

# WLL: The Future of Women's Sports is Now

Jera Strony, Writer

Edited by Maya Merante

A game of skill, athleticism, and poise — women's lacrosse has produced some of the most talented athletes for generations. However, women's lacrosse has often taken a back seat to its male counterpart. Although the games are vastly different, they are often lumped together under the same umbrella. The debut of the Women's Lacrosse League (WLL) is just the first step in giving women's lacrosse a larger platform and continuing to bring recognition and support to the game so many have known and loved for years.

With origins that can be traced back to Indigenous tribes in the 12th century, lacrosse is the oldest North American sport. Lacrosse was originally a part of the 1904 and 1908 Olympic games as a medal event but was later removed. While lacrosse has not been an Olympic sport for quite some time, its popularity is on the rise in the United States, especially in the women's game. Currently, there are over [500](#) collegiate lacrosse teams across the Division 1, 2, and 3 levels. But the explosion of growth hasn't stopped at the collegiate level. The [United States Women's Lacrosse](#) team has won nine of the 11 world championships that are sponsored by World Lacrosse and has provided an Olympic-adjacent environment for young girls aspire to reach.

However, since the World Lacrosse Championship isn't annual, postgraduate players look for an opportunity to play at a professional level every year. While football has the NFL, men's lacrosse has the Premier Lacrosse League (PLL), and women's soccer, more recently established, has the NWSL, women's lacrosse has next to nothing. That all changed in 2020 when the brand Athletes Unlimited decided to have its inaugural season of [AU Pro Lacrosse](#), where 56 players came together to compete on four teams that were shuffled each week. Each player chose a non-profit that resonated with them and worked to earn individual points during the games to raise money for their organization. AU Pro Lacrosse ran for four years, paving the way for the next monumental step in women's lacrosse, the WLL.

The PLL officially announced that it would be creating a female counterpart in November of 2024. Not only that, but the name sponsor for the league would be Maybelline. Often, there is a stereotype that in order for women's sports to be as popular and exciting as men's sports, women must embrace their more masculine and aggressive side. While women's lacrosse is certainly an aggressive and demanding sport, it is empowering and impressive that the league was able to embrace the feminine side of women's sports by bringing in Maybelline, a makeup brand, as a sponsor.

[Jessica Feinstein](#), Senior Vice President of marketing at Maybelline New York said, “We were intrigued by lacrosse because it is one of the fastest-growing sports in the U.S. and one of the fastest-growing sports for girls in the U.S.” Having a women’s professional sports league backed by a female-based company is the perfect way to draw in viewers of all kinds while continuing to allow women to support women's lacrosse. Frequently, the lack of support for women's sports is due to a lack of awareness by the general public of just how enjoyable women's sports are. By using Maybelline, a makeup brand millions of people know, as a sponsor, the WLL is able to bring greater awareness to the game and potentially attract viewers that may not have known about the sport.

Maybelline has made it clear that they want to give this partnership their all. They have expressed their goals of hosting a street lacrosse series. This requires minimal equipment and flexible rules allowing anyone to play, introducing more young girls to the sport. Additionally, they would launch pop-ups with iconic players from the WLL.

The [WLL](#) hosted its inaugural season this past February 11th-17th. It consisted of four teams, each spearheaded by a lacrosse legend captain. The Boston Guard, champions of the first season, was headed by captain Charlotte North.

Lexi Katz, a sophomore at Syracuse University, worked as an intern for WLL, helping to make their first season a success. Katz feels that “the WLL is hands down changing the future of women’s lacrosse. They gave an immense impact on the girls of youth lacrosse and showed them the possibilities they have in the sport.”

Often, the explosion of popularity in women's sports is due to the increase in attention and growth of a select few players. Quite recently, this phenomenon was seen with Caitlyn Clark in women’s basketball. Her talent and personality directly contributed to a monumental rise in viewership throughout both the WLB and collegiate women’s basketball.

In lacrosse, [Charlotte North](#) has been the primary catalyst in the explosion of popularity. North brought a new style and flair to the women’s game. From her inhuman shot that reached record speeds to her ability to maneuver and dodge through any defender, Charlotte North’s style of play commands attention. After playing at Duke for two years, North transferred to Boston College where she became a 2-time Tewaaraton winner (the most prestigious award in college lacrosse), led the NCAA in goals, and helped Boston College win its first national championship in 2021. Katz says, “Experiencing ‘The Charlotte North Effect’ in person was so unbelievably and incredibly moving. There were so many young girls there just to see her play.”

North, and every other collegiate women’s lacrosse player’s dedication, has led to leaps in popularity of women’s lacrosse over the past few years. However, the push into the future of

women's sports doesn't stop here. Lacrosse has officially been selected as an event in the 2028 Olympic Games for the first time in over 100 years. With a growing platform, the future possibilities of women's lacrosse are endless. Lexi Katz says she is "looking forward to seeing how they expand [the league]," as well as "hoping for more teams, a regular season, and more fans at games."

The growth of women's lacrosse goes to show that when society and industry gives women's sports the proper platform the support will inevitably follow. These women embody what it means to be a "strong woman," balancing poise with strength and using their platforms to empower the next generation.