



## PARENTS' INTRODUCTION TO YOUTH LACROSSE

This is a quick guide to help parents understand the game of lacrosse and the goals of the Lake Zurich Youth Lacrosse Program. While this is not comprehensive, we hope this helps you enjoy the game with your son.



### Boys' Lacrosse - Game Overview

Boys' 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 and to keep the other team from scoring. 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.

Boys games are generally 48 minutes long, with 12-minute running-time quarters. Each team is given a two-minute break between the first and second quarters, and the third and fourth quarters. Halftime is 10 minutes long.

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 (*see diagram on following page*).

Men's/boys' 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 supervises field play. There are personal fouls and technical fouls in boys' 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 30-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.

### Field Positions

#### Attack:

The attackman's responsibility is to score goals and help his teammates score goals by passing the ball. 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 has three attackmen on the field during play.

### Midfield (Middies):

The midfielder's responsibility is to cover the entire field, playing both offense and defense. The midfielder is 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 has 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, positioning and aggressiveness are necessary. Good stick skills are important as defenders use longer shafts as in older age groups. Each team has 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.



### Skills Required

The physical characteristics of the sport are compelling to a wide range of potential participants. Size is not as critical a factor in lacrosse as are speed, agility, stick skills and stamina. In lacrosse, smaller athletes with power & skill can easily out-perform their larger opponents. Hand-eye coordination and mental 'vision' are key aspects of lacrosse, requiring the lacrosse player to be (or become) a multi-dimensional athlete. It's a true challenge – for both coaches and players – to maintain the patience, discipline and intelligence necessary to master lacrosse fundamentals.

The following section highlights the fundamental skills needed in the game of lacrosse. Every practice will dedicate time to working on some of these critical skills to improve your player's ability to excel in game situations.

**Catching** The act of receiving a passed ball with the crosse/stick

**Checking** The act of attempting to dislodge the ball from an opponents stick

**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

**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 players slaps the head of his stick against his opponents stick

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

**Screening** The offensive tactic in which a player near the crease positions himself 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

### Personal Fouls

**Slashing:** Occurs when a player's stick viciously, or in an uncontrolled manner, 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 Body Checking:** Occurs when any of the following actions takes place:

- A. body checking an opponent who is not in possession of the ball or within five yards of a loose ball;
- B. avoidable body check of an opponent after he has passed or shot the ball;

C. body checking an opponent from the rear or at or below the waist;  
D. 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 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.

## Technical Fouls

**Crease Violation:** Occurs when an offensive player deliberately, through his own momentum, enters the opponent's goal-crease or a defensive player, including the goalkeeper, with the ball in his possession, enters from the surrounding playing field into his own goal-crease.

**Holding:** Illegally impedes the movement of an opponent with the ball.

**Illegal Offensive Screening:** Occurs when an offensive player, through moving contact of his body or equipment, blocks a defensive player from the man he is playing, or impedes his normal movements of playing defense.

**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.

**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.

**Withholding The Ball From Play:** Occurs when a player clamps a loose ball against the ground more than momentarily or clamps the ball against his body to prevent it from being dislodged.

## Glossary

**Attack Goal Area:** The area around the goal defined by the endline, the Goal Area Line and the two broken lines located 20 yards on either side of the goal. Once the offensive team crosses the midfield line, it has 10 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. At no time should a player initiate or receive body contact with his head.

**Box:** An area between the two team benches 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.

**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 offensive half of the field.

**Crease:** A circle around the goal with a radius of nine feet into which only defensive players may enter. Defensive players may not take the ball into the crease.

**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 10 seconds to move the ball beyond the Goal Area Line. Once beyond the Goal Area Line, the defensive team may not pass or run the ball back into the Defensive Clearing Area.

**Extra Man "Man-Up" Offense:** A man advantage that results from a timeserving penalty by the other team.

**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 used to catch, throw and shoot.

**"Man-Down" Defense:** The situation that results from a timeserving 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



Man !  
Ball !

# GET INVOLVED



## The Role of Parents

You, the parent, are equally as important to your child's positive lacrosse experience as the coach of the team. In order for your child to get the most out of playing lacrosse, it is important that you do the following:

- Be positive & supportive
- Equip your child properly
- Learn about the game
- Get involved - volunteer to help!
- Let the coaches coach
- Enjoy the game and have fun!

A great way to support your child's lacrosse experience is by becoming a volunteer for the lacrosse program. It's best to get started when your child first signs up for lacrosse, so that you both can start together. Volunteers are always needed to do the following:

- Line the fields
- Organize club activities
- Organize & plan fundraising
- Assist during registration
- Photograph players and games

stationary player attempts to block the path of a defender guarding another offensive player.

**Play On:** If a player commits a loose-ball technical foul or crease violation and an offended player may be disadvantaged by the immediate suspension of play, the official shall visually and verbally signal "play on" and withhold the whistle until such time as the situation of advantage, gained or lost, has been completed.

**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 from the offensive half to defensive half of the field.

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

## How Can I Help My Son Practice?

Lacrosse is a game where *every* player needs to run, throw, catch and defend. Among the most important skills are throwing and catching. It is essential that each player practices throwing and catching (with both hands) as much as possible.

So you don't play Lacrosse? It doesn't matter — you can throw and catch with a baseball mitt to your son. This works perfectly and can become a nice way to spend time together. Have your son catch and throw with both hands, and don't forget to practice fielding ground balls as well.

If you have a brick wall your son can play wall-ball. If you don't have a brick wall handy there are many throwing rebounders available for purchase that can take the place of a wall.

Perhaps the hardest skill to master is cradling – or keeping the ball in the stick. It may sound easy but it's not. This skill comes with repetition and time, so don't be afraid to let your son bring his stick inside the house and watch TV while he cradles. It is this type of practice that makes cradling a less mechanical and more natural motion.

## Safety

Field lacrosse is sometimes perceived to be a violent and dangerous game, however, injury statistics prove otherwise. While serious injuries can and do occur in lacrosse, the game has evolved with an emphasis on safety, and the rate of injury is comparatively low. Ensuring the safety of participants is a major focus for Lake Zurich Lacrosse.

Lacrosse is a contact sport so it is essential that parents ensure their sons have mouth guards, protective cups and all required lacrosse gear for *every* game and practice.

Proper lacrosse equipment includes a helmet, shoulder pads, arm pads, gloves, appropriate footwear, mouth guards and protective cups. Goalies have additional gear such as a throat protector and chest protector.

## Sportsmanship

Lacrosse has a long tradition as a 'gentleman's sport', taught and played with dignity for its heritage and respect for anyone who accepts the game's complex and rewarding challenges. Moreover, lacrosse stresses good sportsmanship by emphasizing conduct that "honors the game". The essentials of this conduct are behaviors that reflect honesty and integrity.

Lacrosse rules have a unique emphasis on sportsmanship. Coaches, players, fans, and officials are held to high standards on the field of play and are expected to demonstrate exceptional sportsmanship at all times. If a player, coach, or fan's conduct is not in line with these standards, that particular team may be penalized. In contrast with many youth sports today, good sportsmanship is an inherent part of lacrosse.

For coaches, players and fans alike, lacrosse is a completely unique form of competition in which all participants show their respect for outstanding plays and players, regardless of the opponent. This evolves from a focus on the joy and satisfaction of playing the game, and letting winning & losing take care of itself.

# SOUNDS OF THE GAME

players should be talkative during the game. here are some of the things you should hear...

Because of the intensity of the game, the boys are encouraged to yell status and commands to each other. It should be loud so they can hear above the fast-paced action. The coaches will also be yelling instructions to the boys during the game.

## On-Field Communication

### HERE'S YOUR HELP!

This is what a player ready to receive a pass says to the player with the ball. This helps the player with the ball locate open targets.

### MAN – BALL – RELEASE

In a 2-on-1 ground ball situation, one player should body check the opposing player and the other should take the ball. Players should signal their intent of taking either the 'Man' or 'Ball' by yelling accordingly. The other player then knows his opposite role and acknowledges verbally. When a boy gains possession of the ball he should yell 'release' to alert his teammate to disengage checking the opponent.

### I'VE GOT BALL

A defender will say this to signal that he has the opposing player with the ball.

### I'VE GOT YOUR BACK

This is what an adjacent defender says to the defender covering the ball to let him know he is there to help him.

### I'VE GOT POINT

A defender will say this during a fast-break to indicate he has the man with the ball.

### SWITCH!

On defense, this is what one player says to another when they wish to switch men during/after a pick by the other team.

## Coaching Communications

### BACK HAND LOW!

It is hard to pick up a ground ball unless your stick is at a low angle. Boys frequently have their back hand too high and need this reminder.

### USE YOUR BUTT!

Much like boxing-out in basketball, players picking up ground balls are encouraged to position their body between their opponent and the ball before they attempt to scoop it.

### DON'T RAKE – SCOOP THROUGH!

A reminder to scoop through the ball and not rake the ball when pursuing a ground ball.

### KICK THE BALL!

A reminder to players struggling to get a ground ball that they can kick it out of a crowd toward free space.

### MARK UP (or Get On Your Man)!

A reminder to find a man to cover in the defensive end.

### MIDDIES BACK!

A reminder to the midfielders to hastily transition (sprint) from offense to defense.

### CLEAR!

An alert to the team that they are now in possession of the ball and transitioning from defense to a clear.

### UP THE SIDELINES!

Since a mistake in the defensive end can be costly, players are encouraged to clear the ball to the sidelines and then to the offensive zone.

### GILMAN!

In this type of clear the goalie throws a long pass over the midfield directly to the attack.



It is typically used after defensive stands when the team is out of position or tired.

### MIDDIE BACK!

A defender may cross the midfield line with the ball. In order to avoid an offside penalty, a midfielder will stay back with his stick in the air. Coaches yell this reminder.

### CHECK STICKS!

A command to tell defenders to hit the sticks of opposing players expecting a pass.

### STICKS UP!

A command to tell defenders to get their sticks in the air to block passing lanes.

### GET TO THE HOLE (or HUB)!

Tells the defense to retreat back to the area in front of the crease. Typically used in transition (fast-break) or when players get a bit out of position and pursue too far out.

### LOOK FOR THE OPEN MAN!

Or frequently, **PASS!** Just like basketball, a quick passing game is the key to success in this team sport.

### SHOOT! A crowd favorite!

### GREAT JOB!

The most important thing a coach can say in Youth Lacrosse.



### Our Goals as Coaches

*We look to teach, inspire and build the confidence of each player. We want all players to enjoy their experience with the sport of lacrosse and to learn positive character lessons that will help them in every aspect of their life.*

## LZ YOUTH LACROSSE

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