



Quiz on the Heritage of the Creators Game



Name the members of the Six Nations of the Iroquois Confederacy?

The Seneca, Cayuga, Onondaga, Oneida, Mohawk and Tuscarora.

What other major nation played the game outside of NY?

Objiwa or Chippewa in the Great Lakes region. Over 40 other tribes were thought to have played the game of lacrosse.

Describe the basic differences between their sticks?

The Ojibwa stick has a smaller round head, the Iroquois stick has a long triangular shape.





What is the name the Iroquois call themselves?

Haudenosaunee ("People of the Longhouse")

What is their team name and colors?

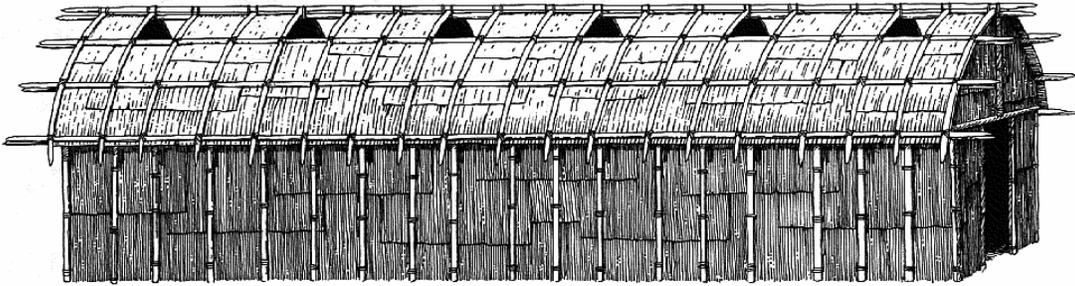
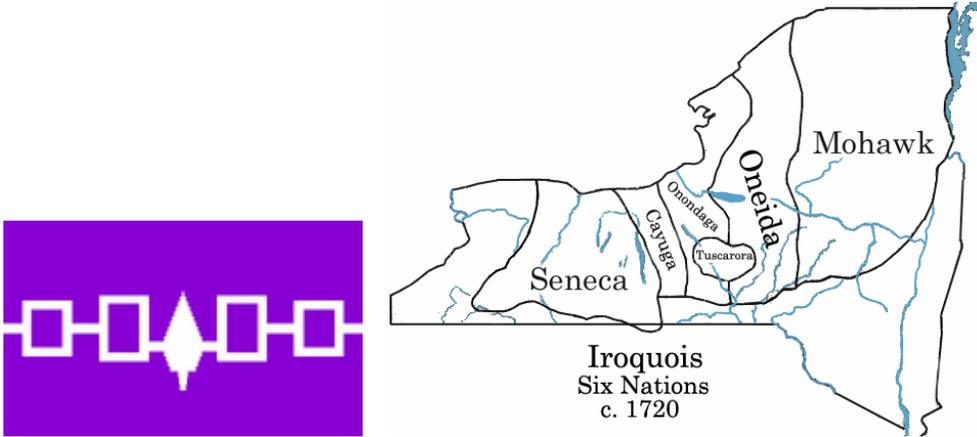


Nike has provided the team with uniforms that include jerseys with an eagle head on the back and elements of the Iroquois flag on the sleeves. At the same time, the **purple-and-yellow** uniforms also pay homage to the past. Hiawatha's belt rings the sleeves. On the back of the shorts is embroidered the phrase "Dey Hon Tshi Gwa'ehs," which means "to bump with hips" — the name given to the original sport by the Creator.

On their uniforms they have a purple band, what is it called and what does it signify?



Hiawatha's Belt, which is also the national flag and represents the tribes of the confederacy by territory.

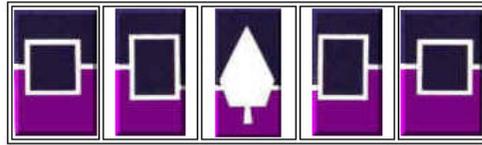


The Six Nations Confederacy was and is likened to a longhouse.

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Aiionwatha Belt

(Click on the symbols below to learn about of the Haudenosaunee Nations)



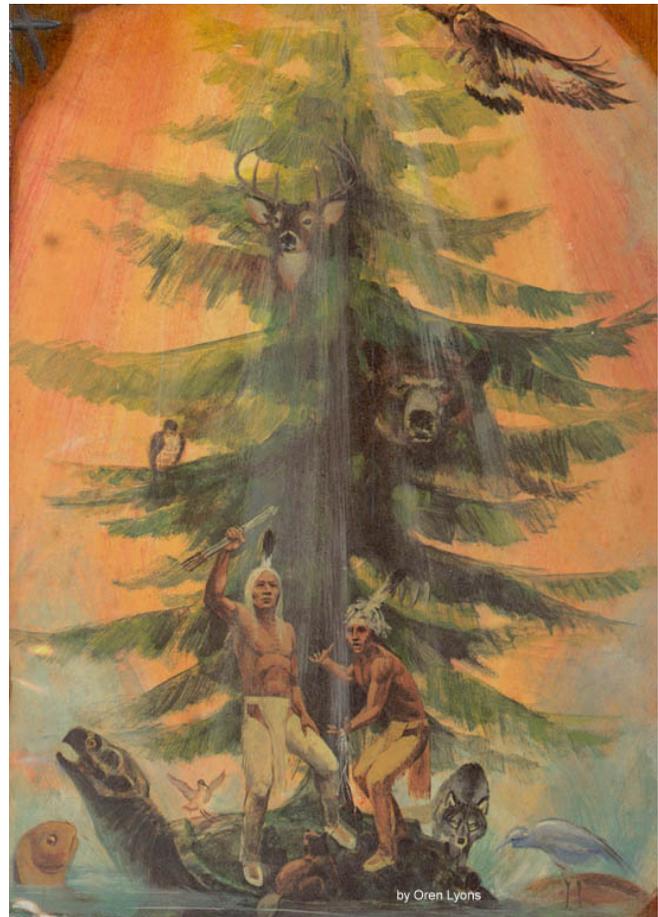
[SENECA](#) * [CAYUGA](#) * [ONONDAGA](#) * [ONEIDA](#) * [MOHAWK](#)



[TUSCARORA](#)

The story of Hiawatha's Belt - One of the people who had accepted the good words of the Creator and decided to help the Peacemaker was **Hiawatha**. Tadadaho was determined to stop this message of peace. So determined that he killed Hiawatha's daughters. Grief stricken, Hiawatha was no longer able to spread the Creator's words with the Peacemaker. While grieving, Hiawatha found words that would help console others who lost loved ones. He devised a method to remember these words by stringing purple and white fresh water clamshells together on strings. Hence the first **wampum** was made.

Once Hiawatha's mind was clear; he and the Peacemaker were able to confront Tadadaho again. The message of peace was unstoppable. This time they had the support of 49 other leaders from all of the five nations. It is at this point when they "**combed the snakes**" from Tadadaho's hair and he accepted Creator's message and became the 50th chief. They symbolized this union of peace by uprooting a great **white pine tree** and threw their weapons of war into the hole and a mighty stream washed away their weapons of war. They replanted the tree and the Peacemaker placed an **eagle** on top to warn the **Haudenosaunee (People of the Longhouse)** of any dangers to this great peace. The Hiawatha wampum belt



was made to record the event of the Five nations joining together in peace. Each nation is represented with the Onondagas symbolized in the great white **Tree of Peace**.

When were the Iroquois Nationals re-formed?

1983

What other names does lacrosse go by in native cultures?

Dehuntshigwa'es – means "to bump with hips"

Baggataway – Ojibway for "he plays lacrosse"

Tewaaraton – Mohawk name for lacrosse

To the Cherokees, it was the "little brother of war"

Name any one of the clans of the Onondaga?

Eel, Deer, Wolf, Bear, Turtle, Beaver, Hawk, Heron, Snipe

Which clan does the current Onondaga stick maker belong to?

Turtle Clan

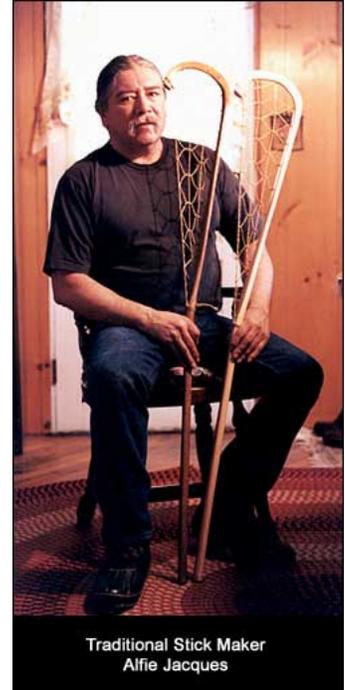
What does the turtle symbolize?

Mother Earth



What are traditional sticks made from?

In those days it was strictly hickory and is was very important to make sure your pocket was always being adjusted for accuracy. We were always practicing how to net, restring or otherwise in constant work adjusting our stick. We learned that trusting your stick is just like trusting a good friend.



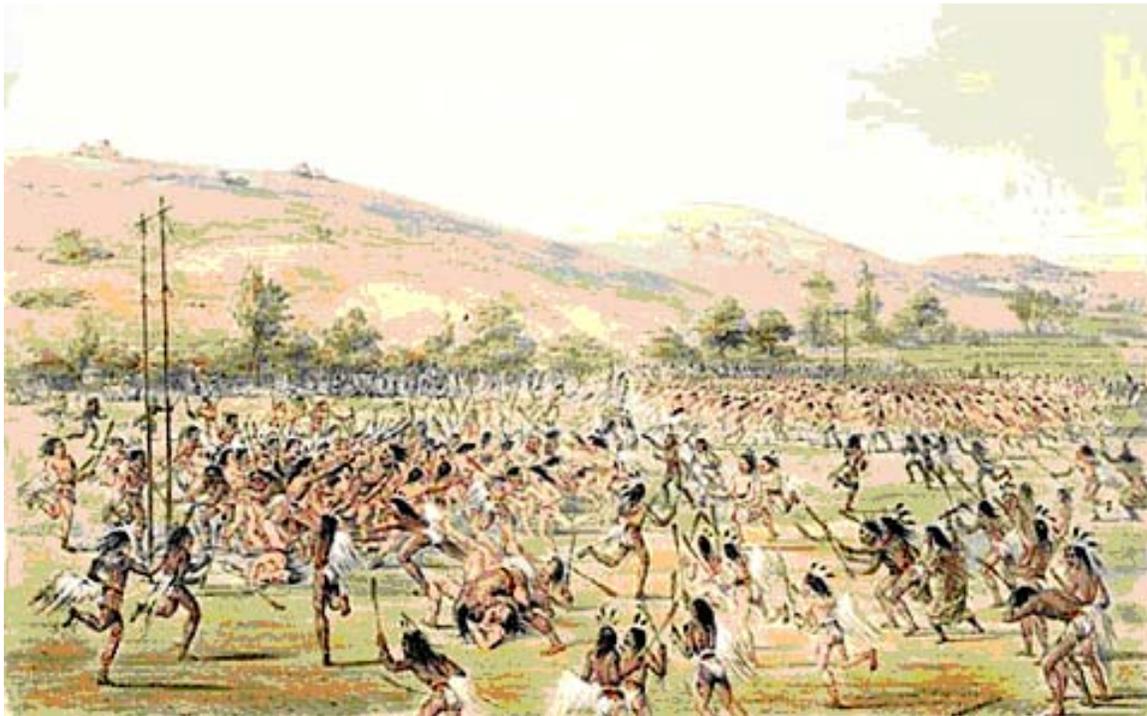
Traditional Stick Maker
Alfie Jacques

What does going to water mean?

In his senior year, John Barcik, Delaware '92, (founder of the Baggataway Clothing Co.) convinced his fellow players to perform a Cherokee lacrosse ritual called "Going to Water." According to this tradition, the medicine man, who was also the lacrosse coach, would lead the players to a sacred body of water where he would perform a ritual using red and black beads. The players would wear red bead necklaces, which represent victory. They would bury and stomp on the black beads, which symbolized the confusion of the opponents. "Here were the team members, with war-painted faces and dressed only in towels in 20-degree weather," Barcik laughs. "The closest we could come to a sacred body of water was a run-off creek near the University's fields. Most of the necklaces a friend and I had made had become hopelessly entangled, so the players ended up just holding beads." They dutifully buried and stomped on the black beads but were beaten soundly in their game the next day.

How big were the playing fields?

The games were played to settle territorial disputes and as entertainment and often involved hundreds or even 1,000 warriors at a time on fields up to 25 kilometers long.



Leo Nolan, executive director of the Iroquois Nationals Lacrosse Federation. "We say a special prayer to say thanks to the Creator for us being here and for our good health and good minds, and to say thanks for the game."

The people who make up the modern day Six Nations have been playing lacrosse for centuries. And for centuries, lacrosse has represented so much more than fun and games to them. In many Native American villages, lacrosse became a surrogate battle, with potentially bloody wars between clans being replaced by winner-take-all games that settled scores and often kept the peace.

For the Iroquois, lacrosse was – and still is – nothing less than divine, a loving gift from the Creator. In addition to resolving conflicts, lacrosse often took on medicinal overtones, with games serving as healing rituals that restored the physical and spiritual strength of the people.

Games were frequently accompanied by ceremonies designed to bless the game and to heal a sick member of the clan. Dehuntshigwa'és players were revered as mighty warriors, and participants frequently sought out respected shamans to exert spiritual influence in their favor.

Iroquois lore is filled with stories of great lacrosse figures, such as Agnes Thomas, a St. Regis Mohawk whose most unearthly shot broke ribs and knocked goalies off their feet, and Oren Lyons, a two-time All America and member of the National Lacrosse Hall of Fame who played with Jim Brown at Syracuse University and became the patriarch of the Iroquois Nationals program.

But almost to a man, all Iroquois players learned the game as children, practically from birth, which is one of the characteristics of Dehuntshigwa'és that survives to this day. Burnam recalls that practically everyone played as young Mohawks, and former player and board member Dave Bray notes that kids as young as five carry their sticks around to form an emotional and spiritual connection to it. Because of that, Bray says, “Our players play with more spirit.”

Because lacrosse holds such a deep, lifelong and sacred place in their culture, Iroquois of all ages revere the gift that the Creator gave them. Says current Iroquois coach Ron Doctor, “It is difficult to explain (the game's) spiritual importance to the Iroquois people.”

Among the more well-known players expected to suit up for the Iroquois this summer are Abrams, Matt Alexander and Brett Bucktooth, a senior All-America candidate from Syracuse University, Delby Powless from Rutgers, Neal Powless from Nazareth College, and Gewas Schindler from Loyola.

But even beyond wins and losses Nolan and other Iroquois hope that the Nationals' presence in London will achieve perhaps a bigger goal: to share their traditions with players and fans from around the world. Burnam feels that the process has to large extent already taken place: he says that “international players” like the Japanese and the Czechs, know more about the origins of the game than the U.S. players do.”

But in some ways, non-Haudenosaunee players will never completely understand what lacrosse means to the Iroquois because, as Doctor and others note, the spiritual depth at which their people play, feel the game is almost indescribable. Non-Iroquois may never fully understand what it means to ask a medicine man to bless the game you are about to play, play in bare feet or feel a wooden shaft in your hands.

These things, as Vennum says, are part of the magic: a magic lying just below the surface.

Lacrosse plays vital role for American Indians

Tradition. In the sport of lacrosse, and for those who are passionate about the game, tradition is a word that means practically everything.

Where did you go to high school? Whom did your brother, your father and your sister play for? How many times did your family make the trip to watch the Final Four? Maryland or Johns Hopkins, whose side are you on? Do you remember Paul and Gary Gait? Do you know the story of Morgan State and the Ten Bears? Does Boys' Latin vs. St. Paul's mean more to you than Ravens vs. Steelers? Did you learn how to cradle while you were still sleeping in a cradle?

It's easy then - especially at this time of year, with all the hype surrounding today's NCAA championship between Virginia and Massachusetts - to forget that the word "tradition" has a much deeper meaning to a select group of lacrosse players. It's a meaning that spans not only generations, but also centuries. Though lacrosse is considered by many to be the fastest-growing sport in the country, and though it has evolved into an important part of East Coast private school culture, the game still means as much today to some American Indians as it did in the early 17th century.

"This game was a gift from the creator," says Leo Nolin, who played lacrosse for Syracuse from 1968-70, but grew up playing the game as a member of the Onondaga Nation in upstate New York. "For us, it's a medicine game, a healing game, a community game and a spiritual game. It's really our national sport. But it's not just a sport for us, it's a way of life."

Most historians agree that lacrosse is the oldest sport in North America, and possibly one of the oldest team sports in recorded history. According to the book *American Indian Lacrosse: Little Brother of War* by Thomas Vennum Jr., French and English missionaries observed members of the Haudenosaunee (or, what is often called Iroquois) people playing the game in the **1630s**. That aspect of the game's origins is a serious point of pride for Indians still playing back home, making their own sticks, and carrying on those traditions today.

"At that time in Europe, people were playing around with swords and fighting each other," says David Bray, a member of the Seneca Nation who played for Cornell in the

early 1970s and is now an assistant director of affirmative action at the University at Buffalo. "It's pretty unique when you think about it and the history of team sports."

Even though the game evolved significantly after it was embraced by Canadians and then eventually Americans in the mid- to late 1800s, Indians like Nolin say there's no bitterness that the sport has been swallowed up by mainstream culture. In fact, most of the Onondaga Nation takes great pride in watching the Final Four each year, and following Indian players like Brett Bucktooth, an All-America sophomore attackman for Syracuse.

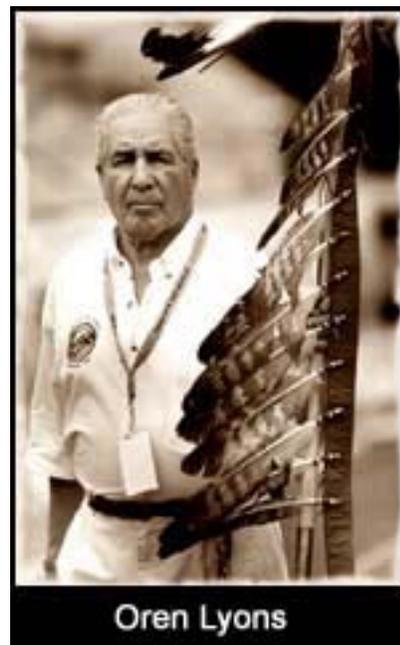
"We have a saying: Anytime you give something to the non-Indian, it's going to be exploited," Nolin says, laughing. "Over time, everything changes. You have to respect that. The game changed even when it was in our hands. It builds camaraderie, and I know that sharing it with the non-Indian was the right thing to do. But we still feel an obligation to make sure the many folks who play the game understand where it came from, and understand why it's such an important part of our community."

The lessons of peace and brotherhood seem especially important to pass along this year. Lacrosse has taken considerable heat the past few months after rape accusations involving the Duke University men's team became national news, and many people have been quick to criticize the sport, saying too many of its players have grown up with a sense of entitlement.

"You have to remember, the spirit of the game is what's important," says Chief Oren Lyons, the Faithkeeper of the Turtle Clan of the Onondaga Nation, and former All-American goalie for Syracuse in 1957-58. "A lot of people in America now, they get so caught up on who is No. 1. That's short-sighted. It doesn't matter who wins. We don't worry about who is No. 1, No. 10 or even No. 500. That's not our perspective."

Lyons, 76, started playing the game at age 14, and was one of the first Indian players to experience major success at the collegiate level. At Syracuse, he played on the same team as Hall of Fame football player Jim Brown, and says he has always seen the sport as a way to spread the message of peace and tolerance.

"At the World Games this year in Ontario, I think there will be 22 nations playing," Lyons says. "The first year they were held in 1987, there were only five nations. We've passed on the game to people in China, Argentina, Italy, Australia, the Czech Republic. Sometimes I think other countries know more about our contributions to the game than Americans do."



Oren Lyons

That's one of the reasons why, in 1983, the Iroquois Nationals were formed, a team consisting only of members from the Six Nations (Seneca, Cayuga, Onondaga, Oneida, Mohawk and Tuscarora) that make up the Haudenosaunee people.

Nolin, the Iroquois Nationals acting executive director, feels there are still important strides for the sport to take. He'd like to see more Indians get an opportunity to play collegiately, mainly so that more native people could grasp the value of an education.

"I think that stuff takes time," Nolin says. "The number of kids who grow up on reserves who go to Division I, Division II or Division III has increased dramatically, but we've still got a long way to go. My house is right between Georgetown Prep and Landon, two lacrosse powers in my area. Obviously, the people who send their kids there, they really value education and sports. We need to push those kinds of values on our kids." Still, there will be plenty of pride for some Indians when they turn on the television or show up at today's game in Philadelphia, even if the game being played is vastly different from their own.

"The crowd you see at the NCAA championship, it's a long way from the music and dancing you'll see at home for us in a box lacrosse game," Lyons says. "People ask me, what do you think? Well, I'm an old man, but I always say to myself, any boys willing to pick up a stick, they are my boys."

