



# US Lacrosse Participation Survey

**A Review of National Lacrosse Participation in 2004**

**US Lacrosse National Headquarters**  
113 West University Parkway • Baltimore, MD 21210  
Ph: 410.235.6882 • Fax: 410.366.6735  
[www.uslacrosse.org](http://www.uslacrosse.org)

*An Official Publication of the National Governing Body of Lacrosse*

**One for all.**



# About This Survey

Following the completion of each calendar year, US Lacrosse publishes this report to gauge the growth of the sport of lacrosse. Data is compiled using a number of internal and external sources, including surveys of 52 US Lacrosse regional chapters throughout the country.

## Lacrosse Today

America's first sport is rapidly becoming one of America's favorite sports. Over the past decade, the number of people playing lacrosse nationally has increased at an estimated rate of over 10 percent annually. The lacrosse movement spans all ages and touches virtually every corner of the country. Often described as "the fastest game on two feet," lacrosse combines elements of basketball, soccer and hockey. The fast-paced play appeals to players and spectators, as well as making it a television favorite, and the skills required make the sport accessible to players of all sizes.

Sports Illustrated devoted nine pages in an April 2005 feature on the sport's growth, and other major print publications have published articles about the sport's rise. On television, ESPN has carried the NCAA Division I men's championship game live for over a decade and also carries a Major League Lacrosse Game of the Week on ESPN2. NBC televised the championship and all-star games from the National Lacrosse League live in 2005. CSTV had a 20-game package on men's and women's college lacrosse in the spring of 2005 and ESPNU also carried over 10 college games in 2005.



## US Lacrosse Estimate on Number of Lacrosse Players in 2004

Youth (non high school, age 15 and under).....	186,048
High School.....	133,857
College.....	23,162
Post-Collegiate Club.....	8,635
Professional.....	150
<b>Total .....</b>	<b>351,852</b>

## US Lacrosse Estimate on Number of Lacrosse Players Nationally

2001.....	253,931
2002.....	288,104
2003.....	301,560
2004.....	351,852

## US Lacrosse Membership\*

Dec. 1990.....	7,025	Dec. 1998 .....	43,626
Dec. 1991.....	7,865	Dec. 1999 .....	62,407
Dec. 1992.....	9,515	Dec. 2000.....	78,354
Dec. 1993.....	9,259	Dec. 2001.....	95,410
Dec. 1994.....	10,693	Dec. 2002.....	118,415
Dec. 1995.....	12,191	Dec. 2003.....	142,717
Dec. 1996.....	13,596	Dec. 2004.....	165,328
Dec. 1997 .....	14,123		

\* - Figures prior to 1998 are for the Lacrosse Foundation, one of eight national organizations that merged in 1998 to form US Lacrosse



# Youth

US Lacrosse, the national governing body of the sport, has seen an explosion of the sport at the youth level over the last several years. Data collected from US Lacrosse's 52 regional chapters following the 2004 calendar year indicated more than 185,000 players played the sport. Since 1999, the number of youth members (age 15 and under) has grown from over 40,000 to just under 100,000.

There are examples of the growth coming from all over the country:

- In Washington state, the number of boys' and girls' youth teams grew from just 14 in 2000 to 89 for the 2005 spring season. Lacrosse is now played as young as the first grade level for boys in the state.
- There are now 15 youth leagues in the state of Georgia and more than 3,500 players under the age of 15 competed in the state in 2004. In 2001, the first year that US Lacrosse tracked data on a national level, there were less than 500 youth players.
- In Colorado, the number of youth players has grown from 2,330 in 2001 to over 6,600 just three years later.
- In 2001, US Lacrosse didn't have a Central Pennsylvania chapter and there were just over 1,000 participants in the western part of the state. By 2004, there were approximately 2,400 youth players in Central Pennsylvania and 6,200 in Western Pennsylvania.



## US Lacrosse Estimate of Number of Youth Lacrosse Players in 2004

US Lacrosse Chapter Survey ..... 186,048



# High School

Examining data from the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) annual participation survey shows that lacrosse has the fastest growth rate of any high school sport over the last 10 years.

That growth has resulted in the following states either sanctioning or formally recognizing boys' and/or girls' lacrosse since 2000: California, Connecticut, Florida, Georgia, Minnesota and Michigan. Lacrosse now has official status from the governing state high school associations in 15 states for boys' lacrosse and 17 states for girls' lacrosse.

The gap between the level of play in different areas of the country is shrinking each year. The Mountain region team, representing Colorado and Utah, advanced to the semifinal round in the top flight of the 2005 US Lacrosse Women's Division National Tournament, the premier high school girls' lacrosse event of the year. The boys' high school team from Torrey Pines (Calif.) High School upset traditional Long Island power Garden City in 2004 in a rare intersectional game.



Top players are also coming from areas all over the country. Colorado high school product Devon Wills is a member of the U.S. Women's Developmental Team and has earned All-America honors two times playing for Dartmouth College. California high school star Spencer Wright earned All-America honors at Syracuse, helping the Orange to the NCAA Men's Division I championship in 2002. Illinois native Todd Rassas starred at Notre Dame and will be a member of the 2006 U.S. Men's Lacrosse team after serving as a captain for the 2002 team that won the world championship.

## Fastest-Growing NFHS Sports

M&W Growth	5yr	10yr	Men's Growth	5yr	10yr	W. Growth	5yr	10yr
Bowling	83.7	128.8	Bowling	87.7	124.8	<b>Lacrosse</b>	<b>103.5</b>	<b>252.1</b>
<b>Lacrosse</b>	<b>79.4</b>	<b>188.6</b>	<b>Lacrosse</b>	<b>60.1</b>	<b>143.9</b>	Bowling	79.8	132.9
Ice Hockey	28.0	92.1	Ice Hockey	27.6	56.9	Ice Hockey	29.5	935.9
Water Polo	16.3	88.4	Soccer	13.0	37.3	Water Polo	24.3	142.9
Soccer	16.1	52.7	Swimming	10.0	25.3	Golf	20.7	64.8

*Based on data from the annual NFHS participation survey. Percentages are based on the number of teams from 1998-99 to 2003-04 for five-year growth and from 1993-94 to 2003-04 for 10-year growth. Minimum of 100 total teams (each gender) to be included in total.*



The numbers from the NFHS survey show tremendous growth and they only represent a portion of the high school lacrosse being played around the country. Significant areas, such as Pennsylvania with more than 160 boys' teams, are not included in this data because boys' lacrosse is not officially sanctioned by the Pennsylvania Interscholastic Athletic Association.

## US Lacrosse Estimate of Number of High School Lacrosse Players in 2004

NFHS Survey .....	96,535
Additional data from US Lacrosse chapters .....	37,322
<b>Total .....</b>	<b>133,857</b>

# College

Over the last five years, no sport has grown faster at the NCAA level than lacrosse. Division I schools like Louisville, Oregon, Miami (Fla.) and St. John's have all recently started or announced new programs. The growth is even stronger at the NCAA Division II and III levels.

While the majority of varsity collegiate lacrosse programs are still located along the Eastern seaboard, lacrosse is expanding throughout the country at the collegiate level. Teams from outside of the traditional lacrosse hotbeds have been experiencing great success.

In women's lacrosse, Northwestern captured the 2005 NCAA Division I championship in just its fourth varsity season. Vanderbilt was a semifinalist in the 2004 NCAA Division I tournament and Stanford has been ranked in the Division I Top 20 for three consecutive seasons. At the Division III level, Colorado College has played in four straight NCAA tournaments and reached the semifinals in 2005.

In men's lacrosse, Denver and Notre Dame both finished the 2005 season ranked in the national Top 20 and Notre Dame has advanced as far as the NCAA semifinals. In Division III, Whittier (Calif.) College has played in the NCAA tournament three times this decade, reaching the semifinals in 2003.



## Fastest-Growing NCAA Sports

M&W Growth	5yr	10yr	Men's Growth	5yr	10yr	W. Growth	5yr	10yr
<b>Lacrosse</b>	<b>14.4</b>	<b>54.8</b>	<b>Lacrosse</b>	7.1	24.1	Golf	31.0	131.6
Golf	14.4	46.5	Indoor Track	7.0	14.2	Lacrosse	21.1	94.0
Indoor Track	8.7	20.1	Golf	5.9	19.0	Rowing	17.2	113.4
Soccer	8.6	55.2	Cross Country	5.3	19.3	Soccer	13.3	100.7
Baseball/Softball	5.8	26.8	Outdoor Track	3.1	11.7	Indoor Track	10.2	26.2

*Based on data from the annual NCAA participation survey. Percentages are based on the number of teams from 1998-99 to 2003-04 for five-year growth and from 1993-94 to 2003-04 for 10-year growth. Minimum of 100 total teams (each gender) to be included in total.*



Despite the rapid growth of varsity collegiate lacrosse, there is demand for even more playing opportunities. That demand has resulted in a burgeoning US Lacrosse Intercollegiate Associates structure. There are nearly 200 men's teams and almost 150 women's programs competing at this level. In 2005, a record 24 men's teams and 16 women's teams competed for the US Lacrosse IA National Championship in three different divisions.

## US Lacrosse Estimate of Number of College Lacrosse Players in 2004

NCAA varsity players.....	12,648
Junior college, IA, club players.....	10,514
Total.....	23,162

# Professional

Major League Lacrosse, a six-team men's professional outdoor league, recently completed its fifth season. Following the 2005 season, the league announced plans for a four-team Western expansion. For the last two years, MLL has been featured with a tape-delayed game of the week on ESPN2 with the championship game being aired live.

The National Lacrosse League will feature 11 teams for the 2005-06 season. This men's professional indoor league dates to 1987 and features teams in both Canada and the U.S. The league has recently added teams in Denver, Minneapolis, Phoenix and Portland. NBC televised the NLL all-star and championship games live in 2005, marking the first time pro lacrosse had been broadcast live on network television.

## Professional Lacrosse Franchises

### Major League Lacrosse

- Baltimore Bayhawks (2001)
- Boston Cannons (2001)
- Long Island Lizards (2001)
- New Jersey Pride (2001)
- Philadelphia Barrage (2004)
- Rochester Rattlers (2001)
- \*Chicago (2006)
- \*Denver (2006)
- \*Los Angeles (2006)
- \*San Francisco (2006)
- \* - Announced expansion teams

### National Lacrosse League

- Arizona Sting (2004)
- Buffalo Bandits (1992)
- Calgary Roughnecks (2002)
- Colorado Mammoth (2003)
- Edmonton Rush (2006)
- Minnesota Swarm (2005)
- Philadelphia Wings (1987)
- Portland LumberJax (2006)
- Rochester Knighthawks (1995)
- San Jose Stealth (2004)
- Toronto Rock (1999)



## US Lacrosse Estimate of Number of American Professional Lacrosse Players in 2004

MLL and NLL ..... 150

# Post-Collegiate Club Lacrosse

While only a select handful of lacrosse players are able to go on to play professional lacrosse, there are large numbers who continue to play, and even pick up the game, after college. Post-collegiate club lacrosse is played in both league formats and tournaments that draw teams from all over the country. Surveys of US Lacrosse chapters indicate that there are more than 8,500 active competitors.

## US Lacrosse Estimate of Post-Collegiate Club Lacrosse Players in 2004

Men.....6,676  
 Women.....2,054  
**Total .....8,635**



# International

Organized lacrosse is now played in more than 20 countries on five continents (Asia, Australia, Europe, North America and South America).

The International Lacrosse Federation (ILF) governs men's international play and will conduct the next World Championship in July 2006 in London, Ontario. A record 18 nations will compete for the championship, which is held every four years. The ILF also conducts an U-19 World Championship every four years. The next U-19 championship will be held in 2008. The ILF has 19 member nations and six affiliates.

The International Federation of Women's Lacrosse Associations (IFWLA) governs women's international play. The United States and US Lacrosse played host to the 2005 World Cup, which saw Australia defeat the U.S., ending a string of four straight World Cup titles for the U.S. A record 10 nations competed in the 2005 World Cup. The IFWLA also conducts a U-19 World Championship every four years and Canada will play host the 2007 IFWLA U-19 World Championship. The IFWLA has 10 member nations and two associate members.

The ILF and IFWLA have a joint committee called the International Development Committee which assists nations in establishing the sport.



## Nations with Officially Recognized Lacrosse

Argentina (ILF Affiliate)  
Australia (IFWLA, ILF)  
Austria (ILF Affiliate)  
Canada (IFWLA, ILF)  
Czech Republic (IFWLA, ILF)  
Denmark (ILF, IFWLA Associate)  
England (IFWLA, ILF)  
Finland (ILF)  
Germany (IFWLA, ILF)  
Hong Kong (ILF, IFWLA Associate)  
Ireland (ILF)  
Iroquois Nation (ILF)  
Italy (ILF)  
Japan (IFWLA, ILF)  
Latvia (ILF Affiliate)  
Netherlands (ILF)  
New Zealand ((IFWLA, ILF)  
Scotland (IFWLA, ILF)  
Slovakia (ILF Affiliate)  
Slovenia (ILF Affiliate)  
South Korea (ILF)  
Spain (ILF Affiliate)  
Sweden (ILF)  
Tonga (ILF Affiliate)  
United States (IFWLA, ILF)  
Wales (IFWLA, ILF)



# Did You Know?

- A championship game record crowd of 44,920 watched the 2005 NCAA Men's Division I final between Johns Hopkins and Duke at Philadelphia's Lincoln Financial Field. **The NCAA Division I men's basketball championship is the only other NCAA championship to have drawn more spectators.** The largest crowd ever to watch a lacrosse game was the 46,923 to watch the 2004 NCAA Division I men's semifinals at Baltimore's M&T Bank Stadium.

- Northwestern captured the NCAA Division I women's lacrosse championship in 2005, becoming the **first team away from the Eastern seaboard to win a NCAA lacrosse championship.**

- A crowd of 19,432 watched the 2005 National Lacrosse League championship game between the Toronto Rock and Arizona Sting, setting a new league record. **The game was also broadcast live in the U.S. (NBC) and Canada (Score).**

- A crowd of 6,820 - **the largest ever to watch a women's lacrosse game in the United States** - was on hand at Navy-Marine Corps Memorial Stadium in Annapolis, Md., for the championship game of the 2005 IFWLA World Cup between Australia and the United States.

- In the Academic Progress Rate report issued by the NCAA in the spring of 2005, **women's lacrosse was tied for the highest score of any sport** (981) and men's lacrosse also ranked among the best scores (964).

- Football, wrestling, soccer and hockey all have **higher incidents of injuries than men's lacrosse in game situations according to data from the NCAA** Injury Surveillance System. In women's sports, basketball, field hockey, gymnastics, ice hockey and soccer all have higher incidents of injuries in game situations.

- Nearly 400 collegiate club lacrosse teams compete in an organized structure known as the US Lacrosse Intercollegiate Associates. **Many of these programs play national schedules** and US Lacrosse conducts a national championship in three divisions for this level of play.

- **Lacrosse is the official team sport for the state of Maryland.** It is also the official summer sport of Canada.

- Pro football Hall of Famer Jim Brown is probably the most famous former lacrosse star (he was an All-American at Syracuse and is a member of the National Lacrosse Hall of Fame), but many other great athletes have **strong lacrosse ties, including former NHL star Wayne Gretzky and current NFL All-Pro lineman Patrick Kerney.**

- The National Sports Museum, in Lower Manhattan, N.Y., is scheduled to open in the summer of 2006. **US Lacrosse and the Lacrosse Museum are official partners of the National Sports Museum.**

