



PARENT'S GUIDE TO LACROSSE

Basic information about the game of lacrosse

Men's Lacrosse Field Positions

- **ATTACK:** The attackman's responsibility is to score goals. He generally restricts his play to the offensive end.
- **MIDFIELD:** The midfielder's responsibility is to cover the entire field playing both offense and defense.
- **DEFENSE:** The defenseman's responsibility is to defend the goal. He generally restricts his play to the defensive end of the field.
- **GOALKEEPER:** The goalie's responsibility is to protect the goal and stop the opposing team from scoring.

Women's Lacrosse Field Positions

- **ATTACK** (includes **First home**, **Second home** and **Third home**): The offensive players who are trying to score.
- **MIDFIELD** (includes **Attack wings**, **Center** and **Defense wings**): The midfield players link the defense with the attack.
- **DEFENSE** (includes **Third man**, **Coverpoint** and **Point**): Their main responsibility is to mark their opponent's corresponding attack players.
- **GOALKEEPER:** The goalie's responsibility is to protect the goal and stop the opposing team from scoring.

Men's Lacrosse

Lacrosse is played between two teams. The object of the game is to advance the ball into the opposing team's territory and shoot the ball into the opponent's goal. The team scoring the most goals at the end of regulation play is the winner. The ball is kept in play by being thrown, carried or hit by the stick, rolled or kicked by one or more players in any direction, as long as the ball stays in the field of play.

A men's team consists of 10 players; 1 goalie, 3 defensemen, 3 midfielders and 3 attackmen. Each team must keep at least 4 players, including the goalkeeper, in its defensive half of the field and 3 players in its offensive zone. The 3 midfielders are free to roam the entire field.

The game has four quarters, plus a halftime. Teams change ends between quarters. Youth games are generally 32 minutes long, with eight minute quarters, two minute breaks between quarters and a ten minute halftime. High school games are generally 40 to 48 minutes long with either 10 or 12 minute quarters and 10 minutes at halftime. Collegiate games are 60 minutes long with 15 minute quarters and a 15 minute halftime. Each team is permitted 4 timeouts, with a maximum of two in a half of play, and one additional timeout per each overtime sudden victory period.

The game starts at the center of the field with a **face-off**. Face-offs are also used to start each quarter and to resume play after each goal. The ball is placed on the ground and the two players facing off position their sticks back to back on either side of the ball, without touching the ball. The play starts when the official blows the whistle and face-off players and other wing/midfield players try to control the ball.

Players maneuver the ball by passing and/or running to gain an advantageous position which will provide opportunities for a player to score a goal. Only the goalkeeper may touch the ball with his hands.

Players attempt to gain control of the ball by scooping or catching it with a stick or by dislodging the ball from an opponent's stick by checking. **Checking** involves poking, slapping or hitting an opponent's stick and gloved hand. Players may also attempt to gain possession of the ball by controlled body checks above the waist and below the shoulders from the front or side.

Attacking players may never enter the area immediately around an opponent's goal, known as the **crease**. Nor may a player physically touch the goalie while the goalie is in the crease. Should the goalie gain possession of the ball, opposing players may try to block the goalie's outlet pass (the **clear**) by standing in the goalie's line of sight and waving sticks. Opposing players may also reach into the crease to *try* to retrieve loose or ground balls, but may not interfere with the goalie.

Unlike other sports, should the ball go out of bounds after an unsuccessful shot, possession is awarded to the player closest to the ball where it went out of bounds *at the moment the ball crosses the boundary line*.

The Men's Team

There is no limit to the total number of players each team may carry on its roster. Most teams carry six to nine defensemen, six to nine attackmen, nine to twelve midfielders and three goalies. This provides three complete rotations of players (4 for midfielders). This is only a general rule of thumb and will vary considerably based on availability of players and coaching

philosophy. There can be a maximum of four long sticks on the field at any one time (not including the goalie). The remainder must be short sticks.

There will be situations (penalties) where one or both teams will be required to play with less than the full ten member team. These are typically known as **Man Up** (the unpenalized team) or **Man Down** (the penalized team) situations and are usually handled with special field formations. Upon issuance of a penalty, which requires one or more players to go to the "Penalty Box," substitutes are not permitted to take their place. The team must play with a reduced number of players until the penalized players are released back onto the field by the officials.

The Men's Field

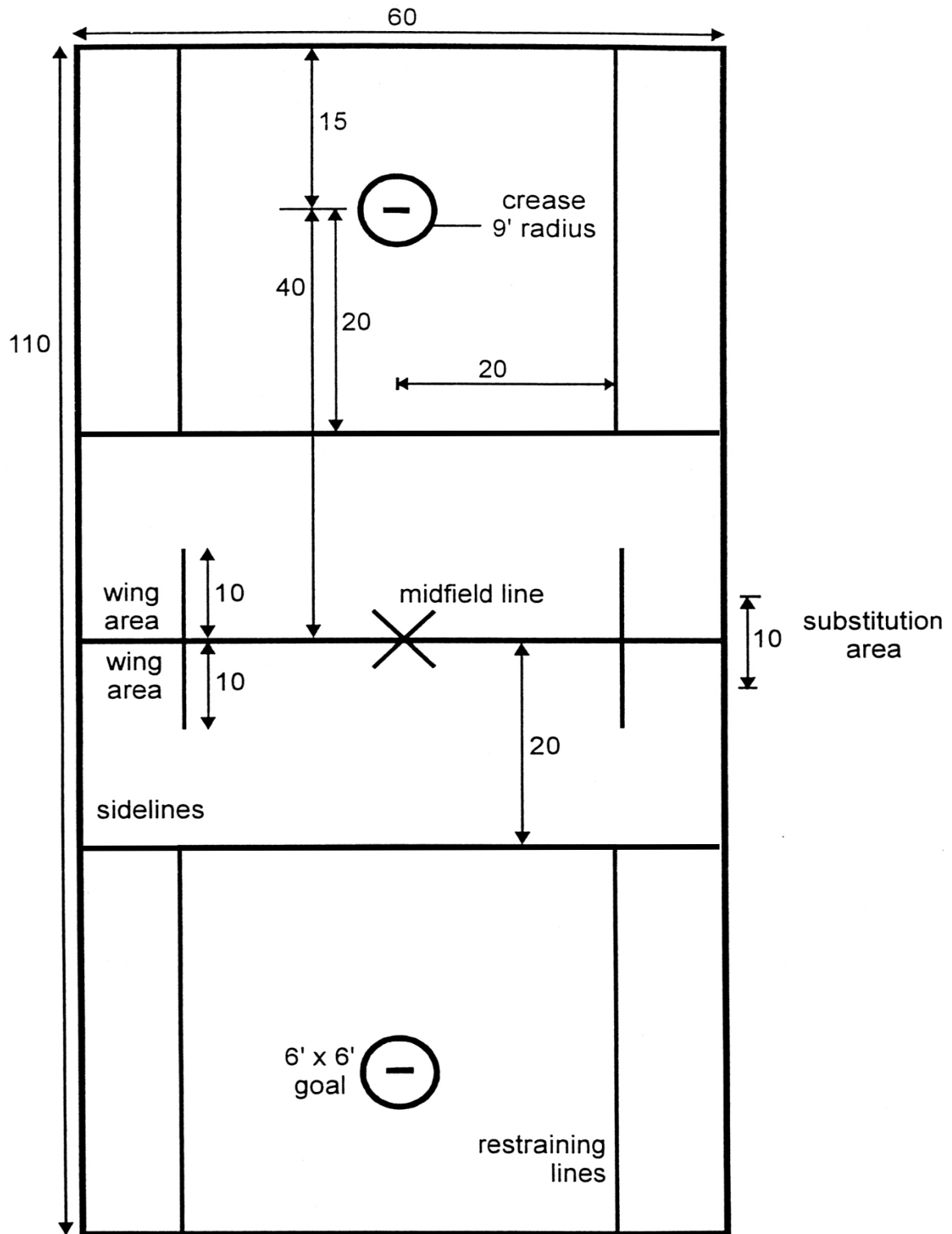
The game is played on a rectangular field measuring 110 yards long by 53-1/3 to 60 yards wide. The field is marked at 55 yards from each end line with a center line and halfway across this centerline with an (X) to indicate the face-off zone (see Figure 1).

Behind each goal there is a 15 yard space, and the goals are 80 yards apart. Twenty yards from each goal toward the center of the field there is a line called the defensive restraining line that spans the width of the field. The portion of the restraining line outside of the offensive box area is not shown in Figure 1.

Goals are typically manufactured of steel or aluminum tubing, measuring 6 feet square at the widest opening and converging to a point 7 feet behind the opening. A mesh net is tightly secured to goal. Each goal sits inside a circle with a radius of 9 feet, called the crease. The center of each crease is on the goal line (15 yards from the end lines) and midway between the sidelines.

OTHER IMPORTANT AREAS OF FIELD INCLUDE:

- **Goal Area** – also known as the "offensive box." It is the area inside the restraining lines at each end of the field. The lines parallel to the sidelines are 10 yards in from the sidelines and are dashed to avoid confusion with the sidelines.
- **Defense Clearing Area** - area behind the defensive restraining lines which run across the field 20 yards in front of the goal.
- **Wing Areas** - indicated by two lines, 20 yards long and 10 yards in front of each sideline.
- **"The Penalty Box" Area** - is located directly in front of the officials' table and is used as a holding area for players to wait out their penalties. Penalized players must remain in the box, down on one knee. It is also the access area for substitute players entering and exiting the field.



all dimensions in yards except where indicated

Figure 1 Boys' lacrosse field

Men's Rules & Regulations

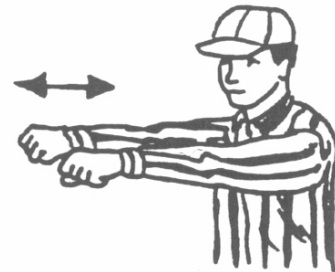
The game of lacrosse is a contact sport. Rules have been established which are intended to protect the safety of the players and maintain control over the game. Each game at the varsity level must have a minimum of two officials, who are called the referee and the umpire. (Middle school games may have a single official. It is desirable to have two officials for a high school J.V. game.) There may also be a field judge and a chief bench official. Decisions regarding third and fourth officials are made by the organization hosting the game.

It is the coach's responsibility to teach and instill in each player an understanding of the nature of the game – it is a physical contact sport, but uncontrolled violent acts must not be tolerated. Players must be trained and are required to play with mental and physical control.

The NCAA and the NFHS (National Federation of State High School Associations) have put forth comprehensive regulations and penalties for infractions. Following is a brief summary of some of the major, common rule violations.

PERSONAL FOULS are infractions of a serious nature, which carry suspension from the game for periods ranging from a minute to three minutes, depending on the severity and intent of the infraction. The penalty's length is usually one minute but can be up to three minutes at the discretion of the officials.

Cross Check is a check by one player on another with the part of the stick between the player's hands.



Slashing occurs when a player swings his stick at an opponent in a deliberate, vicious, or reckless fashion, or when the stick comes in contact with any part of the opponent other than on his stick or gloves, unless the opponent is actively attempting to deflect a legitimate check with part of his body. Slashing also occurs when the stick of a player strikes any part of an opposing player's body above the neck, unless when done by a player in the act of shooting, passing or scooping the ball.



Illegal Body Checks occur when checking a player not within 5 yards of the ball, a late hit, contact from behind or above the shoulders or below the waist. This also occurs when a body check is thrown on an opponent who does not possess the ball, or when an *avoidable* body check of the opponent is made *after* the opponent has made a shot or pass.



Tripping is obstructing an opponent at or below the waist with any part of the stick or body. If a player makes a legitimate check with the stick to dislodge the ball from an opponent's stick and subsequently the opponent trips over his own or the checker's stick, this is *not* tripping.



Unnecessary Roughness occurs when a player uses *unnecessary* and *deliberately violent contact* on an opposing player or is excessively violent when holding or pushing.

Unsportsmanlike Conduct occurs when a person who represents a team attempts to argue with or influence the decision of a game official, using threatening, profane, abusive, or obscene language or gestures during the game; or baits, taunts or acts in a manner considered unsportsmanlike by a game official.

Illegal Crosse is the use of a crosse which does not conform to NCAA/NFHS rules and standards.

Illegal Gloves are gloves which do not conform to required standards or when the glove's fingers and/or palms have been altered or removed.

TECHNICAL FOULS are less serious than personal fouls and are subject to a 30 second suspension from play of the offending player (when the opponent is in possession of the ball) or loss of possession.

Holding occurs when a player impedes or interferes with an opponent's stick movement.



Off-Side occurs when there are more than six players on the opponent's side of the field. This also occurs when a defenseman crosses the center line as the ball is being cleared up the field and all three attackmen and midfielders have progressed past the center line.



Warding Off occurs when a player with the ball uses his free hand or any part of his body to hold, push or control the stick or body of the player applying the check.



Stalling is when a team intentionally holds the ball without advancing toward the goal.



Screening (illegal pick) occurs when an offensive player moves into or makes contact with a defender with the purpose of blocking the defensive player from the opponent being played.

Illegal Procedure is a term that includes touching of the ball by a player other than the goalie, playing in the game without a stick, use of illegal equipment, avoidable lateness of the team, placing a stick in an opponent's face, entering the game prior to expiration of a penalty, delay of game, more than 10 men on the field, and illegal playing out of bounds. (See complete description in NCAA rules).

Interference occurs when one player interferes with the free movement of an opponent. Exceptions: when opponent has the ball and a player is within five feet of opponent, or the ball is loose or on the fly, and both players are within five feet of the ball.

Pushing is when a player pushes, thrusts, or shoves an opponent from behind. Pushing is permitted from the front and sides when an opponent has possession of the ball or is within five yards of a loose ball.

Equipment & Selection

CROSSE - also known as stick.

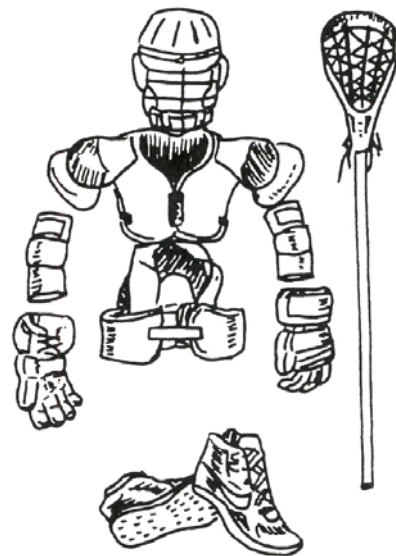
Crosse must be between 40 and 42" long for attackmen/midfielders and 52 and 72" long for defensemen. The head is to be 6½ to 10" wide. Goalie's crosse may be 10 to 12" wide. Younger, more inexperienced players, should use shorter sticks. Crosse contains three components:

Shaft - made from a variety of materials including wood, metal or plastic. Most common is aluminum and its alloys. Aluminum and metal alloy shafts are the most popular for their relative strength and light weight.

The length of the shaft should grow with a player's size, development and skills. When selecting a shaft, the most important point to consider is how it feels in a player's hands. Younger, more inexperienced players need to concentrate on feel and weight, not on materials of construction. Strength of shaft becomes critical with older, stronger, more experienced players.

Head - its sole purpose is to act as a frame for the pocket. The head can be made of wood, plastic, or other synthetic material. The most common is plastic, because of its strength and lightness. There are a wide variety of heads available. It is best for beginners and younger players to stay with basic, simple heads.

Pocket - net that forms a pocket in which the ball is carried and cradled and from which the ball is thrown. The pocket is the single most important and controllable part of the crosse. It is very important that players get to know their pockets and how to adjust them. A player



with average equipment, but good stick skills, and a good feel for the pocket will always perform better than a player with expensive equipment and average skills. Pockets come in two types: Traditional and Mesh

Traditional - consists of four leather thongs, around which are interwoven synthetic cord and shooting strings. This produces a more accurate pass and shot, making it easier to control and absorb the ball. Major drawback: it takes time to soften the leather and form the proper pocket.

Mesh - a single piece of open nylon mesh material which is stretched between the sides of the head and attached with nylon cord, through which shooting strings run. This forms a good pocket immediately, is durable, and easy to adjust. This pocket is more forgiving while learning the basics and is preferred for those just starting the game.

Shooting Strings are made of heavy duty shoelace material, which are interwoven across the pocket. The purpose is to form a release point of the pocket. The actual pocket is formed just below the last shooting string. The objective is to form a short, smooth path for the ball to travel out of the stick.

The pocket must be adjusted so that the top of the ball does not fall below the bottom edge of the head when the stick is held horizontally. The purpose of this rule is so a player can't make it difficult for an opponent to dislodge the ball with a check.

For safety purposes, all sticks are to have a plastic or wood plug covering the end of the stick opposite the head. Sticks are not to be physically bent or altered, other than material added on the exterior surface for improved grip and weight.

THE BALL is white, yellow, or orange and is made of solid rubber. The ball is 7¾ to 8" in circumference and weighs 5 to 5¼ ounces.

HELMET - Each player is required to wear a protective helmet that includes a metal face mask with a chin pad, and a cupped four point chin strap fastened at all points to the helmet. All helmets and face masks should be NOCSAE (National Operating Committee on Standards for Athletic Equipment) approved.

The fit is the most important point to consider when selecting a helmet.

MOUTHPIECE - Must be a highly visible color and worn at all times while on the field.

GLOVES, SHOULDER PADS, SHOES, AND JERSEYS are required protective equipment for all regulation games.

Style and type of gloves and shoulder pads is optional, but is restricted to those approved for use in this sport. Type of shoe is optional, however, hard rubber cleats are recommended.

The most important considerations when selecting gloves is fit and position. The player must be able to get a good grip, be able to feel the shaft through the gloves and be able to control the stick.

Shoulder pads need to fit well. Points to consider when fitting a player are size and weight. Younger players typically require more protection than older, more experienced players. Middies and attackmen usually require more protection because of the frequency and the force of checks being thrown against them. Defensemen need less protection. Goalies must wear all required equipment, including a throat protector and chest pad. Optional equipment for goalies are leg and shin guards. All players need the most protection possible without being uncomfortable or weighted down.

PROTECTIVE ARM AND RIB PADS, ATHLETIC SUPPORTERS AND PROTECTIVE CUPS are required by CSLC for player safety. Many leagues have made these items required equipment.

Women's Lacrosse

(adopted from *Parent's Guide to the Sport of Lacrosse*, 6th ed. and *Women's Rules 2007*, both published by US Lacrosse)



Girls' lacrosse is a non-contact sport played between two teams. The object of the game is to advance the ball into the opposing team's territory and shoot the ball into the opponent's goal. The team scoring the most goals at the end of regulation play is the winner.

The field is approx. 60 yards wide and 110 yards long. There is also a restraining line 30 yards up field from each goal line, which extends across the entire width of the field. No more than 7 field players may be between the restraining line and their opponent's goal at any time (see Figure 2).

Goals are placed at a distance of at least 90 yards apart, and play behind the goal is allowed. Each goal sits inside a circle (called the **goal circle** or **crease**) which has a radius of 8½ feet. Only one player, either the goalkeeper or her deputy (a field player who temporarily stands in her position), is allowed in the goal circle at any one time. No other player or any part of her body or stick may enter the crease at any time.

The collegiate game is 60 minutes long (two 30-minute halves), while the high school game is 50 minutes long (two 25-minute halves). In both collegiate and high school play, teams are allowed two timeouts per game. Teams change ends at halftime. Substitution may be “on the fly” or following a goal, injury, time out, or half.

The game begins with a **draw** (called a face-off in men's lacrosse). Two players (the centers) hold the ball between their back-to-back sticks (a stick is also called a **crosse**) at waist height at the center of the field. Four other field players stand at the edge of the center circle, which is 18 meters in diameter. At the sound of the whistle, the ball is flung into the air as the sticks are pulled up and away. The ball must be flung higher than the heads of the players taking the draw. Either player taking the draw, or any other field player, may take possession of the ball after the draw. A draw is used to start each half and to resume play after each goal.

There are 12 players on a team: three attack players (called 1st home, 2nd home, and 3rd home), five midfielders (called left and right attack wings, left and right defense wings, and a center), 3 defenders (called 3rd man, cover point, and point), and one goalkeeper (see Figure 3).

Field players may pass, catch, or run with the ball in their crosse. If the ball is dropped, it may be scooped up with the crosse (a player may not pick up the ball with her hand). The ball may not be kicked or played off the body to gain an advantage. The ball may not be trapped under the crosse or raked back.

A player may gain possession of the ball by dislodging it from an opponent's crosse with a **check**. A check is a controlled tap with a crosse on an opponent's crosse to try to knock the ball free. *The player must be one step in front of her opponent in order to check and the check must be away from a 7-inch "sphere" around the head.* A check is considered illegal if the defender reaches across her opponent's body when she is level with or behind her, if the defender checks inside her opponent's sphere, or if the check is rough or reckless. Absolutely no contact to the body with the crosse or body is allowed.

When a whistle blows, all players must stand in place. When a ball is ruled out of bounds, a player on the team that did not have the last possession gets the ball when play is resumed. When the ball goes out of bounds on a shot, the player closest to the boundary when the ball goes out of bounds gets a free possession 4 m inside the boundary.

Fouls are categorized as major or minor, and the penalty for fouls is a "free position." For major fouls, the offending player is placed 4 meters behind the player taking the free position. For a minor foul, the offending player is placed 4 meters off, in the direction from which she approached her opponent before committing the foul, and play is resumed. If a check makes contact with a player's head or slashing occurs in the field of play, the whistle is blown immediately, and a yellow (warning) or red (suspension) card is given. A player receiving a yellow card must leave the field for 3 minutes of elapsed playing time, but a substitute may take her place. A player receiving a red card is suspended from further participation in that game, but a substitute may take her place. If a team receives more than 3 yellow or red cards in a game, no substitute is allowed for the carded player for 3 minutes and the team plays short.

Special rules apply inside the 8-meter arc and the so-called **critical scoring area**. If the defensive team commits a foul in this area, the official may raise her flag indicating a foul, but hold the whistle ("**slow whistle**") to give the offensive team an opportunity to score a goal. If the offensive team loses the advantage, they are given either a direct free position (the official clears a **penalty lane** to the goal) or an indirect free position (the player taking the indirect free position may not shoot until the ball has been played by some other player). An immediate whistle is blown when a major foul is committed, which jeopardizes the safety of a player.

Major and Minor Fouls

Major Fouls

Blocking occurs when a defender moves into the path of an opponent with the ball without giving that player a chance to stop or change direction.

Charging occurs when a player with the ball pushes into, shoulders, or backs into an opponent who has already established her position (though not necessarily stationary).

Dangerous shot occurs when a player throws the ball toward the goal without control, or in the direction of a field player or the goalkeeper.

Misconduct occurs when a player conducts herself in a rough, dangerous, or unsportsmanlike manner, persistently breaks the rules, or deliberately endangers the safety of opposing players.

Slashing occurs when a defender swings her crosse at an opponent's crosse or body with deliberate viciousness or recklessness, whether or not the opponent's crosse or body is struck.

Three seconds. A defender may not stand within the 8-meter arc, unless she is closely marking an opponent, for more than 3 seconds.

Obstruction of free space occurs when a defender is not closely marking her opponent and is in the free space on the goal side of the attack player with the ball. The attack player must have the opportunity and be looking to shoot.

Minor Fouls

Goal circle fouls occur when any part of an offensive or defensive player's body or crosse, except that of the goalkeeper or her deputy (a field player who temporarily stands in her position), enters the crease.

Warding off occurs when a player guards a ground ball with her crosse or foot, removes one hand from the crosse and uses her free arm to ward off an opponent, or checks an opponent's empty crosse while she is trying to get possession of the ball.

Empty crosse check. A player may not check an opponent's crosse unless the ball is touching the opponent's crosse.

Body ball. A ball that hits a field player's body to her distinct advantage.

The umpire's arm signals for these fouls are shown in Figure 4.

Field Positions

The Attack

First home. The first home's responsibility is to score. Located in front of the goal, the first home must continually cut toward the goal for a shot, or cut away from the goal to make room for another player. She should have excellent stickwork.

Second home. The second home is considered the playmaker. She should be able to shoot well from every angle and distance from the goal.

Third home. The third home's responsibility is to transition the ball from defense to attack. She should be able to feed the ball to other players and fill in wing areas.

The Midfield

Attack wings. The wings are also responsible for transitioning the ball from defense to attack. Wings should have speed and endurance and be ready to receive the ball from the defense and run or pass the ball.

Center. The center's responsibility is to control the draw and play both defense and attack. She should have speed and endurance.

Defense wings. The wings are responsible for marking the attack wings and bringing the ball into the attack area. Wings should have speed and endurance.

The Defense

Third man. The third man's responsibility is to mark her opponent's third home. She should be able to intercept passes, clear the ball, run fast, and have good footwork.

Coverpoint. The coverpoint's responsibility is to mark her opponent's second home. She should be able to receive clears from the goalkeeper, run fast, and have good footwork.

Point. The point's responsibility is to mark her opponent's first home. She should be able to stick check, body check (to follow each movement of her opponent's body with her body to cause her to slow down, change direction, or pass off; no actual body contact may take place), and look to intercept passes.

Goalkeeper. The goalkeeper's responsibility is to keep the ball out of the goal. She must have tremendous concentration and confidence. She is also an important element in the defensive unit because she can watch the game and warn her defense about the position of the ball and opponents who pose a possible scoring threat. She must have a loud voice and communicate well with her defense.

Equipment

Crosse (Stick)

Made of wood, laminated wood, or synthetic material, with a shaped net pocket at the end. A girl's crosse must be between 35½ and 43¼ inches long overall. The head of the crosse must be between 7 and 9 inches wide. The pocket of the crosse must be traditionally strung (no mesh). The top of the ball when dropped in the pocket must remain even with or above the side walls. The goalkeeper's crosse may be 35½ to 48 inches long. The head of the crosse may be mesh and up to 12 inches wide. The umpire will inspect all players' sticks before the game begins. At any time during the game, at the umpire's discretion, time out may be called to re-inspect the equipment.

The ball

The ball must be yellow and made of solid rubber. The ball must be 7.75 to 8 inches in circumference and weigh 5 to 5.25 ounces.

Field players' equipment

All field players must wear ASTM-approved goggles and a mouth guard. Any color mouth guard **except white and clear** is acceptable. There may be no protruding tabs for *field players*.

Close-fitting gloves, nose guards, soft head gear and eye guards are optional, and may be worn by all players.

The goalkeeper's equipment

The goalkeeper wears a helmet with a face mask and separate throat protector, a mouth guard, a chest protector, padded pants, shin guards, and gloves. The goalkeeper's stick is larger than the field players' sticks.

Jewelry

Players may not wear jewelry on the field except for Medic-alert jewelry with information visible, which must be taped securely to the player. Barrettes are legal as long as they do not endanger other players. The umpire has the power to rule any decoration as dangerous to other players, to remove it from the field, and to penalize it as a minor foul.

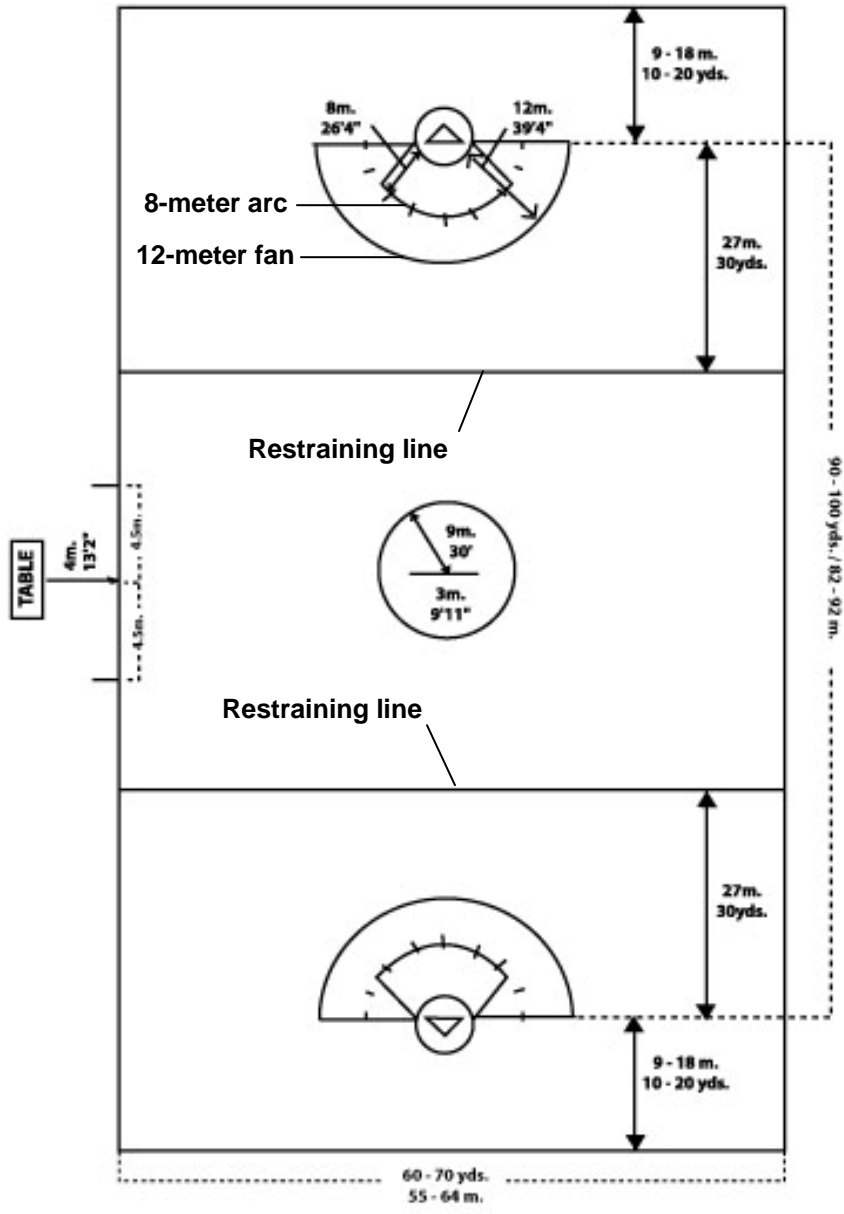


Figure 2 Women's field dimensions

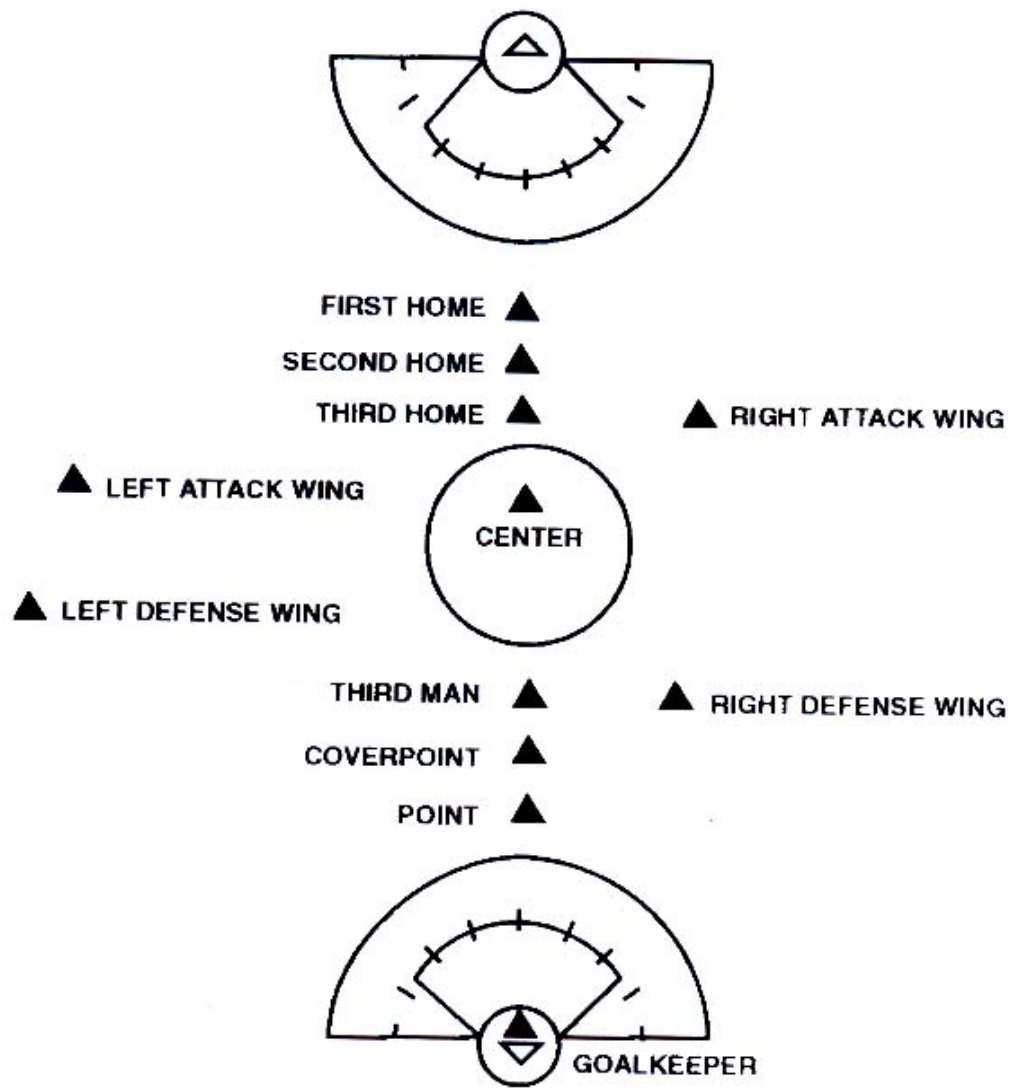


Figure 3 Women's field positions



Figure 4 Visual arm signals for umpires in women's lacrosse