

# Ontario Lacrosse SIXES Program





**ONTARIO LACROSSE SIXES  
2025 OLA SIXES SEASON STRATEGY**

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## **ONTARIO LACROSSE SIXES** **2025 OLA SIXES SEASON STRATEGY**

### **MISSION & MANDATE**

The mandate of the new OLA Sixes discipline is to:

- Introduce the new Olympic Sixes format as a recruitment, development and competition discipline
- To establish the Fall season for all genders as the OLA competition window for the Sixes discipline
- To ensure the season strategy promotes both (1) local/house league, club-based program development, and (2) Zone and provincial rep team competition. To establish club-based provincial championships hosted by the OLA, for the Sixes discipline
- To ensure opportunities to engage all regions of the province in both Sixes club-based program development and provincial championship participation
- To develop players, officials and coaching training resources to support Sixes promotion and enhancement

### **ALIGNMENT WITH OLA STRATEGIC PLAN**

This Program supports and enhances the following objectives of the OLA Strategic Plan:

- 1.1 Breaking Down Barriers
- 1.2 Celebrating and Encouraging Female Participation
- 2.1 Championing the Player Development Pathway





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**PROGRAM**

The 2025 OLA Sixes discipline operates on the following schedule:

Year	Season Dates	Girl's Program Age Divisions	Boy's Program Age Divisions
2025	August 23 – October 26	U9, U11, U13, U15, U17, U19	U9, U11, U13, U15, U17, U22

**2025 SEASON PROFILE**

The 2025 Sixes season is comprised of:

- 8 weeks or 50 competition dates (both local/house and rep running concurrently)
- Labor Day weekend blackout
- Provincials Ratings Tournaments on October 4th-5th
- Provincial Championships on October 24th-26th
- Thanksgiving blackout (October 11th-13th)





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### **CLUB-BASED PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT**

A priority emphasis of the strategy should be placed on club-based, local/house league development. Selling the advantages of a local Sixes program might include:

- Season of play (Fall)
- Flexible scheduling of games (weeknights & weekends)
- Short season (of up to 8 weeks or 50 competition dates)
- Limited time commitment (one or two sessions per week)
- Local facilities (means limited travel)
- Entry/recreational/intake opportunity for new player recruitment
- Potential linkage of Sixes Field → Box
- Opportunity to reduce roster sizes (with a maximum of 15 players) **(MR2.01)**
- How few players are required for local league play/promotion: 36 (3-team league); 48 (4-team league); 60(5-team league) and 72 (6-team league).

The OLA should establish a team of 3-4 Board members and/or volunteers to champion

Sixes club-based program development and the overall Sixes season strategy.

### **ZONE AND PROVINCIAL REP COMPETITION**

Association rep team competition takes place within existing OLA Zones. Within Zones, groups of Associations geographically proximate can be established to facilitate optimal playing opportunities. Single-game; multiple-game; inter-Zone and/or tournament formats can be used to create Zone schedules. Teams set their own schedules and are responsible for related game costs (fields; officials; timekeepers).

Zone Directors (or their designate) will help facilitate as much game play as possible.

### **2025 ADMIN FEES, REGISTRATION & PROVINCIAL ENTRY FEES**

For the 2025 Sixes season, the OLA will be subsidizing partial provincial admin costs associated with the Program:

OLA Admin Fee: \$0 (on players registered in the 2025 OLA box or field programs)

GameSheet Inc. Fees: \$0





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MyLax Fees: \$0

OLA Sixes Tournament Fees: \$0

Fees which apply include:

OLA Admin Fee: \$32.00 (on new players not previously registered in the 2025 OLA season)

OLA Team Entry Fees: \$100 (deadline prior to first game)

Lacrosse Canada Player Levy: \$15 per player

SportzSoft registration fee: \$2.30 (per player/non-refundable)

Provincial Entry Fee: \$300.00 per team (deadline of September 30th)

OLA residency rules apply to all player registrations. All players, coaches and trainers must be registered in Sixes SportzSoft registration product prior to any participation.

Existing players should contact their Association about Sixes opportunities. New players can visit [www.playlacrosse.com](http://www.playlacrosse.com) or [www.ontariolacrosse.com/playing/where-do-i-play](http://www.ontariolacrosse.com/playing/where-do-i-play) for registration options.

**PROVINCIAL CHAMPIONSHIPS**

Provincial championships:

- will be held October 24th-26th at a location TBA
- will host both boy's and girl's disciplines
- are eligible only to teams meeting the provincial entry fee deadline





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- are eligible only to teams having played ten sanctioned games & MyLax ranked
- are round-robin competition formats with gold medal championships games

### **GAME RULES, LENGTHS, FORMATS**

World Lacrosse rules apply and can be found online at [worldlacrosse.sport](http://worldlacrosse.sport).

Regular Season

Game lengths: 4 x 8-minute quarters; Stop time: none; Halftime break: 3 minutes.

Provincial Championships

Game lengths: 4 x 8-minute quarters; Stop time: last 2 minutes of the game; Halftime break: 5 minutes.

### **PLAYER'S EQUIPMENT**

Boy's (minimum & mandatory): gloves, helmet & facemask + legally equipped goalie.

Girl's (minimum & mandatory): gloves & goggles + legally equipped goalie.

In the U9 division, other protective equipment is optional.

### **ROSTERS, REGISTRATION DEADLINE & TEAM ENTRIES**

Maximum roster size per team is fifteen players (including a goalie). Teams require a legally equipped goalie and five runners to start a game. Registration and roster deadline is September 30th. Associations may enter multiple teams in any age division.

### **COACH, TRAINER & OFFICIALS CERTIFICATION**

All carded coaches and trainers from any OLA sector during the 2025 season are automatically certified for Sixes, pending their re-registration and approval in a Sportzsoft Sixes product.

All 2025 certified officials from any sector can officiate upon completion of an online Sixes module.

### **MYLAX, PROVINCIAL EXPANSION & RATINGS TOURNAMENTS**

The MyLax ranking platform will be used to rate teams for provincial championships. Two ratings tournaments will be hosted to cross-pollenate as much competition from across the province as possible. All scores from regular season and ratings tournaments games will be included in the MyLax season rankings.





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The three ratings tournaments will be held on October 5th-6th in Kingston (East), GTA (Central) and London (West). Teams in each age division will only be required to participate on the Saturday or the Sunday of the ratings tournaments (playing approximately four games on the day).

### **AGE DIVISIONS & BIRTH YEAR TABLE**

Like current minor box and field lacrosse age divisions in 2025, the following age divisions, age eligibility and birth years apply to the Sixes season:

AGE DIVISION	AGE COHORTS	BIRTH YEARS
U9	7 and 8 Years	2018 and 2017
U11	9 and 10 Years	2016 and 2015
U13	11 and 12 Years	2014 and 2013
U15	13 and 14 Years	2012 and 2011
U17	15 and 16 Years	2010 and 2009
U19 Girls	17 and 18 Years	2008 and 2007
U22	17, 18, 19, 20 and 21 Years	2008, 2007, 2006, 2005, 2004

To promote an inclusive culture to ensure the best provincial growth prospects for Sixes, co-ed participation should be emphasized as the club-based strategy in U9 and U11 age divisions.

### **SIXES KEY PROGRAM DATES**

July 1st: registration opens

August 18th: Practice and Club based program starts

August 23: Games start to be played

OLA team entry deadline: prior to first game

September 30th: Online registration deadline

September 30th: Roster declaration deadline

September 30th: Provincial entry deadline

October 4th-5th: Provincial ratings tournaments (Kingston, GTA & London)

October 24th-26th: Provincial championships (boy's & girl's)







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**RESOURCE ON WHY THIS STRATEGY WORKS**

**HOW ALTERNATIVE FORMS OF FOOTBALL HELP THE GAME GROW by Nick Faris, *theScore***

When the NCAA launches women's flag football next spring, schools will seek to duplicate the dominance of the Ottawa Braves. The university in Ottawa, Kansas, rules the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA) as its four-time reigning champion.

Braves head coach Liz Sowers prizes transferable skills. Kansas is close to Arrowhead Stadium, the home turf of the NFL's dynastic Kansas City Chiefs, but there isn't an excess of high school players around the state. To construct a small-school powerhouse, Ottawa recruited athletes with two essential traits - hand-eye coordination and lateral quickness - that they'd sharpened away from the gridiron.

"You find me the best basketball players," Sowers said, "and I can arguably tell you they're some of the best flag football players."

Ottawa's success highlights a phenomenon. Thanks to an influx of new talent, football is flourishing across America in alternative forms. The spread of spinoffs that deemphasize the game's violence has created space for more players to showcase their speed, toughness, intensity, and flair.

Demand for football is fervent. A handful of colleges, including six in the 2024 season, add tackle teams annually, bringing the current nationwide count to 774. National Football Foundation chairman Archie Manning, the patriarch of American football's first family, said in a release that these programs invigorate campuses and prolong the careers of passionate high school players

Unserved demographics - women and small guys - are getting in on the action.





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In 2025, more than 30 women's varsity flag teams will populate a few NCAA conferences and the NAIA. The number of schools competing in men's sprint football - a full-contact variation with a player weight limit of 178 pounds - doubled in the past couple of years to 16.

"Why is that important? I don't know your size, but for guys like me who will never be 6-foot-5 and 240, sprint football for smaller body frames (provides) more opportunities," said Steve Hatchell, the National Football Foundation's president and CEO.

"The same with women's flag. Women's flag in high school and college is not a growth sport - it's an exploding sport."

Flag's reinterpretation of the four-down format is accessible to the masses. The NFL sponsors youth leagues in every state and combines a flag game with skills challenges to crown the winner of the retooled Pro Bowl. Novice players can take the field and deepen their understanding of the sport without being pigeonholed into a position or bowled over.

"It's a different way for young people to grab onto the sport without having to wear a helmet and pads," Hatchell said

Football's changing shape has made it more inclusive. Frequent participation in tackle football - defined as playing it at least 26 times a year - slipped by 2.8% between 2018 and 2023, according to data from the Sports and Fitness Industry Association (SFIA).

Flag players outpace tackle players by more than a million Americans aged 6 and up, per the SFIA, since tackle is largely limited to young men.

Some women enjoy hitting, Sowers emphasized in an interview. Her own pro and international tackle playing experience helped her discover and embrace flag. The Braves benefit from expertise gleaned in the NFL by their defensive coordinator, Sowers' twin sister Katie, a trailblazing former 49ers and Chiefs assistant.

Flag rewards finesse, not brute force, but its resemblance to regular football explains the offshoot's appeal.

"Young girls are growing up watching football. Whether they're watching their brothers or their uncles or dads coach, they're seeing the game," Sowers said. "Girls want to play this game that they've never had an opportunity to play."

Sprint football's growth revived a format that Ivy League and military schools adopted to level the field for light players - the original maximum weight was 150 pounds - beginning in 1934. Sprint shares the rules and look of the standard college game, just without behemoths.

An early sprint advocate, the late Penn president Thomas Sovereign Gates, dubbed it

"football for all," Philadelphia Magazine once wrote. Patriots owner Robert Kraft and U.S. President Jimmy Carter played in distant decades for historic teams - Columbia and Navy, respectively. Alumni range from George Allen, the Hall of Fame coach who got his start with Michigan's defunct sprint program, to the frat rapper Hoodie Allen, a recent Penn defensive back.





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Sprint's newest entrant, the Long Island-based Molloy University Lions, went 0-7 in their 2024 inaugural season with an average margin of defeat of 46.9 points. Established powers, including league finalists Army and Navy, predictably drubbed a lineup built from scratch.

The blowouts didn't faze Brian Hughes, a lifelong local college coordinator tapped to be Molloy's head coach. He identified a recruiting wheelhouse - undersized, overlooked Division III prospects from the island - and began to actualize Molloy president James Lentini's plan for football to expand and energize the student population.

"This is a vision that he had - a way to unite the campus. Nothing gets people more excited than Friday night lights," Hughes said. "We're a Catholic nursing university first.

Now we're great at business and criminal justice and education. To get another 60-75 males enrolled, regardless of their major, is also a university goal, which makes great sense."

One highlight of Molloy's first year was a 65-yard touchdown dime fired at Cornell by junior quarterback Paulie Drummond V, a Long Island native and Division III transfer.

Hughes taught the fundamentals of line play to converted fullbacks and linebackers who showed they could battle in the trenches while adhering to the 178-pound limit, enforced by the league at multiple weekly weigh-ins.

A 2006 New York Times story highlighted the unique trajectories of sprint players. It noted Iraq War veterans were suiting up for Navy and a ballpark estimate of 70 doctors played for Cornell's longtime coach.

"They want to play college football, and they get a good coach and an opportunity to play against other institutions. They use what they learn to go on in life," Hatchell said

"We want you to build a house in four or five years that you're going to live in for 40. The football players of today are the leaders of tomorrow."

Elite players look forward to flag's Olympic debut. The sport's addition to the 2028 summer slate inspired NFL QBs to muse about representing the home team in Los Angeles. Darrell Doucette, the veteran face of the U.S. men's national squad, bristled at the assumption NFLers would supplant him and argued they won't have a feel for flag's shiftiness and trickery.

Sowers, who played and coached for Team USA, said the women's teams from Canada, Japan, Mexico, and Panama could seriously challenge American supremacy and underline flag's worldwide growth. Buzz about the tournament will spur youth participation. The Olympic flame is a guiding light for grassroots talent.

"It's absolutely going to motivate young girls and boys to play. More so young girls," Sowers said.

"The Olympics are the highest honor in sports and a goal of everyone. It gives purpose to something they might have thought there was no future in."

