



# Play Time Guidelines

*Updated: February 2025*

## **1.0 Purpose**

This policy is to establish an outline for playing time for all teams affiliated with the Eastern Shore Breakers Lacrosse Association. It is the Association's purpose to develop all lacrosse players at all levels. We hope to support our coaches so that they can ensure that all player's needs are being met - both developmentally and socially. This is a complex matter that has many considerations.

We want all coaches, players and parents to behave cooperatively and respectfully. Open and honest communication will be the key to success for all our teams.

## **2.0 Definitions**

2.1 Equitable Playing Time means that we balance the desirability of developing every individual player against the collective goal of working as a team. Equitable Playing Time should never be confused with equal playing time. The former means fair and reasonable, whereas the latter means everyone plays the exact same amount. But it can never be equal. For example, no one would ever complain that a goalie had more time than a runner. And there will always be a degree of imprecision during the rotation process. Equitable Playing Time, where playing time is allocated based on principles of fairness and reasonableness depending on the circumstances of the practice or match, and on the idea that everyone should have the opportunity to derive benefit regardless of their skill level. Although relatively equal playing time is a factor for every coach to keep in mind, the objective of Equitable Playing Time is equal benefit, not equal playing time.

2.2 Situational lacrosse is a competitive strategy that involves offense/defense positioning, powerplay, penalty kill, transition and face-offs.

### **3.0 PLAYTIME GUIDELINES FOR U11 and U13/U15/U17 “B” Division Teams**

3.1 The Breaker’s coaches at these levels should focus on the development of all players and where appropriate, provide equitable playing opportunities.

3.2 Every player shall receive Equitable Playing Time on the condition that they and their family comply with the Code of Conduct.

3.3 The coach has a responsibility to all the players to develop their skills and abilities during practice time. The coach must develop an effective practice plan that utilizes all players, coaches and floor space. The coach must train all players in situational lacrosse during practice time.

3.4 The coaches should rotate players into situational events during games, in the hopes of developing every player’s abilities in these situations.

3.5 If the team has two goalies, the goalies will be rotated equitably.

### **4.0 U13/U15/U17 “A” Division Teams**

4.1 Every player shall receive Equitable Playing Time on the condition that they and their family comply with the Code of Conduct AND

4.1.1 The player exhibits dedication. This means that a player regularly attends matches (regular season, dryland training, tournament, and exhibition), practices, and other team events. When a player is absent, it affects the team. A player must inform the coach as soon as possible when they cannot attend a team event. Important and unmovable school or family events should always come first, but on a competitive team, it is expected that players shall make real efforts to attend team events and to provide the coach with a reasonable and timely explanation when they cannot. In addition to notifying the coach at the earliest juncture possible, a player or their parent(s) shall ensure that their RAMP availability profile is up-to-date because it allows the coaches to plan practices and identify if they need to contact call-up players.

4.1.2 The player demonstrates Solid Effort. “A” division players are expected to work hard during practices and games. Lack of focus is detrimental to the other players, and Breaker’s coaches and trainers reasonably expect players to listen and behave properly. If a coach believes that a particular player is not

demonstrating a solid effort, the coach will have a discussion with the player and his/her parents, this may result in decreased participation in shifts.

4.1.3 The player and their parents are courteous and cooperative. They are respectful of all other players, not only teammates, but also players from the opposing team. Players must refrain from derogatory comments about any teammate, team staff member, opposing player or coach, or game official. Parents are to conduct themselves in an orderly, non-aggressive fashion during practices and matches, and refrain from instigating or perpetuating verbal or physical altercations with anyone. The player and their parents always observe a 24-hour (“cool down”) rule, which is that they and their parents refrain from expressing dissatisfaction with, or engaging in public criticism of, a coach within 24 hours of the event in question. Parents and players are to be respectful and cooperative with all members of the team’s staff. If the player and their parents are unhappy then they should speak to the manager of the team who will follow the Association’s process on handling such matters.

4.1.4 The coach has the right to play situational lacrosse. There are certain situations, such as, but not limited to last minute offense/defense, powerplay, penalty kill, face-off, where competitive strategy outweighs Equitable Playing time. For example, if the team is playing in a close game which affects its ability to remain in contention, then the coaches reserve the right to play the players who they believe will give the best chance of playing in a subsequent game. The Provincial playoffs are an example of this situation. Coaches reserve the right to reward players who they observed exhibited the finest efforts during the earlier part of the game. Developing or advanced players are equally eligible. Advanced players can expect less playing time when there are developmental opportunities for developing players. This is most often the case when they are playing an obviously weaker team. Rather than crush the other team, the team will play its developing players more. Conversely, where the team is playing a strong or superior opponent, advanced players can expect more playing time.

4.1.5 If the team has two goalies, the coach will do their best to provide an equitable, rotational schedule. The goalies are expected to demonstrate the level of commitment of the other players on the team. If the team is playing in a close game which affects its ability to remain in contention, then the coaches reserve the right to play the goalie who they believe will give the best chance of playing in a subsequent game. The coach also reserves the right to play the more advanced goalie (if there is one) in more meaningful situations, for example championship games.

4.1.6 The coach has a responsibility to all players to develop their abilities during practice time. The coach must develop an effective practice plan that utilizes all players, coaches and floor space. The coach must train all players in situational lacrosse during practice time. The coach must use their best abilities to create line-ups that develop all players in competition.

4.1.7 The coach will follow all rules and regulations in regards to running an offense/defense system. All players should have the opportunity to develop all positions in practice. The coach is able to make positional game time decisions that will best serve the player and the team.

## **5.0 PLAYTIME GUIDELINES FOR U7/U9 PROGRAMS**

These programs are designed to be an introduction to the sport of lacrosse. The main focus will be on development of basic skills and systems. Coaches will maintain a fun and positive environment that fosters a love for the game.

## **6.0 Review and Amendments:**

This policy will be subject to periodic review by the Association's Executive or the designated committee. Amendments may be made to ensure its continued effectiveness and relevance.