

# Kevin Mondy Jr. blazing trails on lacrosse field

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Lacrosse is hardly considered the sport of choice for African-Americans. The sport is highly revered and touted in Canada, and originated during the 5th Century. But it didn't gain popularity in the U.S. until the 1990's. Lacrosse is most popular on the east coast, with leagues in Maryland, Connecticut, Pennsylvania, Massachusetts.

Although the sport continues to gain visibility in the media through coverage of collegiate, high school and youth programs, it has yet to penetrate many urban areas in the US. That's the main reason why lacrosse (still not considered a UIL sport in Texas) is not typically offered in public schools. I talked to a twelve-year-old student at Lakehill Preparatory School in North Dallas who plays lacrosse with the Hillcrest community league team about his experience with the sport.

**Michelle London-Bell:** So, how long have you been playing lacrosse? How did you initially get involved with the sport/what sparked your initial interest?



Kevin Mondy, Jr.

**Kevin Mondy, Jr.:** “I have been playing since the 4th grade, so it has been around four years now. I got involved with Lacrosse through the St. Phillip School and Community Center in South Dallas, which is a private school. The BRIDGE (Building Relationships to Initiate Diversity, Growth and Enrichment) Program is a nationwide initiative that provides opportunities for kids to learn the game of lacrosse. I remember seeing something on television about lacrosse and that's what got me interested. I didn't know I was good at it until everybody told me I was good. I play the goalie position, which means you have to be very physical and tough at the same time.”

**MLB:** How do you feel about playing lacrosse considering there are very few African-Americans who play the sport?

**KMJ:** “Well, it’s kind of hard; but as more African-American males watch the game and it’s more visible – then more African-American males and females would want to play it. Male lacrosse and female lacrosse are two different things; with females, it is a lot less physical. [Females] wear eye protection and use the lacrosse sticks only.”

**MLB:** How can the game of lacrosse, in your opinion, get more exposure with African-Americans?

**KMJ:** I think through television, the local news, and more schools offering the sport.

**MLB:** Do you see yourself continuing to play lacrosse throughout your school years? Do you think your coaches cultivate your craft?

**KMJ:** “Yes, the coaches motivate me a lot, because when we are losing a game – they motivate me to keep my head up and play ten times harder. They call me Mr. ‘6 by 6’ – which means it is a reference to the lacrosse goal because it’s 6 inches tall by 6 inches in width.

As a goalie, I play a leadership role on the team and it requires a lot because you have to direct the defense in telling them which direction to go [in order] to stop the opposing team, and then revert back to the offense. I feel it helps me to develop leadership skills – similar to a quarterback on a football team.”

**MLB:** Do colleges give scholarships for lacrosse? Where do you think playing lacrosse will take you ultimately?

**KMJ:** “Syracuse University offers lacrosse scholarships – lacrosse is huge there! It would be great to land a scholarship to a college like that. I want to go there and play lacrosse, but I also want to become a statistician – because I am good with numbers and I like math!”

**MLB:** Great! The next generation needs young people who dig math and science, so I commend you for that. Speaking of the next generation, do you see yourself positively impacting the image of lacrosse as a sport in our community?

**KMJ:** “Yes, I can see that. With the help of others we can expose more people to the sport by playing lacrosse across the nation. I would like to go to schools and ask them to use their fields, bring along equipment, and show them how to play. I think other kids will be receptive because one thing about lacrosse, being like football – it is a contact sport and you get to be physical. It is really a combination of football, hockey and basketball all in one. You can use all those skills in one game.”

If you would like to learn more about lacrosse in the Dallas-Fort Worth area visit [www.texaslacrosse.com](http://www.texaslacrosse.com).