

# to WOMEN'S LACROSSE

Your pocket game-time guide to the basic rules of play.

## The Basics!

Women's lacrosse teams use netted sticks to carry, throw, and shoot a ball along a field in an effort to score goals. A goal counts as one point and is scored when the ball completely crosses the opposing goal line between the posts and under the crossbar. The team scoring the greater number of goals in the allotted time wins the game.

## What's Needed?

Lacrosse stick, solid rubber ball, team uniform with kilt or shorts, gloves, sneakers or cleats, and mouth guard. Protective eye-wear is mandatory! Goalkeepers wear extra padding.

## How Long Is A Game?

Generally, a game is divided into two twenty-five minute halves, with a ten-minute break at halftime. Each half begins at the center circle with a "draw" between two opposing players. Team captains flip a coin to choose playing sides and teams switch sides at halftime. If a game ends with the score even, it is a tie. Some leagues may decide the result of a tie by playing overtime periods of sudden death; the team scoring first wins.

## Who Plays Where?

Two teams of twelve players are on the field at one time. Players cover the entire length of the field. Positions are determined according to where players can best contribute on the field. In most leagues, unlimited substitutions are allowed during the course of a game.

**Attack Players** (1st, 2nd, and 3rd Home) - As the front line of the offensive attack, these players are usually the team's primary goal scorers. They try to maintain offensive positions around the opposing team's goal in order to gain scoring opportunities.

**Midfielders** (Two defense wings, two attack wings, and one center) - These five players contribute on both offense and defense while covering the entire length of the field. As the team's main ballcarriers, they control the tempo of the game.

**Defensive Players** (Point, Cover Point, and 3rd Man) - These three players help defend against offensive attacks and work to "clear" the ball from out of their goal area up to the midfielders. They generally remain on their defensive side of the field

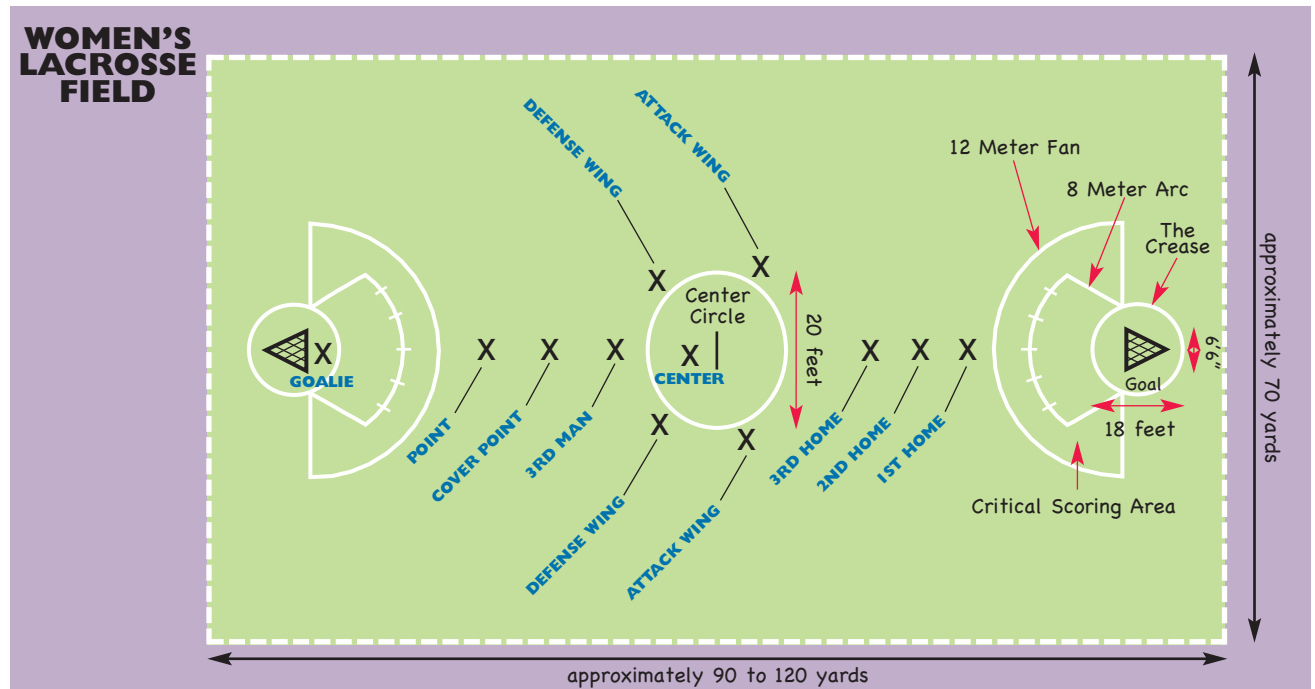
surrounding their team's own goal. On a draw, they line up vertically from their goal toward the center circle.

**Goalkeeper** - Plays inside the "crease" directly in front of her own goal to block incoming shots. She uses a stick with an oversized head to best prevent shots from scoring. The goalie is the only player allowed to touch the ball with her hands, but may do so only when she is standing inside the crease. Upon gaining control of the ball with her stick, the goalie has ten seconds either to pass the ball away or to run it out of her crease. If the goalie leaves the crease while in possession of the ball, she may not reenter the crease unless the ball goes back inside first or she passes the ball away.

## Stand And Draw!

**The Draw** - Takes place between opposing players in the center circle to start each half and after every goal. The two centers stand opposite each other across the center line, holding their sticks waist high with the stick pockets touching back-to-back. The referee places the ball between the netting of the stick pockets. When the signal is given to start, each player pulls her stick upwards and backwards to release the ball into the air. Players then attempt to gain possession of the ball. Prior to the start of the draw, all other players on the field must remain completely outside the center circle. If a violation of the draw occurs twice, a referee will restart play using a "throw."

**Throw** - Used in a variety of situations when play has been stopped, such as when two opposing fouls occur simultaneously.



On a throw, two opposing players stand side-by-side, three feet apart. The umpire throws the ball up in the air between the two players who then move to gain possession and control of the ball.

**Stand** - Anytime the whistle is blown to stop action, all players must stop moving and stand where they are on the field. They have to remain standing in their stationary positions until play restarts or is redirected by an official.

**Out of Play** - There are now hard boundaries in women's lacrosse. If the ball is taken out of bounds, possession is given to the other team.

**Trapped Ball** - If the ball gets caught in a goalie's pads or clothing or in the netting of the goal itself, the ball is placed in the goalie's stick and play resumes. However, if the ball gets trapped in another fielder's clothes or her lacrosse stick, a throw is used to restart play.

**Free Position** - Awarded to a player after a major or minor foul has been committed anywhere on the field. The free position is always taken at least eight meters from the crease. On a major foul all other players must stand at least four meters behind the player taking the free position, while on a minor foul they may stand four meters to the side. The official places the ball in the stick pocket of the player taking the free position, who then passes, shoots, or runs with the ball.

## Foul Play!

A violation of the rules results in a major or minor foul, awarding a free position to the fouled player. It is a major foul when a player charges, pushes, trips, blocks, or makes physical contact with an opponent; "slashes" an opposing ballcarrier; commits a "shooting space violation;" or invades the body space of an opposing player, such as touching her stick to that player's body. A minor foul is called if a player uses her stick or foot to shield a ground ball; or if a player kicks the ball or touches it with her hands (except for the goalie inside her crease). Also, no part of a player's body may enter the crease while the goalie is in her position there, however, the player's stick can follow through the crease upon shooting.

## Learn The Lingo!

**Checking** - Two forms of checking are permitted: the body check and the stick check. A body check occurs when a defending player moves her body in front of an opposing ballcarrier to redirect her progress. On a stick check, a defender knocks her stick against an opponent's stick in an attempt to knock the ball loose. The latter is done with sharp, quick jabs directed away from the face and body of the player being checked. Both styles are legal provided that there is no body contact and that the stick check is neither reckless nor touches any part of the ballcarrier's body. A player may not hold her stick on an opponent's stick.

**Clearing** - An important defensive maneuver in which defending players run or pass the ball out of their goal area. Clearing is best done along the sidelines, away from the front of the goal.

**Cradling** - When moving with the ball, a player uses her wrists and arms to turn the stick, in order to maintain control of the ball while in the stick pocket.

**Critical Scoring Area** - The semicircle area in front of each team's crease from where most goals are scored. This area includes the twelve meter fan and the eight meter arc.

**Cutting** - An offensive player without the ball quickly moves around a defending player or into an open space in order to get free and open to receive a "feed pass."

**Fast Break** - An offensive team speedily runs the ball up field on an attack to gain a player advantage over the defense.

**Feed Pass** - Used by the offense when they are near the opposing goal. One player passes the ball to a cutting teammate who then takes a shot on goal.

**Goal Circle** (or Crease) - The nine-foot diameter circle surrounding each goal. Only one player is allowed in the goal circle at a time and no player from outside may reach in with her stick. It is also a foul when any player enters the circle while the goalkeeper is in position there.

**Ground Balls** - Describes the ball loose on the ground. Players will position their bodies in front of opposing players to block them from scooping up the ball.

**Man-to-man** - A defensive setup in which each defending player guards a specific offensive opponent.

**Marking** - The play of a defender who uses her stick and body to closely guard and follow an opposing offensive player.

**Passing** - Throwing the ball between teammates, done overhand, underhand, or sidearm and sometimes along the ground.

**Pocket** - The head of the lacrosse stick where the ball is held and carried. Depending on the style of the stick, the pocket is strung with either leather and gut netting or mesh netting.

**Pick-up** - The manner in which a player picks up a loose ground ball. She crouches toward the ground, slides the pocket of her stick underneath the ball, and lifts it into the netting of her stick.

**Shooting Space Violation** - When a defender is more than a stick's length away from an opponent while inside the critical scoring area in front of her own goal. Thereby obstructing incoming shots.

**Shovel Pass** - A short underhand pass used between teammates who are in close proximity to one another.

**Slashing** - A major foul against any player who recklessly stick checks an opponent using a dangerous, sweeping stroke.

**Stop Play** - When a foul occurs or the ball goes out of play, the umpire blows a whistle to stop the action of the game. To restart play or redirect a player, a throw or free position is taken. If play stops as a result of an injury, the ball is given to either the player who held the ball last or who was closest to it before the whistle blew. The official game clock continues to run whenever play has stopped - except during injury time-outs or every time the whistle sounds during the last two minutes of each half.

**Zone Defense** - Defenders cover specific areas of their defensive zone as opposed to man-to-man coverage.

## Did You Know That?

The origin of women's lacrosse can be traced back to the Indians of North America, who played a form of the men's game in their preparation for battle. However, it was not until the mid-19th century that the English first played a unique style of a stick and ball game solely for women. Competing girls' schools began playing this modern game in the 1860's. Many of the general rules of play in those first games resemble those used today.



## WOMEN'S LACROSSE SIGNALS



FREE POSITION



ROUGH CHECK



PUSHING  
OR  
BODY CONTACT



GOAL CIRCLE  
FOUL



ILLEGAL BALL  
OFF BODY



GOAL

Check out our other great guides at the  
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This Mom's Guide to Woman's Lacrosse is published by Mom's Guide to Sports,  
Doylestown, PA.

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