

TOMS RIVER LACROSSE CLUB: LACROSSE 101

History of the Game

Lacrosse originated with the Native Americans, starting as a male team sport. While the rules varied among various tribes, the one rule that was observed by all was that the hands could not touch the ball. The lacrosse stick used varied between southeastern, northeastern and Great Lakes tribes. For example, the Great Lakes tribes, such as the Santee Dakota and Potawatomi, used a stick that was three-feet long, while southeastern tribes used two sticks that were two-and-a-half feet long. Not only did Native Americans use the game recreationally, but the games were also surrounded in ceremonialism. Today, lacrosse continues to grow in popularity, growing faster than any other sport in the United States.

Basic Rules

As your child continues to play lacrosse, you'll undoubtedly learn more about the game. However, for now you need to know the basic rules. Played by two teams, each team has 10 players. Players work to get the ball into the opposing team's goal, and the team scoring the most goals by the end of the game, wins. Youth games generally last 50 minutes. During play, players use crosses to pass, catch, and run with the lacrosse ball. The goalie is the only player allowed to touch the ball with his hands. Body checking and stick checking both are used to try to obtain the ball. However, personal fouls may be called if body checks or stick checks are used inappropriately.

Field Positions

Field positions for a boy's lacrosse team include a goalie, three defense players, three midfielder's and three attack players. The goalie must prevent the other team from scoring, protecting the goal at all times. Defense players help defend the goal and the goalie. Midfielders play defense and offense, playing the entire field, which requires stamina and speed. The attack position involves scoring goals and working with the other attack and midfield players to pass the ball to score goals.

General Information:

Teams -- Ten players per team at full strength. No limit to substitution.

Goal Value -- Each goal counts one point.

Time Outs -- Two per half for each team.

The Goal -- Six by six feet, made from pipe, strung with netting.

The Ball -- Solid rubber -- orange, yellow or white -- weighing roughly 5.5 oz.

What to Watch For:

Face Off -- One on one play, where the referee places the ball between the two player's sticks to begin play at start of a period, or after a goal.

Fast Break -- Similar to basketball, generally a four offensive player against three defenders situation that's difficult to defend.

Clearing -- Term used by the defensive team to move the ball from their half of the field to the attack half -- seven clearing players against six riding players.

Riding -- Term used by the attacking team to keep the defensive team from clearing the ball.

Personal Fouls -- Illegal body checking slashing, cross checking, tripping, unsportsmanlike conduct or fighting.

Technical Fouls -- Interference, holding, pushing, playing without a stick, withholding the ball from play, illegal procedure (such as stepping in the crease, checking the goalie's stick when he is in the crease, touching the ball with your hand), and offsides (each team has to have at least four men on each half of the field at all times).

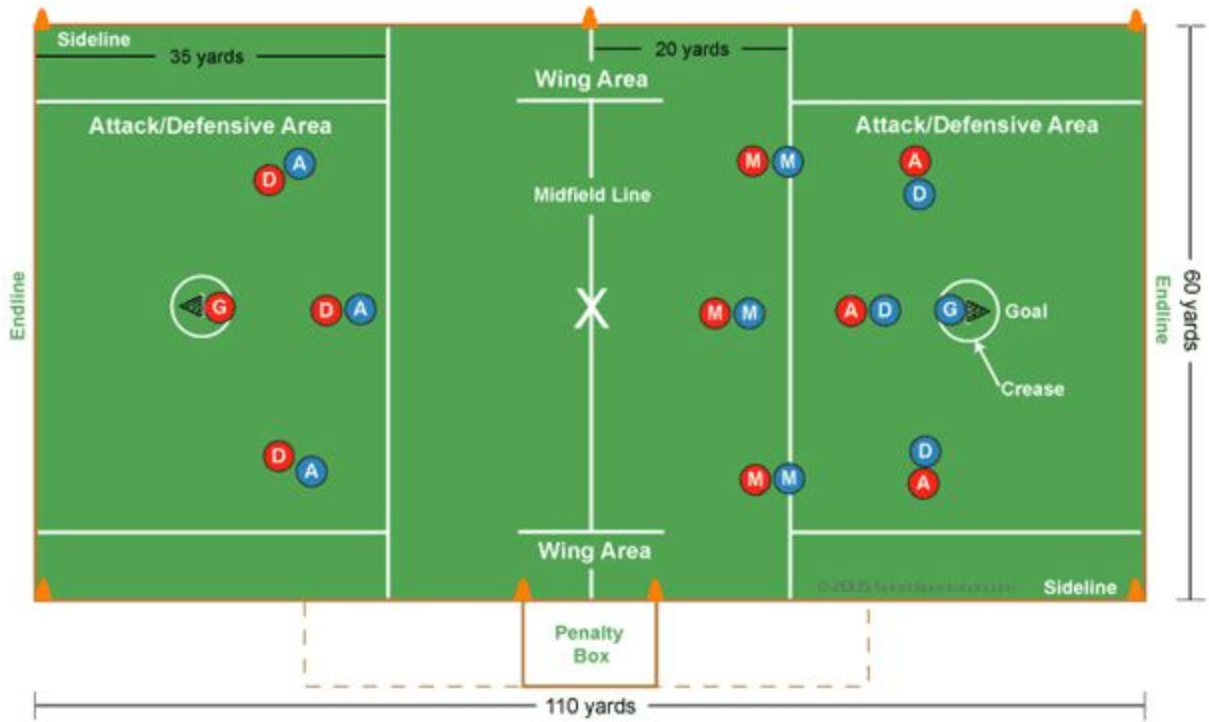
Crease -- No attacking player is allowed in the crease. No defensive player, nor the goalie with the ball (once he's left the crease) may enter it. The goalie can receive a pass in the crease.

Ball Out Of Play -- The ball is given to the team which did not cause it to go out of bounds, unless it went out after being shot at the goal. In that case, the team whose player is closest to the ball when it goes out is given possession

Offsides -- Midfielders can enter any area of the field, but attackman, defensemen and goalies are confined to their area of the field. To prevent an offside, a team must have at least 4 players on their defensive end and 3 on their offensive end. If a defensemen, attackman, or the goalie cross midline one midfielder must not cross midline to prevent offsides.

The Field

The playing field dimensions are 110 yards long and 60 yards wide. The boundaries of the field are marked with white or colored lines. Here's a diagram of the field.



THE ROOTS OF HONORING THE GAME

R is for Rules

Rules allow us to keep the game fair. If we win by ignoring or violating the rules, what is the value of our victory? PCA believes that honoring the letter *AND* the spirit of the rule is important.

O is for Opponents

Without an opponent, there would be no competition. Rather than demeaning a strong opponent, we need to honor strong opponents because they challenge us to do our best. Athletes can be both fierce and friendly during the same competition (in one moment giving everything to get to a loose ball, and in the next moment helping an opponent up). Coaches showing respect for opposing coaches and players sets the tone for the rest of the team.

O is for Officials

Respecting officials, even when we disagree with their calls, may be the toughest part of Honoring the Game. We must remember that officials are not perfect (just like coaches, athletes and parents!). Take time to think about how to best approach an official when you want to discuss a call. What strategies do you have to keep yourself in control when you start to get upset with officials' calls? We must remember that the loss of officials (and finding enough in the first place) is a major problem in most youth sports organizations, and we can confront this problem by consistently respecting officials.

T is for Teammates

It's easy for young athletes to think solely about their own performance, but we want athletes to realize that being part of a team requires thinking about and respecting one's teammates. This respect needs to carry beyond the field/gym/track/pool into the classroom and social settings. Athletes need to be reminded that their conduct away from practices and games will reflect back on their teammates and the league, club, or school.

S is for Self

Athletes should be encouraged to live up to their own highest personal standard of Honoring the Game, even when their opponents are not. Athletes' respect for themselves and their own standards must come first. Having this definition of Honoring the Game (HTG) is a start. To make Honoring the Game the youth sports standard, coaches, leaders, and parents need to **discuss** HTG with their athletes. Coaches need to **practice** it with their athletes (i.e. have players officiate at practice). And perhaps most importantly, all adults in the youth sports setting (coaches, leaders, parents, officials, and fans) need to **model** it. If these adults Honor the Game, the athletes will too.

Guidelines for Honoring the Game

The key to preventing adult misbehavior in youth sports is a youth sports culture in which all involved "Honor the Game." Honoring the Game gets to the ROOTS of the matter and involves respect for the Rules, Opponents, Officials, Teammates and one's Self. You don't bend the rules to win. You understand that a worthy opponent is a gift that forces you to play to your highest potential. You show respect for officials even when you disagree. You refuse to do anything that embarrasses your team. You live up to your own standards even if others don't. Here are ways that parents can create a positive youth sports culture so that children will have fun and learn positive character traits to last a lifetime.

Before the Game:

1. Make a commitment to Honor the Game in action and language no matter what others may do.
2. Tell your child before each game that you are proud of him or her regardless of how well he or she plays.

During the Game:

1. Fill your children's "Emotional Tank" through praise and positive recognition so they can play their very best.
2. Don't give instructions to your child during the game. Let the coach correct player mistakes.
3. Cheer good plays by both teams (this is advanced behavior!)
4. Mention good calls by the official to other parents.
5. If an official makes a "bad" call against your team? Honor the Game—BE SILENT!
6. If another parent on your team yells at an official? Gently remind him or her to Honor the Game.
7. Don't do anything in the heat of the moment that you will regret after the game. Ask yourself, "Will this embarrass my child or the team?"
8. Remember to have fun! Enjoy the game.

After the Game:

1. Thank the officials for doing a difficult job for little or no pay.
2. Thank the coaches for their commitment and effort.
3. Don't give advice. Instead ask your child what he or she thought about the game and then LISTEN. Listening fills Emotional Tanks.
4. Tell your child again that you are proud of him or her, whether the team won or lost.