



USA LACROSSE NEW START MANUAL

GUIDE TO STARTING A NEW TEAM OR LEAGUE

USA LACROSSE MISSION

As the governing body of lacrosse in the United States, USA Lacrosse provides national leadership, structure, and resources to fuel the sport's growth and enrich the experience of participants.

USA LACROSSE VISION

We envision a future that offers everyone a lifelong opportunity to enjoy the sport of lacrosse.

USA LACROSSE HEADQUARTERS

USA Lacrosse national headquarters are located in Sparks, Maryland. Features include the sport's national archives and The Lacrosse Museum and National Hall of Fame.

USA Lacrosse currently employs over 80 staff members at its national offices and benefits from regular volunteer assistance. USA Lacrosse, a 501 (c)(3) organization, relies on the growing membership support of over 450,000 lacrosse players, coaches, officials, and enthusiasts for a large portion of its operational funding. Additional funding programs include annual giving, planned giving, foundation and corporate giving, capital drives, grants, advertising, and special events.

USA LACROSSE FOUNDATION

The philanthropic arm of USA Lacrosse, the USA Lacrosse Foundation (USALF) works to generate resources above and beyond membership revenue to support the mission and vision of USA Lacrosse: to grow the game responsibly while inspiring participation across the country and in your own backyard. Refer to the Foundation's Annual Report for an overview of USA Lacrosse's efforts to support and develop the sport. This report includes a listing of donors that provide critical financial support to the organization. [Click Here](#) to view the Annual Report.

USA LACROSSE NATIONAL TEAMS

The U.S. National Team program has 5 primary teams:

- U.S. Men's Senior Team
- U.S. Women's Senior Team
- U.S. Men's U19 Team
- U.S. Women's U19 Team
- U.S. Men's Indoor Team

Each team competes quadrennially in sanctioned World Championships through the Federation of International Lacrosse (FIL). Teams typically participate in more than 10 annual games, exhibitions, clinics, and appearances.

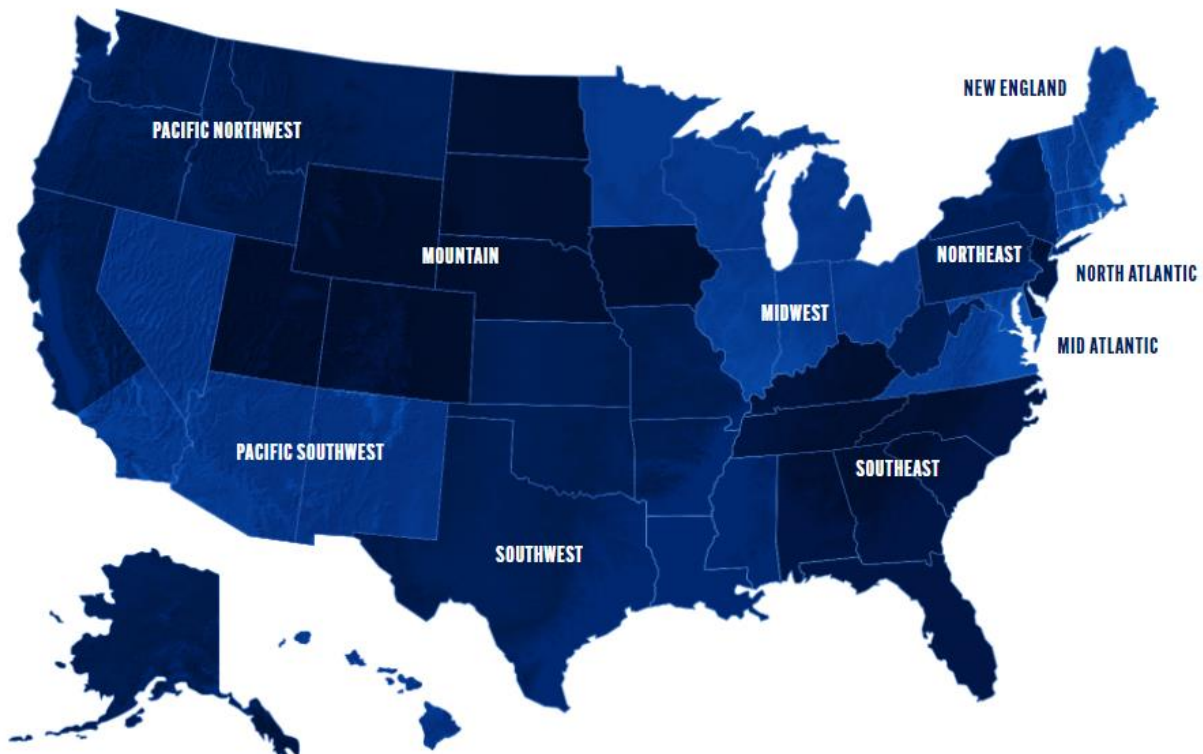
WELCOME

This manual is designed to guide you through the process of establishing a new lacrosse team or league at the youth or high school level. In addition to this guide, the USA Lacrosse website (www.usalacrosse.com), headquarter staff, and regional network are available to assist you.

USA LACROSSE REGIONAL NETWORK

As you determine which direction you are going, be sure to tap into the knowledge resources of the USA Lacrosse regional staff. You will find the local USA Lacrosse network to be an invaluable resource when it comes to experience with beginning and sustaining new lacrosse programs.

USA Lacrosse is represented by 10 local regions covering all 50 states. They are there to help you! Visit <https://www.usalacrosse.com/regions> to locate your USA Lacrosse regional contact.



USA Lacrosse Regional Managers and Directors can provide your program with the following tools:

- A list of local resources and contacts that have experience in starting new teams
- Volunteer support
- Invaluable advice and guidance
- Website promotion for your new team
- Support with fundraising efforts
- Potential local grant programs

HOW TO START A TEAM

To help you most efficiently execute the process of forming a new team, you will first need to answer a few questions about what kind of team you seek to form:

- ① What level of play are you facilitating? Youth or high school? Club or varsity?
- ② Are you interested in joining an existing league with your new team? Are you establishing your own league?
- ③ Will you need to pitch your vision to a school board or academic administration?

In this section you will find general keys to success and starting points for forming a team or league at any level. Please refer to the “Special Considerations: Starting a Team at the Youth vs High School Level” section of this manual for forming a team specific to your age level of play.

CHECK LIST

- Gauge interest level and identify target group of potential participants.
- Create a budget and determine how the team will be financed.
- Recruit others (parents, volunteers, community support) to help you with the administration of the team or league.
- If you are forming a team, connect with an existing organization (like a Parks and Rec Dept or YMCA) or find a league to join. If you are forming your own league, establish a non-profit organization.
- Secure field space.
- Recruit committed coaches and officials and connect them with training opportunities.
- Confirm insurance for the organization, players, coaches, and officials.
- Establish a risk management plan.
- Recruit players.
- Secure equipment for players if they don't have their own.
- Get other team and field materials.
- Find other teams to play.
- Secure financial support and fundraising.



GAUGE INTEREST LEVEL: IDENTIFY TARGET GROUP OF PARTICIPANTS

Before committing your time and effort to forming a new team, determine your target area and potential participants to ensure that there is ample interest. Consider the following questions to guide you in shaping your program's mission and identifying steps for success.

- ① Who do you want to serve?
 - Age groups & gender(s)
 - Consider gender equity
 - Single neighborhood vs. community-wide
 - Urban/suburban/rural
 - Recreational only vs. educational
 - Volunteer vs. staffed

- ② What model will you use to facilitate your programming?
 - Clinics (basic skills, fun, awareness)
 - A competitive league
 - Summer Camps
 - Year-round Activity
 - Seasonal Activity
 - Educational Components

TIP ON GAUGING INTEREST

- Once you have determined your target audience, format, and mission, consider holding informational meetings after school or at local YMCA's, Boy's and Girls' Clubs, or Parks and Rec Depts to allow you to gauge the local interest level.
- Talk to attendees about your purpose and mission. Use the [Lacrosse in Schools](#) PowerPoint presentation template and resources from www.usalacrosse.com.

HELPFUL LINKS

- [Lacrosse History](#)
- [About USA Lacrosse](#)
- [USA Lacrosse Coach Resources](#)
- [Health & Safety](#)

CREATE A BUDGET

Starting a lacrosse team requires an investment of time and money. Money is one of the quickest and most effective routes to program acceptance. Since schools and community organizations may not have the start-up costs for new sports, be prepared to gather funds before making your pitch. Remember that long-term planning – for more than just one or two seasons – is critical for the program's success and sustainability.

HIDDEN COSTS

Financing a new team can be challenging. Hidden costs may include field rental fees, transportation expenses, coach payment, officials fees, practice equipment, tools, uniforms, and marketing and promotional initiatives.

EQUIPMENT COSTS AND USA LACROSSE MEMBERSHIP FEES



[Men's Game Rules and Equipment](#)

[Women's Game Rules and Equipment](#)

Consider the following list of items and estimated costs:

NOTE: Your team may or may not require all items listed.

EQUIPMENT	COST/UNIT	POSITION	GAME
Complete Stick	\$30 - \$150	Field Player	Men's and Women's
Mouth Guard	\$10 - \$50	Field Player	Men's and Women's
Helmet	\$130 - \$300	Field Player and Goalie	Men's
Headgear	\$130 - \$150	Field Player	Women's
Goggles	\$30 - \$50	Field Player	Women's
Arm Pads	\$40 - \$100	Field Player	Men's
Shoulder Pads	\$50 - \$100	Field Player	Men's
Gloves	\$100 - \$150	Field Player	Men's
Complete Stick	\$80 - \$100	Goalie	Men's and Women's
Pants	\$40 - \$80	Goalie	Women's
Shin Guards	\$20 - \$50	Goalie	Women's
Gloves	\$100 - \$180	Goalie	Men's and Women's
Chest Protector	\$70 - \$200	Goalie	Men's and Women's
Uniform Shirt	\$20 - \$50	Field Player and Goalie	Men's and Women's
Uniform Shorts	\$20 - \$50	Field Player and Goalie	Men's and Women's
Uniform Kilt	\$20 - \$50	Field Player and Goalie	Women's

USA LACROSSE MEMBERSHIP LEVEL	AGE	COST/MEMBER (annual)
6U	6 and Under	\$15
Youth	7 - 14	\$30
High School	15 - 18	\$35
Young Adult	19 - 22	\$35
Adult	23 and Above	\$55

OTHER EQUIPMENT/SUPPLIES TO CONSIDER

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pinnie/Scrimmage Vest | <input type="checkbox"/> Penalty Clock |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Stopwatch | <input type="checkbox"/> Cooler/Ice Chest |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Balls | <input type="checkbox"/> Field Space |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cones | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Field Lining Equipment | <input type="checkbox"/> Coaches |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Goals and Nets | <input type="checkbox"/> Officials |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Scorebook | <input type="checkbox"/> Promotional Materials |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tools (screwdriver, pliers, scissors) | <input type="checkbox"/> Athletic Trainer Services |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Helmet Repair Kit | <input type="checkbox"/> CPR/First Aid Training |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Horn | <input type="checkbox"/> First Aid Kit |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Game Clock | <input type="checkbox"/> AED |

BUDGET/ACCOUNTING



As your initiatives progress, remember to share financial information (needs, costs, donations, expenditures, etc.) with board members, parents, and other interested parties. Whether a non-profit organization or not, disclosing general financial information helps to maintain a professional environment and reassures participants and their families of the use of appropriate and ethical fiscal procedures. See [Checklist for Forming a Non-Profit Organization](#) document for guidance.

RECRUITING VOLUNTEERS

Many programs have been started by the efforts of a single individual, but the most successful long-term programs have a strong support team. Surround yourself with helpers from the very beginning.

PARENTS/GUARDIANS

The caretakers of the players you are recruiting are your strongest allies. Their participation must go beyond fundraising and game attendance. Parents and guardians should strive to be connected with the lacrosse team support the team's mission and standards of behavior.

PARENT/GUARDIAN AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT TIPS

- Identify two or three key parents or guardians who are proven leaders and engage them. Suggest that they invite other interested parents to an informal gathering where you and other volunteers can discuss lacrosse and how a team might be established. Have facts at hand, like the cost of equipment, possible field space details, and information about neighboring teams or clubs. Identify parent/guardian volunteers and give them specific tasks and action items.
- A booster club should be formed by the parents/guardians of your team members. If utilized properly, the club can be a useful means of gaining exposure, members, and support.
- Identify people in your area who have played lacrosse and involve them in any of the above activities - this will be a bonus for your core group.
- Select players to give presentations before booster clubs and PTA or community service organizations.
- Parks and Rec departments frequently provide field space, advertisement opportunities for coaches and players, and space for meetings and fundraisers.
- Local businesses, especially sports retailers, may have interest in sponsoring a team or providing uniforms and other equipment at a discounted cost. They may also be a tool for posting advertisements for coaches and players.

SECURING FIELD SPACE

Field space is a crucial consideration in deciding whether or not to start a lacrosse program. Consider the availability space and the number of fields needed for the size of your team. If your new team is a school program, availability should be confirmed early in the process. If the new team is a non-school affiliated club and/or local school facilities are not available, then public facilities like town fields, Parks and Rec Depts, and YMCAs should be explored. These organizations will require insurance prior to booking. Always visually inspect all aspects of a facility or venue before a rental agreement is signed. Reference the [insurance page](#) of the USA Lacrosse website for more information on obtaining insurance.

COACHES AND OFFICIALS



Recruit committed coaches and officials and connect them with USA Lacrosse training opportunities. An essential part of starting a lacrosse team is finding qualified coaches and officials. USA Lacrosse [coach](#) and [official](#) training programs are designed to educate interested and dedicated individuals to be knowledgeable and successful coaches and officials.

A safe and positive playing experience starts by knowing the rules and how to appropriately and effectively coach, officiate, and play the game. All lacrosse participants have a responsibility to know the rules, parents and players included. Most injuries occur as a result of rule infractions.

Please contact the USA Lacrosse Coach Development team for information on identifying and training coaches. cdp@usalacrosse.com

Please contact the USA Lacrosse Officials Development team for information on identifying and training officials. OfficialsDevelopment@usalacrosse.com

INSURANCE

Insurance is important for the safety and liability of all players, coaches, officials, and program administrators and it is often a prerequisite to using fields or facilities. General Liability, Excess Liability, and Accident Medical and Catastrophic Medical insurance is a benefit for each coach, official and player member of USA Lacrosse. Additional insurance such as Directors & Officers Liability, Equipment Insurance, and Crime Insurance can also be purchased through the USA Lacrosse insurance program.

USA Lacrosse partners with RPS Bollinger Insurance to provide exclusive on-the-field coverage for all USA Lacrosse members. USA Lacrosse and RPS Bollinger provide extensive Risk Management information that you need to protect your players and stay safe on and off the field. After establishing your team or league, remember to registrar your program with USA Lacrosse. Registering your team or league with USA Lacrosse allows the program administrator to manage their roster, validate membership, and secure a Certificate of Liability. [Click Here](#) for more information on registering your group with USA Lacrosse.

To learn more about insurance available for USA Lacrosse members, please [Click Here](#).

For general insurance inquiries or claim support, please contact RPS Bollinger.

RPS Bollinger
800.446.5311
lacrosse@rpsins.com

RECRUITING PLAYERS

Demonstrating that you have a significant amount of interested participants will be required, regardless of the level of play you are establishing. Not only will you win support from possible sponsors and support staff, but the enthusiasm, dedication, and excitement generated from participants and their coaches will spark interest in others and ensure the future of your team or league. Convincing others to involve themselves in a new sport can be a challenge and an ongoing process. Your patience, determination, and drive will be vital in forming a new team.



SUGGESTIONS

- Post or distribute flyers in public places, local schools, the YMCA, Parks and Rec departments, sporting events, local businesses etc. Consider advertising in your local newspaper. Be sure to include team and event details and contact information.
- Conduct in-school assemblies or demonstrations to introduce the sport to the students and get them excited about playing lacrosse.
- Approach educators within your local school district about including lacrosse as a component of their physical education program or hosting an introductory clinic day for their students. [Click Here](#) to learn more about Physical Education lacrosse.
- Hold an informal meeting. Demonstrate the sport, make your enthusiasm clear, and show promotional videos or clips.
- If local teams or college programs exist in the area, arrange an exhibition game and advertise your initiative. Coordinate a demonstration during a break at a local amateur or professional sporting event. Use a PA announcement or distribute flyers in the stands. Gather a group of interested players together to attend a college or professional game to introduce them to the sport and expose them to the highest levels of competition.
- Host a free and informal play day or a clinic. Invite players and parents to try the sport. Provide loaner equipment for the day.
- Consider asking coaches and players from other sports to participate in a lacrosse play day.

SECURING EQUIPMENT

- Contact local retailers and inquire about overstocked equipment. Ask about their interest in sponsoring a team.
- Buy in bulk and inquire about bulk-purchase discounts.
- Considering applying for a USA Lacrosse Grant. [Click Here](#) to learn more about the grant process and upcoming offerings.

USED EQUIPMENT

Remember, used equipment may be hazardous. Used gear may not fit safely, may be slightly worn or damaged, and may predispose players to injury. as the equipment may not fit, may be slightly damaged, and may predispose players to injury. In order to qualify for insurance protection, USA Lacrosse requires players to follow current and accepted rules of play with equipment that meets current and accepted safety standards.

FINDING TEAMS TO PLAY AGAINST

Contact your local [USA Lacrosse Regional Manager](#) to learn more about teams and leagues in the area. Reach out to league and/or team organizers before the season starts. USA Lacrosse staff are available to connect you with local and national tournaments, festivals, and meetings. These events are a great way to meet coaches and connections.



TRANSPORTATION

Remember school or public transportation are options for players who are unable to carpool or be driven by a parent/guardian. Van or school bus rental may be a beneficial option. In some cases, it may be necessary. Check with your local Parks and Rec department for more information on local bus rental and charters.

NOTE: USA Lacrosse member liability coverage is not provided to parents, coaches, or volunteers while using any automobile to transport team members or volunteers to any practice, game, or activity. Please reach out to USA Lacrosse to inquire about transportation insurance for your program.

FINANCIAL SUPPORT AND FUNDRAISING

Fundraising will be vital to the success of your team. You will need to market and promote your team and your fundraising efforts.

COLLECTING DUES

Team dues may be necessary to support your team. Dues are a way to ensure interest and commitment from players and parents. Keep dues as low as possible. High dues will limit your audience, interest, and will create a barrier. After outlining your budget, determine if team dues will cover all expenses or if you will need to plan for other fundraising to cover the difference.

SPONSORSHIP

Local sponsorship helps defray costs and draws attention to your team activities. Businesses with an interest in lacrosse or sports are often a good starting point. Offering advertising in newsletters, event flyers, event sites, and programs are typically acceptable trade-offs for sponsorship. Do your part in promoting and supporting your sponsor as well. Consider wearing their name on your uniforms. Businesses that have sponsored in the past may be more likely to sponsor again, so keep detailed records of contacts and contributions.

GRANTS AND MONETARY DONATIONS

Solicit grants or funds from individuals, local agencies, organizations, retailers, corporations, foundations, or the government. Remember, if you are an established non-profit organization and a donor receives something of value in return for a contribution, the donation may not be fully tax deductible. This may apply to fundraising activities such as banquets, auctions, concerts, athletic events, and solicitations for contributions when merchandise or benefits are given in return for payment of a specified minimum contribution. If the donor receives goods or services in return for a contribution to your team, the donor cannot deduct any part of the contribution, unless the donor makes a payment greater than the fair market value of the goods or services received. In advance, determine the fair market value or any goods or services to be given to contributors.

HOSTING A FUNDRAISING EVENT

The key is choosing a suitable fundraiser, establishing a sound organization, and plenty of participation by team members, parents, and boosters. Fundraising events are a great team bonding exercise. People who are excited and passionate about the team will make these fundraisers successful.

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS: STARTING A TEAM AT THE YOUTH VS HIGH SCHOOL LEVEL

Youth (15 and under)

- When recruiting players, remember the importance of word-of-mouth.
- Parents/guardians are your best ally. Parents/guardians want to be involved in their child's activities. Some may have more time than others, but all want the best for their children and want to see them excel.
- Keeping participation costs low will reduce the barriers to entry. Parents/guardians will be more willing to allow their child to try lacrosse if the initial expense is more attainable.
- Organizing multiple teams or multiple ages can be a challenge, but it is extremely important that players are grouped by age. [Click Here](#) to learn more about the importance of age-based segmentation.
- Remember, do not combine men's game and women's game players unless play is in an educational setting or following non-contact rules.

High School Club and Varsity

- Establishing as a club team first is a strong step towards a future varsity program. A club team that is well maintained by coaches and players demonstrates that this is a worthwhile sport to sponsor.
- Committed interest from students and parents must be demonstrated for the school to recognize your efforts. Schools tend to listen to multiple parents voicing the same opinion. Identify the largest number of involved parents (PTA members, trustees, recent large donors, influential alumni, etc.). These individuals can aid in accessing and communicating with administration more easily. They are oftentimes the most effective in making progress.
- Meet with the school principal to propose an informational meeting in a gym, cafeteria, or library after hours. Principals may have more interest in new programs than athletic directors, who may be hesitant to add another sport they have to manage without additional resources or facilities. If the informational meeting is successful and there is significant interest, propose a follow-up meeting with the principal to move forward.
- It is common for schools to lack a budget for new clubs or varsity sports. It is important for you to draft a detailed budget and determine the expense for participants and the sponsoring school.
- Ask a teacher to serve as a team sponsor or school contact. This will aid in establishing positive ties that will be invaluable when establishing a varsity team.
- Make it easy for the school to say yes. Be organized and professional. Finding teams to play, field space, officials, equipment, and other necessities will alleviate some the headaches the school is anticipating. If the school is impressed by your organization, dedication, and ability to get people interested, then they are more likely to look on your proposal favorably. Work patiently with the administrators to clarify concrete issues, concerns, needs, and opinions so you can move forward with resolutions.
- Be persistent, but patient. Getting a sport sanctioned by a school may take years. Set long term goals. It takes planning on your part and the school's part to ensure that the team is established properly, is financially stable, and successful.