

Lacrosse Rules

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The rules of lacrosse will vary between different leagues, but we'll try to outline some of the basic rules here that mostly apply to high school men's lacrosse:



Lacrosse: Rules of the Sport

- When a player with the ball or the ball goes out of the field of play the opposing team gets the ball unless the ball goes out of bounce after a shot. In that case, the team with the player closest to the ball when it went out of bounds gets the ball.

- There are 10 players on each lacrosse team. Four of the players must stay on the defensive half of the field, three must stay on the offensive half, and three can go anywhere on the field.
- The game is typically divided up into two halves and 4 quarters with each quarter being 12 minutes long. College lacrosse games are longer and kids games are shorter.
- The game starts with a face-off between two players on each team. The ball sits on the ground between the two players and the referee blows the whistle. This signals that the players can both try to get the ball.
- Only the goalie can touch the ball with their hands. All other players must use the lacrosse stick to carry, pass, shoot, or catch the ball.
- When an opponent has the ball or is within five yards of the ball, a player can body check them. A body check is contact from the front between the waist and the shoulders. You can also stick check the player on the stick or gloves to try and knock the ball away or to keep a player from getting the ball.
- There is an area around the goal called a crease. An opponent is not allowed to enter the crease, but they can reach in with their stick to pick up the ball.

Some plays that you are not allowed to do in lacrosse are called fouls. If a player commits a foul, they will get put in a penalty area for 1 to 3 minutes. Like basketball, at 5 personal fouls the player is removed from the game.

Lacrosse personal fouls include tripping, unnecessary roughness, cross checking (making contact with another player with the stick between your hands), slashing (a stick check not on the opponents gloves or stick), or illegal body checking.

Some Lacrosse technical fouls include holding, offsides (not the right number of players on each half of the field), setting screens, stalling, and pushing.

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Lacrosse Strategy

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In Lacrosse there are offensive and defensive strategies for different situations. Some of these game situations include:

- **Settled** - A settled situation is when all players are ready or settled when the attacker goes on the attack. It may occur after a stoppage of play like a foul or out of bounds play.
- **Unsettled** - An unsettled situation is when there is a quick change of possession giving one team an advantage like a fast break.
- **Power Play or Man-up Man-down** - This is when one team has one less player due to a penalty. While the player is out, the team with the extra player or power play will press and try to score. The other team will focus on defense and try to hold until their player's penalty time is complete.



Lacrosse Offensive Strategies:

In a regular or settled situations, teams will run set offenses. A common settled offense is called a 2-3-1. This stands for a first line of 2 midfielders at the top of the field, a second line just in front of the goal with two tacklers on the outside and a midfielder in the middle, and a third attacker

Lacrosse: Team Strategy for the Sport

located just behind the goal (sometimes called position X). The players will then pass the ball around the outside or run in triangles to confuse the defense and try to get an opening. Some other settled formations include the 1-4-1 and the 1-3-2. Some formations may give an offense more attack strength, but also leaves the defense open to a fast break. Other strategies used include setting picks or screening within the rules. A key offensive strategy in lacrosse is to try and get fast breaks or unsettled clears. This can give the offense the advantage for a short period of time. By quickly transitioning the ball up the field a team can get more offensive players than defensive players in the attack zone.

Lacrosse Defensive Strategies:

In regular or settled play the defense may play man-to-man defense, where each lacrosse defensive player is assigned an offensive player to cover, or zone, where each defensive player is assigned an area or zone to cover. In man-to-man defense players need to communicate and have "slide" responsibilities where they cover for a defender who gets passed. Knowing when and how to switch players is key in a lacrosse man-to-man defense. The most common zone defense is a 3-3 where the top three players are midfielders and the bottom three are defenders.

Man-up Man Down:

Power play or Man-up Man Down is another key area in lacrosse strategy. A Man-up situation is a great opportunity to score and teams must be ready to capitalize on these situations. At the same time, if you can establish a strong man-down defense you can frustrate the other lacrosse team as well as hold them in check.

Other:

Substitutions are a key strategy in lacrosse as well. Keeping the players, especially midfielders, fresh and fast is important. The best strategy and players in the world won't be able to win games if they are too exhausted to run.

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