

BASIC LACROSSE RULES



This is intended for new people to the game of lacrosse or for anyone who doesn't understand what's happening out there!

Although lacrosse is very complimentary to hockey it also shares similarities to basketball. The main similarities to basketball and differences to hockey are as follows: Like basketball, and unlike hockey, the game of lacrosse involves the entire team continually switching from offense to defense. Everyone is a defensemen in Lacrosse!

The 5 offensive players are referred to as Left Crease (like left wing in hockey), Left Corner (like left defense), Right Crease (right wing), and Point or Top (Centre).

Like basketball, there is no offside, nor icing! This keeps the pace of the game moving very quickly! There are rules, regulations and features that are unique to lacrosse and most of these are used in our House League. Here are some of the things you should know.

Whistles signify the start and stoppage of all play.

Face-offs: Two players line-up with their right shoulder and the open face of their stick facing their own net, the ball is placed between. Other players can line-up just about anywhere outside the two restraining lines. After the whistle blows, drawmen must pull straight back to gain control of the ball. If a player does not pull straight back, possession goes to the other team. The ball must come out of the 2' small face-off circle before other players can cross the restraining lines. An offense against this does not cause another face-off as in hockey, it results in possession to the non-offending team.

Face-offs occur only after a goal. When one team offends, and no penalty is called, the other team is awarded possession; i.e., if a player shoots and the ball bounces into the stands the other team is given possession. After a penalty, or when the ball strikes the goalie in the face mask, he is given possession.

Possession Changes: Minor infractions will stop play, possession is awarded to the non-offending team. When a player is awarded possession by the ref he must be given at least 9 feet of room by the defending player until the whistle signifies restarting of play. There are many ways a team can lose possession of the ball, most are explained below.

Loose Balls: If two players are going after a "loose" ball they must play the ball only. They may not check the opposing player until he has possession of the ball. Getting between the opposing player and the ball is good strategy, however, knocking him off his feet, is not. He will be awarded possession. Checking before possession is a very common occurrence in House League, and causes many possession changes. **Neither new players nor parents adapt quickly to this rule!**

Checking: Checking the body is legal from waist to shoulders, using the area of the stick between the hands. Slashing the body is not allowed, however, hitting the ball in a stick is. A one handed wraparound is not recommended and is often assessed a holding penalty. The main intention of checking is to regain possession of the ball, or to protect your net. Checking is an important part of the game but checking from behind and violent checks into the boards will be strictly enforced. Hitting from behind will be dealt with severely as it is one of the leading potential injury factors. Remember it is a "judgement" call by the ref. His call is final.

High sticking is another area of confusion for parents! "Incidental" contact with the helmet by an opposing player's stick is not automatically a penalty! It is again a ref's judgement call. Also, if a player ducks into a player's crosscheck, no matter how severe, it is not a penalty unless the Ref makes the call! Remember cross-checking in lacrosse is both legal and a very important and proper method of checking! Again, the only way to enforce high sticking is the ref's judgement. There is no other way.

Push offs: A player with the ball cannot push off with his free hand or arm! If he does, possession is awarded to the other team. **This rule is very misunderstood by new parents.** As long as the player with the ball keeps both hands on his stick he can push with his shoulder or resist a checker. Holding the ball against the body is not legal, and results in a possession change.

Remember as well, if you are the defending team, you can push or control an offensive player that is within the dotted lines in front of your crease, whether he has the ball or not! This does not include knocking him off his feet. However, the offensive team player cannot check back - he must take the checking without responding! Any response or checking by any member of the team who has possession will result in loss of possession.

Picks: A player may help a teammate that has the ball by impeding or blocking opponents while he is standing still only. If he does this while moving, it is called a moving pick, and will result in a possession change. **This is often missed by even the experienced lacrosse fan.**

The crease: Another big difference between hockey and lacrosse involves the goalie's crease.

If a player carrying the ball touches the crease before shooting, the whistle will blow and the goalie will be given the ball. If a player goes into the other team's crease to shoot or cuts through the back corner, his team loses possession. This again happens often at the start of the season.

If a player goes through the other team's crease to make a check or touches the goalie while he is in his crease it results in a penalty. If a player is pushed into the crease, he is OK but you must make every effort to get out ASAP.

The goalie or a player has 5 seconds to get the ball out of the crease after stopping and gaining control of the ball or having been awarded possession of the ball in the crease. He must pass the ball out or step out with both feet. Once this has happened, he or any other player, cannot go back in or through the crease with the ball during that possession! When defending your own net you may not pass or intentionally roll the ball back to your own goalie in the crease. You can pass to the goalie as often as you like if he is out of the crease.

The Goalie: The goalie in lacrosse can function just like any other player (remember, there is no centre red line for off side purposes and a goalie can go anywhere on the floor). A goalie with the ball can also be checked like any other player. The goalie may grab the ball with his hand only when he is in his crease, but he must pass it to teammates with his stick not his hand.

Penalties: A lot of the penalties are the same as hockey, however, some of the signals the ref uses

are different, just to add to your confusion. When a team is shorthanded, they have 10 seconds to get the ball over centre and once over cannot go back, or change of possession occurs.

Shotclock: Like basketball, the 30 second shotclock is used from the Novice division up. The team with possession must shoot, hitting the goalie or the net, before the time runs down. If they are the first to regain possession of the rebound the clock will be reset for another 30 seconds.

Miscellaneous: Players, or goalies out of their crease, will be penalized if they catch the ball in the hand. If they just contact it with hand it is possession to the other team.

The ball can be kicked but not for a goal. Also if the ball gets stuck in a stick the ref will free it and play shall continue.

In House League, these rules will be enforced with the idea of teaching the kids! Referee's judgment is an important factor and is guided by executive board policy, referee-in-chief's directions and convenor's guidance! Again any violent hitting or infractions are intended to be strictly enforced.

And lastly, please remember, yelling at a referee will not change his decision on a call that has been made. It may, however, change his decision about reffing again next year.

Lets all have FUN!

Your help would be greatly appreciated, Coaches will be looking for assistance to run the time clock and the shotclock. So please lend a hand. Learning how to run the clocks is easier than you think. Without them the kids can't play. Moms are welcome too!

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