

LACROSSE.

THE NATIONAL GAME OF CANADA.

IN England it is a boy's pride to be the possessor of a cricket bat, and it is his ambition to get into the eleven at school; but in Canada his chief desires are a crosse, and a place in the school team. Lacrosse is as inherent to the youth of Canada as Cricket is to the youth of England, and it would be very hard indeed to decide which of the two pastimes more completely combines the requisites of a good sport—activity, skill, and steadiness. Englishmen, of course, almost naturally incline to the glorious game of Cricket, but there is undoubtedly a great deal to be said in favour of Lacrosse. There can be no comparison between the two games, for their natures are utterly opposed, but it is certain that, next to Cricket, Lacrosse requires more skill and more practice for the attainment of proficiency than any other game.

The actual invention of the game is shrouded in mystery, but there is no reason to doubt that it originated with the North American Indians. Indeed, the very few records that exist tell us that on all great fête or gala days a Lacrosse match between two tribes of these Indians was the chief—possibly the only—feature of amusement provided. There was apparently no limit to the number of players on these occasions, from one to two hundred frequently taking part, whilst the extent of the field was arranged in accordance with the numerical strength of the tribes engaged, and the goals were generally one, and often two miles apart. The Canadian white men learnt the rudiments of the game from the Indians, and considerable credit is due to them for having constructed so fine a game as Lacrosse from such rude materials. No more conclusive proof of its excellence could perhaps be quoted than the single fact that, notwithstanding its comparatively late adoption, it is, as our heading implies, the recognised National game of Canada.

Lacrosse is played in England only to a limited extent—limited, that is to say, when the many thousands who participate in Cricket, Football, and Lawn Tennis are taken into consideration. Its progress during the years it has been practised here has undoubtedly been slow; the number of clubs and of players have not increased rapidly, but still they *have* increased, and there can be no doubt that Lacrosse in its quiet way is fairly holding its own with its sister sports.

We find it a matter of some difficulty to satisfactorily describe Lacrosse in these pages, for the reason that it is so entirely different from any other pastime, and that its many peculiarities require to be seen in action to be understood aright. However, close attention to the following details will at any rate initiate a would-be player into its mysteries, and the experience he will gain in practice will teach him the rest. The first things to be obtained are a crosse and a ball, the former being the instrument with which the game is played. Its appearance will be gleaned from the drawing of it in Figs. 1, 2, and 4. It consists of a straight piece of wood, about an inch thick, and four feet long, bent into a semicircle at the top, with a piece of gut drawn from the tip of this semicircle to a point about eighteen or twenty inches from the straight end of the stick. The space thus formed by the stick and the gut is woven with more gut, and a network is made of a coarser and more pliable nature than that of a tennis racket. It is upon this network that the ball is played. The remaining eighteen or twenty inches of the stick constitute the handle of the crosse. The crosse of to-day is a great improvement upon that formerly used by both Indians and Canadians, but as these improvements are such as only the experienced player would understand,

we need not describe them here. The ball used is rather larger than a tennis ball, and is composed of solid sponge india-rubber. Like a cricket bat, a crosse has a right and a wrong side, a distinction that will be readily appreciated by the veriest tyro, for upon the right side the ball can be held, whilst upon the wrong it cannot—at least, not by novices.

Everything depends upon the way in which the crosse is held. If the player will take hold of the extreme end of the handle with his right hand, having the gut of the crosse towards him, and with his left hand grasp that portion of the stick where the handle terminates and the gut commences, he will be holding a crosse as it should be held. If he hold it very loosely he will find that the crosse (if it be a good one) will have a natural balance of its own, with the wooden side of it rather lower than the gut side, and he may be sure that the position it falls into is the correct one. He should then place a ball upon the network, and he will find that it will (if the crosse is properly held) at once roll towards the straight part



Fig. 1.—THROWING.



Fig. 2.—THROWING.

(or backbone) of the stick, and then proceed to roll along the backbone towards the semicircular end. This semicircular end (otherwise the point) should then be slightly raised, or the ball will drop from it to the ground. At the first few attempts the ball, doubtless, will drop to the ground, but as this happens in all cases, no beginner need fear that he is unusually awkward. Remember, that when resting on the crosse, the ball should always be against the backbone. Having mastered this, "throwing" becomes the next operation. Here let us lay down the golden rule that the ball must *never* leave the crosse at any other part than the point, and before doing so it must have rolled down at least a portion of the backbone.

A glance at Fig. 1 will now be of some assistance, and if the player will hold the crosse in the manner there depicted, being careful that the ball is in the proper position, and will, with a circular movement, swing it towards the left shoulder, he will find that the ball will travel rapidly down the backbone and fly off at the point—the greater the speed of the ball down the backbone the farther it will go. Like all other movements, this re-

quires practice, and failures will surely attend first attempts, but after a while the ball will be found to "bite" the stick, as it were, and success

will soon follow. The ball has frequently been thrown from 100 to 130 yards by means of this throw. Fig. 2 introduces us to another throw, and here the player will find some difficulty in bringing the crosse into position whilst the ball is upon it; but, if he will remember that the ball must *at all times* rest against the backbone (we cannot repeat this too often), he will soon attain his object. This throw is performed by bringing the right hand, which holds the end of the handle, sharply towards the body, and, as in the former throw, the ball will run down the backbone, and shoot from the point. There are a variety of other throws, all variations of the two described, which are the chief ones, but if the beginner will master these thoroughly, the others will

come to him naturally. Next we have an essential feature of the game, "Catching"—and this requires more practice and care for proficiency than any other particular. The novice will be almost certain to hold out his crosse like a frying-pan, and allow the ball to simply drop into it, which, of course, it will do, and immediately jump out again. To ensure a safe catch the point of the crosse should be pointed at the ball whilst it is in the air, and then as the ball reaches the gut the crosse should receive a slightly downward movement. In fact, the crosse should give way to the ball in the same way that a fielder at Cricket gives way to a ball when he catches it. Frequently the ball comes too swiftly to permit of it being caught at the first attempt; then it should be merely blocked, as it were, and be caught on the rebound. If the player has access to a blank wall the throw in Fig. 2 can be practised against it, and the ball can be caught on the return. We know of no better practice than this, as it enables one to become accustomed to the handling of the crosse, besides learning the actual points of throwing and catching—and the more advanced the beginner is in these rudiments the better he will play in the field.

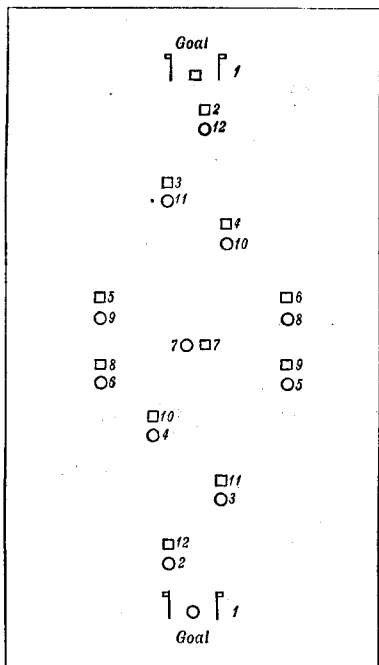


Fig. 3.—PLAN OF LACROSSE FIELD.

We will proceed to give a slight outline of the game of Lacrosse. No limit to the size of the field is necessary, though a boundary is often compulsory. The distance of the two goals from one another should be from 120 to 130 yards. A goal consists of two upright posts six feet high, and placed six feet apart, thus forming a space six feet square, through which the ball has to pass to score a game. There are no minor points, and there is no "off side" in Lacrosse, and a game usually lasts ninety minutes, ends being changed at half time. The team should number twelve each, and a glance at Fig. 3 will show the positions the twenty-four players should occupy. One side is represented by a square (□), and the other by a circle (○). The names of the various positions are:—1, Goal-keeper; 2, Point; 3, Cover-point; 4, Third Man; 5 and 6, Defence Fields; 7, Centre; 8 and 9, Attack Fields; 10, Third Home; 11,

Second Home; 12, First Home. It will thus be seen that each team extends the entire length of the field, from goal-keeper to first home, and that the players (with the exception of the goal-keepers) are in opposing couples. Every one knows the work of a goal-keeper. He has to do his best to prevent the ball from going through the 6-feet square he is defending, and, he it carefully noted, he is the only player on the field who may touch the ball with his hands. "Point" takes his position immediately in front of goal. This is considered the most responsible position on the field, and is always filled by the best and most reliable player. "Cover-point" stands a few yards farther from the goal being defended, and his position is only second in importance to that of "Point," and the same remarks apply to "Third Man" in a slightly lesser degree. These three men compare somewhat with "backs" at Football, and all must be steady, sure men. It is by them, and sometimes the goal-keeper, that the throw first described is so frequently used. The next men out are the "Defence Fields." These should be speedy men to run the ball down the sides. "Centre" is a sort of "rover" who has no fixed position, but should endeavour to help his side on the defence when they are in trouble, or assist them on the attack when they are assaulting their opponents' goal. The players hitherto described are (with the exception of Centre) confined to one-half of the field, and are called "defence men"—because their chief object is to defend their goal from the onslaughts of the enemy. The remainder of the team are called "attack men," because to them is left the task of attacking the opposing fortress—of scoring goals, in fact. They all need to be active, if not speedy men, and the throw of Fig. 2 is the one used by them more than any other. The reason that the players are separated into couples is



Fig. 4.—FACING.

that each "defence man" is opposed individually to an "attack man" of the other side. Thus "Point" has always to "check" (that is the recognised term) "First Home." "Cover-point" checks "Second Home." "Third man" checks "Third Home," and the "Defence Fields" check the "Attack Fields." A careful study of the diagram in Fig. 3 will explain this more clearly.

The game is commenced by the two "centres" in the manner shown in Fig. 4. This starting position is termed "facing." When "Play" is called the centres will struggle for the ball; one will secure it, and immediately run with it towards his opponents' goal; if closely followed, he will pass the ball to one of his side who has managed to elude the attentions of his check, and he will at once make a sharp throw for goal. The ball will be stopped—say by the opposing "Point," who will make a long shy of 100 yards or more, and the game is immediately carried on at the other end of the field. The "attack men," by dodging and other means, do their best to become "unchecked," and by judicious passing of the ball endeavour to retain possession of it until one of them gets an opportunity of shooting at goal. The "defence men," of course, do all in their power to prevent the "attack men" from becoming unchecked, and at the same time try to secure the ball and throw it away from such dangerous proximity to their goal. Perhaps an "attack man" succeeds in obtaining a shot at "goal," but he throws wide, and the ball goes behind the posts. In this case it is generally advisable for

"Goal-keeper" to go after it, as he is a yard or so nearer than any one else. "First Home" goes out to him, and "Point" takes "Goal-keeper's" place for the time being. "Goal-keeper" throws up from some distance behind "goal," the ball falling in the centre of the ground, and play takes place amongst the fielders. By them the ball is carried to either one end or the other, and the game continues in this way, the ball visiting every part of the field until a good and successful shot at one of the goals puts an end to it. The ball is then brought to the centre of the ground, and the next game is started by "facing," as at the beginning.

Lacrosse is essentially an unselfish game. The more freely a team will pass amongst themselves the more certain are they of victory. It is a game that has all the exercise, all the freedom, and all the manliness of Football, and one in which skill and activity are more than a match for mere brute strength. Like all games that are worth playing, there is a certain amount of risk.—but this is confined to skin and other external abrasions. Broken limbs and internal injuries are unknown to Lacrosse. It can be played in both winter and summer, but a good light and a dry, even turf are decided advantages. Lacrosse is a game that requires to be seen to be appreciated and thoroughly understood, and we are sure that if it were better known than it is, it would be played to a much greater extent. It needs an introduction to some of our public schools, and then it would, perhaps, attain the position it deserves to hold as a thoroughly pure sport, containing no elements that are not healthy and manly.

LAWS OF LACROSSE.

Rule I.—The Crosse.

Section 1.—The Crosse may be of any length to suit the player, woven with raw hide or gut—not cord or soft leather. The netting must be flat when the ball is not on it. In its widest part the Crosse shall not exceed one foot. A string must be brought through a hole at the side of the tip of the turn, to prevent the point of the stick catching an opponent's Crosse. A leading string, resting upon the top of the stick, may be used, but must not be fastened, so as to form a pocket, lower down the stick than the end of the length-strings. The length-strings must be woven to within two inches of their termination, so that the ball cannot catch in the meshes.

Section 2.—No kind of metal, either in wire or sheet, screws, or nails, shall be allowed upon the Crosse. Splices must be made with either string or gut.

Rule II.—The Ball.

The Ball must be india-rubber sponge, not less than eight inches, and not more than eight and a quarter inches in circumference. It must weigh not less than four and a quarter ounces, and not more than four and a half ounces. In matches it must be furnished by the home club.

Rule III.—The Goals.

The Goals shall be placed not less than 100 yards, and not more than 150 yards apart, unless otherwise arranged, and in any position agreeable to the Captains of both sides. The Posts must be six feet apart, and the tops thereof, including any ornament, must be six feet above the ground. In matches they must be furnished by the home team.

Rule IV.—The Boundaries.

The Boundaries of the field of play shall be agreed upon by the Captains before the commencement of the match. Should the ball be thrown out of bounds, the Referee shall call "Stand," and the ball shall then be "faced" by the two nearest players, four yards within the bounds at the point where the ball went out.

Rule V.—Umpires.

Section 1.—There must be only one Umpire at each Goal, who shall be agreed to by both Captains before the commencement of the match. They shall not be changed during the progress of a match without the consent of both Captains. They shall not change goals during a match.

Section 2.—No Umpire shall, directly or indirectly, be interested in any bet upon the result of the match. No person shall be allowed to speak to the Umpires, or in any way distract their attention.

Section 3.—The Umpire shall stand behind the posts. In the event of "goal" being claimed, he shall at once decide whether or not the ball has fairly passed through the goal-space, his decision being simply "goal" or "no goal." His decision shall be final, without appeal, and he shall not be required to give a reason.

Section 4.—In the absence of a Referee, the Umpires shall assume his functions, as set down in Law VI., each over his own half of the field. One only shall act as timekeeper and starter, failing a Referee, and this shall be decided by tossing.

Rule VI.—The Referee.

Section 1.—The Referee shall be selected by the Officers of the competing teams at any time prior to the match. He shall be a disinterested person.

Section 2.—Before the match begins, he shall see that Umpires have been properly chosen.

Section 3.—He shall draw the players up in lines, and see that the regulations respecting the crosses, ball, goals, and spiked shoes, &c. &c., are adhered to. He shall ascertain the length of time the match shall last, directly from both Captains, and he shall be sole timekeeper and starter.

Section 4.—When a "foul" claimed by any player has been allowed—or in case of injury or accident, Law VIII., Sects. 2 and 3—the Referee shall immediately call "Stand." If the ball enter goal, after "Stand" has been called by the Referee, it shall not count.

Section 5.—The infliction of penalties (Law XII.) shall be in the province of the Referee, without appeal, and any side rejecting his decision, or refusing to continue the match, shall be declared the losers.

Section 6.—The Referee shall arbitrate in all disputes between the Captains, and his decision shall be final.

Section 7.—At the commencement of each game, and after "Stand" has been called, the Referee shall see that the ball is properly "faced."

Rule VII.—Captains.

Section 1.—A Captain to superintend the play shall be appointed by each side previously to the commencement of a match. They shall be members of the club by whom they are appointed. They may or may not be players in a match; if not, they shall not carry a cross, nor appear in Lacrosse uniform. They shall be the mouthpiece of their respective teams in all disputes, in which they may be assisted by one player selected by them, and shall report any infringement of these Laws during a match to the Referee.

Section 2.—Captains shall arrange, previous to a match, the length of time it shall last, and shall toss for choice of goals.

Rule VIII.—The Teams.

Section 1.—*Number.* Twelve players shall constitute a full team. They must be regular members of the club they represent. Should one side be deficient in numbers at the time fixed for starting the match, their opponents may either limit their own numbers to equalise the sides, or compel them to play with as many as they have.

Section 2.—*Wilful Injury.* Should a player be incapacitated from playing through wilful injury from an opponent during a match, his side shall be at liberty to replace such injured player by a fresh man, or compel the other side to take off a player to equalise the sides. No change of players may be made after a match has commenced, except in cases of injury during the game.

Section 3.—*Accidents.* Should an accident occur to any player, which, in the opinion of the Referee, incapacitates him from playing, the other side must put off a man during his absence.

Section 4.—*Spiked Soles.* No player may wear spiked soles under any circumstances. The soles must in every case be india-rubber if boots or shoes are worn.

Section 5.—The players on each side shall be designated as follows:—1, "Goal-keeper;" 2, "Point;" 3, "Cover-point;" 4, "Third Man;" 5, "Right Defence;" 6, "Left Defence;" 7, "Centre;" 8, "Right Attack;" 9, "Left Attack;" 10, "Third Home;" 11, "Second Home;" 12, "First Home."

Rule IX.—The Game.

Section 1.—Each game shall be started by the centres facing at the centre mark, and when both sides are ready the Referee shall call "Play."

Section 2.—A match shall be decided by a majority of goals taken within a specified time, unless otherwise agreed upon. A goal shall be scored by the ball passing through the goal-space from the front, not being propelled with any part of the foot or leg.

Section 3.—Should the ball be accidentally put through either goal-space by one of the players defending it, by whatsoever means, it shall be counted a goal to the opposite side. Should it be put through by any one not actually a player, it shall not count.

Section 4.—In the event of a goal-post being knocked down during a match, and the ball put through what would be the goal if the post were standing, it shall count goal for the attacking side.

Section 5.—When goal has been claimed and allowed, the ball shall be again faced in mid-field, but when disallowed, it shall be faced where it is picked up. In no such case shall a ball be faced within ten yards of either goal-post.

Section 6.—Ends shall be changed at "half-time" (unless otherwise agreed upon), when either side may claim not more than ten minutes' rest; such rest not being counted as occupied in play.

Section 7.—The Goal-keeper, while defending goal within the goal-crease, may put away with his hand or foot, or block the ball in any manner with his crosse or body.

Section 8.—Any player is "out of play" if he drops his crosse during a game, and may not touch the ball or impede an opponent in any way until he recovers his own crosse.

Section 9.—A match is ended by the Referee calling "Time."

Rule X.—Fouls.

Section 1.—No attacking player may be within 6 feet of either goal-post, unless the ball shall have passed "Cover-point's" position on the field. Such position shall be marked 10 yards in front of the goal. A player thus trespassing shall be out of play, and no goal shall count, if taken, while he is out of play.

Section 2.—No player shall interfere in any way with another who is in pursuit of an opponent.

Section 3.—No player, except the Goal-keeper (Law IX., Sec. 7), may touch the ball with his hand, save when the ball lodges in a place inaccessible to his crosse, or about his clothing or person. The player picking it up must "face" with his nearest opponent, all other players standing in the positions they may then occupy.

Section 4.—Should the ball catch in the netting, the crosse must immediately be struck on the ground, and the ball dislodged.

Section 5.—Kicking the ball under any circumstances with the foot or leg is foul play (except in the case of the Goal-keeper, Law IX., Sec. 7), but this does not prevent a player from stopping the progress of the ball with foot or leg.

Section 6.—No player shall grasp an opponent's crosse with his hands, hold it with his arms or between his legs or under his feet, or kick it.

Rule XI.—Rough Play.

Section 1.—No player, with his crosse or otherwise, shall hold or trip another, nor push with the hand; nor shall any player deliberately charge or shoulder an opponent, nor

wrestle with the legs entwined, so as to throw an opponent. This does not prevent the use of the "body-check," provided the same be strictly as defined (Law XIII.), nor the pushing an opponent with the shoulder in ground-scuffles.

Section 2.—No player shall deliberately strike another, or threaten to do so, under any circumstances, and any one considering himself purposely injured during play must report, through his Captain, to the Referee.

Section 3.—The check commonly known as the "square" or "crosse" check, which consists of one player charging into another with both hands on the crosse, so as to make the stick meet the body of an opponent, is strictly forbidden.

Section 4.—No player shall throw his crosse under any circumstances.

Rule XII.—Penalties.

Section 1.—For breach of Law X., Sections 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6, a "face" shall be given, at the place where the foul occurred, yet not nearer either goal-post than ten yards, unless the "foul" be made by the defending party.

Section 2.—Claiming "fouls" on trivial grounds, as when, in the opinion of the Referee, no foul was intended, cannot be tolerated, and the Referee shall first caution a player so offending, and, if persisted in, shall disqualify him for that particular game (not match). Should the Captain (non-playing) so offend, the same penalty shall be inflicted upon him as though he were a player.

Section 3.—For rough play, Law XI., Sections 1, 2, 3, and 4, the penalty for first offence shall be disqualification for remainder of that particular game or match. See Law VI., Section 5.

Section 4.—The Referee shall be bound in all cases to inflict one or other of these penalties, but only when appealed to by the Captain of the complaining side.

Rule XIII.—Definition of Terms.

GOAL is the space contained between the two posts.

GOAL CREASE shall be a ground-space six feet square in front of the goal-posts, having for one of its sides the line between the posts. If not marked, it shall be left to the Umpire to decide.

FACE.—The ball shall be placed upon the ground between the crosses of two opponents, and each of them shall have his left side towards the goal he is attacking. They shall not move till "Play" has been called.

TRIPPING is the use of the legs, feet, or crosse, to throw an opponent.

HOLDING shall mean clutching with the hand or arm, or detaining an opponent between the two arms and the crosse, or placing the crosse against his body so as to impede his movements.

BODY-CHECK is the placing one's body in the way of an approaching opponent, so that the latter is simply impeded. No checker shall use force in the body-check.

STRIKING means the giving a deliberate blow with either crosse or hand.

CHARGING or SHOULDERING implies motion and unnecessary force in checking, and is forbidden, because the object should be to play the ball and not the man.

DRAW means equal number of goals gained at call of "Time."

STAND.—The ball is dead when the Referee calls "Stand," and no player shall move until the Referee calls "Play."