



Lacrosse: A New (Old) Game

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One of the fastest growing games in United States is Lacrosse. This game is new to many, but has its roots in Northeast American and Canadian Indian culture. Indian nations playing lacrosse were the Oneida, Mohawk, Onondaga, Cayuga, Seneca, and Tuscorora. The sport was used to resolve conflicts and training for young warriors. Its popularity in Minnesota has risen from 30 high school teams to over 60 in just 3 years.

Lacrosse is very physical and is rated as one of the three collision sports by the NCAA. Many of the movements can stress the body such as the knees, ankles, elbows, and shoulders. Proper fitting equipment can help protect participants during the player-to-player contact. However, proper physical training is the best way to prevent injury.

A player must possess a strong core, cardiovascular endurance, and flexibility. Core strength is needed during the game because of the body-to-body contact. A strong core is essential for body control during the physical play of ground balls and defense. Upper body strength is also needed for maintaining control of the cross during play. A person who is not controlling their cross can end up injuring another player by way of bruises to the arms and legs.

The cardiovascular endurance is needed due to running the length of a field 110 yards by 60 yards wide and sprinting up to 40 yards, 3 to 4 times a shift. Flexibility helps when a player is trying to avoid contact or “make a move” during play. A good cardiovascular system will allow a player to increase his performance on the field during a shift along with a faster recovery between shifts.

Proper stretching will help with the flexibility of a player. Stretching the quads, hamstrings and calf muscles will help the legs; stretches for the arms, shoulder and trunk help with the stick work during the game. A stretch is defined as a slow constant pull on a muscle held for 30 seconds.

The most common injuries are sprained ankles and knees for which rest, ice, compression, and elevation (RICE) are the preferred home treatment. Contusions (bruises) are also common due to the use of cross for defense and offense.

Being prepared physically can help reduce injuries. However, injuries can still occur and Physical Therapy Consultants, Inc. can help an athlete with their training regimen and treatment of injuries.