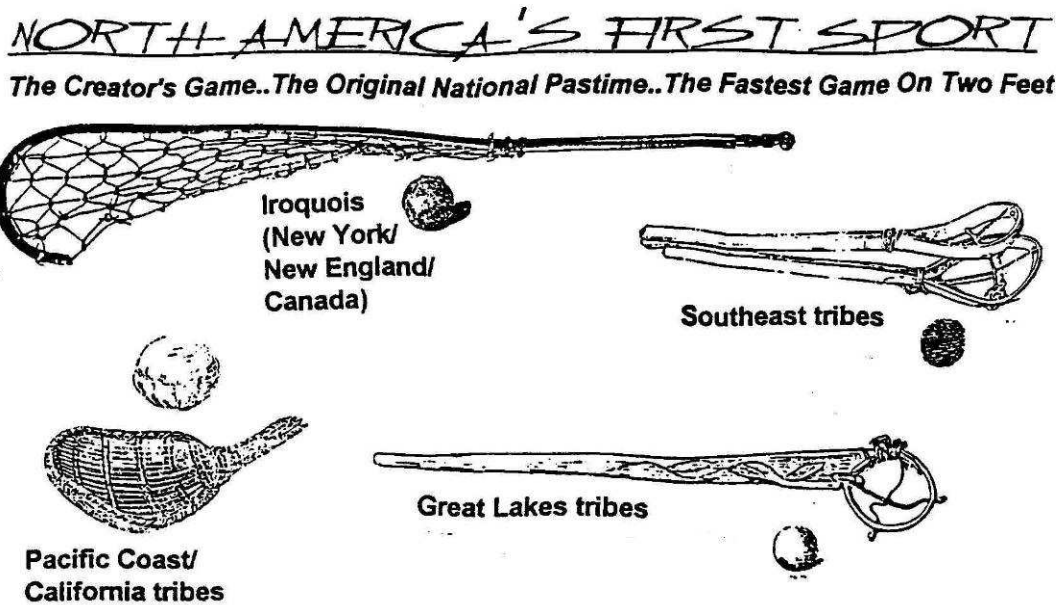


History of Minnesota Lacrosse

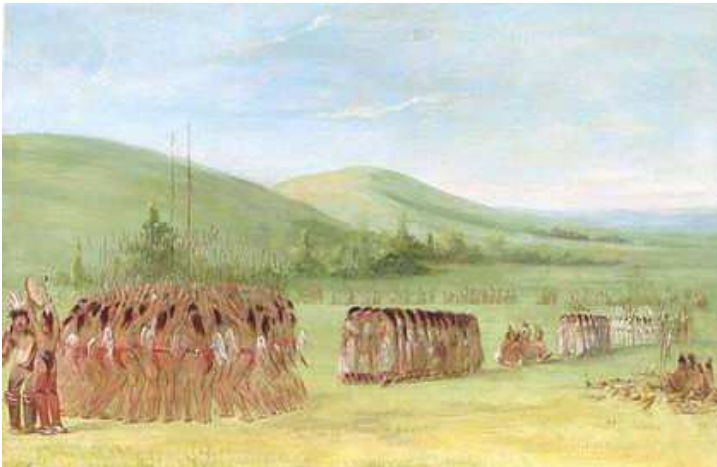
Native History

Lacrosse is considered the most widely played team sport in North America before European settlement, with regional variations played with either one or two sticks of differing structures.



In all its forms the native game was an athletic contest of great skill, pride and spiritual significance. It was so popular that many sports historians consider it the first original national pastime. The indigenous cultures believed the game was given to them by the Creator for his enjoyment. There was also a unique spiritual component to the game, as it was used to celebrate good times, used as a healing ritual and to honor the dead and even settle territorial and other

disputes. You can't say that about many other sports we play today. The face-off used at the start of the game (toss-up) included the teams yelling their name of the Creator, with sticks raised to the sky. (see Ball Play Dance). This was to wake up the Creator and let him know his people were playing the game. The tradition of raised sticks in a huddle and yelling out your team's name is still a part of the modern version of the game.



Choctaw Ball Play Dance by George Catlin

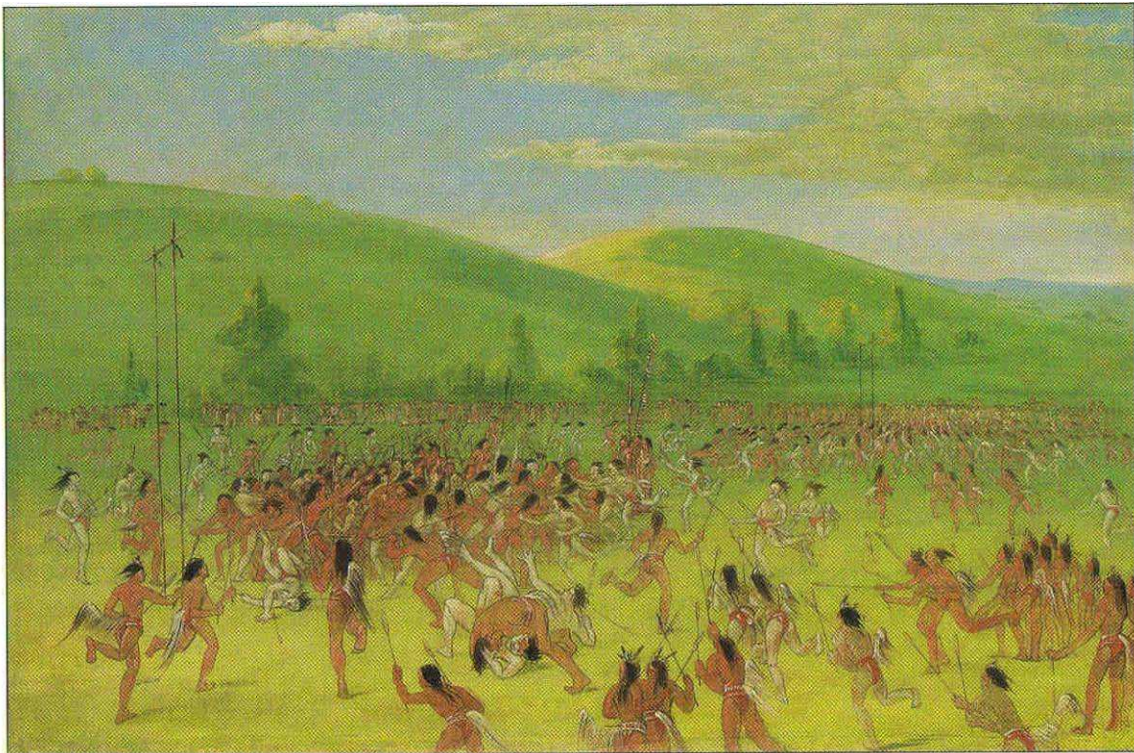
The Sport Came Before the City

The name la crosse, “the stick” in French, was given to the game by the French Jesuit missionaries who thought the stick used to play the game by the Huron, Iroquois Confederacy (Seneca, Tuscarora, Mohawk, Onondaga, Cayuga and Oneida) and other eastern tribes looked like the bishop’s crosier (bent stick) used in religious ceremonies. The French fur traders also called it la crosse because similar sports like tennis and croquet played in France with a curved racquet were called jouer à la crosse.

In the Ojibwa language the game was called Baa-gaa-do-we. The Dakota word for lacrosse is Ta ka psi ca pi, meaning “ball game”. The Cherokee called it Is tap o li. But the Mohawk had one of the best names for the game Ta war a thon, which means “Little Brother of War”. This was a pretty accurate way to describe the game because of the physical skills and stamina it took to play it really did to prepare braves for war.



Tribal elders were the officials, keeping the rules, wisdom and what was wrong and right. In the George Catlin painting below of a Choctaw ball game you see the elders (grandmothers) lined up along the side of the field. They would run on the field to break up fights and smack the offending players with hickory sticks. Players didn’t want to do anything to dishonor their grandmother, family, or tribe. In this game you can see the goal posts that the players had to carry the ball through or shoot it through.



How Lacrosse Helped Capture a British Fort

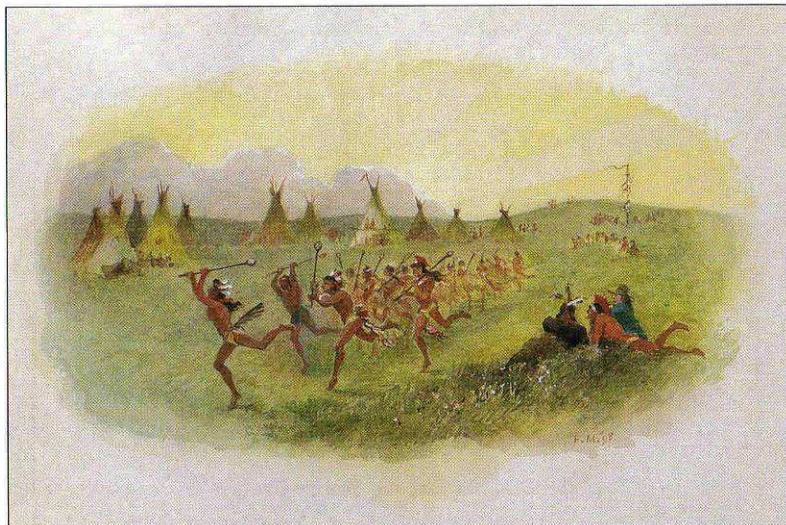
There is one great story every lacrosse player should know about how a lacrosse game between the Sauk and Ojibwa was used to plan a surprise attack and capture the British held Fort Michilimackinac on Lake Michigan in 1763. The British were at war with the French and local tribes were not happy with the English and the trading terms they offered for furs. They preferred the way the French had traded with them, and decided it would be a good gesture to take the fort from the British and give it to the French. So, they devised a plan to use a lacrosse game to distract the British soldiers so they could take the fort. The date of the game was set to coincide with the English king's birthday when the soldiers would be free from their duties and ready to be entertained by the public wagering on the game. On the day of the game, the plan had the women of both tribes line up along the wall in front of the main gate with tomahawks, knives and war clubs under their shawls and blankets. As the game moved closer to the main gate, the ball was thrown inside the fort. The players dropped their sticks and grabbed the weapons from the women and stormed the unsuspecting British capturing the fort and all the goods inside. It worked!

The Native Game in Minnesota

The stick ball or the ball game version of lacrosse played in the Great Lakes region consisted of a stick, made from ash or willow with a circular dream catcher like webbing on the end that held the ball. The round ball was made of wood, rock or clay with deer hide wrapped and sewn around it. The stick shape and rules were different from the larger stick used by the eastern tribes (Huron and Iroquois tribes) and the two stick game played by southern tribes (Cherokee, Seminole, Choctaw, etc). The Midwest version of the game usually pitted village against village with sometimes 100 players on a side. The two dominant tribes in Minnesota were the Ojibwa (Chippewa) in the north and Sioux (Dakota, Nakota and Lakota) in the south. Other local tribes that played included the Winnebago, Menominee, Fox, and Sauk. The town of Ball Club near Bemidji was named by the Ojibwa because the sandy beaches offered a great place to play the game. Likewise, La Crosse, Wisconsin is also named after the game because fur traders witnessed the Winnebago, Menominee and other local tribes playing the game there during fur trader rendezvous, and named it "the prairie of lacrosse." It was eventually shorted to just La Crosse.

A Game of Celebration

This watercolor by Francis Meyers depicts the Sisseton tribe of the Sioux playing a ball game to celebrate the 1851 Traverse des Sioux treaty signing in St Peter, Minnesota. You can see the one goal post with all the ribbons on it in the background.



Native Rules of the Game

The rules of the native game were simple. The hand can not touch the ball at any time. At the start of the game and after every goal a face-off happens at the center of the field where the ball is tossed-up in a circle of opposing players. To score, the ball (made of wood or sewn hide wrapped around clay or animal hair) is carried (cradled) and passed to teammates down the field and eventually shot at the goal so the ball passes through the goal posts or hits the goal post. Traditionally the field was up to three miles long with no boundaries and body and stick checking were allowed. In the Great Lakes region version of the game played in Minnesota the object was to score by hitting the trunk of a tree (goal) or touching it with the ball in your stick. Each team had a goal (tree) anywhere from 1 mile to several hundred yards apart depending on the number of players per team and terrain. Each tree was stripped of its branches so only the trunk remained, which made scoring difficult as there was not much to shoot at. Games typically lasted several hours or days.

A Culture Lost

The traditional ball game played by the Ojibwa and Dakota communities ended in the last 90 years due to the extensive diffusion of traditional culture and the influence of government and religious assimilation policies, gambling and harsh play. However, the stickball “two stick” version is still played by the southern tribes (Choctaw, Cherokee, Seminole, etc.) at sun festivals and tribal fairs. The Iroquois never gave up the game and are credited with introducing it to the European settlers over 300 years ago. They have also embraced the modern box and field game and have inter-tribal box leagues, a men’s field team, and an Under-19 team that represent the Iroquois people in national and international tournaments. The game is still a tremendous source of pride for them.

In Minnesota, gambling is one of the major reasons that the ball game is not played today by the Great Lakes tribes. So much of their culture was lost when they were forced to integrate and move onto reservations. The government agencies and missionaries banned gambling due to the food and supplies wagered away on lacrosse and other games. There is a famous lacrosse game that took place in Oak Grove, now Bloomington, Minnesota, where missionary Gideon Pond, wrote about a three day long game that took place in 1852 at a fur trader rendezvous. Four local Dakota bands (villages) came together to play a ball game to celebrate the great trading that was taking place between them and the white settlers and fur traders. Pond was impressed by the tremendous skill and stamina the players displayed, but was disheartened by the estimated \$50,000 worth of government supplied food and other supplies that were lost by Good Iron’s, Sky Man’s and Grey Iron’s band from Red Wing, Minnesota to Chief of the Little Six band/village from Shakopee.

If you are interested in the native history of the game there are two great books: “Lacrosse Legends” and “Little Brother of War – American Indian Lacrosse” written by former Edina native Thomas Vennum, Jr., a musicologist for the Smithsonian Institute. The books are full of stories of how and where the native game was played, with photos of the different sticks and players.



Lacrosse Evolves

In the late 1800's the American and Canadian settlers' enthusiasm for the game gave us the rules we use today. Lacrosse was recognized as the national sport of Canada in 1880. It was primarily played on the east coast of Canada and the United States. In the 1960's there were less than 50 colleges with men's varsity lacrosse teams in the United States. Today the number of varsity teams exceeds 600 when you include NCAA Div I, II and III and MCLA clubs. Plus, there are literally thousands of boy's youth and high school teams, not to mention women's and girl's lacrosse, which have the same growth and numbers. With the advent of mass production the Native-made traditional wooden stick went away in the early 1970's to make way for the plastic and aluminum sticks used today. However, there are still a few wooden stick makers out there as the Iroquois have never stopped playing, and the wooden sticks they make are still used in Canadian box lacrosse leagues.



Traditions Revived

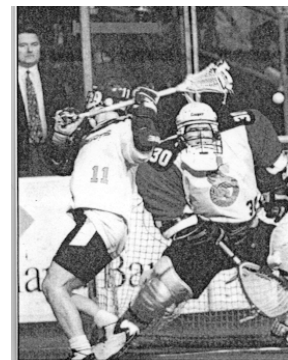
In 2003, Tim Moulton of the Minnesota Lacrosse Association partnered with the Minnesota Department of Health to sponsor a game of Baa-gaa-do-we at the National Sports Center in Blaine. The Roseville and Bloomington Jefferson high school teams played a game with traditional wooden sticks. The native community was represented by Dr. Lloyd Elm (Onondaga Nation) and Dan Ninham (Oneida Nation – pictured throwing up the ball to start the game).

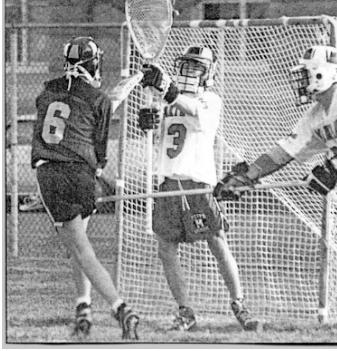
Lacrosse in All Its Forms

There are four types of lacrosse being played today:

Mini-Lacrosse (soft lacrosse) is for beginners and is primarily taught in gym classes. It is an inexpensive modified non contact version of the game that stresses the basic stick skills of dodging, catching, cradling, throwing, scooping and shooting. A soft lacrosse ball or tennis ball is used and no protective gear is required, just a plastic (very durable) stick with a deep pocket that makes the game easy to play.

Box Lacrosse (indoor) was invented in Canada by hockey rink owners that wanted to use their arenas in the summer when the ice was out. It involves many of the same rules (penalties, 6 on 6) and equipment of hockey combined with the skills of lacrosse. It stresses the speed and stick skills of lacrosse with the physical demands of hockey (boarding, checking) and basketball (picks, offensive and defensive concepts). The MN Swarm professional box lacrosse team, play in the Xcel Center and represent Minnesota in the National Lacrosse League.





Men's Field Lacrosse is played 10 on 10 on a 60 by 110 yard field in the spring and is closer than box lacrosse to the traditional Native American version of the game with the exception of the equipment. Helmets, gloves, shoulder and elbow pads are required, along with a stick and mouth guard. The stick can be between 56"-72" long for the defensive players and 40-42" long for the offensive players. The goalies have a stick that has a wide and deep net on it and also wear a large chest and throat protector. The strategy is similar to box lacrosse but the game is more spread out with a larger field, different rules and positions and more fast breaks.

Women's Field Lacrosse is also played on a soccer-sized field 12 on 12 but with different stick checking rules and without the body checking of the men's game. It is highly skilled and fast-paced without the need for protective equipment other than eye goggles and a mouth guard. The goalie is the only player with a helmet and protective gear and the stick with a larger pocket. The sticks do not have the deep pocket used by the men, which makes cradling more difficult. The rules are also different from the men's as there are no time-serving penalties, instead fouled players are given a positional advantage to the goal. The women's game resembles more closely the traditional Native American game than any other version played today.



Men's College & Club

There was only one men's college team and two men's clubs in the early 1980's. The Twin Cities Men's Club (TCLC) was started in 1976 by Dave White who brought a small group of post-college players together and Jules Santa who had a group of college players from the U of M. The two groups combined to make the TCLC and played against other teams in the Great Plains Lacrosse Association which included North Dakota, Iowa State, UW-Madison, Knox College, Ripon, Western Illinois, Beloit and a few others. The closest competition back then was 4-7 hours away in North Dakota, Wisconsin, Illinois or Iowa. The team went through several name changes due to sponsorship, including Pete's Wicked Ale and The MN Chill.

The Minneapolis Lacrosse Club (MLC) was started in 1988 by Keith Burke and Titus Song, Carleton grads, and Chris "Boomer" Smith, a St John's grad who didn't want to play with TCLC. The club changed its name in the late 1990's to the Uptown Lacrosse club, but went back to the MLC in 2000.

On the college level Carleton was the first program started in 1981 by Keith Burke and Bruce Wall. Both the St Thomas program, founded by Chris Larson and St John's program founded Carl Koller were started in 1985 and first competed in 1986. The Upper Midwest Lacrosse League (UMLL) was started in 1991 and contested its first championship in 1993 (won by Gustavus Adolphus). Founders included Stan Shei, Rob Graff and Chris Larson.

Men's College team formation timeline

1981 – Carleton College
1985 – St John's and St Thomas
1991 – U of M-Twin Cities, Gustavus Adolphus, MN
State Mankato
1993 – U of M-Duluth, St Mary's, St Cloud State
1996 – Bethel, U of M-Moorhead, St Olaf
2006 – Augsburg
2011 – Hamline, Macalester, Concordia (St Paul)



Rob Graff coaching UMD

Out of Minnesota teams in the UMLL

Iowa State, UW-Eau Claire, UW-White Water, UW-La Crosse

Women's College Club Lacrosse

The Upper Midwest Women's Lacrosse League (UMWLL) formed in 2005 to administer and govern local college club lacrosse teams in the state and region. These college club teams and the UMWLL, fell under the auspices of US Lacrosse's Women's Division of Intercollegiate Athletics (WDIA) College Lacrosse Associates (WCLA). Today, the WCLA is now the Women's Collegiate Lacrosse Association (WCLA), still under the leadership of US Lacrosse, with over 200 club teams competing in DI and DII divisions. Dave Holdsworth (of Minnesota) serves as the Chair of the WCLA. The UMWLL transformed into the North Central Women's Lacrosse League (NCWLL) in 2008 and today is comprised of three divisions of college club teams with an automatic qualifier (AQ) to the National Tournament. Kathryn Knippenberg (former Hopkins HS and University of Minnesota player and current head coach of Holy Angels, has served as the president of the NCWLL since its inception.

Current NCWLL teams include:

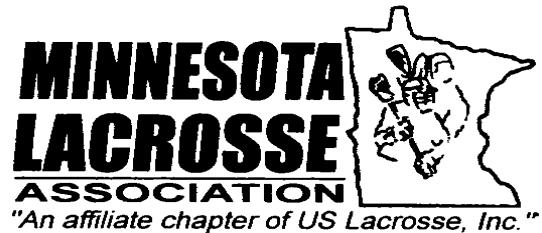
University of Minnesota
College of St. Benedict
Gustavus Adolphus College
University of St. Thomas
Bethel University
St. Cloud State University
Augsburg College
Hamline University
University of Minnesota - Duluth (representing the NCWLL at DII Nationals in 2011)
Carleton College
Concordia
MSU-Mankato
MSU - Moorhead
St. Mary's University
Macalester College
Winona State University

Out of Minnesota teams in the NCWLL

North Dakota University, UW La-Crosse, UW-Eau Claire, UW - River Falls, UW - Stevens Point, and Iowa

The formation of the Minnesota Lacrosse Association

In 1992, Mark Hellenack moved to Minnesota for a job transfer and took his experience from running the Lacrosse Foundation NJ Chapter and started the Minnesota Lacrosse Association (the local chapter of US Lacrosse). The first step was pulling together like-minded individuals that wanted to see the game promoted and grow in the land of 10,000 lakes. From there the first seeds of youth and high school lacrosse were planted.



Some of the MLA's early board members

Art Ayers – VP / President
Matt Dempsey – Officials / President
Chris Duca – Women's Rep.
Rob Graff – Men's Club Rep.
Mark Hellenack – President / Executive Director
Janet Holdsworth – Women's Rep. / Girls' HS
Mary Scott Hunter – Women's Rep. / Web
Mike Livingston – Web
Chris Larson – Men's College Rep.
Howard Rogers – Treasure / President
Dave Rundquist – Officials
Debra Wood – Girls' HS / Umpires

MLA events, clinics, camps and tournaments

1993 – MN Chapter Indoor Box League formed at the Hopkins Pavilion
MN Chapter Stick Loaner program

1994 – MN Chapter Indoor Box League formed at Hayes Arena
MN Chapter Four Winds School "Baggatawawin" Clinic and Club Exhibition Game
Travers Des Sioux Tournament & native game re-enactment in St Peter, MN

1995 – River Rendezvous Tournament at Pond Dakota Mission Park in Bloomington, MN
First MLA high school boys' and girls' field lacrosse games are played

1996 – MN Summer Boys Lacrosse Camp & League
First MLA Men's & Boys' Lacrosse Coaches Clinic at Hayes Arena
First MLA Women's & Girls' Lacrosse Coaches Clinic at Bethel College
First boys' HS league is formed and sponsored by Grow Biz (Play It Again Sports)
MN U13 and U16 Native lacrosse teams formed by Dan Ninham of Bemidji for Indigenous Games played at NSC in Blaine
The first MN Chill Boys' HS select team competes in at the Vail Shootout in Colorado

1997 – Inner City Native American youth box team formed at Little Earth in Minneapolis

1998 – MN Chill U14 & U12 trip to National Jr. Lacrosse Assoc. Tournament & World Games in Baltimore

1999 – MN Chill U15 trip to STX Youth Festival in Albany, New York
First MLA MN Chill/Brine girls' & boys' camp at Holy Angels
MLA Boys' Youth Summer League at Eisenhower Elem. School in Hopkins
MLA Boys' & Girls' HS All-Star Game at Holy Angels



North Central School Girls Lacrosse Association is formed
2001 – MLA Face-off Fund Raiser Banquet at Edinburgh Golf Club in Brooklyn Park
2004 – Hot-Dish Classic Tournament Fund Raiser for the American Cancer Society at Noble Sports Park in Brooklyn Park
2005 – First MLA LAXtravaganza All-Star Game at Holy Angels

Box Started it All



Mark Hellenack started high school and youth with box lacrosse due to the fact that initially fields were not available and turf-covered hockey arenas were. In the spring of 1993, Hellenack arranged for indoor time at the Hopkins Pavilion and started promoting lacrosse with a series of introductory clinics at local schools during gym classes. Field lacrosse would follow, but in the first attempt to grow the sport he felt it was better to play box because you only needed 5 players and it was similar to hockey. Arenas were great

because the hockey kids were familiar with it, it had bathrooms, goals, lockers and the ball never really went out of bounds. The first league was at the Hopkins Pavilion in 1993 and the second started in 1994 at the Hayes Arena in Apple Valley. The games tended to be more about hitting and starting fights due to the hockey background most of the kids had, but then lacrosse skills and a sense for the concepts of the game started to take over soon after. We expanded the age levels to include 7-8th and 5-6th and continued to run the youth age level leagues indoors as the high school game started to move outdoors.

Boys' High School Field

The first three boys' high school outdoor field lacrosse teams were started in 1995. They consisted of the "Valley" team with players from Burnsville, Apple Valley, Eagan and Eastview, the "Tonka" team with players from Minnetonka, Hopkins, Eden Prairie, St Louis Park, Minneapolis and Plymouth, and the Breck team which was the first school-based high school team in Minnesota. Hellenack and John Thiel, then the athletic director at Breck who had played lacrosse in college at Amherst, discussed scheduling and splitting the cost of goals between the three teams. Thiel was one of the first athletic directors behind making lacrosse a varsity sport in Minnesota.

The boys' high school club teams continued to grow at 2 to 4 teams each year as more and more kids wanted to have teams at their school. The first official Boys' H.S. State Championship was held in Mankato in 1997 with Cooper, Hopkins, Orono, Mankato, Richfield, Roseville, and Breck. The Minnesota Boys' Scholastic Lacrosse Association (MBSLA) was formed in 2003 by the high school league coaches. Mark Hellenack was president for the first few years, followed by Scott Cater of Bloomington Jefferson, Tim Moulton of Eden Prairie, Hank Marotske of Blake, Tim Roche of Eastview and now Kevin Reed of St Louis Park.

The Push for Boys' Varsity

After several years of trying, Howard Rogers, the President of the MLA with help from parents and coaches, was able to get the Minnesota State High School League (MSHSL) to elevate boys' lacrosse to sanctioned varsity status in 2007.

Presently the MBSLA runs the high school club league and the spring youth season with four leagues covering 3rd to 10th grade. As of the spring of 2012, there were 26 MBSLA (club) and 57 MSHSL (sanctioned) teams.

High School Field Lacrosse Team Formation Timeline

- 1995 – Breck, Tonka, Valley
- 1996 – North West Hawks (Cooper), Hopkins
- 1997 – Mankato, Minnetonka, Orono, Roseville, Richfield, Wayzata, St. Paul, Apple Valley
- 1998 – Bloomington Jefferson, Eden Prairie
- 1999 – Edina, Dakota LC (Eagan), Hastings, Holy Angels
- 2000 – North Suburban (Mounds View), RAVE (Rosemount, Apple Valley, Eagan, Eastview)
Bloomington Kennedy, Totino-Grace, Lakeville
- 2001 – St. Paul Academy, St. Thomas Academy, Blake, Benilde-St Margaret's, Mahtomedi
- 2002 – St. Cloud Tech, Shattuck-St Mary's, Osseo-Park Center, Chaska-Chanhassen, Armstrong,
Minneapolis
- 2003 – Irondale, Eagan, Eastview, Apple Valley, White Bear Lake
- 2004 – MontiQuois (Monticello), Duluth-Superior
- 2005 – Hill-Murray, Woodbury, Stillwater, Centennial, Maple Grove, Buffalo
- 2006 – Prior Lake, Rochester, Champlin Park, Burnsville, Rosemount
- 2007 – Andover, Blaine, Coon Rapids, Anoka, Owatonna, St. Louis Park
- 2008 – Forest Lake, Spring Lake Park, Elk River, Henry Sibley, Delano, Farmington
- 2009 – Holy Family Catholic, Shakopee, Grand Rapids, Rochester Mayo, Rochester John
Marshall, Rochester Century, Simley, South Washington County, Lakeville North,
Lakeville South
- 2010 – Brainerd, St. Cloud North, Tartan, North St. Paul, Trinity School
- 2011 – Becker, St. Michael-Albertville, Fargo, ND, Hudson, WI
- 2012 – Grand Cities (Grand Forks, ND and East Grand Forks, MN), Proctor, Cretin-Derham
Hall, Waconia, Northfield, Providence Academy, Rogers

Girls' High School

Girls' high school lacrosse began at The Blake School with a student who had transferred from the east coast and a teacher who had moved from Pittsburgh - Debra Wood. They often spoke about the game they missed as the student played lacrosse back east and Debra Wood was a former college umpire and high school lacrosse coach in the Ohio/Western PA areas. Together they decided to recruit girls to go out on a field after school and throw a ball around. It was 1994 and their goal cages they used were made out of PVC piping. The following year parents donated goal cages and the Blake team scrimmaged the local Twin Cities post-collegiate team - the Hoydens - founded by Mary-Scott Hunter, Holly Souza and Chris Duca, and a group of young women at Carleton College.

Soon, a joint team of Hopkins, Eden Prairie and St. Louis Park girls that was coached by Holly Souza formed only to soon have the school split off to form their own club teams. Janet Holdsworth coached the Hopkins Royals, Judy Baxter and Holly Souza coached the Eden Prairie Eagles and student-leader, Arianna Gavzy led the St. Louis Park squad. More teams developed and fell under the auspices of the MLA, which supported the initial club teams by running their state champions. The other early teams created were Holy Angels, Cooper, and Bloomington Jefferson.

In 1998, Debra Wood (Blake) and Janet Holdsworth (Hopkins) co-founded the North Central Schoolgirls Lacrosse Association (NSLA) to administer, organize and govern the development and play of girls lacrosse in Minnesota. In 2001- 2002, Janet Holdsworth (former President of the MLA and co-founder of the NSLA) led the effort for girl's lacrosse to become a state sanctioned sport in Minnesota with the support of the Athletics Directors from Prior Lake, Benilde St-Margaret, Mahtomedi, Roseville and Eden Prairie. Girl's lacrosse passed the MSHSL sanctioning process with the promise that 7 NSLA teams were poised to move immediately to varsity status. This vote was historic because no other sport in recent times was sanctioned the first time brought forward for a vote before the representative assembly.

The growth of girl's lacrosse exploded after sanctioning with over 60 varsity teams competing in the MSHSL in 2012 with an additional 8 club teams competing in the NSLA.

Girls HS Team Formation Timeline

- 1994 – Blake (2002)
- 1995 – Eden Prairie (2002), Hopkins (2002)
- 1997 – Cooper (2006), Holy Angels (2006)
- 1998 – Bloomington Jefferson (2006)
- 1999 – Bloomington Kennedy (2006),
Mahtomedi (2002), St. Louis Park
(2003), Mankato
- 2000 – Totino-Grace (2002), North
Suburban, Orono, Roseville (2004),
Minnehaha Academy (2002),
Benilde-St. Margaret's (2002),
Hastings
- 2001 – Edina (2006), Anoka, Armstrong
(2006), Prior Lake (2002), Lakeville, Shattuck-St. Mary's (2002)
- 2002 – Chaska (2006), St. Cloud Tech, Stillwater
- 2003 – Breck (2005), Centennial, Minnetonka (2005), Osseo, RAVE, Visitation (2005)
- 2004 – Andover, Duluth, Maple Grove, Mound Westonka, White Bear Lake
- 2005 – Cretin-Derham Hall, Hill-Murray, Monticello, Wayzata, Woodbury
- 2006 – Becker, Rochester, Minneapolis, Elk River, Owatonna, Buffalo
- 2007 – 2012 (Need info, contact Mark Erickson)



Hopkins HS Girls team coached by Janet Holdsworth

Years in parentheses after a team represent the year that team gained MSHSL varsity status.

Youth Girls

The Middle School Schoolgirls Lacrosse Association (MSSLax) was founded in 2002 by Sharon Hawkins. With the help of Dave Holdsworth and Deb Wood, Sharon rounded up 6 teams of 7th, 8th and 9th grade players for an inaugural season in 2003. Leah Rued helped with administration. First year teams included Breck, Benilde-St. Margaret's, Totino-Grace, Shattuck-St. Mary's, Lakeville and Edina. The first MSSLax Play Day was held on the Shattuck-St. Mary's campus on May 3, 2003.

In 2004, Sharon Hawkins stayed on as President, aided by Lindsay Eichenlaub and Phil Becker (Breck coach since the first season). Teams of 6th/7th/8th graders included Benilde-St. Margaret's, Blake, Bloomington, Breck, Edina, and Lakeville. Lindsay Eichenlaub set up the first website, Jim Vincent joined the board and Phil Becker became treasurer. The 2nd Play Day was held at Blake Lower School on May 15, 2004. BSM, Blake, Breck and Edina competed. Alex Christianson (Edina) joined the MSSLax board for 2004/2005 seasons. Other board members in the early years were Rick Reidt (Stillwater), Jenni Lorsung (Dakota), Krista Dean (Wayzata).

In the Spring of 2005, MSSLax had two divisions, for 5th/6th grades and 7th/8th grades. By 2006, MSSLax had 13 7th/8th grade teams and 9 5th/6th. Alex Christianson was elected President of MSSLax for the 2008 season and Maria Slusser (Minnetonka) joined the board.. Also in 2008, MSSLax implemented a summer youth girl's lacrosse season for 4th/5th/6th graders and 6th/7th/8th graders. The first summer Play Days were held in Minnetonka, Eden Prairie, and Lakeville before moving to the National Sports Center in Blaine for 2011.

A new website, MSSLax.com, went online in 2010, thanks largely to the efforts of Joni Caney and Hannah Hutner. Joni Caney (Lakeville) joined the MSSLax board. Hannah helped with administration for four seasons. By the end of the 2011 season, MSSLax had grown to 65 7th/8th grade teams and 42 5th/6th grade teams. In the summer of 2011, 9 3rd/4th grade teams played in the summer season.

During the Fall of 2011, the MSSLax board was restructured to include regional directors and a director of coaches/player development. Sharon Hawkins retired from the board in 2011. Joni Caney was elected President for the 2012 season, Alex Christianson, Past President; Julie Carlson joined the board as VP, Maria Slusser, secretary. Phil Becker, treasurer, became the longest serving board member. Other additions to the board included Heather Brick, Sean Bateman, Erin Larson and Anne Moelk.

MSSLax continues to work towards its goals of:

1. Promote development and appreciation of girls' lacrosse in Minnesota
2. Encourage the growth of youth girls' lacrosse in Minnesota;
3. Organize and administer safe and fair middle school spring competition; and
4. Develop sportsmanship and goodwill among participating players and teams.

Minnesotans Who Helped Get Lacrosse Started

Art Ayers – helped start lacrosse in Mankato, coached Mankato East & Mankato State and served on the MLA board. Also coaches and ran the MN Chill All-Star teams the MLA sent to Vail to represent Minnesota from 1999-2002.

Judy Baxter – this former Lehigh women's lacrosse coach took the Eden Prairie girls' HS team to several championships and started some of the first women's lacrosse coaching and player clinics/camps.

Harold Buck – A former high-school player from the Philadelphia area who started officiating in 1998 and quickly became a high-school and youth assigner. He played a major role in organizing, improving, and administering programs for officials training and assigning and for high school and youth lacrosse through the UMLOA, MBSLA, and through US Lacrosse as a member of the Board of Governors and the Training Committee for men's officials.

Matt Dempsey – played at St Mary's and then helped run the officials' organization, was the president of the MLA, and helped start the U of St Thomas.

Ian Flam – started Northstar Lacrosse, the first lacrosse-only store in Hopkins in the late 1990's. He was also responsible for bringing high profile college Div. I coaches to the successful Lacrosse Academy camps he runs. He also helps run the MN Elite travel teams that represent Minnesota at recruit showcases throughout the country.

Rob Graff – played at Harvard, assistant coached at Temple and was the longtime coach at powerhouse U of M Duluth. Rob helped start the Upper Midwest Lacrosse League. He also played for and ran the Twin Cities LC, served on the first MLA board and coached the MN Chill college All-Star team. He is presently coaching his sons 7-8th grade team in Bloomington.

Mark Hellenack – coached at Hopkins HS from '95-02 and won state titles in '97 and '98. Coached at St. John's from 2003 to 2008 (6 seasons) with a record of 70-23, 4 UMLL titles and two 2nd place finishes at the MCLA National Championships. He ran the MLA from its inception in 1993 to 2004 and was the driving force in the growth of the game in MN. He is in the NJ Lacrosse Hall of Fame for starting the US Lacrosse / Lacrosse Foundation NJ Chapter in 1984.

Dave Holdsworth – served on the first MLA board, former President of the Northcentral Schoolgirls Lacrosse Association, former President of the North Central Women's Lacrosse League (college), and current Chair of the US Lacrosse / WCLA (governing body for women's club lacrosse in U.S.). Administrator of the first off-season leagues for girls players.

Dr. Janet Holdsworth – served on the first MLA Board, former MLA-President, co-founder of the North Central Schoolgirls Lacrosse Association, led the state sanctioning process for girls' lacrosse, coached Hopkins HS to four consecutive championship games, head coach of the University of Minnesota women's lacrosse team, first lacrosse coach and woman in country to receive Positive Coaching Alliance's Double Goal Golden Whistle award, founded first girls' lacrosse club program - MN Lakers Select, coached the first MN girls' lacrosse team internationally.

Mary Scott Hunter – served on the first MLA board, helped start and promote girls high school and women's college lacrosse. Founder of the first-ever post-collegiate women's team in the Twin Cities (Hoydens). Served as an officer for the North Central Schoolgirls Lacrosse Association. Co-founder of the Umpires board with Holly Souza.

Tom Klein – helped form the first Minnesota Lacrosse Officials Association the 90's.

Chris Larson – started the Upper Midwest Lacrosse League and served at the MCLA secretary for many years. He also has coached at the U of M, MN Chill College All-Star team and served on the first MLA board. He played at U of St Thomas and the Twin Cities LC and presently is a well respected high school and college official.

Tom Lauer, Ray Moles & John Wolff – Started the YLM summer outdoor field lacrosse League for boys and girls youth in 2002.

Daniel & Aron Lipkin – started Home Grown Lacrosse in 2007 along with Colin Achenbach (Minnesota's first high school All-American (Apple Valley – RAVE) and college All-American at CW Post). The Lipkins have taken on the task of promoting and developing inner-city lacrosse in Minneapolis and running clinics, camps and leagues throughout the Twin Cities.

Hank Marotske – served as the MBSLA president for two terms and started the boys' HS programs at Holy Angels, Irondale-Mounds View and Blake. He played at St. Thomas University and for the Minneapolis LC and is presently the head coach at Breck. Hank also started the MN Elite travel team with Justin Hobin, the head coach of Totino-Grace, and Blake parent Shay Johnson.

Tim Moulton – served as the MBSLA president one term, was the head coach at Eden Prairie and started the Eden Prairie Quick Stix youth travel team.

Kevin Reed – current MBSLA president and coached St. Louis Park HS to two MBSLA State Championships. Under his leadership the youth 3-4th, 5-6th and 7-8th grade spring youth league and 9-10th leagues have flourished and the high school club league continues to promote the growth of lacrosse by adding new teams each year.

Howard Rogers – served as the MLA president for several terms and almost single-handedly got boys HS lacrosse to be a MSHSL sanctioned sport in 2002.

Brad Scibak – a Canadian official from Winnipeg that helped organize, assign and train college officials.

Dave White – helped start the Twin Cities LC and is one of Minnesota's first officials, official's assigner, trainer and mentor to others.

Debra Wood – founded first MN girl's lacrosse team at The Blake School, co-founder of the North Central Schoolgirls Lacrosse Association, ran some of the state's first clinics, camps and leagues.

Daron Yates – the first UMLL assigner and nationally recognized official.