



Lacrosse: Then and Now

DIRECTIONS

Read the text, and complete the activity on page 3.

- 1 Lacrosse is regarded as the oldest team sports in all of North America. Historians think that versions of the game were played as early as the 12th century. The game was initially played by the Algonquian tribe, but it quickly gained popularity and spread to other tribes in the eastern half of North America as well as to tribes around the western Great Lakes. Lacrosse has stood the test of time and is enjoyed today around the world.
- 2 In its early days, the Algonquin called the sport *baggataway* and the Iroquois called it *tewaarathon*. Teams varied in size. A team could have as little as a few dozen players and as many as hundreds. Sometimes whole villages came together to compete against each other. In addition, games could last for hours, or even days!
- 3 Games were played with specialized balls and sticks. The balls were commonly made out of wood or out of deerskin stuffed with fur. The earliest sticks were made entirely out of wood, with an end that was sculpted to have a curve—similar to the shape of a spoon. Over time, the stick changed to become a long, thin piece of wood with a basket on the end. The basket could be woven out of different materials, such as strips of dried animal skin or **sinew**.
- 4 Lacrosse was about more than a game to **Indigenous** people. It was part of their culture and their religion. It was a way for tribes to form cultural connections. However, when Europeans arrived in North America, they were not interested in preserving the culture of Indigenous people. Some European colonizers wanted to **eradicate** lacrosse. They wanted to completely ban everyone from playing the game. But many colonists were eager to learn how to play. Although many Europeans learned to play lacrosse, they often made changes. These changes made the game smaller, shorter, and more regulated.
- 5 By the mid-1800s, lacrosse clubs had sprung up across the United States and Canada. The game quickly gained popularity in many countries around the world. By the 1900s, lacrosse had spread to New Zealand, England, Australia, and other countries. In 1994, the government of Canada declared lacrosse the country's national game.

sinew: a cord or tendon in the body that connects muscle and bone

Indigenous: native to a certain place, especially referring to native peoples

eradicate: completely get rid of



- 6 Today, the sport is hardly recognizable as the game it once was. Lacrosse balls are now commonly made out of rubber. Lacrosse sticks are now made from metal, with baskets woven out of nylon string. Sometimes the baskets are referred to as “pockets.” Unlike the games of the past, most lacrosse games now involve two teams of twelve players. These games are formally regulated to be 60 minutes in length.
- 7 Additionally, the game is played professionally and there are several major lacrosse competitions, such as the World Lacrosse Championship (WLC) and the Women’s Lacrosse World Cup. Lacrosse has also been included several times in the Summer Olympics.
- 8 Though the game has changed over time, it still signifies cultural value to Indigenous players and spectators. Lyle Thompson, a NCAA Division I record holder describes what it means to play the game today: “Being part of the Iroquois Nationals is more than representing your people and playing lacrosse on the world stage... You’re signed up and doing what you can do to help our people move forward.”

Use Key Details to Write a Summary

Describe lacrosse in the past and present using key details from the text. Then, think about how the key ideas are related and write a summary of the text. Remember to use your own words when you write a summary.

Lacrosse in the Past	Lacrosse in the Present

My Summary



Jai Alai: A Game for the Ages

DIRECTIONS

Read the text, and complete the activity on page 6.

- 1 Can you imagine a game that is rougher than football and faster than basketball or hockey? Jai alai (HIGH LIE) is such a game. Jai alai is rooted in a centuries-old game played by the Basques in northern Spain. The name jai alai means “merry festival.” It was so named because public festivals and celebrations often featured a **spirited** jai alai match. It continues to be a very popular sport among the Basque people in Spain.
- 2 There are different theories about the origin of jai alai. Many historians think jai alai probably originated from a Greek handball game that eventually made its way to the Basque country. The Basques made major changes to the game. They changed both the equipment and the court. They also developed rules for the sport. These changes have remained a part of the game for hundreds of years.
- 3 Jai alai initially consisted of players hitting a hard ball with their hands against an **adobe** wall. These balls are called *pelotas*. The Basques found that the walls could not stand up to the constant **pummeling** by these balls. So they developed jai alai courts. These specialized courts are called *frontons*. The jai alai frontons are made of three concrete or brick walls and a fourth wall of mesh. The mesh protects spectators from the hard ball.
- 4 The Basques made another improvement to the game because of the pain caused by catching and hitting such hard balls. Pelotas resemble baseballs but are only about two inches in diameter. They are made by covering a hard core of rubber with linen thread and two layers of goatskin. Have you ever been stung by catching a fastball without using a baseball glove? That is what catching was like for Basque players. Thus, they developed three-foot baskets called *cestas*. Players strapped these baskets to their wrists to catch and return pelotas.
- 5 Jai alai is usually played as singles or as doubles. A singles match means two players play against each other. A doubles match means two teams of two players play against each other. A match is won by the first team that scores 7 points. To begin, one player throws the ball in against the wall.

spirited: lively

adobe: sun-dried bricks

pummeling: pounding



- 6 Opponents must catch the ball in their cesta either before it hits the ground or on the first bounce. Then the players must hurl the ball back against the front wall.
- 7 Points are earned in three ways:
- The opponent (the player not serving) misses the ball or returns it after more than one bounce.
 - The opponent does not return the ball to the front wall.
 - The opponent fails to catch the ball and throw it in one continuous motion.
- 8 Jai alai's popularity has spread to many countries. It is now played in France, Mexico, Cuba, and elsewhere. It was first played in the United States at the St. Louis World's Fair in 1904. Jai alai is now a popular game in California, Florida, and Connecticut.
- 9 The Basques developed jai alai hundreds of years ago. They may have anticipated its international popularity. But they probably never imagined it would someday hold a world record. In 1979, a ball returned by Jose Ramon Areito of Spain in a jai alai match in Rhode Island was clocked at 188 miles per hour. This record formally made jai alai the "fastest game in the world."



Write a Concise Summary

Read the summary of **Jai Alai: A Game for the Ages**. Cross out the details that are not important details for a summary. Then, combine the remaining ideas to write a more concise summary.

Summary:

The game of jai alai has developed and become popular over time. Jai alai is rougher than football and faster than hockey. It was named for the festivals at which people played the game, and it is a very spirited game. The game started in Greece and moved to the Basque country in Spain. The Basques made many changes to the game. At first, players hit a hard ball with their hands. Then they developed a court. The court has three walls and a wall of mesh. The mesh protects people watching the game. The players experienced pain when they played with hard balls, so they made baskets so they could catch the balls with the baskets instead of their hands. Before the basket, catching the ball was like catching a baseball without a glove. It hurt! The game is played as singles or doubles and there are three ways to earn points: the opponent misses the ball or returns it after more than one bounce, the opponent does not return the ball to the front wall, or the opponent fails to catch the ball and throw it in one continuous motion. Jai alai has become popular in many countries, including France, Cuba, and Mexico. The Basques probably didn't think their game would produce world records some day. Jose Ramon Areito returned a ball at 188 miles per hour, and that made jai alai the fastest game in the world.

Concise Summary:
