

1 Sport in America

- Host:** Welcome to *Sports Today*. Today we'll be talking about a sport that has been played for hundreds of years and it comes from North America. When I say this sport is hundreds of years old, I mean that it was played hundreds of years before any people from Europe arrived in America. This sport was invented by the Native Americans, it's called lacrosse. In the studio with me is Ashak Burns. When did you start playing lacrosse, Ashak?
- Ashak:** I started lacrosse when I was quite young – I think I was about four or five. I watched my brothers practising in the garden and in the street and I watched them play in matches. When I was seven, I joined a junior team.
- Host:** What did you like about lacrosse?
- Ashak:** It's different, for example, you don't touch the ball with your hands. You have a stick with a net on the end. You use it to catch the ball. Even when I was a little kid, trying to catch the ball with the net was fun. Better than kicking a ball.
- Host:** You were never a great soccer fan then?
- Ashak:** No, not really. I kicked a ball around with friends, but it was never much fun. Lacrosse was just cooler.
- Host:** How do you play lacrosse? Can you tell us about some basic rules of the game?
- Ashak:** Sure. So, the rules can be different, it depends which league you play in or whether you are in a children's or adults' team. I know about lacrosse that is played in most American high schools. Where should I start? There are ten players in a team. Only three of them are allowed everywhere on the field. The others must either stay at the back or at the front. You also can't just run across the field.
- Host:** How do you play the ball?
- Ashak:** Only the goalkeeper is allowed to touch the ball with his or her hands. All the other players must use their sticks to play the ball.
- Host:** It sounds quite rough.
- Ashak:** Yes, lacrosse is quite a tough sport, you can tackle the other players and also hit their sticks, so they lose the ball. It isn't super dangerous, but sometimes it hurts. You aren't allowed to hit someone with your stick. It's quite a hard game to play.
- Host:** I heard that Native American tribes played lacrosse to settle conflicts. Do you know about that?
- Ashak:** Yes, it's true. Sometimes they played a game of lacrosse, so they didn't have to go to war.
- Host:** When did people start playing lacrosse for fun? When did it get popular with other people, other than Native Americans?
- Ashak:** I'm not sure, some white settlers in Canada started playing lacrosse as a sport. In 1859 it became Canada's national sport and then it became popular in the US, too. In the 1930s they introduced box lacrosse.
- Host:** What is box lacrosse?
- Ashak:** It's a version of lacrosse played indoors. Then it's five players against five players, with one goalkeeper in each team. It's fun, too, but I prefer the outdoor version.