

Lacrosse Terminology

Lacrosse is a great game to watch, but with all sports there are rules and terms that, once understood, bring you to a whole new level of understanding. These terms open the door to an understanding of the rules, fundamentals, and tactics of the game. There is certainly an extensive lacrosse vocabulary that players and serious fans need to learn.

Ball or Ball Down

All players usually shout ball any time the ball is on the ground. Often this is the first indicator to the player who had it that he has dropped it. Ball can also signal the intent of a player to go after the ball instead of the man.

Body Check

Defensively using the body to hit an opposing ball carrier or while contesting an opponent for a player a loose ball. The body check must always be done above the waist and from the front or side.

The Box

The rectangular shaped area around the crease/goal. Defenders seldom press players outside of the box. The distance involved makes it all but impossible to score from outside of the box. The rules state that the offense can only possess the ball for so long without entering the box. At the end of a game the team that is ahead must keep the ball inside of the box.

Butt or Butt End

The end of a crosse opposite the head. All shaft ends need to be covered with a butt-cap.

Change Planes

When a shooter has a close in shot, the goalie must respect where the ball carrier starts his shot. If the shooter holds his stick high, the keeper does the same. Therefore it is most effective for the shooter to start high and shoot low, or vice versa. This is 'changing planes'.

Clamping

On the face-off, a player pushes the back of his stick down on the ball in the attempt to gain control of it.

Clearing

An important defensive maneuver where 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.

"Coast to Coast"

Only occurs when a player nearest their endline takes the ball all the way down the field to the opposing team's end of the field. Most of the time, this refers to clearing midfielders, or defensemen who carry the ball across midfield and into the offensive half and towards the cage. Coast to coast- from one goal to the other.

Cradling

In order to maintain control of the ball when moving along the field, players turn their wrists and arms to cradle the ball in the stick pocket.

Crease

The eighteen-foot diameter circle surrounding each team's goal.

Cutting

An attacking player without the ball darts around a defender toward the goal in order to receive a "feed pass." A cutting player is a cutter.

D Cut

A maneuver used by an attackman to get open for a shot. The player starts on the GLE, about 5 yards away from the goal. He then makes a rounded cut, on the side away from the ball. (completing a "D" shape) This is often the third attackmans' move during a fast break.

Face-off

Takes place at the start of each quarter, after every goal, and after certain dead balls. Two opposing players crouch down at midfield, hold their sticks flat on the ground and press the backs of their stick pockets together. The ball is then placed between the pockets and, when signaled to start, the players "rake" or clamp on the ball to vie for control.

Face Dodging

A player with the ball cradles the stick across his face in an attempt to dodge a stick-poking defender. Generally an open field dodge that does not involve changing hands.

Fast Break

When an offensive team quickly mounts a scoring attack enabling them to gain a man advantage over the opposing defense. Almost always a four on three.

Feed Pass

An offensive play in which one player passes the ball to a cutting teammate for a "quick stick" shot on goal.

Flag Down

Tells the offense that a penalty will be called. This means that you should do all that we can to get off a shot without dropping the ball to the ground, which will halt play.

GLE (Goal Line Extended)

An imaginary line that extends straight out from the sides of the goal line.

Gilman Clear

Defender, typically the goalie, clears the ball by throwing it as far as he can down the field. Sometimes this is a desperation move, but it is often better to create a ground ball situation in the opponents end than around our own goal area.

Ground Balls

Players compete for the control of loose ground balls by stick checking opponents away from the ball while simultaneously trying to scoop it up.

Head

The plastic of the stick connected to the handle.

In the Dirt

The often trampled area approx. 15 foot radius area in front of the goal. Shots from outside the dirt area should be bounce shots, which are more difficult for keepers to stop. Also known as the 'hole'. A much smaller area than 'the box.'

Man Down

Describes the team which has lost a player to the penalty box and must play with fewer men on the field. Man Down teams are often tricky, since it is likely that a defender was penalized.

Man-to-Man

A defensive setup in which each defending player guards a specific offensive opponent.

Man Up (aka Extra Man or EMO)

Describes the team at a player advantage in a penalty situation. Opposite of man down.

Out-of-Bounds

When a shot goes out of play, the player closest to the sideline where the ball went out gets the ball.

Passing

An integral part to quickly moving the ball. Players throw overhand or underhand to each other. In most cases a high pass is easier to deal with than a low bouncing dribbler. Slowly thrown lobbed passes give the defense time to react and often result in the catching player being hit before the pass arrives.

Pick

An offensive player without the ball positions himself against the body of a defender to allow a teammate to get open and receive a pass or take a shot. Picks must be stationary and 'passive'.

Pocket

The head of the stick in which the ball is held and carried. The pocket is strung with leather and/or mesh netting. In order to be legal, the top of a ball cannot be seen when looking at the pocket from the side.

Poke Check

A defender jabs his stick at the exposed stick end or hands of an opposing ball carrier in an effort to jar the ball loose. These checks are very effective in that the checking player stays in balance and keeps a cushion of space between himself and the ball carrier.

Quick Stick

When the ball reaches an offensive player's stick on a feed pass, he catches it and then shoots it toward the goal in one swift motion.

Raking

A face-off move by a player who, in trying to gain possession of a ground ball, places the head of his stick on top of the ball and sweeps it back. Raking is done standing still. This means that often people who rake will be legally hit by an opposing player. Raking is a very bad habit that is difficult to unlearn. EXCEPTION: Goalkeepers can rake or 'clamp' a ground ball legally from the crease.

Release

Players shout release when they succeed in scooping a ground ball. This indicates to teammates that they can no longer make contact with the opponents to drive them away from the ball. Doing so is a penalty.

Riding

When an attacking team loses possession of the ball, it must quickly revert to playing defense in order to prevent the ball from being cleared back out. In most ride situations, the goal-keeper will be left un-marked.

Roll Dodge

An offensive move in which a ball carrier, using his body as a shield between a defensive player and the cradled ball, spins around the defender. To provide maximum ball protection, the ball carrier switches hands as he rolls.

Support

When a player without the ball moves into a position where the player with the ball can make a clear pass.

Scooping

The manner in which a player picks up loose ground balls. He bends toward the ground, slides the pocket of his stick underneath the ball, and lifts it into the netting of the stick.

Screen

An attacking player without possession of the ball positions himself in front of the opposing goal crease in an effort to block the goalkeeper's view.

Shaft

A hollow aluminum or composite pole connected to the head of the crosse.

Skip

To pass to a non-adjacent teammate. Also known as a star pass. (like drawing a star)

Slap Check

A stick check (inferior to the poke check). The defender uses his stick to slap the stick of the offensive player who has the ball. Poke checks are preferred since it is easier to keep you feet moving and stay balanced during the check.

Slide

When an offensive player with the ball has gotten past his defender, a defending teammate will shift his position to pick up that advancing player.

Square Up

To position one's body in preparation to pass. This means to aim the leading shoulder towards the target.

Stick Check

In an effort to dislodge the ball from the "pocket," the defending player strikes his stick against the stick of an opposing ball carrier in a controlled manner.

Unsettled-Situation

Any situation in which the defense is not positioned correctly, usually due to a loose ball or broken clear, or fast break. Teams that hustle score many goals during unsettled situations.

V Cut

A maneuver used by an offensive player to get open for a pass. The offensive player feints in causing his defender to react and move, he then cuts sharply away (completing the "V" shape) See also "D cut".

Zone Defense

When defenders play in specific areas of their defensive zone, rather than covering man-to-man.