

History

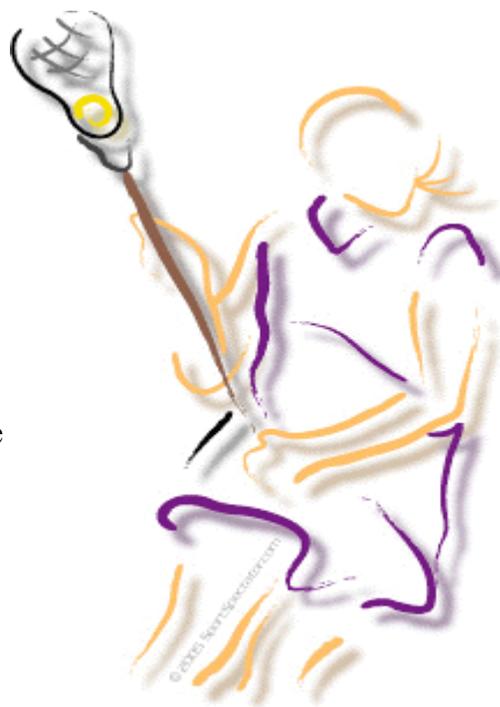
Perhaps the first sport in North America, "baggataway" was played by Native Americans as far back as the 1400s, often with thousands of people participating and goals spread miles apart. French colonists referred to the stick used to play as a "crosse" — French for a "bishop's staff" — and lacrosse was created. A Canadian dentist, W. George Beers, established the rules in 1867 that formed modern lacrosse. Traditionally an East Coast sport, lacrosse has experienced recent growth at the high school and college levels, and the game has expanded across the country.

Object of the Game

Teams accumulate points by throwing the ball into the opponent's goal. The team with the most goals wins the game.

The Essentials for Girls Lacrosse

Game Length	Scoring	Positions
Start of Game	Equipment	Glossary
Offense	Penalties	
Defense	Field of Play	



Game Length

A high school game is 50 minutes (college is 60 minutes), divided into 25-minute halves and separated by a 10-minute halftime. Teams switch playing sides for the second half and are allowed one time-out per half. Although games can end with a tied score, some leagues use "sudden death" overtime, in which the first team to score during overtime wins the game.

Start of the game

The action begins at the start of each half and after each goal with a [draw](#) at the center of the field. The team that takes possession of the ball during the draw is on offense.

Offense and Defense

Offense:

- Women's lacrosse is a fast-paced game; since players are spread across a large field, speed is the key factor to success.
- Teamwork is also critical.
- Good passing leads to scoring chances and prevents the opposition from taking possession of the ball.
- Field players run while [cradling](#) the ball and look to pass to open teammates with the objective of creating an open shot at the goal.
- The action of pushing the head of the stick forward and pulling the shaft back produces extremely accurate and fast shots.
- Some basic offense strategies include trailer, stack, motion, back door, and dart.

Defense:

- The defense attempts to stop the offense from scoring by deflecting or intercepting passes, taking the ball from the opponent, or forcing bad shots.
- Physical contact is not permitted; however, when a defender is at least one step in front of an attacker, she can [check](#) the opponent's crosse to knock the ball loose.
- Defenders will either play "man-to-man" defense, in which each player is assigned to guard a certain opponent, or "zone defense," in which defensive players guard a specific area of the field.

Scoring

A goal is awarded every time the ball enters the goal.

Equipment

Stick

- The “crosse,” or stick, has an aluminum or titanium shaft that connects to the head of the stick.
- The head is usually made of plastic and has strings or mesh that form a pocket to aid in catching and throwing the ball.
- The pockets of the sticks in women’s lacrosse are relatively shallow compared to those used in men’s lacrosse, making it more difficult to maintain control of the ball.
- Goalies use a larger stick and pocket.

Ball

The ball is solid rubber and is about the size of a baseball.

Protective Equipment

- The women's game requires very little protective gear because it is non-contact.
- mouth guard
- padded gloves.
- shin pads
- cleats or sneakers
- short-sleeved jerseys
- skirts
- protective eyewear.

Goalies use additional padding

- helmet
- gloves
- chest pad

Penalties

When a foul is committed,

- the referee blows the whistle to indicate a penalty and the players must **stand**, or remain still.
- The penalty for fouls in most areas of the field is **free position**.
- The team who committed the foul is moved four meters away from the fouled player and the fouled player is given possession of the ball.
- Play resumes on the referee’s signal (whistle blown and hand gesture), at which point the player may run, pass, or shoot.

“Minor” and “Major” fouls

Minor fouls

- defender is moved four meters away in the direction from which she approached the player; for major fouls,
- defender is placed four meters behind the fouled player.

Minor fouls include

- **cradling** the ball too close to the body and face
- touching the ball with a hand
- intentionally forcing the ball out of bounds
- For minor fouls committed within the 12-meter fan, the fouled player is moved to the nearest spot on the fan and is granted an **indirect free position**.

Major fouls include

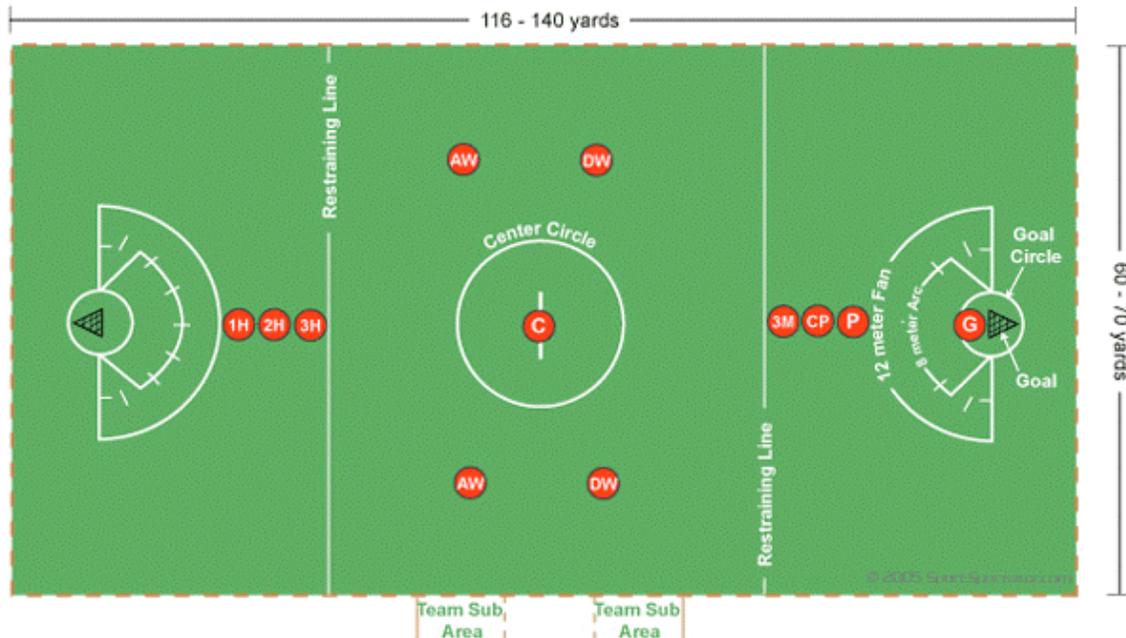
- violating an opponent’s **sphere**, **slashing**, **blocking**, **three-second** violation,
- illegally **picking**, pushing, tripping, **charging**, and dangerous shooting.
- For severe rules violations, such as dangerous play or unsportsmanlike conduct, a player receives a yellow or red card.
- A yellow card is a warning;
- A red card results in the ejection of the player from the game

Major fouls committed within the critical scoring area

- the player is granted **free position** and a **penalty lane** is cleared between the player and the goal
- If the offensive player was on a **scoring play** when this type of foul occurs, a **slow whistle** is issued and play continues, in order to allow the offense to maintain its advantage

- If the team loses possession of the ball, the penalty is enforced at the spot of the foul; if the team shoots the ball or takes it beyond the plane of the goal during the scoring play, the foul is void and play continues
- For major fouls committed within the 8-meter arc, all defenders are cleared from the arc and the player gets a [free shot](#) from the closest hash mark on the eight meter arc

Field of Play



Women's lacrosse field dimensions vary, and natural boundaries or visible guidelines are used to determine the perimeter of the playing area. Common characteristics include:

- **Restraining line:** Divides area where a maximum of seven offensive players and eight defensive players (including the goalkeeper) are allowed; otherwise, a team foul is called.
- **Goal:** Points are scored when the ball passes through this six-foot by six-foot square.
- **Critical scoring area:** Unmarked area 15 meters in front and to the side of the goal, and 9 meters behind it. Includes the "fan" and the "arc." Defenders must allow [free space to goal](#) when the offense is inside this area. Also, penalties within this area have special consequences.
- **Twelve-meter fan:** 12-meter semi-circle used in the administration of minor fouls. Also called the "fan."
- **Eight-meter arc:** Line inside which defenders must be within a stick's-length of their attackers. Used to administer a **free shot**. Also called the "arc."
- **Hash marks:** Five marks on the eight-meter arc used for a [free shot](#). Play resumes from the closest hash mark to the foul.
- **Goal circle:** Circle that surrounds the goal and indicates the area in which only the goalie can enter. Also called the "crease."
- **Center circle:** Circle in the middle of the field where a [draw](#) is held.
- **Team substitution area:** Area where substitute players may enter the field [on-the-fly](#).

Positions

Two teams compete with 12 players each: a goalkeeper, 5 attackers, and 6 defenders (can also be categorized as goalkeeper, 3 attackers, 5 midfielders, and 3 defenders).

Attackers

- Attackers include the first home, second home, third home, and two attack wings.
- The **first home** ^{1H} is highly skilled with the stick and is relied upon to score.
- The **second home** ^{2H} is a versatile playmaker who must get open to set up scoring opportunities. She possesses a great shot and knack for finding an open teammate.
- The **third home** ^{3H} is an all-around player who is a key to transition from defense to offense. She must be able to quickly change from an offensive mindset to **marking**.
- The **attack wings** ^{AW} are often involved in finishing a fast break. These speedsters need to be strong passers and shooters. They are often first to gain possession off a draw.

Defenders

Defenders include the point, coverpoint, third man, center, defense wings, and goalkeeper.

- The **point** ^P marks the first home. Decision-making, positioning, and shot blocking are key skills.
- The **coverpoint** ^{CP} is usually the best one-on-one defender who relies on speed and footwork to mark the second home.
- The **third man** ^{3M} is a multi-dimensional athlete whose primary duty is disturbing the attack in the midfield. On defense she looks to intercept passes and quickly pick up an open attacker. Also has occasional scoring opportunities.
- The **center** ^C is a pivotal player in transition from defense to offense. She also controls the draw.
- The **defense wings** ^{DW} need to match the speed and endurance of the attack wings and possess a good outside shot.
- The **goalkeeper** ^G attempts to save each shot with her stick, but can also use any body part to keep the ball out of the goal. Lightning-fast reflexes, quick decisions, and courage are required to stop a barrage of high-velocity shots.

Glossary

- **Blocking:** Moving into path of a player without providing space for the player to stop or change direction.
- **Charging:** Player with the ball comes into contact with a defender who has already established position.

- **Checking:** Hitting the opponent's crosse to dislodge the ball.
- **Clearing:** Passing or carrying the ball out of the goal circle.
- **Cradling:** Running with the stick in either one or both hands in a manner that keeps the ball in the pocket.
- **Cutting:** Attacker runs toward the goal looking to get open to receive a pass.
- **Deputy:** A defender who can enter the goal circle in the absence of the goalie when her team has the ball.
- **Draw:** A technique to start or resume play in which a ball is placed inbetween the sticks of two opposing players, a whistle is blown, the sticks are drawn up and away, and the ball is sent above the heads of the player before one of the players takes possession of it.
- **Fast break:** An opportunity to score in transition to offense with at least a one-man advantage.
- **Free position:** After a foul, all players must be at least four meters away from the player who was fouled. The attacker may run, pass, or shoot the ball after the whistle is blown to resume play.
- **Free shot:** Penalty awarded from a hash mark on the 8-meter line when a major foul is committed within the 8-meter arc. All players, except the goalie, must move outside the arc. When the umpire blows the whistle, the player can take a shot on goal or pass while the defense moves in.
- **Free space to goal:** Inside the critical scoring area, defenders must stay out of the space between the player with the ball and the goal circle, unless they closely mark an opponent.
- **Indirect free position:** Following a minor foul within the 12-meter fan, play resumes from the 12-meter fan and the player may run or pass, but cannot shoot.
- **Marking:** Defender is within a stick's length of an opponent.
- **On the fly:** Substituting during play. When one player exits the field through the team substitution area, another can enter.
- **Penalty lane:** The path that is cleared between the player with the ball and the goal when a **free position** is awarded to the attacking team inside the critical scoring area.
- **Pick:** Offensive player impedes opponent's ability to defend a teammate. Must be within the visual field of the opponent.
- **Scoop:** Picking up a ground ball in the crosse pocket.
- **Scoring play:** A single possession of the ball in which the offense moves the ball in an effort to score.
- **Slashing:** Recklessly swinging the crosse at an opponent's stick or body.
- **Slow whistle:** Permitting play to continue during a penalty inside the critical scoring area on a **scoring play** to allow an offense to maintain its advantage.
- **Stand:** All players, except the goalkeeper in her goal circle, must remain stationary following the sound of any whistle.
- **Sphere:** An imaginary bubble, about seven inches around the head of a player, that an opponent's crosse cannot enter to ensure safety.
- **Three-second rule:** Defensemen may not remain in the arc for more than three seconds without guarding another player.