

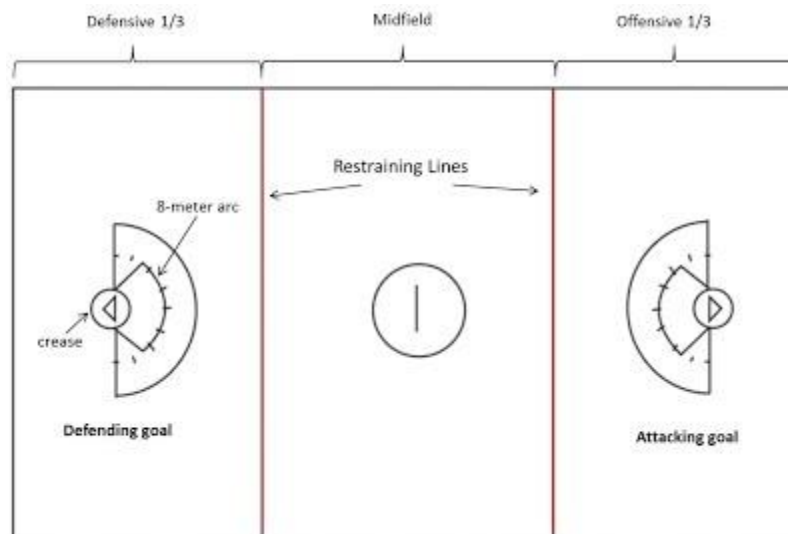
Lacrosse 101

For those who don't know or understand the sport's long list of rules, girls' lacrosse can be very confusing. "Why does the referee keep blowing the whistle?" and "Why does the game keep stopping?" are questions frequently asked on the sidelines during a girls' lacrosse game. So I am here to explain some of the game's basic rules. It will take some time to fully grasp all the concepts of the game, but after reading this I hope you will feel more comfortable watching a girls' lacrosse game!

1. Shooting Space Violation vs. Dangerous Shot: When inside the 8-meter arc that surrounds the goal, offensive players will acquire free space to shoot, known as "shooting space." This is a lane that an offensive player will take to shoot. When a defender jumps into this lane, obstructing the offensive players' ability to shoot without hitting the defender with the ball, the defender is violating the rule of shooting space. This violation is very different from a dangerous shot, even though both fouls occur at similar situations in a game. Unlike a shooting space violation, a dangerous shot is an offensive foul. This occurs when an offensive player takes a shot when she doesn't have space to do so, resulting in a dangerous play. She may even hit her defender with her stick or the ball during the shot. This penalty may also occur when the referee blows his/her whistle for a shooting space foul, but the offensive player continues to shoot anyway.

2. 3 second Rule: I am sure some of you basketball fans read this rule and thought "3 second rule? Yes, I know this one!" Well, unfortunately it's a little different. Unlike in basketball where an offensive player is penalized for being inside the lane for more than 3 seconds, in lacrosse, a defensive player is penalized for being inside the 8-meter arc without marking a player on the opposing team. So when playing defense, any defensive player inside the 8-meter arc must be guarding another player, they can't just be hanging out in the middle of the arc alone.

3. Offside and the Restraining Lines: When looking at a girl's lacrosse field from above, you will notice that there are two lines that run across the field and split it into thirds. These are known as the restraining lines and they help determine when a team is on or offside. Each team, while allowed 11 field players on the field, is only allowed to have 7 of those players in the offensive and defensive ends. This means that while the play is going on at one end of the field, 4 field players must hold behind the restraining line nearest to where the play is occurring. This rule allows teams to have space offensively and defensively. It would be very crowded if all 11 field players played at both ends of the field.



4. Empty Stick Check: This rule is a pretty easy one to understand. A player is not allowed to hit or "check" the stick of an opposing player with her own stick, when this player does not have the ball in her stick. This is known as an empty stick check.

5. The Crease: Both goals on a lacrosse field are surrounded by circle painted on the field known as the crease. This space is for the goalies, and field players are not allowed to enter this space when the goalie is in there. For the most part, field players aren't allowed in the crease at all, except for a particular situation. Following a save, when the goalie is struggling to clear the ball to her teammates, she may drop the ball in the crease, exit the crease, and a field player may enter the crease to pick up the ball.

6. A "Cover" or "Raking": This rule focuses on how players pick the ball up off the ground and is one of the easiest to understand. When the ball ends up on the ground during a girl's lacrosse game, a player must pick up the ball with her stick as if she is using a shovel to pick up dirt or snow. She will scoop beneath the ball and scoop all the way through until she securely holds the ball in her stick. She cannot use the mesh of her stick to cover the ball in any way and she cannot use the back of the mesh in order to flick the ball up into her stick.



In this image, the lower of the two sticks is illegally covering the ball with the back of her stick. Her opponent has no chance of getting the ball because of this.

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