

## Introduction

When you first start to play lacrosse, it can be very daunting to try and find the right equipment. Often it is borrowed, odd and if you want to buy almost everything is bought over the internet. So how can you be sure you're buying the right equipment? This guide aims to point you in the right direction, giving tips on how and what to buy.

## Where to get it from?

There are only a few limited lacrosse suppliers in the UK so it is, advisable to have a look at US websites before making any decisions. Popular sites such as [www.lax.com](http://www.lax.com) and [www.laxworld.com](http://www.laxworld.com) are a good place to start looking.

As far as the UK is concerned there are a few main suppliers. UKLacrosse ([www.uklacrosse.com](http://www.uklacrosse.com)) are the official supplier of all Warrior and Brine equipment, whilst Hattersleys supply STX and deBeer equipment. Peak Sports also stock lacrosse equipment but aren't the greatest on variety and price.

## What Should I Buy?

As a beginner the first thing you should be thinking of getting is a stick (composed of a head and a shaft) and gloves first so that you can practice on your own and away from training. Of the players who start the sport at University it's the ones who practice on their own who improve the fastest. As with all equipment take a look on websites, read reviews and get other peoples opinions either from a teammate or on a forum ([www.laxforums.co.uk](http://www.laxforums.co.uk)).

### -The Head

What you want from a head, as with all lacrosse equipment, varies depending on your position. Defensemen need strong stiff heads for checking whereas attackmen prefer light, pinched (narrower) heads that handle the ball well and are hard to check the ball out of.

Whatever head you choose to buy DO NOT spend over £60 on a first lacrosse head alone. Even if you plan on playing lacrosse for the rest of your life eventually your head may break or you will want a newer one. Here are some top-end sticks for £60 or under.

**Brine Clutch** £60 UKLacrosse

**Brine Cyber Pro** £55 UKLacrosse

**Warrior Evo Pro** £53 UKLacrosse

For those on a tighter budget try some of these beginner's sticks out. These heads are more of a stepping stone for those new to lacrosse.

**Brine Answer** £31 UKLacrosse

**Warrior Warpath** £25 UKLacrosse

**STX Av8** £24 Hattersleys

### -The Mesh

As far as mesh is concerned - hard mesh is almost certainly the way to go. It can be slightly harder to catch with, and takes some breaking in but it's much more durable and precise. You can usually buy heads pre-strung for a bit of extra cash, or you can buy a separate stringing kit and ask some-one skilled enough to do it for you. Later on you can experiment with different types of mesh.

### -The Shaft

The shaft of the stick is where the main difference between attack and defence is seen. Attackers are prohibited to using a stick to maximum of 42" whereas defenders use 6 foot long poles to get at the opposition.

The main advice about shafts is that if you want to cut the price of your stick as a whole then buy a cheaper head. If you want a shaft that lasts past a few tough checks don't buy a cheap alloy. You really get what you

pay for! I'd advise shopping around for these as it may be cheaper to get one from the US. Note that some sticks will come as a whole but will have cheap, nasty shafts so beware.

## -Helmets

For a long time the only usable helmets on the market were made by Cascade, but now both Brine, Warrior and Gait are making decent alternatives.

With Cascade the price structure is as such that the newest is the most expensive and the older models cascade down in price. All Cascade helmets use the same styled shell; it is the visor, chin, face mask and the inner protective elements that change. If buying new look for maybe an older model the Cascade CPX is good for price/age and comes with pads that mean you can adjust the size of the helmet yourself, so no worries about buying the wrong size. Unfortunately helmets are items that are best bought in the US and can be shipped too but it costs that little more. You can get them in the UK at a premium. You can usually customise the colours for no extra cost. Definitely look on the websites first and ask people if they have an old one going spare. Get on laxforums equipment or eBay as well.

As for others, the Warrior Pro Z is the low-price option at £75 from UKLacrosse. There are some other options around £100 which are not too bad but as soon as you are looking around the £120 area it is worth getting Cascade.

## -Gloves

It can be hard to choose when it comes to gloves. There are so many options and there's no way to tell which ones will be right for you until you actually try them. For this reason I'd suggest asking people from the squad to try on their gloves before you make any decisions. You might find some you really like or you may find the gloves you wanted don't feel right at all.

It's a good idea to get some relatively cheap gloves to start with, you won't be able to tell much difference when you start. General rule is the more individual padded parts on the hand the better the glove as it is more flexible. Some good options for beginners include:

**STX Stinger** £24 Hattersleys

**Warrior Adrenaline** £31 UKLacrosse

**Warrior Hypno** £40 UKLacrosse

If you're willing to spend a little more for something you'll use for years it might be better to look at gloves in the US. If you want to order from the UK I'd advise any of the following:

**Brine Deft** £70 UKLacrosse

**Warrior MacDaddy** £94 UKLacrosse

However again gloves are generally cheaper and more available in the US. For a full selection visit lax.com. Gloves come in a massive range of colours too.

## -Arm pads

There can be some confusion when it comes to arm protection. Whilst arm guard and arm pad sound similar they're actually pretty different. Just remember that an elbow guard will protect almost the whole arm, as will an arm guard, although it is slightly shorter. The elbow pads and arm pads are much smaller and will only protect the area around the elbow.

Attackers and midfielders should be getting the full arm and elbow guards to protect them from checks.

Defenders can opt for arm and elbow pads as they don't need as much protection and can use the extra mobility to help reach for checks. Prices can go up to the £80 mark, but that's just ridiculous. They can be bought in the UK reasonably cheap with a decent selection to go at.

## -Shoulder Pads

Shoulder Pads aren't essential but can be worth getting. They are best when you are most free to move in them, they will offer good protection for shoulder/collarbone and upper arms.

## -Rib Pads

It's actually a better idea to invest in some rib pads rather than shoulder pads. There are far more useful and will last forever. Buy these in the UK as they are well priced and will be no different to US alternatives.

## -Other Equipment

The most essential piece of equipment needed to play lacrosse is a box (or cup). Many players start off without one and after that first check down-stairs quickly regret the decision: just think of a solid rubber ball hurtling towards you at 100mph. A good but expensive choice is the **Nutt Hut**, £22 from UKLacrosse, which is like compression shorts with a jockstrap built in. Otherwise a standard jockstrap and box is fine (get it from any decent sports shop)

If you plan on playing mixed you must also wear a gum shield. Just pop down to a sports shop again to get a self-mould one if you plan on getting one, if you haven't already.

As a final word I'd advise that if you are thinking of getting new equipment you should try to order with other team members, or with the club, as you can then often get all of your equipment at a discounted price. It can be very easy to spend hundreds of pounds getting carried away with brand new equipment but often there's very little difference between the middle of the range and top end stuff so try to be savvy. Remember, if you're not sure about anything then just ask an experienced player what they think, they're the ones who've played with it all before. Main rule though at the cheaper end of the market is **you get what you pay for!**