-off, two players lay their stick horizontally next to the ball, head of the stick inches from the ball and the butt-end pointing down the midfield line.^[18] Face-off-men scrap for the ball, often by "clamping" it under their stick and flicking it out to their teammates. Attackers and defenders cannot cross their "restraining line" until one player from the midfield takes possession of the ball or the ball crosses the restraining line.^[18] If a member of one team touches the ball and it travels outside of the playing area, play is restarted by awarding possession to the opposing team, unless the ball traveled outside of the playing area after a shot on goal was made then the player with the closest lacrosse head to the ball at the point when it exits the field of play gains possession of

the ball. During play, teams may substitute players in and out freely. Sometimes this is referred to as "on the fly" substitution. Substitution must occur within the designated exchange area (often called "the box") in order to be legal.^{[17][18][19]}

For most penalties, the offending player is sent to the [penalty box](#), which is located between each team's bench. Play continues without the player for a designated amount of time based upon the foul, however, most penalties are "releasable," meaning that the penalty ends when a goal is scored by the non-offending team. Technical fouls (such as offsides and holding) result in either a turnover or a player's suspension of 30 seconds, while personal fouls are generally penalized one minute. (Some infractions, such as playing with a stick that does not meet the specifications of the designated level of play, may serve non-releasable penalties of up to three minutes).^[20] The team that has taken the penalty is said to be playing [man down](#), while the other team is on the [man up](#). Teams will use various [lacrosse strategies](#) to attack and defend while a player is being penalized. Offsides is penalized by a 30-second penalty. It occurs when there are more than 7 players on the defensive side of the field (three midfielders/three defensemen/one goalkeeper), or more than 6 players from one team on the offensive side of the field (three midfielders/three attack). The zones are separated by the midfield line.^{[17][18][19]}

[1904 Olympics](#) Gold Medal winning *Winnipeg Shamrocks* lacrosse team [Lacrosse at the Olympics](#) was a medal-earning [sport](#) in the [1904](#) and [1908 Summer Olympics](#).^{[21][22][23]} Lacrosse was a [demonstration sport](#) in the [1928](#) and [1932 Summer Olympics](#), as well as at the [1948 Summer Olympics](#).^{[24][25][26][27]}

The men's professional Major League Lacrosse has used different field lacrosse rules from the international, college, and high school programs. With intentions to increase scoring, the league employed a sixty-second [shot clock](#) and a two-point goal for shots taken outside a designated perimeter.^[28] In 2007, the MLL was bolstered by a ten-year television contract with [ESPN](#).^[29]

Box lacrosse

Main article: [Box lacrosse](#)

Up until the 1930s, all lacrosse was played on large fields outdoors. The owners of Canadian [ice hockey](#) arenas invented a reduced-size version of the game, called [box lacrosse](#), as a means to make more profit from their arena investments, and because severe [winter weather](#) in many areas limits outdoor play.

Since 1985, when the [Canadian University Field Lacrosse Association](#) (CUFLA) began operating a collegiate men's league, field lacrosse has witnessed a revival in Canada. There are now 12 varsity teams. In 1994, Canada declared lacrosse its national summer sport in 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](#). It grew to encompass men's lacrosse clubs in 14 cities throughout the United States and Canada.

A game of box lacrosse

Box lacrosse is played by teams of six on a [hockey rink](#) where the ice has been removed or covered by artificial turf, or in an indoor soccer or lacrosse field. The enclosed playing area is called a box, in contrast to the open playing field of the traditional game.^[30] This version of the game was introduced in the 1930s to promote business for hockey arenas,^[31] and within several years had nearly supplanted field lacrosse in Canada.^[32]

Box lacrosse is played at the highest level by the *Senior A* divisions of the [Canadian Lacrosse Association](#) and the [National Lacrosse League](#) (NLL). The National Lacrosse League employs some minor rule changes from the Canadian Lacrosse Association (CLA) rules. Notably, the games are played during the winter.^[30] The NLL games consist of four fifteen-minute quarters compared with three periods of twenty minutes each (similar to ice hockey) in CLA games (multiple 15-minute OT periods for tied games, until whoever scores first). NLL players may use only sticks with hollow shafts, while CLA permits solid wooden sticks.^{.[33][34]}

The goals in box lacrosse are much smaller than field lacrosse, traditionally 4 feet (1.2 m) wide by 4 feet (1.2 m) tall in box, and 4.6 feet (1.4 m) wide by 4 feet (1.2 m) tall in the NLL.^[33] Also, the [goaltender](#) wears much more protective padding,^[30] including a massive chest protector and armguard combination known as "uppers", large shin

guards known as leg pads (both of which must follow strict measurement guidelines), and ice hockey-style masks or lacrosse helmets.^[35] Also, at the professional level, box lacrosse goaltenders often use traditional wooden sticks outside of the NLL, which does not allow wooden sticks. This makes Box Lacrosse faster and rougher than the traditional Field Lacrosse.

The style of the game is quick, accelerated by the close confines of the floor and a [shot clock](#). The shot clock requires the attacking team to take a shot on goal within 30 seconds of gaining possession of the ball. In addition, players must advance the ball from their own defensive end to the offensive side of the floor within 10 seconds.^[30]

Box lacrosse is also a much more physical game. Since cross checking is legal in box lacrosse, players wear rib pads in addition to the shoulder and elbow pads that field lacrosse players wear. Box lacrosse players wear a different type of helmet as well, a hockey helmet with a box lacrosse cage.

For most penalties, the offending player is sent to the [penalty box](#) and his team has to play without him (thus lacking one player) for a short amount of time. Most penalties last for two minutes, unless a five-minute major penalty has been assessed. What separates box lacrosse (and ice hockey) from other sports is that at the top levels of professional and junior lacrosse, a five-minute major penalty is given and the players are not ejected for participating in a fight.^[36]

Women's lacrosse

2005 [NCAA Women's Lacrosse Championship](#)

Main article: [Women's lacrosse](#)

The rules of women's lacrosse differ significantly from men's lacrosse, most notably by equipment and the degree of allowable physical contact.^[37] Women's lacrosse rules also differ significantly between the US and all other countries, who 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. As of late there has been discussion on the wearing of 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.^[38] 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, differ 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 either 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.

Internationally, the game is commonly played in [British girls' independent schools](#). While a minor sport in [Australia](#), it is played to a very high standard at the elite level. Women's lacrosse has seen significant growth in Europe since the beginning of the 21st century, particularly in Germany, the Czech Republic, and the Netherlands. Japan entered its first team into the World Cup in 1993, and South Korea followed suit in 2009. In 2012, the first Israeli international team

competed in the European Championships in Amsterdam. The Swedish National team took part for the first time in the 2013 World Cup. The Australia national squad won the 2005 [Women's Lacrosse World Cup](#). The 2009 Women's World Cup was played in [Prague, Czech Republic](#), won by the United States, and the 2013 World Cup was played in Oshawa, Canada, again won by the United States.^[39]

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