



# **INTRODUCTION TO LACROSSE**

This booklet is intended to provide basic information of the game of Lacrosse. Some information may not apply to the level of Lacrosse you are familiar with, but is included to expand your knowledge of the game.



# THE PLAYERS

There are 10 players in action at one time on a lacrosse team: a goalie, three defensemen, three midfielders, and three attackmen. At all times, a team must have three men on its offensive half of the field and four men on its defensive half.

**Goalie:** Also called a goalkeeper, the goalie uses a wider stick and wears a chest protector, as his job is to stop the opponents' shots, which may come flying at him at over 100 mph. The best goalies are either brave or crazy ... or a little of both. After making a save and gaining possession of the ball, the goalie is allowed to stay in the crease for only four seconds. During that time, no one is allowed to touch him.

**Defensemen:** Defensemen use a longer stick (52-72 inches) and generally stay on the defensive half of the field. Their job is to guard the opponent's attackmen and take the ball away from them. Defensemen need to be quick, aggressive and tough. Middies use a short stick (40-42 inches).

**Midfielders:** Middies, as they are also called, play both offense and defense, thus, they must run the length of the field. They are usually substituted frequently in units so as to keep them fresh. Speed and endurance are essential for middies. In recent years coaches have begun using "long-stick middies" -- middies with defense sticks -- as defensive specialists.

**Attackmen:** Attackmen use the shortest stick so as to limit the chance of losing the ball. They generally stay on the offensive half of the field and coordinate the offense. They are usually the best stick handlers and must be quick and agile. Attackmen use a short stick (40-42 inches).

# THE EQUIPMENT

All players must wear helmets, shoulder pads, gloves and mouthpieces. Arm pads are usually worn, especially by middies and attackmen, and rib pads have also become popular in more recent times. In addition, goalies wear a chest protector and a throat protector. The sticks used today are generally made of molded plastic with either a nylon mesh or a leather and nylon woven pocket, with either an aluminum, titanium or alloy handle. The sticks vary in length from 40 to 72 inches, depending upon the position played. Sticks can be ruled illegal for either a deep pocket or an illegal crosse. A deep pocket brings a 1-minute non-releasable penalty. An illegal crosse brings a 3-minute non-releasable penalty.



# MEN'S LACROSSE RULES



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 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.



# PENALTIES

Penalties are classified as either technical or personal fouls. Technical fouls either cause the offending team to lose possession of the ball, award the other team the ball, or place the offending player in the "penalty box" for 30 seconds if the opponents had possession of the ball at the time of the infraction. Personal fouls result in a one-minute penalty. Severe abuse (fighting, etc.) may result in either a three-minute penalty or expulsion from the game. In the case of a time penalty, the offending team must play a man short, thus yielding the opponents an "extra-man" opportunity.

## Personal Fouls

**Slashing:** Striking an opponent's body other than his hand with your stick. (To an extent, striking the arms is allowed.) One-minute penalty.

**Tripping:** Obstructing the opponent below the knee with your body or stick. One-minute penalty.

**Illegal body checking:** Hitting an opponent from the rear, below the waist, above the shoulders, or when the opponent neither has the ball nor is within 5 yards of a loose ball. One-minute penalty.

**Crosschecking:** Hitting the opponent with the part of the stick between your hands. One-minute penalty.

**Unsportsmanlike conduct:** Official's discretion. One-minute penalty.

## Technical Fouls

**Offside:** Failure to have either three players on your offensive half of the field or four players on your defensive half. The normal position of these players is not significant, only the number is. An offside against your team when you have the ball brings a change of possession. An offside call on your team when the opponent has the ball brings a 30-second penalty.

**Holding:** Holding an opponent or his stick with your body or stick. This does not eliminate body checks or holding your position, but you may not wrap your stick around an opponent and thus stop his movement. Holding brings a 30-second penalty.

**Pushing:** Pushing an opponent from the rear, or when he is not within five yards of the ball. All body contact must occur with both hands on your stick. You may not use your free hand to push off. A push with possession brings a 30-second penalty. A push without possession brings a change of possession.

**Interference:** Moving picks, preventing cutters free movement, etc. Also, hitting the goalie in the crease when he has possession of the ball. Calls can bring change of possession or a 30-second penalty, depending upon the circumstance.

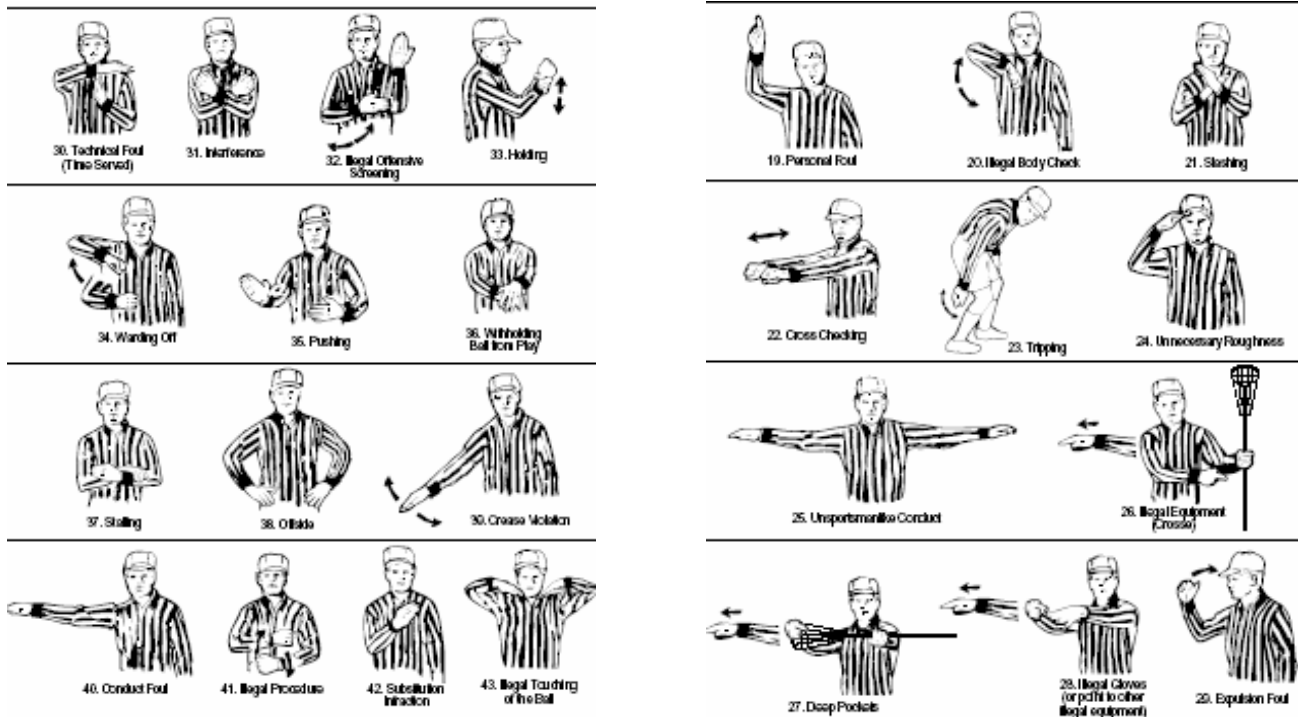
There are also technical fouls from throwing the stick, lying on a loose ball, illegal substitutions, playing without a stick, delay of game, etc.

## Timed Infractions

**Failure to advance:** When a team gains possession of the ball in the defensive end, it has 20 seconds to cross midfield. Failure to do this results in a "failure to advance" call and the possession is lost. Once past midfield, the team has 10 seconds to get the ball into the "box," meaning across the restraining line and inside the rectangle made up of the endline and the two inner lines that make up the attack area. Failure to do this also results in a "failure to advance" call and loss of possession. In addition, the offensive team must never keep the ball out of the "box" for more than 10 seconds. If they do, a "failure to advance" call will be made.

**Four-second call:** When the goalie makes a save or assumes control of the ball in any way while in the crease he may remain in the crease for only four seconds. If he does not vacate the crease in that time, possession is lost.

# OFFICIAL LACROSSE SIGNALS



# LACROSSE TERMINOLOGY



**Ball- or Ball down** - All players shout ball any time the ball is on the ground. Often this is the first indicator to the player who had it that he has dropped it. Ball can also signal the intent of a player to go after the ball instead of the man. (see below)

**Body Check** - Defensively using the body to hit an opposing ball carrier or while contesting an opponent for a player a loose ball. The body check must always be done above the waist and from the front or side.

**The Box** - The rectangular shaped area around the crease / goal. Defenders seldom press players outside of the box. The distance involved makes it all but impossible to score from outside of the box. The rules state that the offense can only possess the ball for so long without entering the box. At the end of a game the team that is ahead must keep the ball inside of the box.

**Butt** - The end of a crosse opposite the head. All shaft ends need to be covered with a butt-cap.

**Change planes** – When a shooter has a close in shot, the goalie must respect where the ball carrier starts his shot. If the shooter holds his stick high, the keeper does the same. Therefore it is most effective for the shooter to start high and shoot low, or vice versa. This is ‘changing planes’.

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

**Clearing** - An important defensive 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** - In order to maintain control of the ball when moving along the field, players turn their wrists and arms to cradle the ball in the stick pocket.

**Crease** - The eighteen-foot diameter circle surrounding each team’s goal. Attacking players may never enter the opposing goal crease. They may 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 four seconds. Such fouls result in the loss of ball possession.

**Cutting** - An attacking player without the ball darts around a defender toward the goal in order to receive a “feed pass.” A cutting player is a cutter.

**D Cut** - A maneuver used by an attackman to get open for a shot. The player starts on the GLE, about 5 yards away from the goal. He then makes a rounded cut, on the side away from the ball. (completing a "D" shape) This is often the third attackmans’ move during a fast break.

Extra Man (aka Man Up or EMO) - Describes the team at a player advantage in a penalty situation. Opposite of man down.

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 then placed between the pockets and, when signaled to start, the players “rake” or clamp on the ball to vie for control.

Face Dodging - A player with the ball cradles the stick across his face in an attempt to dodge a stick-poking defender. Generally an open field dodge that does not involve changing hands.

Fast Break - When an offensive team quickly mounts a scoring attack enabling them to gain a man advantage over the opposing defense. Almost always a four on three.

Feed Pass - An offensive play in which one player passes the ball to a cutting teammate for a “quick stick” shot on goal.

Flag Down – Tells our offense that a penalty will be called. This means that we should do all that we can to get off a shot without dropping the ball to the ground, which will halt play.

GLE (Goal Line Extended) – An imaginary line that extends straight out from the sides of the goal line.

Gilman Clear – Defender, typically the goalie, clears the ball by throwing it as far as he can down the field. Sometimes this is a desperation move, but it is often better to create a ground ball situation in the opponents end than around our own goal area.

Ground Balls - Players compete for the control of loose ground balls by stick checking opponents away from the ball while simultaneously trying to scoop it up. All Ravens yell ‘ball down’ when the ball is on the ground. See also ‘release’.

Head: The plastic of the stick connected to the handle.

In the Dirt - The often trampled area approx. 15 foot radius area in front of the goal. Shots from outside the dirt area should be bounce shots, which are more difficult for keepers to stop. Also known as the ‘hole’. A much smaller area than ‘the box.’

Invert - Any offensive play that involves ‘inverting’ the middies and the attack. In a man on man situation, this puts the defensive bigs out on top with our attack, and the middies defending the area around the crease.

Man Down - Describes the team which has lost a player to the penalty box and must play with fewer men on the field. We will always establish Man Up and Man Down teams before the game. Man Down teams are often tricky, since it is likely that a defender was penalized.

Man-to-man - A defensive setup in which each defending player guards a specific offensive opponent.

Offside - Called anytime a team has fewer than four players on its defensive side of the field, or fewer than three players on its attacking side. If the defending team is offside when a goal

scores, it counts. If the attacking team scores but is called offside, the goal does not count and the ball is turned over to the other team.

Out-of-bounds - When a shot goes out of play, the player closest to the sideline where the ball went out gets the ball.

Passing - An integral part to quickly moving the ball. Players throw overhand or underhand to each other. In most cases a high pass is easier to deal with than a low bouncing dribbler. Slowly thrown lobbed passes give the defense time to react and often result in the catching player being hit before the pass arrives. We prefer that passes be 'zipped', or thrown with authority, instead of lobbed with a high arc.

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. Picks must be stationary and 'passive'.

Pocket - The head of the stick in which the ball is held and carried. The pocket is strung with leather and/or mesh netting. In order to be legal, the top of a ball cannot be seen when looking at the pocket from the side.

Poke Check - A defender jabs his stick at the exposed stick end or hands of an opposing ball carrier in an effort to jar the ball loose. These checks are very effective in that the checking player stays in balance and keeps a cushion of space between himself and the ball carrier.

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 by a player who, in trying to gain possession of a ground ball, places the head of his stick on top of the ball and sweeps it back. Raking is done standing still. This means that often people who rake will be legally hit by an opposing player. Raking is a very bad habit that is difficult to unlearn. EXCEPTION: Goalkeepers can rake or 'clamp' a ground ball legally from the crease.

Release – Players shout release when they succeed in scooping a ground ball. This indicates to teammates that they can no longer make contact with the opponents to drive them away from the ball. Doing so is a penalty.

Riding - When an attacking team loses possession of the ball, it must quickly revert to playing defense in order to prevent the ball from being cleared back out. In most ride situations, the goal-keeper will be left un-marked.

Roll Dodge - An offensive move in which a ball carrier, using his body as a shield between a defensive player and the cradled ball, spins around the defender. To provide maximum ball protection, the ball carrier switches hands as he rolls.

Support – When a player without the ball moves into a position where the player with the ball can make a clear pass.

Scooping - The manner in which 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 netting of the stick.

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

Shaft: A hollow aluminum or composite pole connected to the head of the crosse.

Skip – To pass to a non- adjacent teammate. Also known as a star pass. (like drawing a star)

Slap Check - A stick check (inferior to the poke check). The defender uses his stick to slap the stick of the offensive player who has the ball. Poke checks are preferred since it is easier to keep you feet moving and stay balanced during the check.

Slide- 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.

Square Up- To position one's body in preparation to pass. This means to aim the leading shoulder towards the target.

Stick Check - In an effort to dislodge the ball from the "pocket," the defending player strikes his stick against the stick of an opposing ball carrier in a controlled manner.

Unsettled Situation - Any situation in which the defense is not positioned correctly; usually due to a loose ball or broken clear, or fast break. Teams that hustle, score many goals during unsettled situations.

V Cut - A maneuver used by an offensive player to get open for a pass. The offensive player feints in causing his defender to react and move, he then cuts sharply away (completing the "V" shape) See also "D cut"

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