

CATCH A DREAM



**NATIVE
NATION
LACROSSE**

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Iroquois: Originators of the Game

The Iroquois are the originators of the modern day game of Lacrosse. Shrouded in time, Lacrosse was played among the Confederacy long before the coming of the Europeans to the shores of North America. It can be said that when the Europeans first came to America, Lacrosse was one of the most popular and widespread games played across the continent and with many variations. The long stick game played internationally today belongs to the Iroquois.

The Iroquois are a unique entity, comprising the only Native American team sanctioned to compete in any sport internationally. Prior to the induction of the Nationals into the International Lacrosse Federation, the Iroquois responded to a request by the NCAA to field a team for exhibition play with Canada and the United States NCAA national champions. The Haudenosaunee Six Nations Confederacy formed a committee and a National Iroquois field Lacrosse team reemerged. They absorbed early defeat, but their players enjoyed the competition and were inspired to take on the challenge of becoming a world-class team. Through the difficult developmental years, and the transition from box lacrosse to the field game, their men never lost faith. Those early players serve as inspiration to the Iroquois teams of today.

1990 was a turning point for all indigenous peoples when the International Lacrosse Federation accepted the Iroquois as a full member nation along with the other ILF member countries. Currently, the Iroquois Nationals are the team to watch for consistent and rapid progression among the international ranks.

The Iroquois, also known as the Six Nations, represent the indigenous people that originally occupied extensive lands in what is now New York State, southern Quebec and Ontario, Canada. Stretching from the Hudson River and Mohawk Valley through to the northern and central Great Lakes region, a confederacy was formed and it brought together the Cayuga, Oneida, Onondaga, Mohawk and Seneca tribes into the first League of Nations in North America. The Tuscarora joined the Confederacy in the mid-1700s to become the sixth member nation.

The Iroquois name for themselves is 'Haudenosaunee' which means "People of the Longhouse". The longhouse symbolizes a way of life where the Six Nations Confederacy live under one common law, think with one mind and speak with one voice. That law is called "Gien na sah nah gonah" the Great Law of Peace. The alliance of the Haudenosaunee created the first United Nations in this land, thus they maintain the oldest, continuously operating form of government in North America. They have lived in northeastern North America for thousands of years. The people of the Six Nations currently residing in New York and Canada remain sovereign and independent. The Iroquois people identify themselves as citizens of their respective nation and travel internationally under their own passports.