

# Boys' Lacrosse - Overview of the Game

**The following, courtesy of US Lacrosse, provides a general overview of the game; the Northern California Junior Lacrosse Association has modified some of these rules for our Junior and Pups players. The coaches will review these rules with the players. Please note: Pups are not allowed to body check and do not play defense with long sticks.**

Men's 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. 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. Likewise, youth games are 32 minutes long, with eight-minute quarters. Each team is given 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.

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 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 (Junior Boys only) 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.

# Boy's Lacrosse - Positions

## **Attack:**

The attackman's responsibility is to score goals. 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 should have 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 should have 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 not essential to be effective. Each team should have 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.

# Boy's Lacrosse - Equipment

## **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 men's 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.

## **Protective Equipment:**

All players, with the exception of the goalkeeper, must wear shoulder pads. Arm pads and rib pads are also 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 and gloves.

# Boy's Lacrosse - Skills

**Catching:** The act of receiving a passed ball with the crosse.

**Checking:** The act of attempting to dislodge the ball from an opponent's stick.

**Poke Check:** A stick check in which the player pokes the head of his stick at an opponent's stick through the top hand by pushing with the bottom hand.

**Slap Check:** A stick check in which a player slaps the head of his stick against his opponent's stick.

**Wrap Check:** A one-handed check in which the defender swings his stick around his opponent's body to dislodge the ball. (This check is only legal at the highest level of play.)

**Cradling:** The coordinated motion of the arms and wrists that keeps the ball secure in the pocket and ready to be passed or shot when running.

**Cutting:** A movement by an offensive player without the ball, toward the opponent's goal, in anticipation of a feed and shot.

**Feeding:** Passing the ball to a teammate who is in position for a shot on goal.

**Passing:** The act of throwing the ball to a teammate with the crosse.

**Scooping:** The act of picking up a loose ball with the crosse.

**Screening:** An offensive tactic in which a player near the crease positions himself so as to block the goalkeeper's view of the ball.

**Shooting:** The act of throwing the ball with the crosse toward the goal in an attempt to score.

# Boy's Lacrosse - Personal and Technical 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.

**NOTE: The US Lacrosse Youth Council has developed modified rules for ages 15 and under play. To get a copy of these rules contact US Lacrosse at (410) 235-6882.**

## 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 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 Body Checking:** Occurs when any of the following actions takes place:

1. body checking an opponent who is not in possession of the ball or within five yards of a loose ball.
2. avoidable body check of an opponent after he has passed or shot the ball.
3. body checking an opponent from the rear or at or below the waist.
4. 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 if the glove has been altered in a way that compromises its protective features.

## **Technical Fouls**

**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, 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.

# Boy's Lacrosse - Glossary of terms

**Attack Goal Area:** The area defined by a line drawn sideline to sideline 20 yards from the face of the goal. Once the offensive team crosses the midfield line, it has ten 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.

**Box:** An area 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 attack goal area.

**Crease:** A circle around the goal with a radius of nine feet into which only defensive players may enter.

**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 ten seconds to move the ball across the midfield line.

**Extra man Offense (EMO):** A man advantage that results from a time-serving penalty.

**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.

**Man Down Defense (MDD):** The situation that results from a time-serving 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.

**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.

**Release:** The term used by an official to notify a penalized player in the box that he may re-enter the game.

**Unsettled Situation:** Any situation in which the defense is not positioned correctly, usually due to a loose ball or broken clear.

# Boy's Lacrosse - Diagram of the Field of Play



