



## Cheat Sheet

# Lacrosse For Dummies

Lacrosse is one of the fastest-growing sports around. But it's actually three games in one: men's field lacrosse, women's field lacrosse, and box lacrosse. The women's field game differs from men's field lacrosse in several critical ways. The player positions on a field lacrosse team differ from the box lacrosse positions. Finally, the rules of play are different in each of the three versions of the sport.

### How Women's Field Lacrosse Differs from Men's Field Lacrosse

Women's field lacrosse is exploding in popularity — there are three times as many women's collegiate lacrosse programs today as there were in 1990. The women's field game differs from the men's field game in some critical ways:

- **Physical contact:** The main difference between men's and women's lacrosse comes down to contact. In the men's game, body-checking is legal — and encouraged (especially by coaches) — while in the women's game, it is not. As a result, there is far less protective equipment in the women's game: Men wear helmets, mouth guards, gloves, shoulder pads, elbow pads, and often ribs pads, whereas women wear mouth guards and protective eyewear, but (with the exception of goalies) no helmets or padding.
- **Number of players:** In the men's game, ten players are on the field — three attackmen, three midfielders, three defensemen, and a goaltender. In the women's game, there are 12 players on the field — offensive players (first home, second home, third home, and two attack wings) and defensive players (center, two defensive wings, point, cover point, third man, and goalie).
- **Sticks:** Unlike men's lacrosse, mesh is not permitted for the pockets of women's sticks; the pockets must be strung in the traditional way. Also, the top of the ball must be above the sidewall when it's in the pocket. As a result, stick handling and shooting are more difficult in the women's game.

- In addition, the standard stick length in men's field lacrosse is 40 to 42 inches from the end of the head to the end of the handle; sticks for defensive players (as well as one midfielder) can measure 52 to 72 inches in length, and the goalie's stick can be 40 to 72 inches long. Women's lacrosse sticks must measure 35½ to 43¼ inches in length; the goalie's stick must measure 35½ to 48 inches in length.
- **Field size:** In men's lacrosse, the field measures 110 yards long and 60 yards wide. In women's lacrosse, the field is a bit bigger: 120 yards long and 70 yards wide.

## The Field Lacrosse and Box Lacrosse Positions

The easiest way to know the positions on the field and in the arena is to know the responsibilities that come with them. In a nutshell, players have three main assignments that come with their positions: score goals (attack players), prevent the other team from scoring goals (defenders), and stop the ball from entering the net (goaltenders). In addition, in field lacrosse, one set of players — known as the midfielders — is regularly assigned the task of playing both offense and defense.

That said, the names of the positions and their precise responsibilities do vary in men's and women's field lacrosse and box lacrosse.

Here are the men's field lacrosse positions:

- **Attackmen:** The attackmen are the primary offensive weapons looking to feed and score. They create most of the offense and generally don't play defense. They're the three players kept on the opposite side of the midline while the ball is at the other end.
- **Midfielders:** Midfielders play offense and defense, following the flow of the game and getting involved at both ends of the field. Midfielders, or "middies," are crucial to a team's transition offense and defense.
- **Defensemen:** The role of the defensemen is generally to stop the opposing attackmen from creating offense or scoring. Occasionally, a defenseman will be dispatched to cover a dominant opposing midfielder.
- **Goaltender:** In addition to stopping shots and getting the ball out of the defensive end, goalies are also responsible for directing the defense. Goalies in field lacrosse have to be more athletic than those in box lacrosse because of the larger goal (6 feet wide by 6 feet high in field, as opposed to just 4 feet wide by 4 feet high in box).

Here are the women's field lacrosse positions:

- **Attack:** The attack positions are made up of first, second, and third homes, and two attack wings, all of whom are responsible for scoring goals.
- **Defense:** Defensive assignments are broken down into these areas: center, two defensive wings, point, cover point, and third man. Wing players move the ball from defense to offense.
- **Goaltender:** The only player on the field wearing a helmet, her job is to prevent goals from being scored.

In box lacrosse, all five offensive players — the two creasemen, two cornermen, and pointman — also play defense:

- **Creasemen:** These two players are generally the primary goal scorers who have strong one-on-one skills.
- **Cornermen:** These two players trail the creasemen on offensive breaks.
- **Pointman:** This player is a threat to score and usually a strong perimeter shooter, but his main role is to feed the ball to his teammates.
- **Goaltender:** The final line of defense, his job is to keep the ball out of the net.

