

Competitive Coach Introduction



FIELD LACROSSE

National
Coaching
Certification
Program



Programme
national de
certification des
entraîneurs

Association
canadienne
de crosse



Canadian
Lacrosse
Association



National
Coaching
Certification
Program



PARTNERS IN COACH EDUCATION

The National Coaching Certification Program is a collaborative program of the Government of Canada, provincial/territorial governments, national/provincial/territorial sport organizations, and the Coaching Association of Canada.

Government
of Alberta



BRITISH
COLUMBIA
The Best Place on Earth



The programs of this organization are funded in part by Sport Canada.



Canadian
Heritage
Sport Canada

Patrimoine
canadien

Acknowledgements

The Coaching Association of Canada would like to acknowledge the contribution of the following people for their work on the Standard Protocol for Developing NCCP Resource Materials:

Lucie LeBel
Julie Long

The Canadian Lacrosse Association (CLA) would like to recognize the efforts of the following people for their contribution to the compilation of this manual:

Karen Blake	Duane Bratt
Bruce Codd	Ed Comeau
Roxanne Curtis	Chris Driscoll
Laura Favor	Pierre Filion
Wayne Finck	Shawn Gilmore
James Gow	Denny Johnson
Kim Knowles	Doug Krochak
Mike Laleune	Ken Lay Sr.
Paul Lehmann	Ron MacSpadyen
Mike Marshall	Bill McBain
Melissa McKenzie	Terry Mosdell
Frank Nielsen	Rick Phillips
Damien Roy	Russ Sheppard
Joanne Stanga	Ross Ste-Croix
Richard Way	

This manual was revised in October 2012 by Duane Bratt.

It is with the tireless efforts of these individuals that the CLA can develop its coaching material.

The Manual is an integration of the:
The CLA's LTAD Overview and Stages documents.
and
The Coaching Association of Canada NCCP templates,
© Coaching Association of Canada, January 2003
© Canadian Lacrosse Association, 2012

How to be a better coach



© Scott Grant, CAC

Learn to listen, especially to the athletes – they are excellent teachers.

Help each athlete develop all of their capacities: physical, mental/emotional, and social.

Take a stand against doping and cheating in sport.

Thirst for knowledge
attend coaching courses, get certified, stay up to date.

Brought to you by
the Coaching Association of Canada www.coach.ca



Coaching
Association
of Canada



Dear Coach,

The Coaching Association of Canada is pleased to offer you an interactive Web site that enables you to check your accreditation online. Go to www.coach.ca where you can:

- track your progress through the NCCP;
- update your coaching profile;
- print out copies of your coaching card or a transcript of your coaching courses;
- visit the Coaching Tips and Tools section;
- and so much more!



Coaching
Association
of Canada



National
Coaching
Certification
Program

THE NATIONAL COACHING CERTIFICATION PROGRAM (NCCP)

The National Coaching Certification Program (NCCP) is developed and implemented through the combined efforts of the federal/provincial/territorial Governments; the national/provincial/territorial sport governing bodies and the Coaching Association of Canada (CAC).

Coaching Courses are administered and delivered through a partnership of the Coaching Association of Canada and each governing sport body.

The NCCP is broken down into the following Coaching and Instructional levels:

- **Community Coaching (For coaches of entry level and house league players)**
 - Community Coach - Initiation
 - Community Coach - Development
- **Competitive Coaching (For coaches in competitive leagues)**
 - Competitive Coach - Introduction
 - Competitive Coach - Development
 - Competitive Coach - High Performance
- **Instruction (For sports where instructors are used)**
 - Instruction Beginners
 - Instruction Intermediate Performers
 - Instruction Advanced Performers

Each Stream is composed of instructional material called contexts which is divided into two categories:

- **Multi-sport Training Courses**, which is information from the sport sciences that is common to all sports and is delivered by facilitators trained by the CAC
- **Technical Training Courses**, which is the body of knowledge specific to each sport and is developed and delivered by each sport body.

CERTIFICATION

The certification part of the NCCP is a formal evaluation jointly administered by the CAC and the Governing Sport Bodies.

To qualify for certification, coaches must complete all courses and requirements in both the Multi-sport and Technical sectors of each Stream.

This Resource Manual has been produced with the cooperation and financial assistance of the Coaching Association of Canada and the Fitness and Amateur Sport Branch, the Secretary of State for Amateur Sport, and the member associations of the Canadian Lacrosse Association. The following people were the major technical group responsible for the writing, editing, technical assistance, trailing, and contributors:

WRITER & NATIONAL RESOURCE PERSON

Duane Bratt

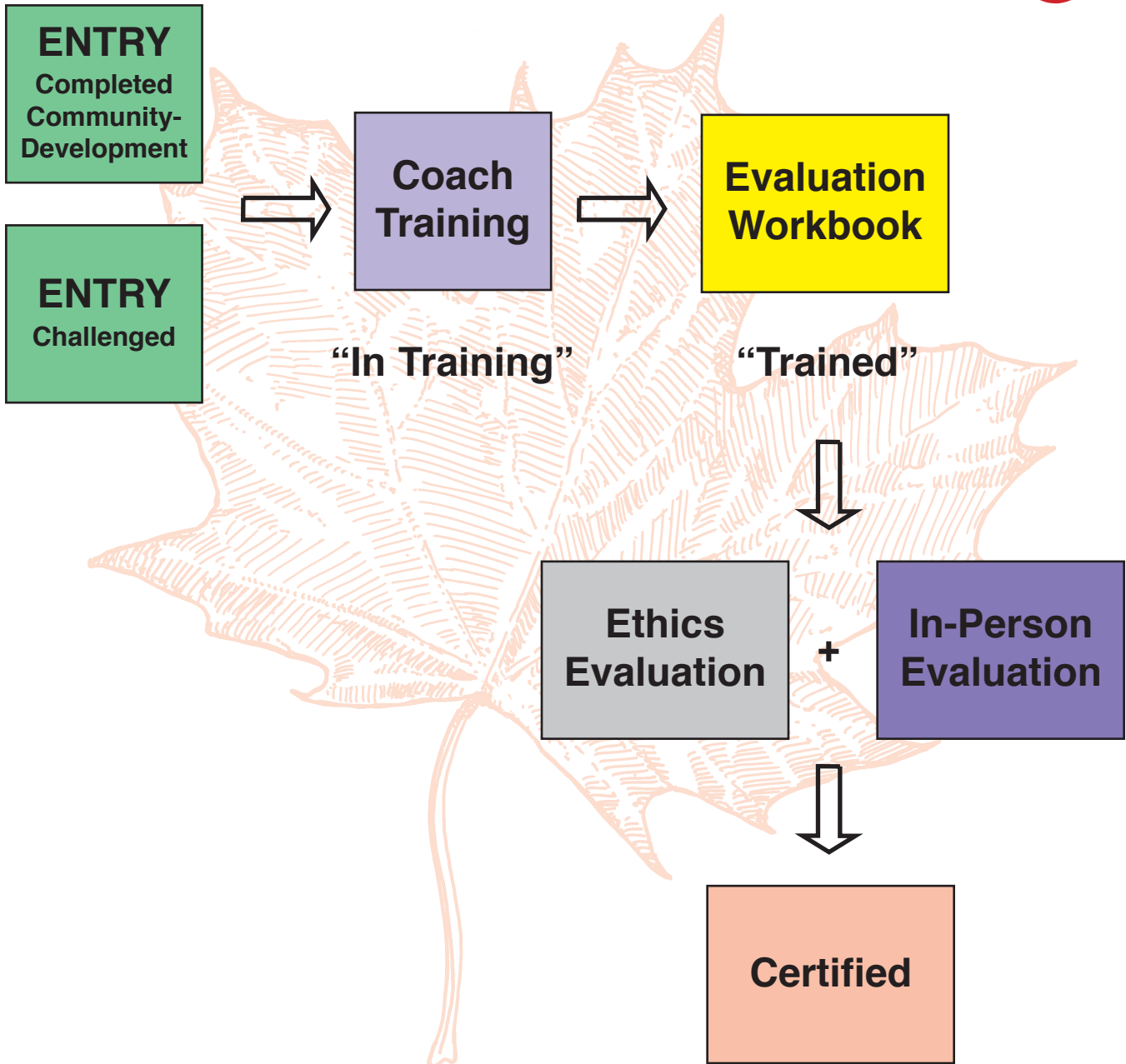
WRITERS/CONTRIBUTORS

Karen Blake	Bruce Codd
Ed Comeau	Roxanne Curtis
Chris Driscoll	Laura Favor
Pierre Filion	Wayne Finck
Shawn Gilmore	James Gow
Denny Johnson	Kim Knowles
Doug Krochak	Mike Laleune
Ken Lay Sr.	Paul Lehmann
Ron MacSpadyen	Mike Marshall
Bill McBain	Melissa McKenzie
Terry Mosdell	Frank Nielsen
Rick Phillips	Damien Roy
Russ Sheppard	Duane Bratt
Ross Ste-Croix	Richard Way

PUBLISHER

Canadian Lacrosse Association

Coach Pathway Competitive-Introduction



National
Coaching
Certification
Program

Programme
national de
certification des
entraîneurs



Association
canadienne
des entraîneurs

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

Coaches Introductions . . . . .	.x
The CLA Lacrosse Coaching Development Program . . . . .	.xi
Long Term Athlete Development . . . . .	.xi
The Key Elements of the LCDP . . . . .	.xv
Player Centred Coaching . . . . .	.xviii
The Motion Offence . . . . .	.xix
Decision Making . . . . .	.xx
Competitive Coach - Introduction . . . . .	.xxiii
Using the Manual . . . . .	.xxiv

THE GAME

Goals, Objectives and Introduction . . . . .	.1-1
The Game . . . . .	.1-2
The Rules . . . . .	.1-4
Appendix A: Answers . . . . .	.1-8

THE COACH

Goals, Objectives and Introduction . . . . .	.2-1
The Coach as an Educator - Learning . . . . .	.2-2
The Coach as an Administrator, Manager and Leader . . . . .	.2-6
Learning to Coach by Learning to Lead . . . . .	.2-7
Appendix A: NCCP Code of Ethics . . . . .	.2-23

THE PLAYER

Goals, Objectives and Introduction . . . . .	.3-1
Knowing the Players . . . . .	.3-2
Growth and Development . . . . .	.3-3
Emotional Development . . . . .	.3-9
Evaluating the Players . . . . .	.3-10
Head Injuries and Concussions . . . . .	.3-14

TECHNICAL PREPARATION

Goals, Objectives and Introduction	4-1
Team Offence	4-2
Offensive Skills	4-7
Extra Man Offense	4-11
Team Play	4-14
Team Defence	4-15
Individual Defence	4-17
Man-down Defence	4-19
Rides	4-21
Clears	4-23
Face-offs	4-24

MENTAL PREPARATION

Goals, Objectives and Introduction	5-1
Preparing to Compete - Part 1	5-3
Preparing to Compete - Part 2	5-5

PHYSICAL PREPARATION

Goals, Objectives and LTAD and Physical Preparation	6-1
Introduction	6-2
The Physical Abilities	6-2
Training the Physical Abilities	6-3
Motor Abilities	6-16
Nutrition Tips	6-25

PLANNING

Goals, Objectives and Introduction	7-1
The Importance of Assistant Coaches	7-2
Dressing Room & Bench Management	7-3
Typical Seasonal Planner Use	7-5

APPENDIX A

Recommendation Regarding Practice-to-Game Ratios	A-1
--	-----

THE CLA LACROSSE COACHING DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

The Canadian Lacrosse Association's (CLA), with the cooperation of the Coaching Association of Canada, has combined its Coaching Development Program with the Streams and Sport Contexts of the NCCP. This integrated approach will offer lacrosse coaches several advantages:

- The theory of how to coach is made relevant by integrating it with the actual teaching of lacrosse. Therefore, the support information from the sport sciences is easier to understand because it is learned as it is being used.
- Coaches will take only one course to coach their teams.
- The Facilitators will be familiar with the needs of lacrosse coaches and the information will be relevant.

LONG-TERM ATHLETE DEVELOPMENT

The Lacrosse Coaching Development Program (LCDP) is committed to the concept of Long-Term Athlete Development (LTAD). The CLA has adapted LTAD to lacrosse through its *Lacrosse for Life* program, especially the Overview and Stages documents.

Long-Term Athlete Development (LTAD)

What?

LTAD is a framework for systematically training and developing physical, mental, and emotional capacities in athletes according to scientifically-recognized principles and stages of human development. As a training, competition, and recovery model, it respects the natural stages of physical, mental, and emotional development in athletes.

How?

Based on clearly defined developmental stages, LTAD provides recommendations for ratios of training-to-competition hours, points of emphasis in skills training, formats for competition, and more. When adapted to a specific sport such as lacrosse, it provides coaches and administrators with clear guidelines for designing training and competition programs at every developmental stage to optimize long-term skills acquisition and performance.

Why?

Importantly, LTAD allows athletes the flexibility to move between competitive and recreational arenas of their sport at almost any time of life. Following early athlete development in the first stages of training, and depending on talent, athletes may choose to pursue elite competition or join a recreational stream for fun and wellness. In this way, LTAD supports lifelong wellness for the greatest number of participants even while promoting medal-winning performances.



Growing with Lacrosse

Lacrosse for Life identifies seven basic stages for developing lacrosse players:



Active Start

Young children begin basic play.



FUNDamentals

Later childhood provides more structure but emphasizes FUN.



Learning to Train

Pre-teens prepare for structured training.



Training to Train

Early teens build training capacities.



Learning & Training to Win

Players train solely for competitive results.



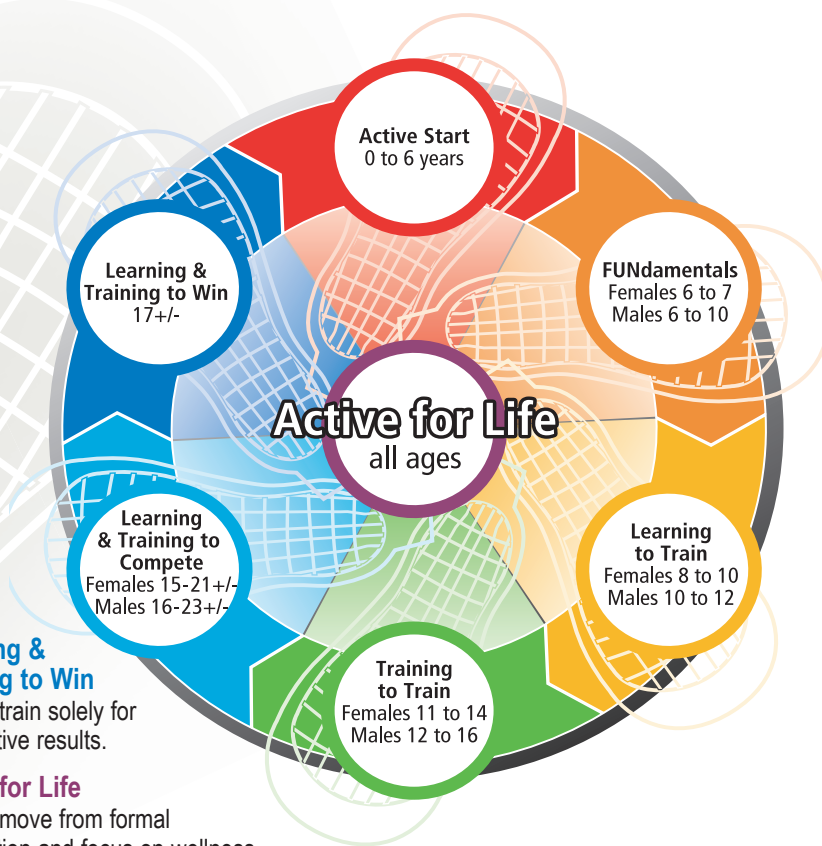
Learning & Training to Compete

Older teens start training to compete for titles.



Active for Life

Players move from formal competition and focus on wellness.



THE MALE ATHLETE

This table reflects the intended focus of training at each stage, ages of players, and the roles played by lacrosse organizers through the stages:

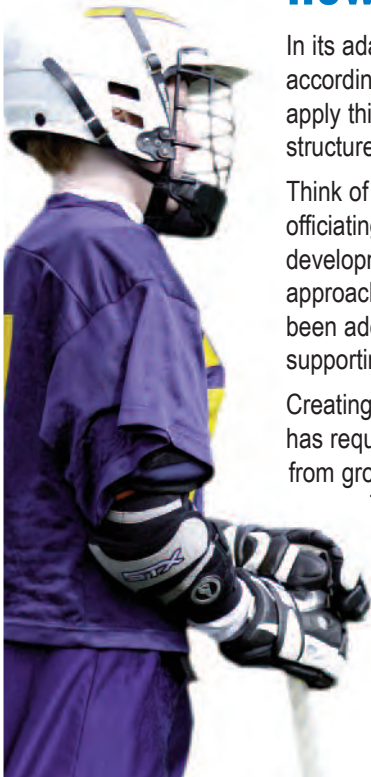
LTAD Stage	Focus	Time	Age Range	Play for	Competition Host	Description
AS	Play		4-6	Club	Local Assoc.	Pre-kindergarten, low organized games - FUN
Fun1	Learn	1st Half	7-8	Club	Local Assoc.	Emphasis on fun; School PE and intramurals SPEED, SUPPLENESS
Fun2		2nd Half	9-10	Club	Local Assoc.	Skills and drills - SPEED Fair play, modified rules, decrease competition, increase fun
L2T	Skill		11-12	Club MA Prov. Team	Local Assoc. CLA w/Host	Start goaltender specialization - SKILL. Ensure fun and participation.
T2T	Game	1st Half	13-14	Club MA Prov. Team	Local Assoc. CLA w/Host	Further skill interaction - STAMINA Ensure fair play - AEROBIC CAPACITY
		2nd Half	15-16	Club MA Prov. Team	Local Assoc. CLA w/Host	Increase competition, Start to focus on the game of lacrosse; SPEED Late entry opportunities; AEROBIC POWER
L2C	Specialize in lacrosse	1st Half	17-18	Club	MA	Skill refinement - STRENGTH Year-round training begins - late entry opportunities
T2C		2nd Half	up to 21	Club	MA	Full complement of training and game exposure Late entry opportunities
L2W	Elite	1st Half	up to 21 21+	Club Club	MA / CLA MA / CLA	Training environment with full Performance Enhancement Team support Full compliment of training and game exposure
T2W	Pro	2nd Half	21+	Club CLA Nat. Team	MA / CLA FIL	Total skill refinement
A4L	Life		21+	Club MA/CLA	MA / CLA MA	Divisions by skill, competition and recreation divided Sr. adult - post career

THE FEMALE ATHLETE

This table reflects the intended focus of training at each stage, ages of players, and the roles played by lacrosse organizers through the stages:

LTAD Stage	Focus	Age Guideline	CATEGORY		Play for	Competition Host	Description
			Field	Box			
AS	Play	0-5	Club				Pre-kindergarten; Daily physical activities (both organized and unstructured); encourage fundamental movement skills; focus on participation; FUN
FUN	Learn	6-7		Tyke 7-8	Club	Local Assoc.	Skill development should be well-structured, positive and FUN; encourage participation in a variety of sports; School PE and intramurals. SPEED 1, SUPPLENESS ; introduce simple rules.
L2T	Skill	8-10	U-11	Novice 9-10	Club	Local Assoc.	Focus on SPORT SKILLS and drills, (accelerated motor co-ordination); NO position specialization
T2T	Game	11-14	U-13	Peewee 11-12	School Club	Local Assoc. MA	Combine skills and tactics; train competitive situations (games & drills); increase competition; start goaltender specialization SPEED 2; STAMINA (PHV ~12); STRENGTH (post menarche)
			U-15	Bantam 13-14			
T2C	L2C	15-16	U-17	Midget 15-16	High School Club MA Provincial	School Board MA CLA	Skill refinement; athlete specific training programs; model high competition in training; some specialization to attack/defense/midfield; late entry opportunities Year-round training begins for National players
	T2C	Specialize in Lacrosse	17-18	U-19				Major 17+
T2W	L2W	18+/-	U-19 Nat.		U19 Nat. University	MA / CLA OUA Div.II-III NCAA Div.II-III	Training environment with full Performance Enhancement Team (PET) support. Full compliment of training and game exposure.
	T2W	Elite	Senior Nat.		University Sr. Nat.	NCAA Div.I FIL	Total skill refinement; year round training and game exposure with highest level of support; high intensity/high volume training
A4L	Life		Masters	Masters	Club	MA	Post career: competition and recreation; coaches; officials. Sr. adult - post career

How Can LTAD Build Lacrosse?



In its adaptation to lacrosse, LTAD will maximize the development of lacrosse players across Canada according to a consistent and scientifically-founded methodology for training and development. However, to apply this systematic methodology to training, LTAD has to be supported by the surrounding organizational structures of our sport.

Think of Canadian lacrosse as an integrated “sports system.” There are competition formats to consider, officiating, facility development, coach training, and a host of other components that contribute to the overall development of our players. LTAD has implications for each of these elements, hence a multi-pronged approach needs to be taken to implementing LTAD that deals with all of them. When all components have been adequately addressed, the result will be a comprehensive, rational system of player development supporting LTAD.

Creating such an integrated system can be challenging. In previous instances where LTAD implementation has required changes to a sport culture’s existing methods and procedures, there has often been resistance from groups within the “sport system” who feel their authority is being challenged or their territory invaded.

This feeling is not abnormal as it is natural for people to feel anxious about change and “stepping into the unknown,” but it can be a stumbling block if it prevents the sport system from moving forward with improved player development and threatens the long-term success of the sport itself.

From its inception, one of the goals of LTAD has been to address a number of consistent shortcomings in all sports development in Canada. These shortcomings have had serious negative consequences as half of our youth are inactive and not engaging in sport programs of any kind. Canadian lacrosse can benefit by learning from other sport organizations in how they have addressed their gaps in delivery.

Shortcomings

- Young athletes tend to over-compete and under-train.
- Coaches neglect the sensitive periods when young athletes experience accelerated adaptation to special aspects of training (e.g. stamina, strength, speed, skill and suppleness).
- Winning is emphasized prematurely at young ages, so training becomes geared to short-term game results instead of long-term athlete development.
- Fundamental lacrosse skills are not taught at appropriate ages using appropriate methods.
- Training and competition programs designed for males are imposed on females.
- Adult training and competition formats are often imposed on child and youth athletes.
- Chronological age is used to organize training and competition, rather than developmental age.
- The best coaches work with elite athletes; less-experienced volunteers coach at the developmental level where trained coaches are essential.
- The competition system (e.g. league and tournament schedules) interferes with athlete development.
- There is no talent identification system (TID).
- There is no integration between physical education programs in schools, recreational community programs, and elite competitive programs.
- There is little integration and coordination between the disciplines of lacrosse (box, men's field, and women's field).
- Athletes are encouraged to specialize (by both sport and position) when they are too young.

Consequences

- Athlete skills are undeveloped and unrefined.
- Skill development is never optimized.
- Athletes fail to reach optimal performance levels when they progress to senior elite competition.
- Athletes develop poor movement abilities.
- Athletes lack proper fitness.
- Athletes develop poor habits from over-competition focused on winning.
- Female athletes do not reach their potential.
- Children do not have fun in adult-based programs and they leave the sport.
- The next generation of international athletes is not systematically developed.
- Athletes over-compete and burnout when pulled in different directions by school, club, and provincial teams.
- Provincial and National team coaches must implement remedial programs to counteract the shortcomings of athlete development.
- Inconsistent national performances due to lack of TID and a player development pathway.
- Athletes fail to reach their genetic potential.
- Competition between box and field programs for players.

In the LCDP, the Phases of Athlete Development as articulated in *Lacrosse for Life* are combined with the Streams and Multi-Sport Contexts of the NCCP.

To Coach Is To Learn

Although Coaching is a voluntary position, it is to be considered a professional activity that involves the same complex skills and responsibilities required by educators. Learning to coach will therefore take time, practice and even some “professional development” (i.e. the certification courses) as coaches go through the recurring process of taking in new information and relating it to what is known.

The LCDP curriculum has been specifically designed to teach coaches how to coach rather than just how to play lacrosse. It is understood that most people who volunteer for coaching duties bring some knowledge of the game or of coaching with them. If their experiences have been influenced by negative attitudes and values and/or ineffective coaching styles, they may have difficulty understanding the purpose of the program. It will therefore help all coaches if they understand the five basic concepts the LCDP is based on:

- The Spirit of Lacrosse
- The Phases of Development
- Player Centred Coaching
- Motion Offence
- Decision Making

THE KEY ELEMENTS OF THE LCDP

THE SPIRIT OF LACROSSE

*The player
who played against me
was really working with me.
He caused me to make moves
I had never made before.
And any magic that came
from the surprise of what I did
came because he guarded me so well.
The two of us
were just working together, creating a new form
to get to the same place.*

Paul Owens – 1977 Poet

The Spirit of Lacrosse is the theme of the LCDP and is the same spirit of achievement and challenge that exists in all sport. Coaches must understand that they are responsible for ensuring that the spirit they foster is positive. For example, if the rules of the game are violated, if FairPlay and respect do not prevail or if the “win at all cost” attitude is not controlled, effort is compromised and **The Spirit Of Lacrosse** will be lost. It is the right of all players to expect that their involvement in a lacrosse program will result in:

Strong Minds

The development of confidence, a positive self-image and the ability to use mental training to their advantage.

Strong Bodies

The development of strength, endurance, flexibility and speed.

Strong Spirits

The development of a positive code of ethics and the ability to play fair.

The message is that the spirit of sport is learned and coaches teach it by what they say and do. The most efficient way for coaches to achieve the Spirit of Lacrosse is to follow the principles of FairPlay and to coach players to play to the intent of the rules as well as the “letter” of the rules. Not allowing players to cheat and by following the FairPlay policies such as not shortening the bench or not allowing players to hold, hit or bully etc., forces all players to **concentrate – move – execute – react** better than their opponents in order to achieve the game’s objectives. Because of this extra effort, the bodies and minds of the players adapt to meet the new demands. Consequently, players become stronger and more alert, their play becomes faster and their motivation to develop skills improves. As the players develop confidence in their ability, they no longer feel they have to cheat to win. Thus the spiral that leads to a very strong Spirit of Lacrosse is started.

Community Coach - Initiation: The “FUNdamental” Phase of Player Development

This is the introductory level for lacrosse and is the first phase of development for 5 to 8 year olds. The course content gives coaches the background to teach young players in a fun and exciting environment. At this level coaches will learn:

- Basic skills & basic team fundamentals;
- Identify correct equipment;
- Basic rules of lacrosse;
- Teaching through the use of minor games;
- The principles of fair play & ethics;
- The principles of running a practice; and
- Safety and liability

Community Coach - Development: The “Learning to Train” Phase of Player Development

This is the starting level for coaches of all older beginners in both recreational and competitive leagues, and the next step for young players who have completed the Fundamental Phase of Learning. Community Coach - Development also contains elements of the Fundamental Phase of Development as all players must go through this phase with every new skill and concept learned. At this level the coach will learn:

- Basic skills and identifying correct measures;
- Basic team strategies;
- Teaching through the use of games and self discovery;
- Principles of fair play and ethics;
- Principles of running productive practices; and
- Rules of lacrosse

Competition - Introduction: The “Training to Train” Phase of Player Development

Coaches in competitive leagues will need the knowledge and coaching techniques of the Learning to Compete Phase of Development. It is during this phase of development that players learn the elements of team offense, team defense, special team play as well as the effort required to compete on a more focused level. Coaches are introduced to knowledge and coaching techniques that will help them motivate players to increased levels of concentration, intensity, and commitment; and that will help them prepare their players mentally and technically for a higher level of play.

Competition - Development: The “Learning and Training to Compete” Phase of Player Development

Not yet developed.

Competition - High Performance: Learning and Training to Win

Not yet developed.

COMMUNITY COACH EVALUATION AND CERTIFICATION**Lacrosse Community Coach - Initiation**

Self-Evaluation only will be conducted at this Level by completing the assigned tasks contained in this manual.

Lacrosse Community Coach - Development

Formal evaluation will be conducted at this Level and when successful, will result in coaches being Community Coach Certified.

PLAYER CENTRED COACHING

Coaches must be **centred on the interests and needs of their players, ie., Player Centred Coaching.**

Coaches are player centred when they:

- Focus on the needs of the players rather than on their own.
 - *Coaches must be concerned about the well being of their players.*
 - *All players must be developed to their potential.*
 - *Lacrosse must be a positive experience for all players.*
- Coach to teach players to compete rather than coach to win, eg,
 - *Teach man-to-man defence instead of zone.*
 - *Teach players defensive positioning instead of chasing or pressing,*
 - *Teach team systems instead of letting one player go for a shot.*
- Coach all players rather than just the elite few.
- Are more interested in achievement than outcomes i.e.
 - *teach skills rather than use the tricks and strategies of shortening the bench, bending the rules, physical and verbal abuse etc.*
- Share decision-making about how to practice by giving the players more self-directed playing time

¹Core Competency Summary. http://www.coach.ca/cbet/gencom_e.htm (9 September 1999).

THE MOTION OFFENCE

Lacrosse, a team sport, is coached for the most part as an individual sport.

Over the years, players and coaches have been quite successful in passing on their knowledge to the next generation. Most of this information, however, has been related to the very highly developed individual skills of lacrosse. Competitive Coach – Introduction introduces coaches to a continuity offence that teaches the team concepts of lacrosse in such a way that all six offensive players are involved and the integrity of individual play is preserved.

The Motion Offence is an offence that was designed from the basic player movement patterns of lacrosse.

The advantages of using the Motion Offence as a practice tool are:

- the players feel they are playing lacrosse rather than practicing drills,
- the players learn the concepts of the game while the coach teaches the individual and team fundamentals;
- the coaches learn how players learn and how to coach a team sport;
- the skills, concepts and strategies can be taught at all ages;
- the activity follows the principles of effective practices, particularly the principle of specificity.

The advantages of using the Motion Offence in games include:

- the development of team play without sacrificing the spontaneity and creativity of individual play,
- continuous player movement, with emphasis on movement off the ball,
- automatic field balance,
- a high percentage of passing and good shooting opportunities,
- use of all players,
- the positive evolution of lacrosse,

The Coaching Association of Canada (CAC) has identified five Core Competencies¹ that clearly identify the skills required for successful coaching. Effective decision making is the fundamental skill of the Core Competencies. These Core Competencies are life skills that coaches bring with them. The curriculum of the LCDP is designed so that coaches can identify and enhance their strengths and develop their weaknesses so that on completion of Competitive Coach - Introduction they will be able to:

- Project a positive **VALUE** system,
- **SOLVE PROBLEMS**,
- **INTERACT** effectively with their players,
- **REFLECT** on the consequence of their actions,
- Provide positive **LEADERSHIP**.

Valuing is: “the ability to choose an effective response to a specific coaching situation that is consistent with principles of ethical practice”. Coaches are expected to:

- follow the policies of the FairPlay Codes and the Coaching Code of Conduct under all circumstances
- ensure the athletes play within the boundaries of the Spirit of Sport.

If players are to develop a positive value system through sport, coaches must be the models.

Problem Solving is "The ability to bring about a positive outcome to meet a specific coaching challenge", and is the key to effective coaching. In many ways, the art of coaching is about finding ways to develop a player's potential which is a continuous task of solving one problem after another, and of planning and organizing practices and games.

Interaction is “The ability to interact effectively with individuals, groups or teams in a specific context.” **Interaction** involves the effective communication and feedback and the building of a positive self-image that is covered in **The Role of the Coach** in Module 2.

Critical Thinking is “The ability to reflect upon and/or monitor the outcome of situations, experiences, decisions and/or actions...., and to assess their relevance and importance as a basis for future action.” The ability of coaches to analyze their teams in relation to the age of the players and to accurately evaluate the results of their own coaching will determine their success at solving coaching problems. In other words, if coaching is **Problem Solving**, then **Critical Thinking** is the key to success in coaching.

Leadership is "The ability to influence others to accept, willingly, the leader's purpose and goal to help bring about some better future outcome or result, and to work together, voluntarily, towards achieving that end." The traditional forms of leadership in coaching tend to be dictatorial. Coaches must learn to facilitate rather than dictate, and should encourage their players to become more self-direct rather than obedient. Community Development starts the process by:

- Focusing on the needs of the players rather than on the needs of the coach or the program. Once players feel that the game is for them, they will be more inclined to follow the direction of the coach.
- Emphasizing that leading by example is more influential than leading by command i.e. "Do as I say, not as I do", does not work.
- Insisting that all coaches teach and coach the rules with no exceptions.
The inconsistency that all coaches complain about and the anger and frustration they feel are a direct result of not following the rules and the Codes of Ethics
When all coaches teach and coach the principles of FairPlay and the rules of the game, they collectively have the power to effect the culture and image of lacrosse. (e.g. the recognized difference in the attitude and image of the Field game vs. the Box game.)

¹Core Competency Summary. http://www.coach.ca/cbet/gencom_e.htm (9 September 1999).

COMPETITIVE COACH - INTRODUCTION

Outcomes

This clinic has been designed to prepare competitive coaches to meet the needs of their athletes by training them to do the tasks (achieve the outcomes) described below. These multi-sport outcomes represent the minimum standard for the training and certification of competitive coaches within a competency-based NCCP.

Providing Support in Training:

Ensures that the practice environment is safe; practice is appropriately structured and organized; makes effective interventions; demonstrates appropriate coaching behaviours; integrates and teaches basic decision making; integrates mental strategies into practice; integrates rules/laws into the practice; Coach understands learning and factors that may effect learning; Coach organizes practice environment to ensure optimal learning; Coach uses effective explanations and demonstrations; Coach uses effective observations to identify areas for improvement; and Coach uses optimal feedback strategies to enhance learning.

Analyze Performance:

Coach can identify sport analysis framework; Coach detects performance; Coach corrects performance; and Analyze key factors related to performance in SPORT;

Plan a Practice:

Present a context specific plan to promote learning and improve performance; Identifies potential risk factors; Design an Emergency Action Plan (EAP); Assist injured athletes to return to competition; and Integrates performance factors that relate to competition.

Support the Competitive Experience:

Manages competition factors and logistics; Develops optimal Athlete/Team Preparation; Makes effective interventions during and after competition; and provides mentoring for drug free sport.

Design a Sport Program:

Present a seasonal plan to improve performance and learning; Design a training program to develop physical readiness; and design a training program to develop mental readiness.

Manage Aspects of a Sport Program:

Provide program administration and logistics; Report on athlete progress throughout program; Identifies talent identification and/or selection procedures; Demonstrates ability to work with assistants and other stakeholders; and use effective communication skills to promote program messages.

Make Ethical Decisions:

Uses an Ethical Decision Making Framework; and develop strategies to address and resolve conflicts in SPORT.

USING THE MANUAL

The manual is to be used as a tool for learning as well as a reference book. This manual is intended to support your efforts by providing you with:

- Information on how children learn so you can maintain the fun of playing and coaching lacrosse
- Information about sticks, equipment, and the rules of men's field lacrosse
- Ideas that will help you develop and improve your approach to coaching
- Guidelines for providing a harassment and abuse free environment
- Information about the players you are working with so that you can better meet their needs
- Guidelines for providing a safe environment for playing lacrosse and for managing injuries
- A technical section to show you how to execute individual fundamentals and basic team skills
- Information on teaching the mental aspects of lacrosse
- Information on training the body so that your players can play the game of lacrosse
- Information on how to help you organize your practices to match the learning level and maturity of your players

The Manual as a Tool for Learning.

This manual is based on a problem solving approach to learning, which is also known as TASK learning. Through the process of completing the tasks you will be sharing and learning with and from your peers as well as from the Facilitator. Space is provided for coaches to note their own thoughts as well as those of others. In fact, when the tasks are given to different groups, you will be expected to fill in the blanks when the other groups give their summaries. Not all tasks will be covered in the workshop, but coaches should look at them during the season to ensure that all ideas and concepts of the manual are explored. The evaluation that you will write when you want to apply for your certification will be based on these tasks, so make sure that you have the best answers available.

THE GAME

Module

1

Goals:

1. To define men's field lacrosse as a team sport, to understand the three components that exist in the game, to know the objectives of the three components and the individual skills and team strategies needed to reach the objectives.
2. To understand the rules, their intent and the impact they have on the playing of the game.

Objectives:

- The competent coach shall have the ability to:
- describe the game of men's field lacrosse;
 - know the three components of the game;
 - know the objectives of each component;
 - have knowledge of what individual and team skills and strategies can be utilized to reach the objectives of the three components;
 - understand which rules have a direct bearing on the game; and
 - understand which individual and team skills need to be addressed in order to keep the infractions at a minimum.

Introduction: Men's field lacrosse is a team sport that is a free flowing series of actions and reactions between offensive and defensive players. Unlike some other team sports which play systems from a play book, men's field lacrosse is similar to basketball, hockey, and soccer.

Coaches and players must be aware of the rules in men's field lacrosse that are the result of poor implementation of the basic men's field lacrosse skills – slashing, high sticking and hitting from behind. The competent coach must be aware of the different strategies the players and team have at their disposal in order to meet all situations that arise as a result of rules and their interpretation. Coaches must be cognizant to the fact that bending the rules to gain an advantage is unacceptable.

Once the coach and players understand how individual skills combined with team strategies can be used to meet the objectives of offense, defence and transition, the only thing which can hold them back is a lack of imagination.



The game of lacrosse is like a chess game, I will react to your reaction to my action, and then when you react to my action, I will have another reaction ready.

TASK 1:
Develop a statement that best describes what is a game of field lacrosse.

TASK 2:
Define the following terms when a team is:

1. in possession of the ball?

2. not in possession of the ball?

3. moving from possession to non possession or vice versa?

The Game

The coach, when approached, should be comfortable in defining what is a game of lacrosse. This will enable him/her to utilize other popular sports to explain the game. This understanding of what a lacrosse game consists of will be the basis of the coach's decision for what skills and strategies will become part of the team strategy for playing the game. There is no right way or wrong way, there are however certain rules and parameters that the game should be played within. The following text will provide tasks which the coach can use in establishing a broad base of skills and strategies that when performed correctly will produce the desired results.

The list produced can be as different as the coaches in the game. Once the competent coach understands the broad scope of skills and strategies open to him/her, makes an assessment of the players (module 3) and the team in opposition, only lack of imagination will curtail the execution of game strategies.

Once coaches have established their list of objectives and how they will achieve them, their practices and seasonal planner (module 7) should reflect a training program which will enable the players to attain their goals.

TASK 3:

Q. List three objectives when a team is:

a) in possession of the ball?

b) not in possession of the ball?

Q. List four objectives when a team is:

a) transitioning from offence to defence?

b) transitioning from defence to offence?

TASK 4:

Q. List goals that the player and the team can use to reach the objectives listed in task 3.

A. Offence

Defence

Transition to Offence

Transition to Defence

NOTE:

Upon completion of task 4, coaches should feel they have the necessary guideline of skills and strategies that are need to be addressed when establishing team goals for the playing year. It is imperative that coaches pass these skills and strategies onto the players. It is only through this approach that coaches will be empowering the athletes to experiment and test the goals needed to reach the objectives. This system of coaching will produce the outcomes outlined in the Athlete Centered Approach in module 2, The Coach.



The Rules

Games are activities with rules, how the rules are interpreted and taught coupled with how they are enforced by officials greatly affects the way the games are played. The intent of this module is to look at the rules which have an impact on how the game is played. Although the complete rule book covers every aspect of play, coaches should have a good working knowledge of its content and interpretations.

NOTE:

The coaches code of conduct states “respect towards officials”. This must also be filtered down to the athletes.

They must be cognizant of those rules which have a direct bearing on the outcome of the game. Certain rules will govern how the coach must plan strategies that enable the athletes to successfully compete. Rules such as “dead ball personal fouls result in possession to the nonoffending team” are vitally important to both teams. When ball possession and time clock management are deciding factors in victory, it is the coach’s role to educate their players in hopes of limiting or eliminating these situations.

NOTE:

The overriding factor when discussing the topic of rules and their interpretation is that the coaches and officials must be on the same page.

The teaching of basic skills also has a huge impact on the rules. Coaches are responsible for ensuring athletes know the correct methods of checking. Uncontrolled slashing, players using illegal equipment, illegal bodychecking and hitting from behind are all a result of poor coaching. There are more effective methods of performing the act of defensive play than those infractions which cause the fore mentioned rules to be enforced.

NOTE:

The decisions you make as a coach have far reaching effects, therefore you must seriously consider the following:

**CONSISTENT
APPLICATION
OF THE RULES.**

In order to ensure that the calls are consistent not only in a specific league or province but across the whole spectrum of lacrosse, the training methods must be dovetailed to project the same meaning. This coupled with strong ethics and a mutual respect between coaches, officials and athletes must be evident in order for the game to advance. The natural response to these concerns is to look at the officiating and coaching programs for the answers. These two programs must be providing the leadership to keep lacrosse on track. For lacrosse it is not so much the need to change the rules as it is to ensure the rules are followed and are consistent.

Everyone must be involved, the coaches, the officials, the athletes (athlete centered approach) and last but not least the executives. They are all entitled to be part of the decision-making process if they are to be responsible for the decisions made in regards to the rules and their interpretations.

Another point is the reminder to coaches that our responsibility is to the athletes, the game itself and our special interests last. We must be aware that what we do at every level has affects on field lacrosse right up to the highest level. Subsequently, how the game is played at the senior level has repercussions throughout all the leagues below.

The last point is about the decision-making process. The group problem- solving and decision-making processes of collaboration and consensus- building must be used if we are to succeed. Then we be able to take the power from our ideas, combine them into one thought and make them policy. In other words, the lacrosse participants will have:

- the power to make changes that will affect the future of lacrosse;
- control of the decision-making process; and
- the ability to produce a game that guarantees maximum enjoyment and development.

We Have Always Had These Powers

- Throughout the years several different versions of the game have been developed to appeal to different age groups (mini/tyke and tyke rules) and to satisfy special needs or desires (school intercrosse program).
- Coaches, players and officials have indiscriminately and independently made decisions on rules and interpretations that have changed the game. The attitudes of: the good penalty; it's all right if the referee doesn't call it; win at all costs; the let them play concept; the pocketing of the whistle at critical points of the game, and coaching and officiating styles are acceptable options to the established rules all have had terrific negative effects. The consequences we see from those approaches and actions have been:
 - the unofficial changing of the rules by a few;
 - inconsistency in the game;
 - increased difficulty to officiate;
 - the need for players to do their own "policing" to keep the game fair; and
 - loss of respect, trust, sportsmanship and confidence in the sport.

NOTE:

Lacrosse played in the minor levels must focus on enhancing player development and enjoyment (fun) while the game for the seniors should promote positive competition.

NOTE:

When all the stakeholders are part of the decision-making process, the decisions made can be effectively communicated and monitored throughout the whole lacrosse world.



The following is an example of how the rules can be used to promote the positive aspects of the game and to enhance the development of our athletes:

Q. What is the intent and the purpose of the rules?

A. The intent of the rules is to make the game fair, safe and consistent.

For the coach, this means there is no bending of the rules or challenging the officials.

For the officials this must mean that all infractions must be called in all circumstances. The officials are required to use discretion when making calls but not in the area of whether to call an infraction or not; but rather in deciding whether an infraction has occurred and whether it has affected the balance of fairness in the game. The following is a suggested guide for officials to consider when setting the guidelines for the gray area of interpretation that would assist in promoting positive athlete development.

The Guide

Where a serious attempt to play by the rules is being made and a incidental infraction occurs that has no affect on the play, the call should be let go. However, when there is no intent to follow the rule, to execute the skill or the infraction is deliberate, the infraction must be called. Using this guide would allow the athletes to learn the game without being overwhelmed by whistles and yet we convey a clear message that unethical behavior will not be tolerated.

The Purpose of the Rules

Rules can serve several purposes:

- to indirectly promote sportsmanship, ethics and integrity;
- to regulate and control games (see intent of the rules);
- to direct the style of play (e.g the stall rule);
- to develop player skills (e.g legal checks);
- to promote an environment that encourages the positive evolution of the game of lacrosse.

NOTE:
Rules are to be followed regardless of whether the referee is making the calls and the techniques (skills & strategies) taught to win the games must fall within the rules and their interpretations.

NOTE:
The gray areas occur because of the lack of discipline, skill, laziness, being outplayed, or deliberate attempts to cheat and bend the rules.

Rules and Athlete Development

Although athlete development is the responsibility of the coach, what a coach teaches is guided by the rules and their interpretation. The groups mentioned in previous paragraphs were tasked with insuring the rules and interpretations are adjusted to match the needs and abilities of the different age groups. Coaches must be aware of the major rules that have a direct bearing on the game and also on the teaching of the skills and strategies required to play the game of lacrosse.

TASK 5:

Q. What rules can the coach have a positive influence on through his teaching & philosophy?

A.

TASK 6:

Q. What rules have the biggest impact on the game?

A.



Appendix A: ANSWERS

Task 1: What is a game of field lacrosse?

- Played with a stick and ball.
- Played with ten (10) players a side which includes a goaltender.
- Physical contact allowed above the hips and below the shoulders with body and stick checks within the rules.
- Always having four players in the defensive half and three in the offensive half.
- Played on a field similar to soccer or football.
- Four quarters of play.
- Excellent hand-to-eye coordination.
- High speed transitions with controlled offensive possessions.
- Players change up during play.
- Good control of the ball.
- Gentlemanly sport with respect for officials.

Task 2: The three components of the game are:

- with the ball everyone is offence;
- without the ball everyone is defence; and
- when you are going from one to the other it is called transition.

Task 3: The objectives of:

Offence

- Produce scoring opportunities in the prime scoring area.
- Control the ball.
- Control the clock.

Defence

- Force the opponent away from the prime scoring areas.
- Force offense to make as many passes as possible.
- Create a turnover.
- Disrupt the offensive set.

Transition to Offence

- Produce a fast break.
- Produce odd man situations.
- Produce “clean” line changes.
- Produce scoring opportunities prior to even strength conditions.

Transition to Defence

- Stop or slow the fast break.
- Prevent odd man situations.
- Force clearing team to make as many passes as possible.
- Create a turn over.

Task 4: Goals which will enhance the objectives for:**Offence:**

- Move the ball quickly and accurately.
- Move your feet.
- Create open space.
- Create odd man situations.
- Set picks away from the ball.
- Quick breaks.
- Create a motion offense.
- Create mismatches.
- Good verbal and body language communication.

Defence:

- Maintain good body position.
- Keep your feet moving with a low centre of gravity.
- Good communication.
- Be patient.
- Prevent mismatches.
- Pressure the ball carrier.
- Support the person checking the ball.
- Create a flat triangle between the ball carrier and your check.
- Transition to defense must be quick.
- Know your assignments and responsibilities.



Transition to Offence

- Patience.
- Fast and accurate passes.
- Goalkeeper who can pass and is mobile.
- Fast break to produce odd man situations.

Transition to Defence

- Get back fast.
- Contain/control you check.
- Pressure the ball carrier.
- Limit odd man situations.

Task 5: Rules the coach can have a positive influence on:

- slashing;
- illegal equipment;
- technical fouls: offside, crease violations, illegal substitutions; and
- illegal bodychecking.

Task 6: Rules which have the biggest impact on the game:

- any technical foul;
- face-offs; and
- crease play.

THE COACH

Module

2

Goal:

To develop the competitive coach as an athlete centred leader and educator.

Objectives:

The skills of the coach will include the ability to:

- provide an environment for learning that is based on the qualities of learning and that leads towards self-direction;
- administrate the policies and directives of the governing bodies;
- carry out or delegate the managerial duties;
- provide leadership that will involve the players in forming team policy, program direction and player development;
- develop the personal leadership and management skills (the emotional intelligence) of the players so they will be able to function as team players both on and off the field; and
- make ethical decisions.

Introduction:

If you can describe your team of 16-year-olds as a mature, pleasant, confident, motivated and intelligent group of young adults who are a pleasure to coach, who get along in a positive and constructive manner, who care about each other, who respect and are respected, who make good decisions on the field, who are not afraid to try new things and who possess an above average self-esteem, then you have developed a team of players who have what you would call character and what the researchers call emotional intelligence. How did you do this? What did you do to develop this emotional literacy of your players? Or, is this example only a dream.

Module 2, The Coach, is about coaching, learning and leading.

WELCOME TO THE TRAINING TO TRAIN PHASE OF ATHLETE DEVELOPMENT

In Module 2 you will be shown how to use the self-directed approach to coaching. To discover which of your coaching behaviours lead to the development of the positive characteristics that not only make good players and people, but also good leaders.



Learning is the intuitive change that occurs when people are engaged in activities that present challenges or problems, stimulate ideas, develop skills or increase knowledge.

1. The Coach as an Educator - Learning

What constitutes the intuitive change that is learning? It is:

- experience;
- knowing;
- habit;
- wisdom;
- competence;
- confidence; and
- esteem.

How do we know that learning has occurred?

- The conscious effort of memorizing, drilling and controlling has moved to the unconscious state of knowing.
- Conscious effort has moved to unconscious effort (habit).
- Confidence replaces hesitation.
- Attention has moved from the worry about outcomes to concentration on process.

Learning happens while we are:

- playing;
- doing;
- working; and
- thinking.

To make learning happen we must be:

- encouraged to create and explore;
- excited & not bored or frustrated;
- in control and not pressured;
- involved in activities that are valued; and
- engaged in solving real problems.

These qualities of learning (adapted from Peter Vaill¹) are present whenever we are in control of what we are doing, i.e. doing what you want to do, when you want to do it and how you want to do it, and occurs when we are self-directed.

¹Vaill P. Learning as a Way of Being, San Francisco, Jossey-Bass, 1996.

Coaching Players to Learn

Learning at the FUNdamental Phase of Development

Fun games and guided discovery are used to give new players the freedom to learn while practising their fundamentals.

Learning at the Learning to Play Phase of Development Greater independence and control is given to the players to ensure that their learning continues. Players are made aware of their learning. They are asked to think about what they like best about the sport, what they do best, what they would like to do better, how to make things better. In other words they are invited to participate in the planning of their sport. This is one way to make “the game for the kids”.

Learning at the Training to Train Phase of Development

Once the players are at the Training to Train Phase of Player Development other forces come into play that will affect performance. Unlike in earlier years when the goal was to play and when choosing to play was easy, choosing to do the work or to make the sacrifices required to refine skills and change or create complex habits is more difficult at the competitive level.

To give the commitment to training to train, the players must feel that they will get something out of their effort. They must feel that it is their sport. This is achieved by teaching the players how to be self-directed so that they can have some ownership and the power of some control. The best players already have self-directed skills.

Application

To ensure that all players understand their responsibilities in a selfdirected environment the players may have to be guided through the steps of:

- deciding on what they need or want to learn;
- setting and refining their own learning goals;
- identifying and finding resources and models for learning;
- choosing and using strategies for learning; and
- doing their own evaluation.

Competing means that players have goals, some of which may be difficult to achieve because of the increased number of choices players have to make.



TASK 1:

Using the explanation of the self-directed approach to coaching, identify situations where you have used the selfdirected rather than the directed approach in your own coaching.

Specifically, the self-directed approach is:

- coaching the players how to identify what they need to learn rather than telling them;
- showing players how to learn, and how to use drills and minor games to organize their own practice activities instead of always telling and showing them what to do;
- guiding players through the progressions of developing learning skills as well as of the progressions of skill development; and
- allowing players to practise alone or in groups without interference from the coach.

Self-directed Coaching Tips

1. **Stimulate involvement:** The coach is a facilitator and mentor

- Prompt and motivate the players to use a self-directed approach such as helping the players identify problems that require solutions.
- Get players to provide evidence to support their ideas or to move in a specific direction, i.e. "why do you want to?"
- Allow players to have a voice in the direction of the team when planning the season.
- Take time to ensure that all players know how to make decisions, solve problems, plan learning activities etc. Don't just leave the players to fend for themselves.

2. **Identify player-specific needs:** There is never enough time to teach everything, and it may be difficult for the coach to regularly know what the player's greatest needs or deficits are. Therefore:

- Ask the players: "What bothers you most about your playing?" or "What is the single most important thing we need to work on?" The coach may then elect to quickly teach one or two things to show the players how to tackle the problem, but then the players should be given the opportunity to explore and solve other problems in a similar fashion.
- Ask the players to share ideas that they have been working on in their own time and then allow them time to show others. Discuss where players can get their ideas, i.e. the internet, junior, senior games, NCAA, world championships, MLL, and peers. Set up circuits made up of the players ideas and allow them to choose which station they want to participate in.
- Formally negotiate with the players to work on specific weaknesses on their own time. They are to evaluate their performance and report back to the coach.

TASK 2:

How is the language of instruction different in the selfdirected approach? Give examples. Instead of telling or asking why, I will:

TASK 3

Give examples of how you could start using the self-directed approach to coaching before, during and after a game.

3. Evaluate and encourage the players to evaluate their own performance.

- Having the players report outcomes or explain what they have accomplished leads them to critically reflect on their performance and leads them to integrate the results.
- Coaches must carefully observe their players so they can fairly evaluate and give formative feedback.

4. Use direct coaching methods with purpose and for effect.

- Role-modeling. When questions are identified, particularly ones that neither the coach nor player knows the answer to, the coach may agree to find the answer and report back to the player.
- When using direct teaching methods, coaches can make their information and drills relevant by:
 - A building on prior knowledge: retention is better if incorporated in what is already known;
 - B making the learning activity relevant;
 - C providing opportunities for discussion, answering questions, teaching peers, and critiquing;
 - D blending teaching strategies rather than exclusively using one method or another; and
 - E direct teaching is most effective when a concept is first introduced and when the players ask their coaches for help. Coaches can use a drill or demonstration to communicate the answer, or use a didactic (questioning) approach to lead the players to the answer.

This concludes the information giving portion of the Learning Module. The step by step process of teaching self-direction will be given in the Practice Planners.

SUMMARY

Coaches who changed to a self-directed approach to coaching found that the more responsibility the players accepted, the less control the coaches had of what was being learned. The coaches felt a loss of power to exert their will, a loss of control of team direction and a loss of knowledge of team accomplishment. In other words they lost the ability to be accountable. However, as the coaches worked to facilitate what the players were trying to achieve and to mentor those who had difficulties, coaches eventually found different ways to control, evaluate and lead the team.



TASK 4:

There are administrative duties that the coach must perform or ensure that they are done.

Identify the policies of the administrative bodies from the CLA to the local associations that coaches and players must adhere to.

2. The Coach as an Administrator, Manager and Leader

The coach's role is to provide leadership through the leading of their players, the managing of their teams and the administration of their policies. These are three distinct and separate skills that we develop as a result of inherited abilities and experience. Coaches usually find that they have greater ability in one area than in the others and it is this natural ability that influences the approach that coaches will initially use. The purpose of module 2 is to help coaches identify their natural strengths and to ensure that their style of coaching will eventually be the most effective way to interact with their players.

The Duties and Styles of Coaching Defined

Administrators:

- carry out policies formulated by others;
- do not make or change policies; and
- use their power of control to carry out policies.

Coaches who use an administrative style of coaching are autocratic in their approach. This means that they set the structure, policies, systems and standards of the team and then tell and direct the players what to do. There is very little feedback from the players and the players are expected to find out how to do things on their own. The players are given the opportunity to comply or, if they can't or won't, they sit on the bench or leave.

Managers:

- are concerned with efficiency and if things are being done right;
- can influence policies but don't make them;
- choose and make decisions about systems of operation that will achieve the expected outcomes; and
- use their organizational skills to ensure that systems are working.

Coaches who use a managerial style of coaching are very good at:

- delegating responsibilities;
- planning and organizing practices;
- recruiting players to improve team performance;
- devising strategies and tactics for winning games;
- establishing systems for organizing the bench and changing lines;
- organizing systems for the special teams and the transition parts of the game.

TASK 5:

At the Training to Train Phase of player development many of the managerial duties of the coach can be passed on to the players. Describe the role the players can to play in accepting team responsibilities, participating in the planning of practices, changing lines and establishing systems of play.

Leaders:

- build and share the direction and vision for the team;
- motivate and inspire;
- are concerned with effectiveness;
- encourage people to live up to their potential;
- clarify roles and objectives;
- promote two-way communication;
- support new ideas and new direction;
- are innovative and creative;
- are problem solvers;
- coordinate, consult and guide;
- are open and frank;
- promote team building, networking and manage conflict;
- are interested in ideas rather than policies;
- delegate responsibilities and monitor;
- encourage planned risk taking;
- use policies and controls to guide rather than to dictate;
- lead and pull rather than direct and push;
- facilitate and mentor; and
- acknowledge and reward.

Coaches who use a leadership style of coaching facilitate and mentor rather than direct and control. They share their knowledge of how to learn, evaluate with the players, involve the players in making team decisions and show their players how to direct their own learning.

3. Learning to Coach by Learning to Lead

In the previous section you found that the skills of an effective leader were synonymous with those of our best coaches. This is not a coincidence. It has long been accepted that coaches are leaders and current literature on leadership often describes leadership behaviour as coaching rather than as directing, managing or controlling. Unfortunately, too many coaches don't recognize their leadership role or even if they do, tend to direct and manage rather than facilitate and mentor. There are valid reasons for these tendencies. Apart from the influence of our information giving education and coaching backgrounds, many coaches get involved in coaching to "give back to the sport" and to share their knowledge. They see themselves as information givers and coaches of lacrosse rather than as developers and coaches of players. Accepting their roles as leaders will help coaches break away from their programming.

TASK 6:

- *Cross off the functions of leadership that will not apply to your level of coaching.*
- *Check off the functions that are already part of your approach to coaching.*
- *Prioritize the remainder of the list.*



How can coaches change their habits and the way they have been programmed to include the qualities of leadership in all aspects of their coaching?

“DIRECTING implies pushing people to do things. LEADING involves acting in a manner in which people willingly follow. The leader provides the proper conditions; the people manage themselves.”

Leaders practice selfmanagement and self-control.”

1. Understand what leadership is.

(Paraphrased from Inside Guide, Spring 1990, p. 66,67²)
Once the manager and the leader have agreed upon what is to be done, “the manager should be free to a large degree to manage him or herself”.

“Optimal motivation occurs when managers think, act, and behave as if they were really presidents...”. “They (managers) truly believe they are responsible for their own results”.

Managers who manage themselves “are a pleasure to work with”.

Leadership is teaching players how to lead by teaching self-management skills.

The implication from the above definition is that leadership and coaching are processes of helping players manage or direct themselves. Self-direction, therefore, becomes the tool for not only becoming a good leader but also for developing successful players. The process is both simple and complex. The simplicity is in our approach: in the beginning it is to let the players play and discover: the complexity comes from our habit to direct and the need for players to “do as they are told”. It means that coaches must concurrently redefine their own leadership skills and then pass these skills on to their players.

2. Learn what leaders do.

There are many sources that coaches can use to guide them through the process of learning how to lead. It is recommended that they refer to the leadership section of their local book stores and libraries. One method of learning how to lead is to follow the example of effective leaders. The following habits of highly effective people as described by Stephen Covey in *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*³ will help coaches in both their personal life and in their endeavour to be a coach.

²McConkey, Dale D. Are You an Administrator, a Manager, or a Leader? *Business Horizons*. Foundation for the School of Business at Indiana University, September/October 1989.

³Covey, Stephen R. *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*. New York, NY: Simon & Schuster Inc., 1989.

At the Community Coach level, coaches carried out Covey’s 7

Habits when they:

- adopted philosophies and behavior patterns that followed the NCCP model;
- set goals and objectives;
- used Practice Plans and planned their season;
- observed and taught ethical practices and principles of Fair Play (valuing);
- sought knowledge and developed appropriate teaching methods (interacting);
- involved the players in using minor games to teach; and
- evaluated the season (reflecting).

At the Introduction to Competition Level, coaches will not only have to learn how to apply these habits at the competitive phase but because of the definition of leadership, will have to develop the habits of the players as well.

1. Be Proactive (Leadership)

Being proactive means taking responsibility for your actions. In coaching, this means that you will not blame players or events if the players do not meet expectations. If there is something the players cannot do or are not doing, it is because you have failed. The problem can be in the way you teach, motivate, communicate or lead.

2. Begin with the End in Mind (Creating your vision)

Base goals and mission statements on what you want to accomplish with your players. Determine what the players need to know to be successful and then determine what you need to learn in order to achieve the player outcomes.

3. Put First Things First (Planning)

It will take several years to develop sound coaching and playing habits. Plan a series of steps that will lead to the final outcomes and set short-term objectives and goals for each practice, week, month and season.

4. Think Win-Win (Valuing)

All relationships in lacrosse, from the coach/player to the association must be based on the principles of the Spirit of Sport, Fair Play, twoway communication and the Four-Way Test. (See section on ethical decision-making in this module).

Task 7

“Coaches Tip”

“Think of examples of behavior, skills or game plans that didn’t meet your expectations. Was the failure a result of incomplete learning by the players, negative attitude by the players or lack of effort on their part? Think of examples of who the players blame and start to formulate plans to stimulate their acceptance of responsibility.”

Task 8

“Coaches Tip”

“You are tasked to select players for a competitive team, start to formulate the characteristics and attributes of the athletes you are looking for. Your “Seasonal Planner” should reflect your approach to the training however remember, you must also formulate into your plan how you intent to stimulate the athletes desire for setting personnel self-improvement goals.”



5. Seek First to Understand and Then Try to be Understood (Gaining and using knowledge, problem solving)

Coaches must understand the material, themselves and their players before they can effectively achieve coaching competency. However, this does not mean coaches have to attend more courses before they can start coaching. Learning and understanding can only be gained by doing. The suggestion is that coaches start with enough knowledge to establish a goal, develop a plan of “Putting First Things First” and then to implement the plan. If the players don’t understand, then coaches must seek more knowledge whether it be self, technical or interpersonal and then try again.

At first the players may not understand the attempts to involve them. After all, they have been programmed to believe that coaching is telling and playing is following the system. Therefore players must be given the opportunity and direction to learn the self-directed process.

6. Synergize (Intervention/self-direction)

Synergy is the energy that comes from working with your players to solve problems, set goals and organize practices. It is the increased accomplishment that comes from two people working together, i.e. two logs together burn hotter than each log separately. It is the emotion that comes from self-determination and empowerment.

Empowerment is the:

- feeling that the players are in charge of their own destinies;
- confidence to be counted upon at all times;
- freedom to learn and to achieve results;
- feeling that a player is supported; and
- mentoring and facilitating that leads.

Empowerment results in:

- the team building that involves the building of trust, respect, integrity and ownership;
- self-esteem – self-worth, self-respect, confidence; and
- self-efficacy – the belief that a person can achieve ones goals. It is the combination of self-esteem, skills and resources.

7. Sharpen the Saw (Reflection)

Sharpening the saw refers to the physical and emotional well being of the coach. It means that coaches must take time for reflection. Not only to protect their health but to ensure that they do not get off track, start missing key elements in their coaching or get too narrow in their perspective. The tendency is to push players through a nonstop approach to sport without considering the needs of the players.

TASK 9:

Describe coaching behaviours that will lead to empowering the players during practices and games.

- *When is it appropriate for coaches to intervene, to reset direction, to take control? Is there a situation when empowerment won't work?*
- *How is the way coaches communicate with their players different when they are using coach directed rather than selfdirected techniques?*
See task 2.
- *When does intervention turn into interference?*

Players are constantly reflecting on their performance and on how they fit in, but they are not always sharpening the saw. Much of the self-talk, which is a reflection of what the player believes or wants to believe, is negative. Coaches can help their players ensure that selftalk is honest, informative and focused on the processes of learning and improving.

Ethical Decision-Making

As a coach, you will deal with a wide range of issues. Depending on the type of issue with which you are faced, you may experience a variety of emotions/feelings and thoughts. Sometimes, you may feel that an action/behaviour is wrong. At other times, you may suspect or even know that a behaviour is illegal. In other instances, you may feel unsure about a situation and a decision, since there seems to be a number of alternatives that could be acceptable. If you ask yourself this type of question, the issue most likely has ethical implications.

Ethical issues arise when our values and the corresponding ethical principles are compromised in some way. When this happens, the decisions are often sensitive and difficult to make. In these situations, the quality of the decisions made by the coach depends on a number of factors including:

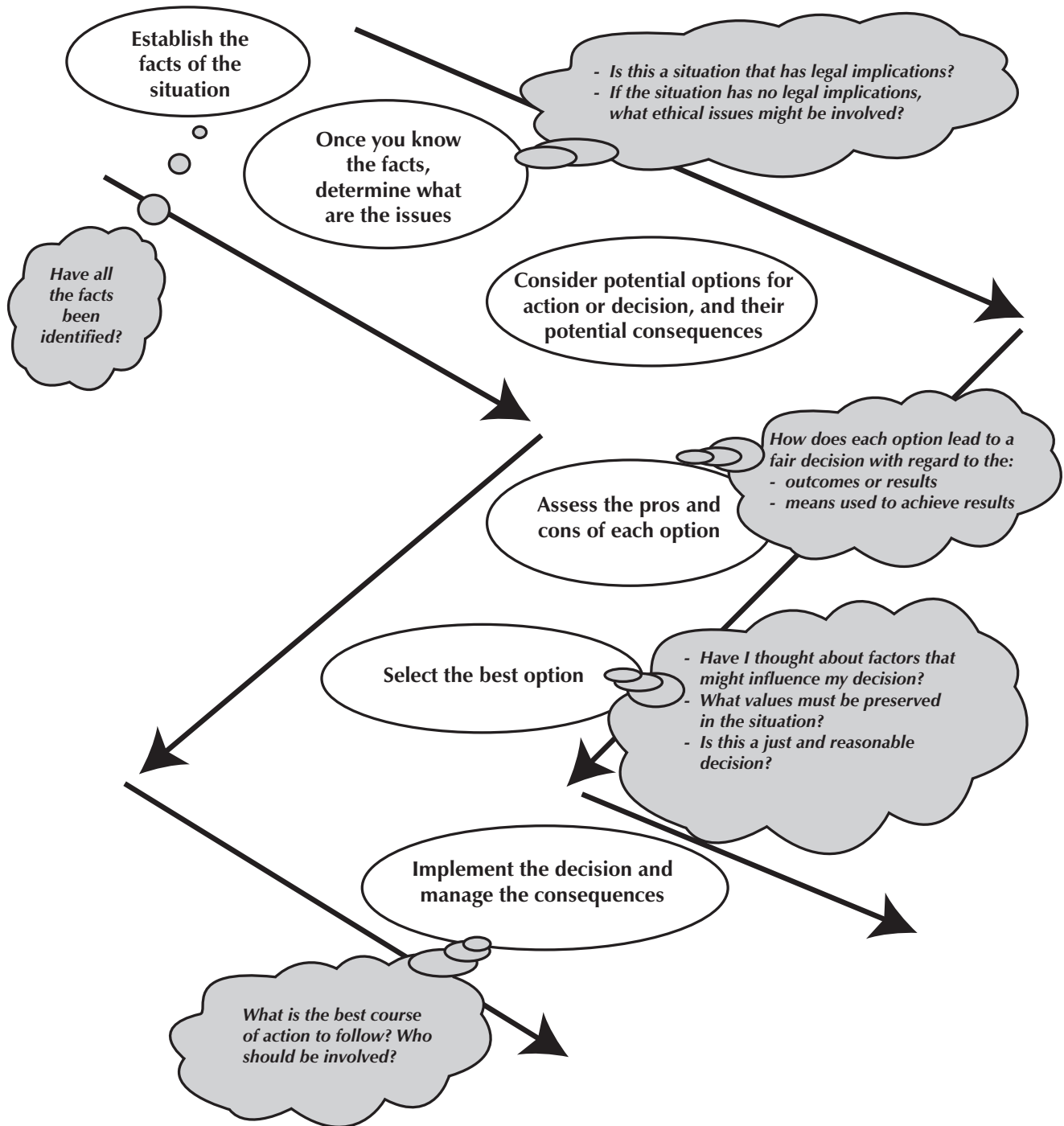
- An understanding of the facts of the situation
- an awareness of his/her own values, and of the various factors that can influence his/her decision
- the use of appropriate benchmarks to analyze the situation and understand what is involved
- the ability to apply a rigorous decision-making framework to the situation at hand

The ethical decision-making process will enable you to make thoughtful and responsible decisions in situations presenting ethical or moral dilemmas. To this end, a series of steps will be proposed, each emphasizing certain questions. These steps are summarized in the diagram on the following page. If you follow this path and answer the questions to the best of your knowledge, you will:

- (1) ensure you have a thorough process to enable you to make sensitive decisions;
- (2) have solid arguments to justify your decisions from an ethical point of view; and
- (3) feel confident to fully assume the consequences of your decisions, knowing that “it was the right thing to do under the circumstances”.



Analysis and Decision-Making Process for Situations That Have Ethical Implications



Step One – Establish the Facts of the Situation

When faced with any situation or problem in coaching, your first task is always to establish exactly what has happened (or is happening) and who is involved in the situation before trying to figure out what you will do about it. At this stage, ask yourself the following questions:

- What has happened or what is happening? When and where did certain events occur? Get the facts from all the parties involved, and look at the situation from both sides if there is disagreement or conflict.
- Who is (or might be) involved in or concerned by the situation?
- What do the parties involved have to say about the situation (i.e. what are all sides of the story)?

Step Two – Determine the Issues of the situation

A) Does the situation have legal implications?

See flow chart on the following page for determining what constitutes legal implications and the appropriate actions to take.

B) Does the situation have ethical implications?

When the coach encounters a situation that does not violate any law, but nonetheless raises moral questions, he/she must make decisions about how best to respond. Under these circumstances, ethical principles are often called upon. Ethical conduct can be described as a behaviour that meets accepted standards or principles of moral, professional or just conduct. Unethical behaviour is the contrary, i.e. actions or decisions that are immoral, unprofessional or unjust. Once you have determined that the situation is not of a legal nature, it is important to determine whether it presents an ethical issue.

Given the facts that have been identified, is there a reasonable doubt that the situation might impact on, or be related to, one or more of the following:

- Safety of one or more individuals
- Short or long term well-being or health of one or more individuals
- Respect for established principles, rules (rules of the team, the game, etc.), or policies of an organization
- Obligations, loyalties, word given, prior commitments made, responsibilities of the person(s) concerned
- Appropriate use of power by the individuals in a position of authority



- Objectives and goals sought by the group or by an individual
- Behaviours or practices that are generally considered acceptable, or that are expected under the circumstances at hand (standard of behaviour)
- Fairness and equity; using acceptable means; respect of others
- Confidentiality of information and privacy; appropriate use of information

Determining if a Situation is Legal

Based on the facts, determine if the situation is legal. It will automatically be so if it relates to one or more of the elements below:

- **Actions that are criminal or quasi-criminal** - These are wide-ranging and could include theft, assault, sexual assault, other sexual offenses, possession of narcotics, underage drinking, driving without a license or insurance, forgery, fraud, vandalism, etc.
- **Actions that breach a contract** - These could include someone acting outside the scope of their delegated authority, violating agreed-upon rules relating to the use of a facility or equipments, or failing to meet other contractual obligations.
- Actions or information indicating there are **reasonable grounds to believe that a child may be in need of protection.**
- **Actions that are discriminatory** - Actions of a government, organization or individual that are contrary to the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, the Canadian Human Rights Act, or any provincial human rights legislation.
- **Actions that constitute harassment** - Harassment is a form of discrimination and is contrary to human rights laws: in its extreme form, harassment may be a criminal offense.
- Actions, even those that are not intentional, that could constitute **negligence**, as legally defined.

↓
YES
↓

Actions to take
Inform appropriate authority:

- Police
- Child protection service
- Employer
- Other

↓
NO
↓

Use the ethical decision-making process

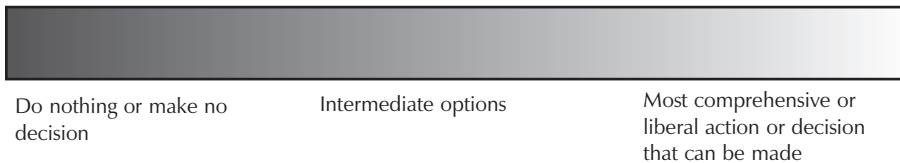
Step Three – Identify possible decisions

Having determined that the situation does have some ethical implications and identified some potential ethical issues (based on the statements listed in the previous step), you should now identify *options for decision or for action*, and assess *potential consequences in each case*. This reflection represents an important step in the ethical decision-making process because it shows that you care about what might happen to others.

Start by asking yourself: ***“What could I do in this situation?”***

In the process of answering this question, think about a variety of options. The first one to consider should be “not making any decision” or “taking no action”. This would be the least demanding option, and it could be thought of as representing one end of a continuum of possibilities. As a second step, consider the other “extreme” of the continuum, and think of the most comprehensive or liberal action you might take in the situation. Then, identify several intermediate options. Do not rule out any option at this stage, even though at the outset it may appear an unlikely choice.

Continuum of Options for Decision or for Action



Once several options for decision have been identified, think about “What might happen if ...”. This will enable you to assess potential consequences that may result from each option. In many ethical situations where a “Yes – No” decision must be made, the following questions are likely to arise:

- What might happen if the coach chose not to make any decision or took no action?
- What might happen if the coach’s position were favorable to the situation, question, or issue at hand?
- What might happen if the coach’s position were not favorable to the situation, question, or issue at hand?

Step Four – Identify the pros and cons of each potential decision

As part of a thoughtful decision-making process, you should now assess the pros and cons of each option for decision. Criteria can be classified into two categories based on whether they relate primarily



to the outcome (or result) of the decision, or the means (or process) used to reach a decision.

Criteria that relate primarily to the outcome (or result)

- The option promotes the achievement of a positive outcome for the majority of the individuals concerned.
- The option minimizes the negative implications that may follow.
- Potentially negative implications affect the fewest people possible.
- The option does not represent a risk for the physical, intellectual, emotional or social development of a person.
- The option does not represent an obstacle to the achievement of a person's or a group's goals
- The option seeks to protect the interests of others who might be in a vulnerable position.

Criteria that relate primarily to the means (or process)

- The option is fair and respects the rights of everyone regardless of athletic potential, sex, race, language, age, religion, etc.
- The option takes into account and is consistent with all established rules and principles.
- The option is consistent with successful decisions or actions taken in the past in similar situations.
- The option respects the authority of people in a position of responsibility.
- The option is based on credible information.

Step Five – Select the best option for the decision

At this stage, it is important to bring together key elements of the previous steps and reflect on how to make “the best possible decision under the circumstances”. In Step 4, we used certain criteria to assess the merit of a variety of options for decision or for action. Based on these criteria, a solution that is “just and reasonable” can therefore be defined as one that:

1. Results in a positive outcome for the majority of the individuals concerned.
2. Minimizes the negative implications for all parties involved.
3. Appears to be the “right thing to do” with regard to your coaching duties and responsibilities.
4. Is being made using a fair and equitable process.
5. Is consistent with certain expected standards of behaviour, such as those outlined in the NCCP Code of Ethics.

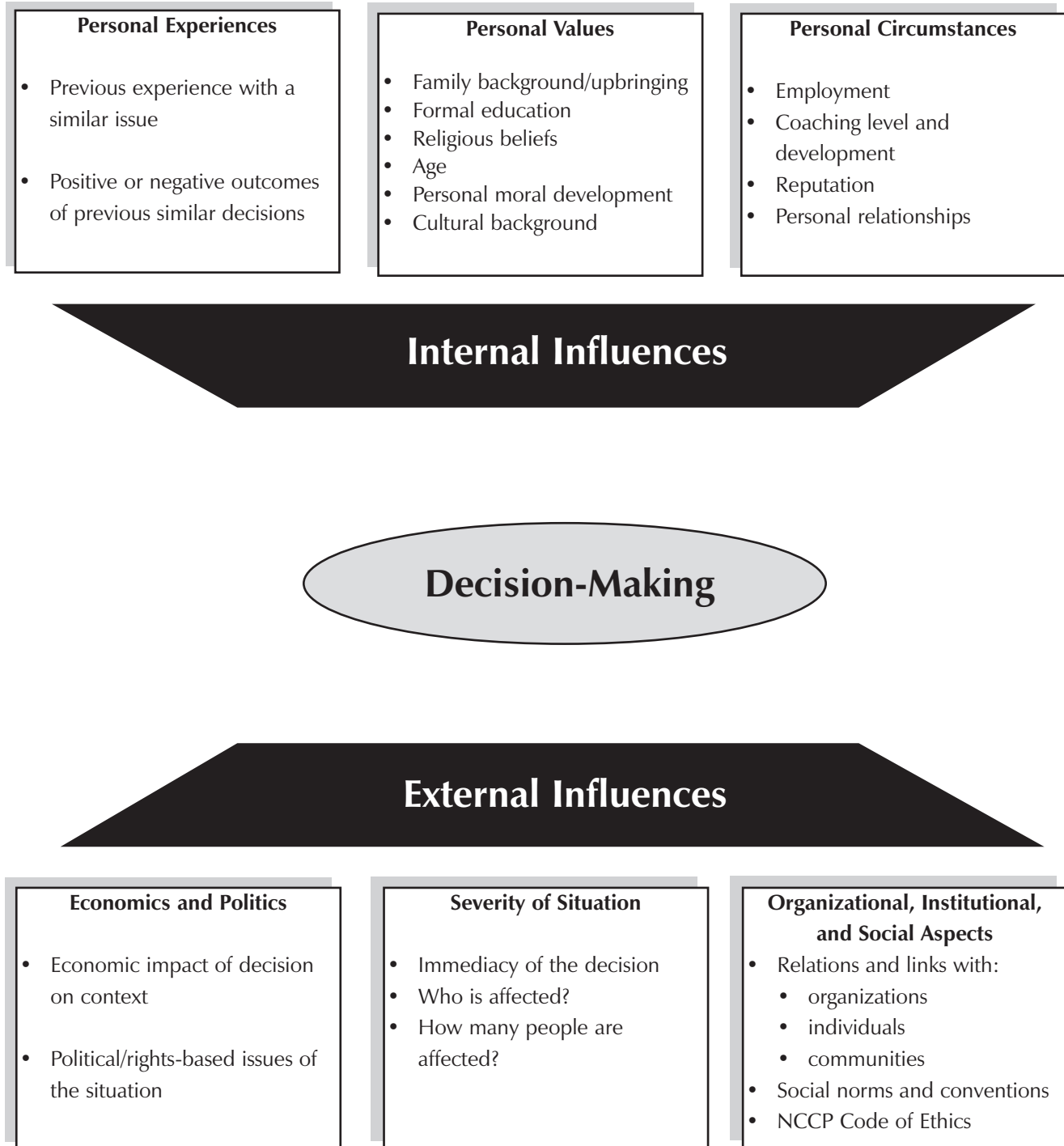
However, despite the availability of such criteria, not all ethical decisions are clear-cut. In some instances, a coach may experience some difficulty in making a decision because there appears to be **more than one reasonable solution**. Sometimes, making a decision will even involve sacrificing one value for another. To rank options that seem reasonable with a view to “making the best possible decision”, we will now consider the following aspects:

1. What factors could possibly influence decision-making?
2. How can one prioritize principles or values in which he/she strongly believes, but that seem in conflict in the situation at hand? In other words, what do you do when you are confronted with an *ethical dilemma*?



What Influences How You View a Situation and the Decisions You Make?

This figure has been adapted from Malloy, Ross, and Zackus, 2000



Moral Dilemmas and Ethical Decision-Making

As mentioned previously, certain ethical situations may generate strong feelings or doubts because there seems to be more than one reasonable solution. Sometimes, making a decision even involves sacrificing one value for another. When there are two potentially right solutions, such situations are referred to as **ethical dilemmas – a conflict between values we wish to maintain.**

The challenge in ethical decision-making is to determine which value you will maintain in your course of action.

Here are some examples of possible conflicts between values, or ethical dilemmas:

- Team Rules vs Parental Rights and Authority
- Team Rules vs Winning the Competition
- Duty to Do No Harm Principle vs Athlete's Will/Right to Play

To help you prioritize principles and values when faced with an ethical dilemma ask the following questions?

Prioritizing Principles and Values When Faced With an Ethical Dilemma

Sometimes, it is relatively easy to determine which value should take priority (e.g., safety of athletes in your care) but in others, it is not as clear (e.g., amount of playing time for each athlete). When someone is faced with an ethical or moral dilemma and is forced to choose between two values, it is normally his/her most deeply held beliefs that will dictate the course of action. Having thoroughly determined the pros and cons of the various options for decision using the criteria proposed in Step 4, and having reflected on some factors that may influence your decision-making, you can resolve an ethical dilemma by asking yourself the following questions:

- Which criteria (or value) do you consider the most important from those listed in Step 4?
- What does the NCCP Code of Ethics suggest in this type of situation?
- Is there another value in which you strongly believe, and that you would seek to maintain at all costs? If so, which is it?



Even though it is a sensitive issue to suggest a ranking of your values, the NCCP nonetheless considers that, above all, it is the duty of all coaches to ensure the decisions they make and the actions they take will result in no harm, physical or other, to the athletes.

Having gone through all the previous steps, you may still want to validate one more time that your decision is really “just and reasonable”, by asking yourself the following questions:

- Would you make this decision in all similar cases?
- If you feel that you cannot apply your decision to all similar cases, what might be a reasonable and justifiable exception? If so, in which circumstances? Do such circumstances apply in the present situation? What leads you to believe that an exception might be justified in this case, but not in other situations?
- Is the decision consistent with previous decisions that have been made in similar situations in the past, and that have resulted in a positive outcome?

Going through this last series of questions should enable you to be confident that you have made the best possible decision under the circumstances, and give you additional arguments to fully assume the consequences that may unfold when the decision is announced or implemented.

Step Six – Design an action plan to implement the decision

Putting your decision or plan of action into effect requires that you consider a number of things, particularly if it involves dealing with individuals or groups of people. Consider the following questions as you establish an action plan:

- **Choose your path.** Exactly what is it that you are going to do? Plan carefully the steps you are going to take.
- **Think about what may happen.** Consider the likely outcomes of the decision and how will these consequences be managed?
- **Identify who needs to know.** Consider carefully who needs to be informed of, or involved in, the implementation of the action plan or decision.
- **Determine if you can deal on your own with the person involved.** Is it appropriate to seek an *informal resolution* in this situation? In issues not involving a contravention of the law, it is often best to try and deal with the issue informally

and directly with the individual involved. We often refer to this as adopting the *conservative approach*. It has the advantage of conferring responsibility for actions upon the party involved and allows them to resolve the situation while maintaining their own sense of dignity and self-respect. It also establishes a degree of trust between parties involved. Approach the individual, and inform him/her of your observations or what has been shared with you. Give him/her a chance to respond, and a chance to do the good or right thing.

- **Warn, don't threaten.** This is an important concept when dealing with a situation at an informal level. This entails informing the individual of the logical consequences of what can happen if a situation is not resolved, rather than threatening the person with an "end of run" right out of the gate! This is plan B. Keep plan B in your back pocket.
- **Think about what you might do next if the informal resolution doesn't work.** In the event an informal resolution does not work, carefully consider what to do next. Inform the individual that you now have to follow up with "plan B". Consider who should be contacted, and what level of authority you should now involve in this situation.



TASK 11:

Your players are cooling down after a game that they have lost. Develop a dialogue that will lead them away from negative self-talk about performance and onto a path of honest and informative appraisal that can be used to plan the next stage of their development. It is not whether they won or lost the game that will build character, but rather the consequences of having played (what they do with the resulting information).

Module Wrap-up

All higher level teams, junior, college, university, semi-professional and professional, struggle when the players and/or coaches do not possess the personal leadership and self-management skills required to win.

- Listen to the interviews with coaches and players of winning and losing teams and you will hear how they have either put it together or are still learning various facets of how to compete or how to win.
- Listen to how professional coaches describe how mature the young superstar is, or as is more often the case, why the younger players are sent to the minors . What is it that they are struggling to learn? Is it not to strengthen weaknesses either technical or psychological? i.e. being able to make the right decisions, execute skills under pressure and react to adversity in a positive way. Or perhaps it is the learning how to learn the personal leadership and self-management skills that should have taken place while learning to complete
- Today's players need to be involved in the part of coaching that affects them. Players that are empowered will believe in the systems and can apply themselves with the commitment and loyalty that is required to make a system work. At the professional level it is the players that must find a way to win, to find a way to stay on top. What only a few elite players can accomplish today, will be the standards of tomorrow. What part are you going to play in preparing tomorrow's athletes?

Appendix A

NCCP Code of Ethics

What is a Code of Ethics?

A code of ethics defines what is considered good and right behaviour. It reflects the values held by a group, and outlines the expected conduct of members while they perform their duties. It can also be used as a benchmark to assess whether certain behaviours are acceptable.

Why a Code of Ethics in Coaching?

Core coaching values have been formalized and expressed as a series of principles in the NCCP Code of Ethics. These principles can be thought of as a set of duties and responsibilities regarding participation in sport, coaching athletes or teams, and administering sports.

The NCCP Code of Ethics can help coaches to evaluate issues arising within sport because it represents a reference for what constitutes “the right thing to do”.

Principles of the NCCP Code of Ethics

The NCCP Code of Ethics is a simplified version of the Code of Ethics of the Canadian Professional Coaches Association (CPCA). However, both codes deal with the same fundamental principles and beliefs:

1. Respect for Athletes
2. Coaching Responsibly
3. Maintaining Integrity in Relations with Others
4. Honouring Sport

The following pages provide a description of each principle and outline implications for coaches.

The Fair Play principles, which follow the NCCP Code of Ethics, relate to the principle of “Honouring Sport”.



NCCP Code of Ethics

1. Respect for Athletes

The principle of *respect* for athletes challenges coaches to act in a manner respectful of the dignity of those involved in sport. This principle is based on the basic assumption that each person has value and is worthy of respect. Acting with *respect for participants* means that coaches:

- Do not make some participants feel more or less worthy as persons than others, on the basis of gender, race, place of origin, athletic potential, colour, sexual orientation, religion, political beliefs, socio-economic status, marital status, age, or any other conditions.
- Have a responsibility to respect and promote the rights of all participants. This is accomplished by establishing and following procedures for **confidentiality** (right to privacy), **informed participation** and **shared decision-making** (right to self-determination – athletes' rights), and **fair and reasonable treatment** (right to procedural fairness). Coaches have a special responsibility to respect and promote the rights of participants who are vulnerable or in dependent positions, and therefore less able to protect their own rights.
- Interact with others in a manner that enables all participants in sport to maintain their dignity.
- Build mutual support among fellow coaches, officials, athletes, and their family members.

2. Coaching Responsibly

The principle of *coaching responsibly* carries the expectation that the activities of coaches will benefit society in general, and athletes in particular, and will do no harm. Fundamental to the implementation of this principle is the notion of competence, which implies that coaches should be well-prepared and possess up-to-date knowledge of their discipline so that they will be able to maximize benefits and minimize risks to athletes.

In addition, *coaching responsibly* implies that coaches:

- Act in the best interest of the participant/athlete's development as a whole person.
- Recognize the power inherent in the position of coach.
- Are aware of their personal values and how these affect their behaviour.
- Acknowledge the limitations of their knowledge and competence in their sport.
- Accept the responsibility to work with other coaches and professionals in sport in the best interests of the athletes.

3. Integrity in Relationships

Behaving with *integrity* means that coaches are expected to be honest, sincere, and honourable in their relationships with others. Acting on these values is possible when coaches have a high degree of self-awareness and the ability to reflect critically on how their views and opinions influence how they interact with others.

In coaching, critical reflection questions existing assumptions about the values and practices that govern coaches' actions. The essential component of critical reflection is an attitude based on (i) open-mindedness, i.e. an active predisposition to hear more than one side of an issue; (ii) active inquiry, i.e. asking why things are done the way they are; and (iii) sincerity, i.e. coaches being genuine in their coaching relationships.

4. Honouring Sport

The principle of *honouring sport* challenges coaches to recognize and promote the value of sport for individuals and teams, and for society in general. *Honouring sport* implies that coaches:

- Act on and promote clearly articulated values related to coaching and sport.
- Encourage and model honourable intentions and actions.



Fair Play Principles

In addition to a Code of Ethics, coaches and athletes should abide by the principles of Fair Play. Applying Fair Play principles implies that all those involved in sport recognize the importance of fairness, a respectful attitude, and appropriate conduct when engaged in sporting activities, and agree to model and promote them.

The following are examples of Fair Play behaviours for coaches, athletes, officials, and parents:

- Follow all of the rules, and never seek to deliberately break a rule.
- Aim to compete fairly, using talent and ability to win; refuse to win by illegal means or by cheating.
- Respect the official(s), and accept their decisions without doubting their integrity.
- Recognize good performances by the opponent.
- Maintain dignity in all circumstances, and demonstrate self-control. In defeat, recognize with dignity the superiority of the opponent. In victory, act modestly, and do not ridicule the opponent.
- For the officials – know all the rules well, and apply them with impartiality at all times.

Note: The Fair Play principles, the NCCP Code of Ethics, and the sample codes of conduct for parents and athletes found in the appendix can all serve as starting points to help in the creation of a team code of conduct that is designed and agreed upon by the athletes, parents and other coaches of your team.

THE PLAYER

Module

3

Goal: To help coaches understand the developmental, emotional and technical needs of players who are training to train.

Objectives: Coaches will:

- know the developmental stage and characteristics of the age group they coach;
- know how coaching behaviour effects the emotional development of the players;
- evaluate individual and team skills relative to the stages of learning;
- evaluate the personal characteristics and mental skills of their players;
- use the evaluation results to identify practice content for technical, emotional and cognitive development; and
- learn the ways player evaluation can be used in managing and coaching the team.

Introduction: Training to train can be a very emotional, frustrating and challenging time for both players and coaches. Compounding the problem is that the training to train phase arrives at the same time as adolescence, another emotional, frustrating and challenging time for everyone.

At the Community Coach level, the Learning to Train Phase of player development, we learned that players learn best when they are playing on their own terms (see module 2) and when they are challenged. At the Learning to Compete Phase nothing has changed except that the games have become more competitive or perhaps combative and the need for self-control and selfdirection more prevalent.

At stake is the emotional development of the players, which, among other things, involves the self-esteem, confidence, self-awareness, self-efficacy and emotional control players need in order to compete effectively.

NOTE:
Module 3, The Player, will help coaches understand the developing teen and to determine their technical, psychological and emotional needs.

NOTE:
Being organized, consistent, patient and fair will help coaches get through the season, but what really makes the difference is understanding the players.

NOTE:
Because growth and development is extremely individualistic, coaches must remember that the age related characteristics are markers only. Players can go through the stages at any time and the whole point of evaluation is to identify the stages of development the coach has to deal with in any particular season



Sport can be the ideal environment for the developing teen because it gives teens the opportunity to explore and discover their abilities, and to create an identity while under the protective umbrella of the coach.

Knowing the Players

Training to train comes at a very awkward time in the life of a developing athlete – the teen years. Adolescence is a time of emotional upheaval, erratic growth, a need for self-determination and rebellion. The result produces the most difficult age group to parent, teach or coach. A common expression heard in a home of teenagers is: “You don’t understand”. It is true, adults probably don’t understand teens as well as they should, but they probably understand them better than teens understand themselves. Young teenagers are looking for independence while still needing the security of home, which frustrates them and makes them even more rebellious. They want the freedom to make choices but don’t know how to accept the responsibility that goes with it or to take the guidance, particularly from parents, to make good decisions.

Surprisingly, the coach has the easiest time of all the caregivers in a teen’s life. Because sport is a chosen activity and because it is socially acceptable to “do as the coach says”, half the problems faced by parents and educators are eliminated because the coach initially has the cooperation of the players. The operative word is “initially”, which means that coaches will be given a chance to prove themselves. Failure to support the emotional, psychological and technical needs will turn the teen off and the coaches’ problems will begin.

Does this mean that coaches need psychology degrees? It would help, but won’t be necessary. Learning how to use the self-directed approach to coaching will not only satisfy the players’ need for self-determination, but the players will have the opportunity to learn how to be self-directed, which in effect is learning how to:

- control their emotions;
- relate to each other and adults, i.e. social skills;
- set and achieve goals;
- prepare themselves to compete; and
- learn.

Growth And Development

Development Models and Training to Train

The 13 to 16 age group is an excellent time to implement the Training to Train Phase of player development. At thirteen, the players are in their last year of pre-adolescence, which is a period of disorganization where the players have been deliberately tearing down their connection to childhood in order to start the rebuilding into adulthood. This is what the hostility towards parents and the rejection of family ties are all about. At the other end of the age group, the sixteen-year-olds are physically and mentally ready to apply what they have learned over the last three years as they prepare for their final year of learning how to compete. Their success will be determined by their parents and coaches and when the parents failed, just their coaches.

The early teens need the security and support of the family, and are seeking the independence to explore and learn how to do things on their own. “Doing things on their own” is the key. Only by finding out what they can do without the help of an adult can players find out who they are. This is why teens reject advice and have to make their own mistakes, and what they mean when they exclaim: “You don’t understand.”

The Training to Train Phase of player development, with its emphasis on teaching coaches how to teach players to be selfdirected, is a perfect match for the early teens with their very strong need for independence and to “learn on their own”.

Thirteen

Emotional Development

The thirteen-year-olds tend to be withdrawn, moody and very sensitive, partially because of the tearing down they endured during pre-adolescents, partially because of the physiological changes that have already started and partially because they have just destroyed their identity.

***TASK1:** Develop a profile of the age group coached using the Age related Growth and Development characteristics.*

***Age category:** _____*

***General:** _____*

***Psycho/Emotional:** _____*

***Physical:** _____*

***THIRTEEN:**
A year of transition between playing for fun and needing more challenge.*



Cognitive Development

Thirteen is transition year of confusion and lost confidence, and trying to learn as they play is no longer meeting the needs of the more intense competition.

Coaches can help the thirteen-year-olds by:

- being very positive;
- by placing special emphasis on the fundamentals;
- by using a disciplined approach to the game; and
- resorting to the more direct methods of teaching to establish a logical process of how to set goals and a plan to achieve them.

By offering a structure and getting the players to focus on what they know best, coaches will establish a base from which the young teen can reach out from and explore. Do not wait until the players “get it” or fully understand before moving to self-direction.

- Explain what is happening but keep explanations brief.
- Move players into activity quickly.
- Start all new activities with the coach directed mode.
- Follow up every activity with lead questions to move players into their own decision making about what to do next and how to make improvements.
- Finish each activity with questions that lead to self-evaluation.

By first showing the players how to set their own goals and then allowing them to plan and evaluate their practising, coaches will lead players to the independent state of being able to “learn on their own”.

THEN

- Move to group goal setting.
- Have the players contribute to the plan for achieving the goals.

Physical Development

A team of thirteen-year-olds will have a mix of players from three different stages of development, early, late and normal maturation levels.

- Flexibility, coordination and balance training are extremely important for players of all stages.
- Intensity and duration of strength, speed and endurance training must be matched to the individuals and the stages they are going through. Do not expect the same performance from all players or even the same player within the same season. If performance is down, suspect a growth and development change.

The key factors in coaching thirteen-year-olds and the early teens will be the growth and development differences of the players. All players will be able to participate in the full spectrum of practices and games, but coaches must be extremely flexible regarding the mental, physical, social and emotional expectations of the individual. Thirteen-year-olds are usually grouped with the fourteen-year-olds, which will compound the problem, so listening, observing and counseling will be valuable skills for coaches to develop.

Fourteen

Cognitive and Emotional Development

They tend to be more sociable and their ties with the team become more important. Their capacity for logical and rational thinking, self-evaluation and self-acceptance allows them to make productive use of the self-directed learning skills they started the previous year. They are now in a position to provide positive leadership for the team, particularly for the younger players. Coaches can enhance development by:

- giving more leadership responsibilities as the players are looking for deeper involvement in the things they enjoy;
- giving more independence and freedom to make individual decisions;
- mentoring the empathy players need to understand and lead the more immature players on the team; and
- teaching the values, ethics and respect required by the Spirit of Sport and the Fair Play policies,. i.e. making use of the teachable moments of practices and games.

Physical Development

Fourteen is the year of the most rapid growth. Strength is developing and will respond to training, although heavy resistance training is not recommended until growth spurts are over.

With new size and strength, coordination and balance training will lead to new and more complex ways to use the skills. The players are ready to test their new bodies along with their developing mental abilities.

Fourteen-year-olds play with increased exuberance and enthusiasm which matches perfectly with what they need to learn to compete: higher energy levels, more intensity, ability to evaluate strengths and weakness, patience to refine skills and playing to ones strengths.

SUMMARY

FOURTEEN:
At fourteen the players are more settled, communicative and confident.



FIFTEEN:

Fifteen is another year of transition, this time between early and late adolescence.

Fifteen

Everything seems to be happening at once.

- A very strong need to be completely independent, not just from family but from all adults.
- Increased levels of self-awareness, which makes them sensitive to criticism and comparisons.
- More critical of authority figures.
- More sensitive to feelings, including those of others, which can be used in a negative as well as positive way.
- Still developing physically and mentally, which means they will be looking for physical and mental challenges.
- Confidence is developing; continues to test and challenge the limits.

With so many psychological and physical changes taking place and with the mental and emotional faculties consequently compromised, it is very difficult for the fifteen-year-olds to make rational decisions. The mistakes the mid-teens make are embarrassing and are sometimes covered through rationalizations, the transferring of blame and strange behaviour.

Coaches can help their players through this difficult stage by:

- being consistent and fair;
- holding their players accountable for their actions;
- criticizing behaviour but not the person;
- controlling anger when challenged; and
- challenging negative attitudes, values and behaviour when it occurs.

Officials must also be on guard as they represent the authority the teens are rebelling against. The officials are going to be tested every time they step on the field. They must be fair, consistent and clever. Both the officials and the coaches have a responsibility for keeping the players on track particularly when players start trying to camouflage their infractions, i.e. make deliberate infractions look accidental.

Sixteen

Unlike at fifteen when the players felt they had to go out of their way to prove their independence, they are now more relaxed and self-assured, and have achieved a sense of equality with parents and other adults.

SIXTEEN:

The sixteen-year-olds have finally achieved their psychological independence.

Of particular note is the self-confidence the players now have that allows them to carry on meaningful conversations with adults. If coaches have been using the self-directed approach to coaching for the last four years, the players will be able to discuss and carry out meaningful goals. For the first time, they will be able to monitor their own behaviour and participate in the planning of meaningful practices.

At sixteen, motivation becomes a positive tool. The players have finally developed a sense of who they are and where they want to go in sport. If the coaching has been positive and complete through each stage of their development, and if the elements of Fair Play and the Spirit of Sport have prevailed, the sixteen-year-olds will be ready to take their lacrosse to new heights. Their final year of midget will be a true test of their character and of the competence of their coaching. If on the other hand, the negative aspects of sport have not been dealt with, the sixteen-year-old is quite capable of taking control and leading the team in a negative direction. This is why negative issues that arise in previous stages should never be ignored.

Seventeen - Nineteen

There are seventeen-year-olds who have the maturity to compete at professional and international levels, and there are nineteen-year-olds who are still rebellious and struggling with effective self-management. Some teams may have seventeen year olds who are just starting lacrosse and who will be trying to learn how to play while competing playing along side players who are at the Learning or Training to Compete Phase of their development. It is critical that coaches give all their players the opportunity to practise at their specific phase of development.

Player Growth and Development

Unfortunately, seventeen is also another year of upheaval and the final break from family. Conflicts with adults come from a know-it-all attitude that comes from a false confidence based on mastery of early teen experiences. They are often surprised when they are held accountable for their actions and learn that adulthood doesn't mean doing what you want when you want. It is at this time that players will value their self-directed training. Even though their lives may not be as smooth and as easy as they wish, at least on the lacrosse field they will understand how to handle adversity. Coaches have to be aware that problems on the field may originate outside of lacrosse.

SEVENTEEN - NINETEEN:
Individual differences within the late teens are as great as in any other time.

NOTE:
Older athletes go through all phases of development much faster than children and after a short period of introduction will be able to learn to play and compete at the same time. However, it does not mean that any of the progressions should be left out.



The key at this stage is guided self-direction. The players know what to do, they just need the encouragement and support to follow through.

- Make the team responsible for team rules regarding practices, playing style, work ethic etc.
- Give players the opportunity to provide leadership in settling team problems, determining team direction and organizing practices.

Mental Development

Whether the players are just learning the game, learning how to compete or learning how to win, they are ready to develop the mental skills of the Learning to Compete Phase of Development.

To help them achieve their goals, regardless of level, coaches must continue to train their players' abilities to:

- increase concentration for more effective learning and performance;
- control emotions;
- stay relaxed while playing;
- use visualization; and
- use self-talk in a positive way.

Physical Development

The players are now ready for strength development and should be encouraged to put together training programs that fit their personal and sport needs.

Emotional Development

Coaches should know that when they are dealing with self-esteem, learning, behaviour and attitude, and when they help players cope with the changes of adolescence they are attending to the emotional development of their players. Scientists who study this aspect of human behaviour are calling it Emotional Intelligence (E.I.), which they say is as or perhaps even more important in determining the success of an individual than I.Q.

Emotional Intelligence (E.I.) is responsible for self-esteem, motivation, empathy, self-belief, confidence, emotional control. It influences how we learn, how we adapt to change and get along with others.

Emotional Intelligence:

- starts developing as soon as the infant is aware of their environment and continues naturally until the mid to late teens and even beyond but with more effort. (The latter point refers to the mythical expression: “you can’t teach old dogs new tricks”.)
- is more important than I.Q. in businesses that deal with people in management positions and in sport. The elite players who can’t teach or don’t succeed in coaching often have low emotional intelligence. On the other hand, people with high emotional intelligence are very good with children and make fine coaches, but may have had difficulties in school. When they say that our best coaches should be placed with our entry level or with young players, they really mean that we should be using coaches with the highest E.I. and not necessarily those with the greatest skills in lacrosse or the highest I.Q.
- is altered and increases as we learn to: have feelings for and understand others, control and express emotions, handle adversity, motivate ourselves and others, apply effort, communicate with and teach others. The development of emotional intelligence is what we normally refer to as maturity.
- is the key component in achieving the deep level of concentration called the zone. When players are emotionally involved in learning they find it very easy to increase concentration and are more inclined to accept new challenges. By keeping the activities challenging, players are led to new levels of emotion which enables higher levels of achievement and deeper levels of concentration. Coaches teach players how to enter the zone of concentration when they help players:
 - channel emotions toward a productive end;
 - control impulse and put off gratification;
 - regulate moods to facilitate rather than impede thinking;
 - motivate players to persist and try again in the face of setbacks;
 - use the mental skills to improve performance and to enter the zone.



Application

What is the significance of emotional intelligence (E.I.) in coaching? Part of emotional intelligence is inherited with the rest coming from the nurturing that is provided by significant others. This means that what we are born with can go either way, which means lower where love, empathy and understanding are withheld and higher when we help children become aware of their emotions and guide them through their frustrations. The significance for coaches is that the level of emotional intelligence that players achieve in their developmental years will reflect on their performance when they are adults.

Examples:

A problem coaches have at higher levels of sport are players who retaliate and take stupid penalties even at crucial times in important games. Why? When under pressure people tend to react from habit. When are habits formed? Were young players praised for lashing out and protecting their rights, or were they taught to channel their anger?

When children are helped to understand why they can't always do or have the things they want, they begin to learn how to delay gratification. It is this ability that leads to the understanding of setting long term goals and of working to improve skills instead of cheating and bending rules to get instant success.

COACHING TIP:

Everyone goes through levels or stages of learning with everything they do, which means that everyone starts at the Initiation and then progresses through stages of Acquisition and Consolidation. Most of the competitive coach's time will be spent at these BEGINNER and INTERMEDIATE stages of skill development. However, many players will take themselves to the ADVANCED stages of Refinement and Creative Variations with their individual skills and the team skills they have been performing for three or four years, particularly if coaches have exposed them to the elements of self-direction, i.e. free time to experiment and learn.

Evaluating the Players

- How good are your players?
- What are their strengths and weaknesses?
- What are the team strengths the team can take advantage of?
- What are the individual strengths the team can take advantage of?
- What personal characteristics do the players bring to the team?
- Who are your leaders?
- Are your leaders leading in a positive or a negative direction?

How, why and when do we evaluate?

When the players were learning to play lacrosse it was important for the coaches and the players to evaluate player skill level so that meaningful practices could be planned. Evaluation of skills must continue, only this time team plays and concepts are showing up on the Age Related Concept Charts. What does not appear on the chart however is how much better one player is than another or at what stage of learning the players are at. For evaluation to be meaningful

at the competitive level, players and coaches must identify how well skills are performed, plays are executed and concepts understood. In other words, what is the stage of development that has been achieved.

Stages

BEGINNER (Initiation and Acquisition)

The players are developing the feel and learning the patterns of the drills and minor games. They are learning to copy established procedures and techniques.

INTERMEDIATE (Consolidation)

The consolidation stage is where players and coaches struggle to move practised skills and plays into the competitive game. Two problems the players are learning to overcome are the distractions of the game that break the concentration and adapting what is practised to the practice environment.

ADVANCED (Refinement and Creative Variations)

Performance is more or less consistent and automatic, consequently, attention can be given to refining movement to meet the needs of competition.

Creating and practising their own variations of skills and plays is the final step and should not be discouraged as this is the natural progression of how we learn and is what keeps players interested and motivated.

Application: (An evaluation question)

A common experience for coaches is to find that after spending a season of drilling and instructing, only a few of the skills and plays they have been working on ever make it into the competitive situation.

The Reason: Due to incomplete learning, the pressure to perform and the speed of competition, players don't have the time or the confidence to implement skills and concepts that are not automatic.

The Solution: Using your knowledge from module 2 on Learning and the application of the principles of practice, design a learning environment to move one of the skills or team plays through the Consolidation stage to the Refinement stage.

NOTE:

Players go through these stages at different rates depending on their rate of learning, their experience and the complexity of the skill or concept. Players progress at different rates with different skills depending on whether the player finds the skill simple or complex. Subjective evaluation should be ongoing to ensure that players are not bored or moved on before they are ready.



TASK 2:
Why do we evaluate?

Brainstorm the many additional reasons for evaluating players.

TASK 3:
*What do we evaluate?
Up until now we have been evaluating the individual skills. Using the above list of why we evaluate, create a second list of the player knowledge, qualities and personal characteristics that coaches will need to evaluate.*

NOTE:
Evaluation of mental skills, and the tests for strength, endurance and flexibility are included in their respective modules.

Application

Evaluating the Technical Skills

Evaluation can be performed by observing players in games, practices or formal drills. The Coach's Manual contains Part Two of the Lacrosse Evaluation Manual that uses advanced drills and activities to test the:

- performance of individual skills at the competitive level;
- speed and accuracy at which individual skills and team plays can be executed;
- game sense;
- concept of using space and maintaining team positioning;
- understanding of team concepts;
- ability to assimilate new information; and
- personal and psychological characteristics and qualities.

To evaluate abilities to perform the motion offence, transition drills and team drills, use the following table from the Levels of Learning. Players can perform at the level of:

Beginner: if they are walking, or while being prompted.

Intermediate: if they are running. Players can execute plays on their own and in a timely fashion in scrimmages.

Advanced: if in a game situation. Players can adapt their skills to the needs of the games being played.

Evaluating Strength, Endurance and Flexibility

The second factor that effects performance is fitness. Strength and flexibility have as much effect on the execution of skills as does technique and therefore should be evaluated prior to the season. Endurance should be developed starting in the pre-season but need not be evaluated until the season begins to act as a marker.

Evaluating The Mental Skills (See module 5)

Mental skills are developed as a part of learning how to learn, which happens intuitively as we strive to achieve our goals. By evaluating mental skills, players will become aware of how they use their mental skills and coaches will know which skills players are or are not using.

This information can be used for selection purposes, and more importantly for skill, (technical and mental), development and performance.

Mental skills can be evaluated while the players are:

- learning, refining, adapting skills;
- before, during and after competition; and
- during non-sport activities.

Degrees: Mental Skills are evaluated according to how automatic they are. The range is:

- complete ignorance of their existence;
- conscious control in non-pressure environments;
- conscious control in competition; and
- conscious activation with intuitive application.

Player Evaluation

It doesn't take too long for coaches to become aware of the differences between the skill level and personal characteristics of their players. Before the season becomes too old, coaches should fill in the chart below so they can take advantage of player strengths.

Players	Skills & Concepts	Learning Level	Personal Characteristics

TASK 4:
Describe how players of natural leadership skills, varying degrees of maturity and a variety of technical and mental skill levels can be combined to increase the speed of learning and development.

TASK 5:
For the same reasons as above, find ways to group players in games to achieve different effects.



HEAD INJURIES AND CONCUSSIONS:

Guidelines For Coaches

NB: The following information is presented as a series of guidelines for handling head injuries. This is not a training session and therefore all head injuries must be treated by a recognized medical professional.

Introduction

Head injuries and concussions can occur in many sports, either in training or during competitions. Because of the potentially grave consequences of injuries to the head, coaches must take certain precautions and should enforce strict safety measures when dealing with them.

The information contained in this section is not designed to train coaches on how to implement a medical treatment or to offer medical advice in the event of a concussion. Rather its purpose is to provide some recommendations on how to manage situations involving head injuries in a responsible manner. It is important to note that there is presently a lack of consensus in the medical community regarding precise grading scales and return to training or competition criteria following concussions.

What is a concussion?

A concussion is an injury to the brain that results from a hit to the head, or to another part of the body that allows the transmission of impact forces to the head. It shows itself through a temporary alteration in the mental status of the individual, and may also be accompanied by some physical symptoms.

Some common causes of concussions

The situations that may result in head injuries vary greatly from sport to sport. Producing a comprehensive list of possible causes is therefore difficult. However, some common causes include:

- direct blows to the head, face, jaw, or neck
- collisions from the blind side, or hits from behind
- hard fall on the buttocks, or whiplash effect
- poor quality of protective sport equipment (shock absorption), failure to wear protective equipment designed for the head, or improper adjustment of the same
- the environment (e.g. obstacles near playing surface)
- significant differences in the skill level, age, or size of participants involved in activities with physical contact or risk of impact
- poor physical condition, or insufficient strength in the neck and upper body musculature.

Symptoms

Symptoms observed in the case of a concussion include headache, dizziness, loss of consciousness, nausea, lethargy, memory loss, confusion or disorientation (lack of awareness of time, place, date), vacant stare, lack of focus, ringing in the ears, seeing stars or flashing lights, speech impairment, balance impairment, and problems with sight.

Other signs may include a major decrease in performance, difficulty following directions given by the coach, slow responses to simple questions, and displaying inappropriate or unusual reactions (laughing, crying) or behaviours (change in personality, illogical responses to sport situations).

A person can suffer from a concussion without losing consciousness.

Managing a participant with concussion symptoms

The following short-term measures should be implemented in the event that a participant suffers a concussion:

- An unconscious participant, or a participant with significant changes in mental status following a head injury, must be transported to the emergency department of the nearest hospital by ambulance. This is a grave situation, and the participant must be seen by a medical doctor immediately. In such a situation, the Emergency Action Plan must be implemented.
- A participant showing any of the concussion symptoms should not be allowed to return to the current practice or competition.
- A participant showing concussion symptoms must not be left alone, and monitoring for the deterioration of his/her condition is essential. He/she should be medically evaluated as soon as possible following the injury. The circumstances of the injury should be recorded and communicated to the medical personnel.
- If any of the concussion symptoms reoccur, the participant's condition should be considered serious, and the individual must go immediately to the hospital.

Grade of concussion	Definition	Recovery time with no symptoms
Grade of concussion	Symptoms last up to 15 minutes	48 hours
Multiple grade one	Two or more grade 1 concussions	1 week
Grade two concussion	Symptoms last more than 15 minutes	1 week
Multiple grade two	Two or more grade 2 concussions	2 weeks
Grade three	Brief loss of consciousness (seconds)	1 week
Grade three concussion	Prolonged loss of consciousness (minutes)	2 weeks
Multiple grade three	Two or more grade 3 concussions	1 month or longer



Managing The Participant's Return After A Concussion

Although a participant may have been given the authorization to return to regular training and competition, this must be done gradually. The participant must be re-evaluated periodically during the weeks that follow his/her return, to ensure that there are no reoccurring symptoms.

Below are a series of steps to assist coaches in managing the return to training or to competition of a participant who has suffered a concussion. Each step should take at least one day, although proceeding through each step may take longer depending on individual circumstances (Step 5 applies predominantly to sports that involve body contact).

- Step 1:** No activity, complete rest; if no symptoms are observed for one full day, move to Step 2.
- Step 2:** Low-intensity continuous exercise, such as walking, jogging, or cycling on a stationary bicycle; if no symptoms are observed, move to Step 3.
- Step 3:** Low-intensity, sport-specific activity without contact; if no symptoms are observed, move to Step 4.
- Step 4:** Moderate-intensity sport-specific training activities without body contact; if no symptoms are observed, move to Step 5.
- Step 5:** Regular practice with body contact if it is required by the sport (no hard impact); if no symptoms are observed, move to Step 6.
- Step 6:** Return to regular training and to competition.

If symptoms do reoccur, the participant must immediately stop any form of activity and be examined by a medical doctor before resuming training or competition. It is extremely important for the participant, the coach, and the medical personnel to be open and frank when evaluating the participant's condition. If reoccurring symptoms are not disclosed, the participant may suffer permanent damage.

Repeated concussions

Some data suggest that after a first concussion, a person might be more at risk of suffering from concussive injuries in the future. If a participant has a history of repeated concussions, he/she should participate in sport activities only when full clearance to do so is obtained from a medical professional.

NB: This information is based on the summary and agreement statement of the first international symposium on concussion in sport held in Vienna in 2001, and on a brochure produced by Judo Canada, entitled "Safety First - What You Need To Know About Concussions." The Coaching Association of Canada is grateful to the Concussion in Sport Group and its chair, Dr. Karen M. Johnston, Division of Neurosurgery, McGill University Health Centre, and to Judo Canada's sport director, Andrzej Sadej, for permission to adapt this material. The Coaching Association of Canada also wishes to express its thanks to Dr. Johnston for reviewing this text.

TECHNICAL PREPARATION

Module

4

Goal: To help develop and enhance a coach's knowledge of the technical aspects of the game of field lacrosse. This will allow the coach to prepare a team for higher levels of competitive field lacrosse.

Objectives: The coach will be able to:

- offer a team and its athletes a wider variety of options for different aspects of the game;
- identify the proper use of different tactical options that will best serve the team when presented by different opposition strategies;
- gain a further understanding of the various aspects of the game of field lacrosse (offence, defence, special teams, riding, clearing, and face-offs);
- place the correct personnel into the appropriate positions in all situations.

Introduction: Module 4 is designed for coaches who are interested in working with teams and athletes that are moving into a more competitive phase of field lacrosse as compared to those athletes who are new to the game.

Within Module 4 are various drills, techniques and scenarios that are presented for the coach to further their knowledge base when coaching field lacrosse.

The material is likely more suited for coaches who have some experience in the game of field lacrosse.

When compared to box lacrosse, field lacrosse is often seen as more of a chess match. Module 4 will give the coach more moves that his athletes and team can use and counter the moves of the opposition.

Module 4 prepares coaches to train their athletes to compete by analyzing and correcting skills, recognizing and utilizing appropriate tactics and strategies, developing athletes and teams prepared to play more competitive levels of field lacrosse.



Team Offence

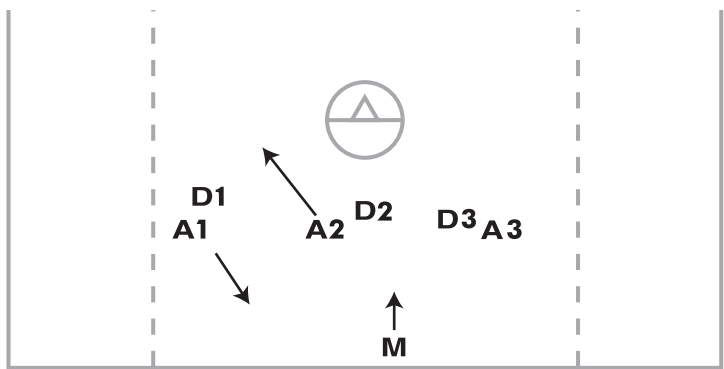
1. Fast breaks with flat set-up

Fast breaks are traditionally set-up in an 'L' formation with one point man and two crease men. Presenting in the flat set-up will likely disrupt the rotation or force the defence to slide from an unfamiliar territory.

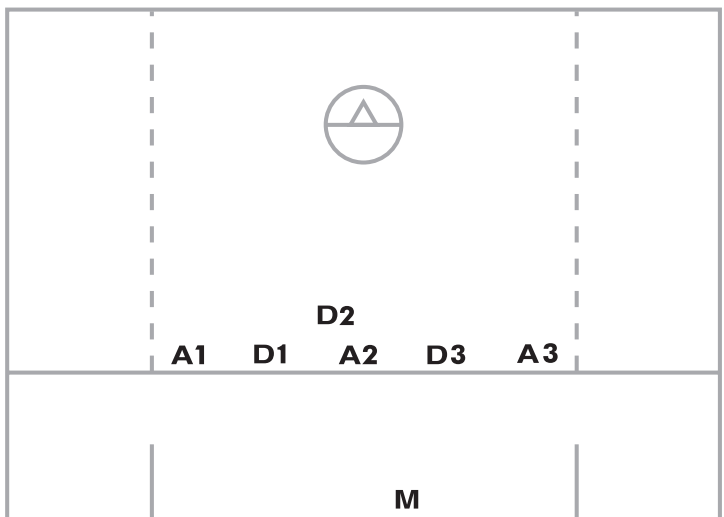
Note:
A2 is regularly the point man of the fast break.

LEGEND

- Player movement
- - - - - Pass
- Shot
- Pick
- ⌋ Start position of the ball
- M** Midfielder
- A** Attacker
- D** Defender



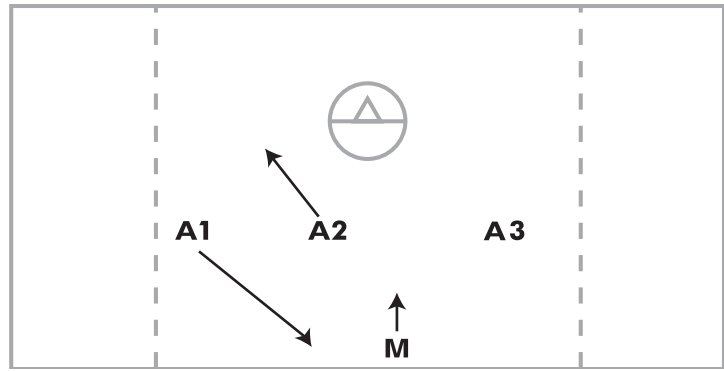
Low
(for Face-offs)



High

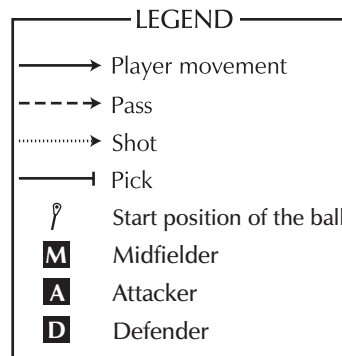
Note:
A2 remains on the right side but moves to the crease versus staying at the point. A1 becomes the point and A3 stays in the same familiar set-up.

Note:
The defence must remain in a triangle zone and not cover their original check. If they stay with their check, the possibility of the wrong slide or no slide is more probable.

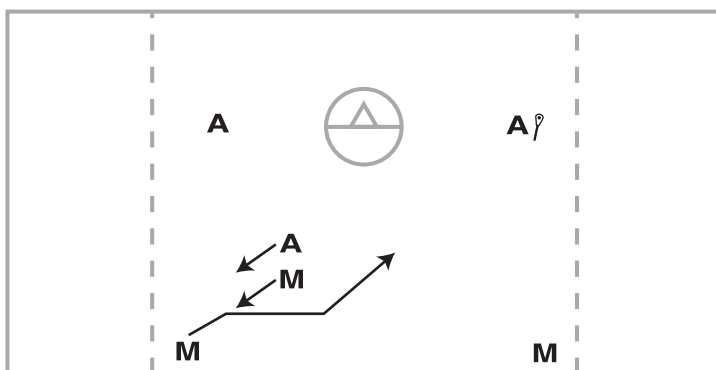


2. 2-2-2 Motion (Deuces)

There are several varieties to this set. Listed below are three different rotations for the exact same set. The player roles always remain the same. The interior players must work well without the ball, be familiar with picks, stack play and be able to catch, shoot and score in tight confines. The four players in the outside positions must have the ability to drive one-on-one, draw a double team and dump as well as pass the ball successfully in pressure situations.

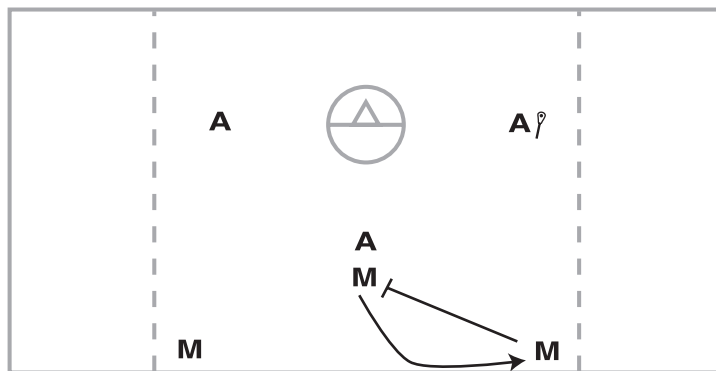


A. Stack rotates opposite of ball



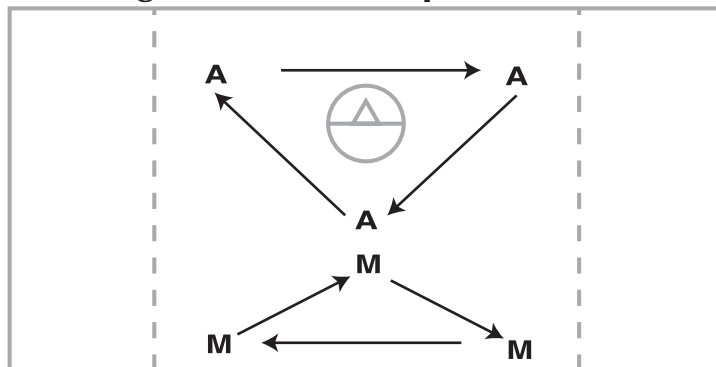
NOTE:
The outside four players cut off the rotating stack of two and look for the pass from opposite to where they started. In the event that they are not open on the first cut they can immediately go and re-pick for one of the stack players.

B. Stack replaces outside four positions



NOTE:
When any of the outside four players cuts to the middle, they pick for one of the two stack players. If there is no shooting opportunity, the original cutter is replaced by one of the two stack players.

C. Triangle Rotation of 3-person units



NOTE:
Each triangle rotates separately. When any of the outside four positions cut to the middle it forces a rotation, fill and replace.

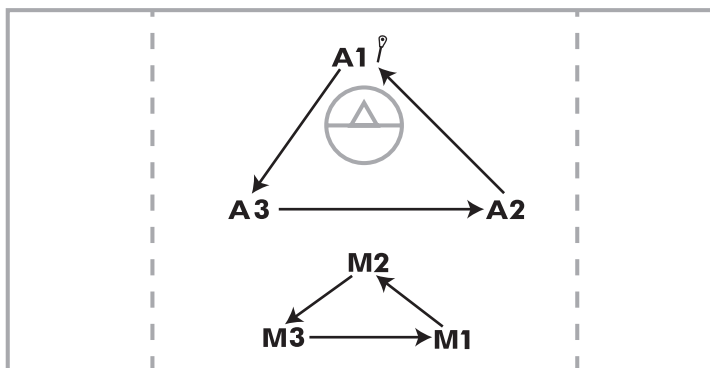




NOTE:
In order for this set to work effectively your players must have the ability to drive one-on-one, distribute the ball successfully, work well away from the ball and have strong spatial awareness.

3. 2-3-1 Motion

In this set, the midfielders all work together as well as the attackman. Each group rotates in a triangle shape with the players cutting, filling and replacing.

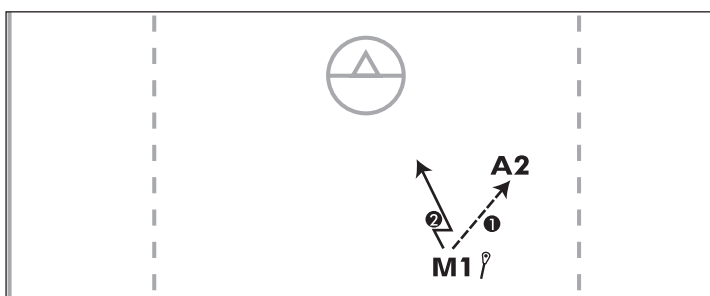


The rotation of the attackmen is as follows:

- Attackman (A1) in 'X' drives either crease forcing the attackman (A3) he is moving toward to cut to the goal. The opposite attackman will fill or replace the driving attackman in 'X'(A2).

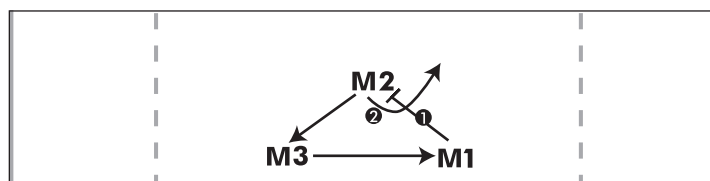
The rotation of the midfielders is as follows:

- On a pass down, the passer cuts to the net for the give-and-go look (M1).



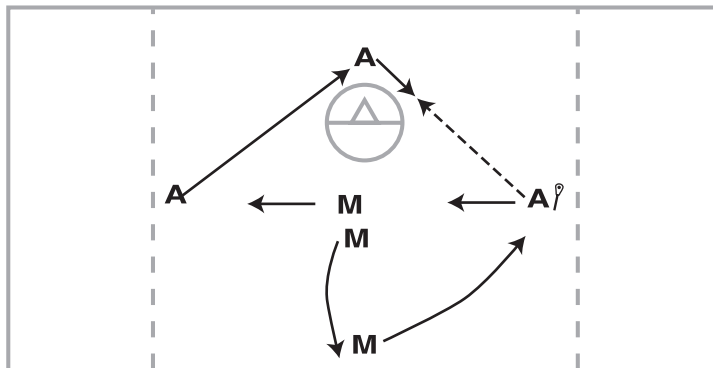
- The midfielder in the middle (M2) could get a pick and re-pick opportunity off this cut to the goal but will likely fill the top position vacancy.
- The midfielder on the opposite side (M3) of the field replaces the vacant location.

NOTE:
The rotation doesn't always have to be perfect as long as the three locations are all filled.



4. 1-4-1 Motion

This is a great set to use against a 'crease-sliding' defence since the middle two players are constantly changing and the defensive players will also have to adjust which limits their effectiveness to support their team-mates. The offence creates movement for all players and always keeps the defence spread out.



LEGEND

	Player movement
	Pass
	Shot
	Pick
	Start position of the ball
M	Midfielder
A	Attacker
D	Defender

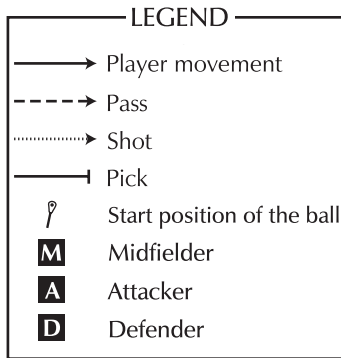
NOTE:
This is a great set to use against a crease-sliding defence.

The four outside positions are always filled by one of the middle two players. The two in the middle are close together (1.5-3m) but never in line with one another. Whenever the ball is carried in the direction of any of the outside four, those players immediately cut to goal and into the middle looking for a pass or to pick for the remaining middle player. Any time the ball is passed down, the player who threw it cuts to the goal. When the ball gets to 'X', that player can drive either side of the goal and the player being driven at, cuts to the goal looking for a pass. The only time movement or rotation doesn't happen is when the ball is passed up the field. The one-on-one option is best in this type of set because it allows the driver time to see the slide coming and make the correct passing choice enroute to the goal. Whenever one of the four outside positions is vacated someone must fill the spot.

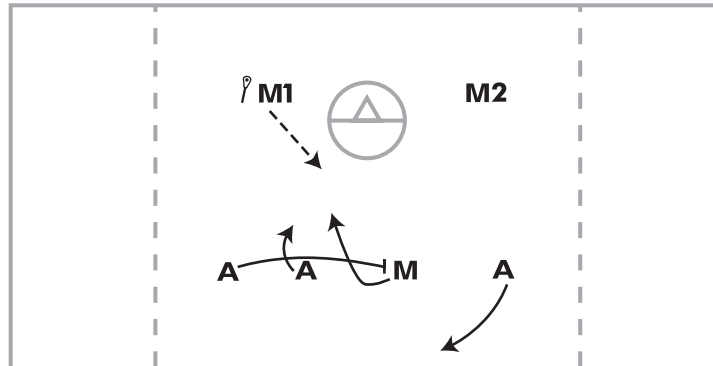


5. Invert Offences

This set features the midfielders doing one-on-ones and feeding against other short sticks. The purpose of this set is to take the long-stick players' advantages out of the game. When two players from opposing teams have the same size stick, they are considered equal. However, when a defenceman has an additional two feet of stick length they have an advantage.

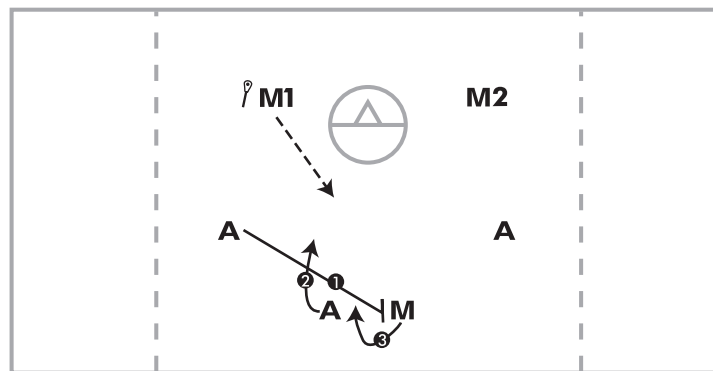


NOTE:
 This set features the midfielders doing one-on-ones and feeding against other short sticks.

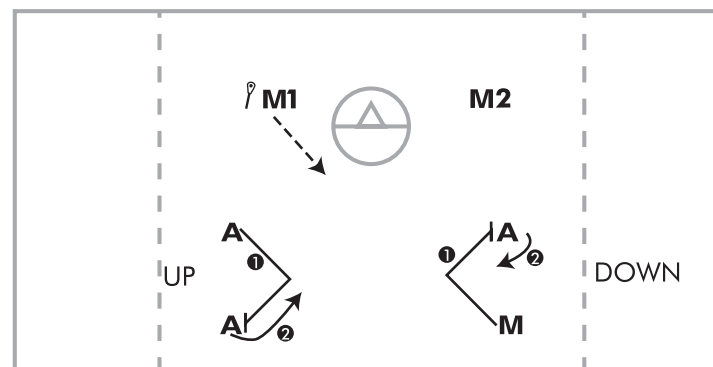


Flat

The two midfielders (M1 and M2) mirror each other on the crease. If one is driving from behind, the other is in front of the net and vice versa. The reason for this is if M2's check goes to support M1's check that leaves M2 alone in front of the net. The four other offensive players set up in a flat line, arc or box formation to free each other for shots using posts and picks.



Arc



Box

Offensive Skills

1. Dodging: Face Dodge

Purpose of skill:

To elude a defender and complete a close range shot.

1. Preliminary Movements
 - i. Approach the defender with two hands on the stick in the shooting position.
2. Preparation Movements
 - i. At a stick length from the defender wind-up to shoot with hands at eye level.
 - ii. Selling the shot is the key to this move being successful – use body language and facial expression to add to its effectiveness.
 - iii. Plant the lead foot.
3. Force Producing Movements
 - i. Push off the lead foot bringing the opposite leg across in front.
 - ii. As the feet change directions, it is just as important that the hands follow.
4. Critical Instant
 - i. When the stick is in front of the body, slide the top hand to the throat of the stick to maximize protection – this will keep the head of the stick at ear level.
5. Follow-through
 - i. Accelerate past the defender.
 - ii. The player must have some separation from the defender before thinking about returning the stick to the ready position.
 - iii. If shooting, the player must shoot from the ear and shoulder area while moving forward.
6. Common Faults
 - i. Not selling the fake shot – this is critical because the body is in a vulnerable position.
 - ii. Not sliding the top hand toward the throat will expose the stick to the defender while passing by him.
 - iii. Not shooting from the ear and shoulder – hanging out the stick allows the defender another chance to check the stick.





1. Dodging: Split Dodge

Purpose of skill:

To elude the defender and create a defensive adjustment.

1. Preliminary Movements
 - i. Accelerate toward the defender with two hands on the stick.
2. Preparation Movements
 - i. At one stick length away, drop one hand, lower your centre of gravity and plant the foot stick-side (changing your speed is needed).
3. Force Producing Movements
 - i. Push off the plant foot and rotate the upper body bringing the stick across at chest level.
 - ii. As the stick approaches the centre of the chest, an exchange of hands will take place. The top hand will meet the bottom hand with the top hand now becoming the arm used to protect the ball (inverted V).
 - iii. The upper body coils itself to protect the ball and withstand any contact attempted to dislodge the ball.
4. Critical Instant
 - i. The plant, upper body coil and hand exchange must happen simultaneously.
5. Follow-through
 - i. The stick remains protected and parallel to body.
 - ii. Accelerate past the defender to open space.
6. Common Faults
 - i. Not accelerating toward the defender thus giving the defender more reaction time.
 - ii. The hand exchange happens above the chest, leaving the body in a vulnerable position.
 - iii. The stick isn't protected from the defender throughout the one-on-one move.

1. Dodging: Driving from 'X' or behind the goal

• Inside Roll

1. The set-up is the same as a roll dodge (page 4-11 and 4-12 in the Level 1 Technical manual) but the area in which to work is very specific. The 5-and-5 area extends from the side of the crease stretching from the goal line extended (GLE) up the field five yards and five yards out at a 90 degree angle toward the sideline.
2. Player drives to the area identified in the first picture and follows the steps to a roll dodge resulting in a close range shot on goal.



• Rocker Step

1. Located in the 5-and-5 area but now that player has inside rolled a few times and the defender is ready for it this time. As the offensive player plants to roll inside, he fakes the inside roll with his body and stick and continues forward leaving the defender guessing again.



2. Feeding

Note:

This skill is more challenging than some may think. Several elements or skills are needed to be able to complete a feed or pass to a team-mate. The skills involved are stick protection, vision and intelligence.

Purpose of skill:

To elude a defender and complete a pass to a team-mate.

1. Preliminary Movements
 - i. Drive one-on-one toward a defender or move with the ball protected from the defender with the head up seeing the field.
2. Preparation Movements
 - i. Move in toward the defender, close to his body.
3. Force Producing Movements
 - i. Plant the leg closest to the defender and push off creating a separation of more than one stick length.
4. Critical Instant
 - i. As the separation increases bring the bottom hand to the butt end of the stick.
5. Follow-through
 - i. Pass to an open team-mate using the proper passing technique or maintain possession of the ball.
6. Common Faults
 - i. Not creating enough separation from the defender.
 - ii. Bringing the bottom hand on to the stick too quickly.
 - iii. Trying to force a pass to someone that is not open.

Extra Man Offence

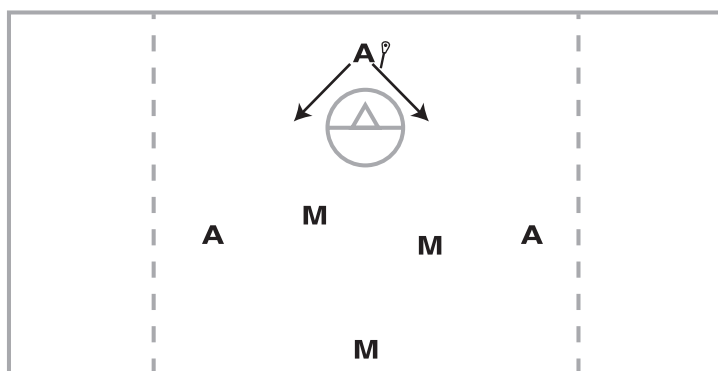
1. 1-4-1

The middle two are never to be too close to each other or in line with one another. We never want to have one defenceman to cover both players at once. The three positions to the outside above the goal line must be excellent outside shooters. The man in 'X' needs to be the best feeder and also intelligent enough to cover all shots that miss the net.

The offence can also seal or pick one of the rotating defenders preventing them from covering an outside shot. Skip passes and middle feeds should cause problems for the defence.

Note:
Most defences will cover this set in a 1-3-1 formation.

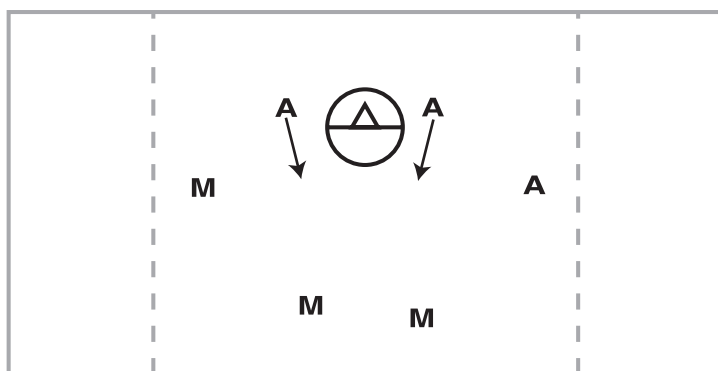
Note:
To be most effective the outside four should draw a defender and quickly reverse the ball through 'X' or around the top.

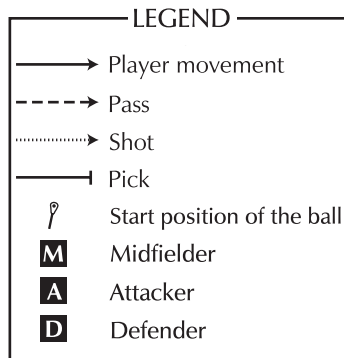


2. 2-4

Offence presents a wide 2-2-2 set with no player in the middle. On the referee's whistle the set shifts to a 2-4 (two high and four across the front of the net). The principles of 1-4-1 set-up are the same for this except there are four outside shooters instead of three.

Note:
The defence will likely matchup in a 2-3 zone set-up similar to basketball in order to cover the opponent.

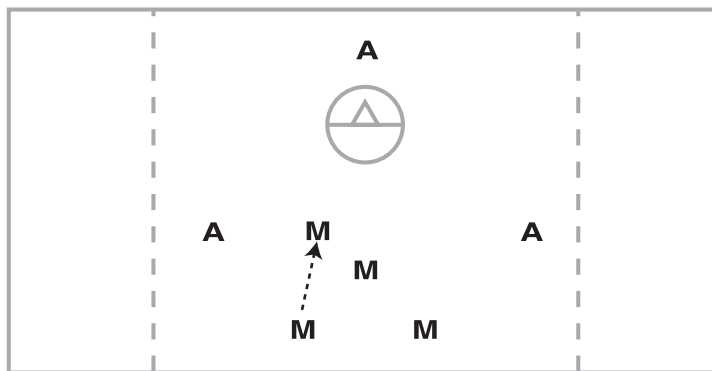
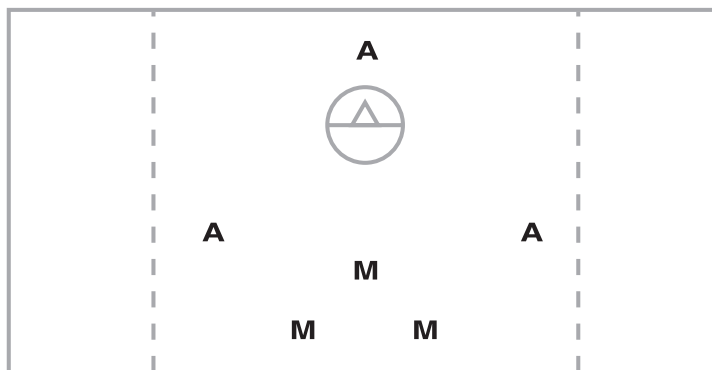




NOTE:
 This is a very advanced choice for a team to try and all of the players on the field must be skilled, spatially aware and have great vision.

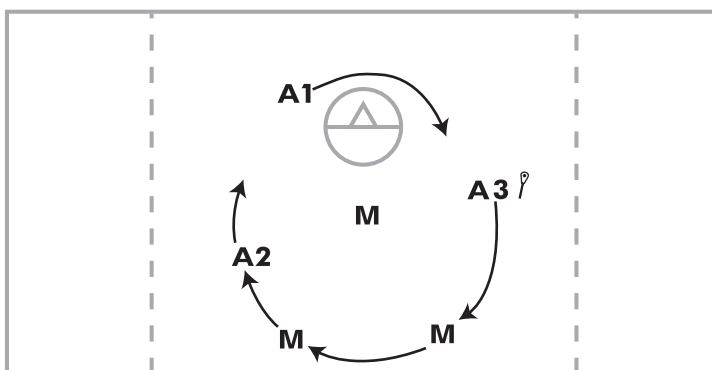
3. Switch Sets

The EMO unit presents in one set and then switches into a different set as the ball rotates around the outside. (i.e. 2-3-1 shifts into a 1-4-1 and then into a 2-2-2). The defence will have to change their formation to properly cover the offence. If they don't all stay on the same page then the offence can exploit any two-on-ones.



4. Quick Hitters 30 second Sneak

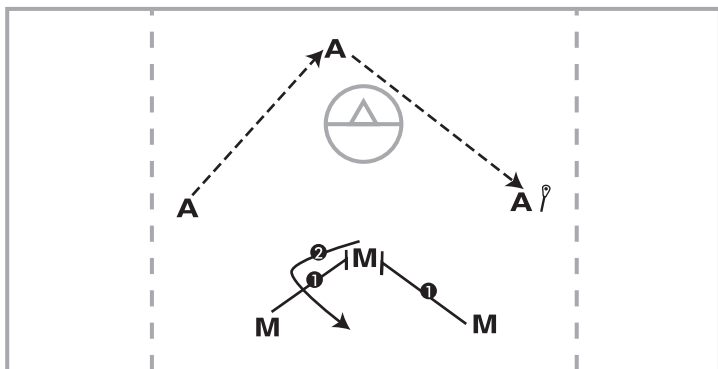
Attackman (A1) starts on the opposite side of the goal with his stick in the opposite hand. As the ball is checked in with the designated player and rotates around the goal up high, attackman (A1) sneaks around the back of the goal and meets the ball on his strong side. The defence is forced to rotate to cover the extra players left open near the crease.



Hot Dog

The top two players form two halves of a bun and the wiener is the man in the middle. As the ball rotates the two players forming the bun set a pick for the wiener and the wiener comes through or around the picks for an open outside shot.

Note:
Run this drill using a 2-3-1 set.



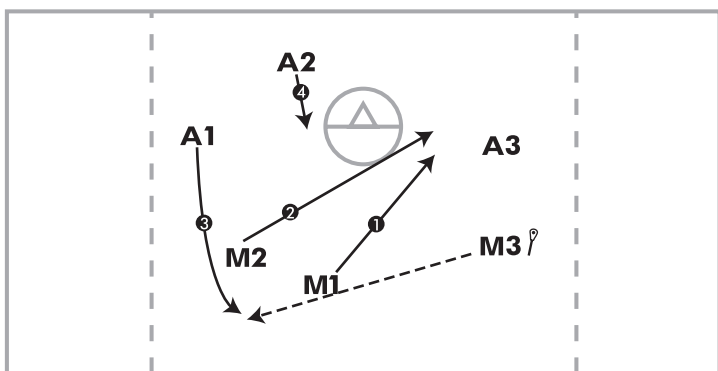
LEGEND

- Player movement
- - - - - Pass
- Shot
- └ Pick
- ⌋ Start position of the ball
- M** Midfielder
- A** Attacker
- D** Defender

Syracuse

The ball rotates around once and reaches the left shooter. No player is in the middle to start. The two right-handers cut in a row and the third creeps behind them looking to receive the ball for the outside shot. The low right-hander creeps from behind the goal to just above the goal line for an open shot.

Note:
This set uses four right-handers and two left-handers. Alternatively, use two righthanders and four left-handers.



Team Play

The Role of the Long-stick Midfielder

The rule states that a team is allowed a maximum of four long-stick players (52"-72") on the field. Normally, all the defenders carry longsticks but to add another long-stick increases your chances of making a defensive play. Long-sticks provide extra stick length to defend and cover more area in the passing lanes but more importantly it changes the thinking of players knowing that there is a fourth defender on the field.

The following situations permit the use of an additional long stick during game play:

- on the wing line matching up with the opposition's "pull-to" player (photo 1);
- on the wing line as the "pull-to" player (photo 2);
- on the face-off to defend against a great face-off taker;
- as an additional fourth defender with the specific job of defending and getting a change when a turnover takes place.



1



2

Team Defence

The principles of good team defence – minimizing an opposition's chances to win – do not change regardless of the players' skill levels and abilities. Good team defence employs these principles:

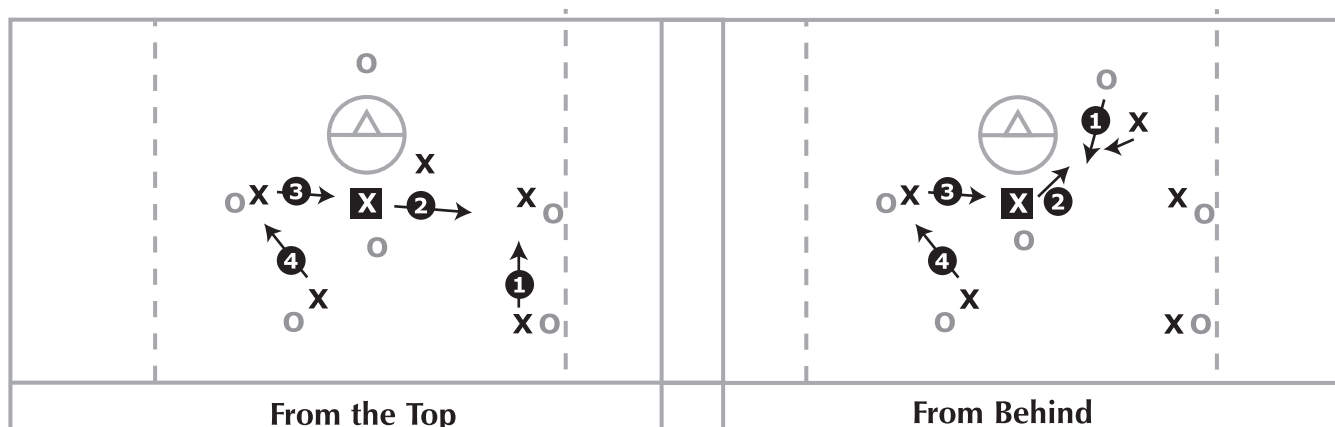
- protection of the prime scoring areas;
- communication amongst teammates is critical;
- awareness of where the ball is and prepared to support a teammate;
- correct body position and movement are essential.

NOTE:
All players playing defence (defenceman or midfielder) have the responsibility to defend their man. Defences are at their best when all members of the team are doing their best to limit the opposition's scoring opportunities by playing a team defence that supports one another and stops advantages taken by the opposition.

Defensive Sets: Slide from Crease

- Play 'top side' and take the middle away to force the attacker down the sides allowing for the defensive slide to occur. .
- The slide from the 'hot guy' in the middle must be hard and aggressive. Once the decision has been made to double-team the attacking player or support your teammate, a 100% commitment must be made ('Slide to Collide'). .
- The slide is only made when your teammate needs your support if he has been "beat" and there will be a scoring opportunity unless the slide occurs.
- Once a defender has slid from the crease, his area must then be defended by another teammate who rotates over from the opposite crease to the ball. The second slide is usually easier to fill and often makes for a more difficult pass for the attacking team. .
- An additional slide from the top to the opposite crease area is required to fill the vacancy left close to the goal. .
- When the ball is being carried behind the goal the defender attempts to lure the offensive player close to the crease. The defender will take their outside path away and challenge them to risk going to the crease. The 'hot guy' will slide to take the path away.

NOTE:
It is often the second and or third pass that creates the scoring chance. Therefore, it is essential that second and third slides occur to play a complete team defence that supports your team-mates.



Zones

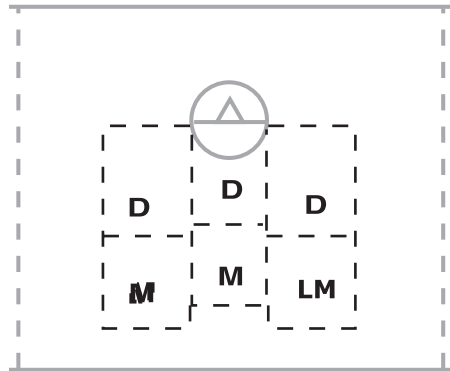
Regardless of which zone a team chooses to use it is imperative that defenders remember that they are defending an area or zone and not an individual. But whenever a player enters your zone employ all the principles of individual defence.

NOTE:

Zones can be effective as another tool that the defence possesses but they are most useful when not recognized. Therefore, good team defences will have the ability to employ more than one kind of defence and more than one kind of zone.

- Be active and vocal.
- Be aggressive in your zone/area.
- Individual defensive principles still apply to those who are in your zone.
- You are responsible for an area and not an individual.
- You must always know the location of the ball as you still must support your teammates when necessary.

LEGEND	
M	Midfielder
LM	Long-stick Midfielder
D	Defender



Individual Defence

All great defensive players use and have a combination of many skills and abilities that allow them to be very good at their position. They rarely rely on one of these strengths or abilities as their position requires them to possess many of these tools. Quickness, size, knowledge, positioning, awareness and communication are all used in combination to produce an excellent defensive player. Another asset is knowing and understanding all of your opponent's strengths and weaknesses just as a good offensive player studies a goalie's strengths and weaknesses.

Individual Checks: Push

Purpose: To contain your opponent and either keep him in front of you or away from the goal. Also a push check can be used at the critical instant when an opponent is shooting forcing him away from the net and disrupting his shot.

- Body position should be a strong and stable stance.
- Arms should be flexed and ready to extend.
- The defender does not want to allow the attacking player to get into his body (defenders arms will collapse).
- Once the attacker enters the area where the defender can make contact without over extending his reach, the defender places his stick on the attacker's body (just above the hips) and pushes the defender away.
- When contact is made it is a push and not a cross check used in the indoor game.



Push check using the forearms

NOTE:

For more details on some of the assets needed to be a great defensive player see the Community Development coaching manual.

Push check using the hands



NOTE:

The rule states that the push must be done with both hands on the crosse and together (side-by-side).



Individual Checks: Whip Check

Purpose: To disrupt the opponent's path to the goal.
To disrupt the opponent from feeding the ball.
To ultimately dislodge the ball from the opponent's stick.

- This check is easily done when the attacking player is reasonably stationary and not on an aggressive drive to the net.
- The defender places his body square to his opponent, between him and the goal.
- The defender holds his stick on his strong side as if he is containing his check.
- At the moment the defender attempts the whip check he slides his top hand down towards the bottom hand and at the same time begins to whip or rotate the stick around the opponent's body in an attempt to hit or slash at his stick.
- It is important that the stick goes in a circular motion around the opponent's body.
- If the opponent does not move his feet right away then the check can be repeated as needed.

NOTE: The defender must be careful not to impede the progress of the opponent when attempting this check.

Individual Checks: Chop (Front/Back)

Purpose: This check is used when the opponent presents his stick in front or behind him which allows the defender to chop down on the stick and create a loose ball.

- The defender must have his stick out in front and in a poke position.
- This check can be used while the attacker is in motion or is stationary.
- The check is attempted when the attacker presents his stick in front or behind the protection provided by his own body.
- The defender who has his stick directly above the attacker's head moves their stick in a waving motion in attempt to distract or fake them into adjusting their stick position. When the stick is exposed the defender moves his stick in one direction and then chops down on the stick in the opposite direction in attempt to dislodge the ball.

NOTE: The defender must be careful not to over commit and lose body position as the attacker may be baiting him.

Man down Defence

In the Community Development coaching manual, you were given basic formations to cover standard Extra Man Offensive sets. In this section, you will learn a more difficult sliding technique as well as some tactics to disrupt the offensive players.

Historically, man down defenses have been passive and patient. This is not a bad approach but it makes you vulnerable for a set play being successful or a quality shot for the offensive team. Therefore, even though the defence is down a man they have some form of control. For example it is generally a better choice to allow an outside shot (preferably from the offence's weakest shooter) rather than one from the crease.

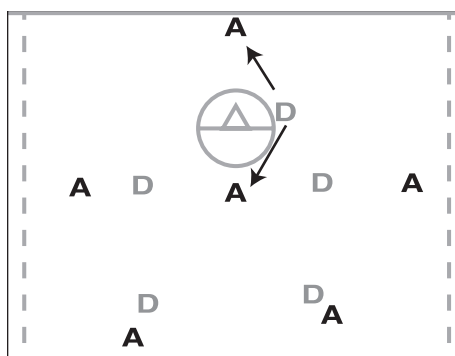
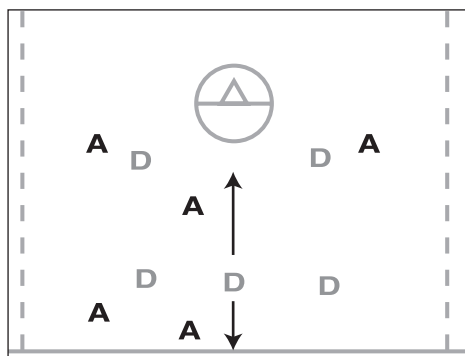
Team Sets: String

- The 'String' man is responsible for checking the point and the middle man of the extra man offence.
- The remaining four players must check the perimeter and ensure that shots do not get to the net without pressure (unless they are from far out).
- When the point man has the ball, the 'String' man is on the ball with pressure. The two adjacent shooters are also defended and the remaining three players are checked by the two low defenders who must pinch-in to protect the middle.
- A similar 'String' slide can be done when the offense is set up with only two players up top. The 'String' will then cover the man in the middle and the man in 'X'. The responsibilities of the other four players remain the same.
- The same happens in reverse when the ball is possessed low by the offence with the middle man on offence being locked-off by the string and the top three shooters are defended by the top defenders who will have dropped towards the middle to help defend the zone.
- Rotation is used as a last resort in this defence.

NOTE:
 When playing in a man down defence the key is to force the opposition to pass off to a teammate. This allows for easier movement and rotation of the man down defence.

NOTE:
 A man down defence also forces the opposition into doing what the defence allows it to do.

NOTE:
 The string man down defence is not a good choice if the offence has a dominant point man and effective middle man.



'String' Behind

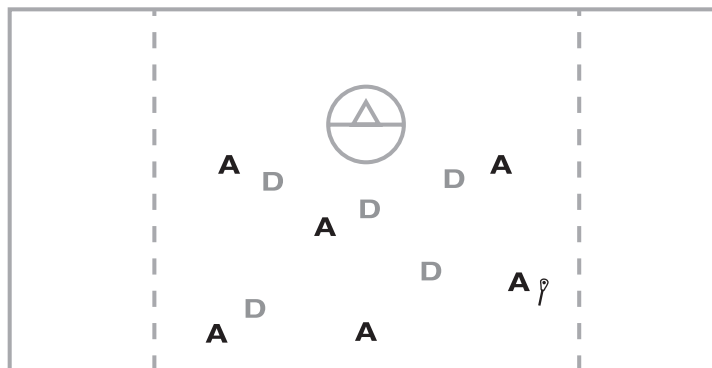


NOTE:

While there is less pressure on the shooters, a defender cannot give up an uncontested shot – the defence is simply trying to minimize the effect of the extra man offence.

Pressure non-shooters

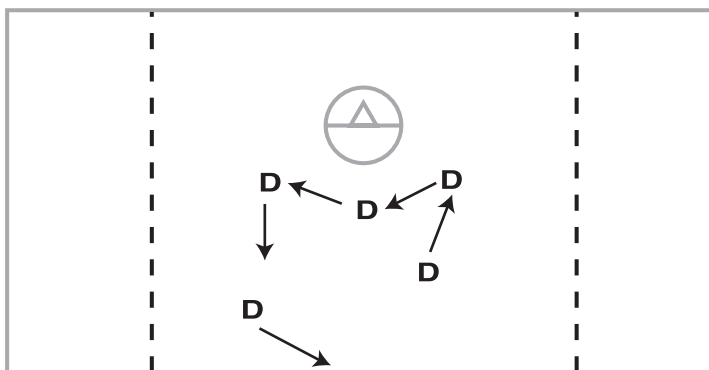
- This defence is employed when the defence believes that either their goalie is very good at handling outside shots or the opposition has shooters that are not as strong and are less of a threat than their low or crease attackers.
- Usually the defence will lock-off or make it very difficult for the lower positioned attackers to receive and/or shoot the ball.
- The top defenders will play lower than normal (even if the ball is high) to help protect the middle.
- The shooters will only get pressured when they enter the predetermined area that the defence and goalie feels is too far from the net (this will vary depending on who the opposition is).
- Rotation will not be necessary but likely two defenders will be checking three shooters (depending on the set of choice by the offence).

**Count and Go**

- The defence counts the number of passes and at the designated number (determined by the coach or captain of the defence) they pressure the ball to surprise the offence and force a bad pass or turnover.

NOTE:

Instead of being passive this team set will disrupt a set play or take time off the clock.



Rides

Key Principles

- Force the clearing team to make a mistake (e.g. force them to make as many passes as possible before clearing the ball).
- Be patient when riding a clearing opponent.
- Force opposing teams to make difficult and long passes in order to successfully clear the ball.
- Positioning and communication are essential.

Techniques

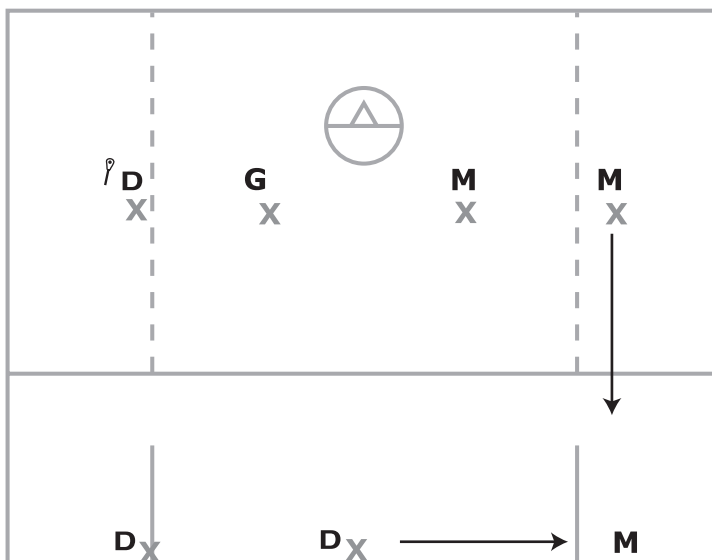
Farthest Pass (Hard)

- This ride is used to force clearing teams into situations where the only pass they see will be the farthest or the longest pass open.
- It is an aggressive ride that puts pressure on opposing teams in an effort to force the opposition to make a bad decision and attempt a pass that the riding team anticipates.
- When this technique is correctly applied, all opponents that are close in proximity or in the vision of the clearing player carrying the ball are locked-off and are not able to receive the ball.

NOTE:
The defencemen and goalie are active when doing this ride. All members of the riding team must be "on the same page" because if one is not, a goal scoring opportunity or an easy clear may result.

NOTE:
Goalies may be required to pick up a check.

NOTE:
Midfielders and attackmen must stay with their check and prevent a short pass that breaks the ride. When picking up an opponent, stay with your check until the ball is cleared or possession changes.

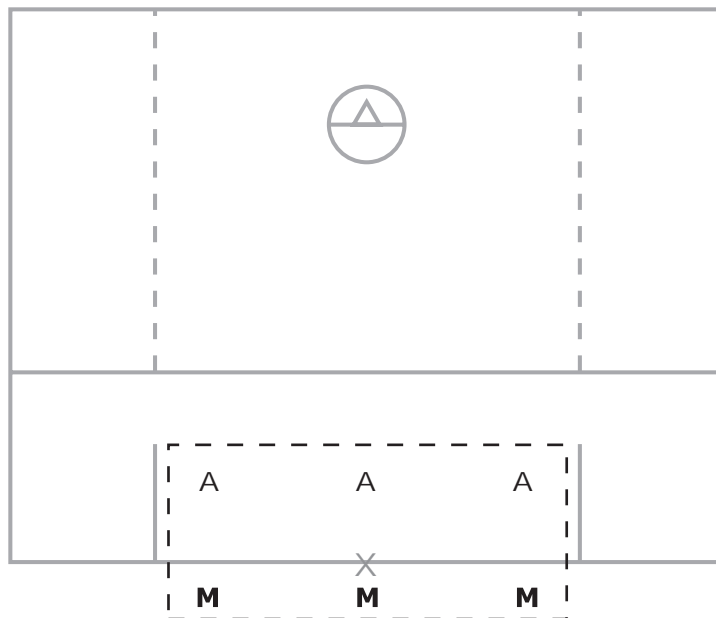


NOTE:

This is not a ride that can be used for a whole game as it can be broken if recognized.

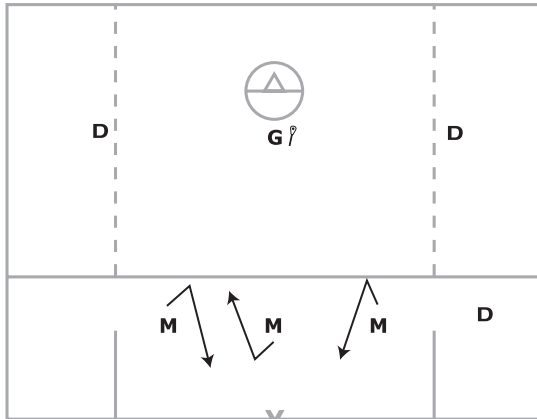
Rainbow (Soft)

- This ride is more of a zone than other rides used by teams (see diagram) and can be a very effective tool if used appropriately and is disguised and used with patience.
- The attackmen and midfielders play in the shape of a rectangle that moves in accordance to the position of the ball on the field.
- The reason is considered a “soft” ride is because the initial pressure is less on the opposition and there are at times what appear to be holes in the zone.
- Opponents are “passed off” in communication from one region of the zone to another always being aware of where the ball is on the field.
- Once the ball enters your area (either from a pass or being carried) then you, and sometimes a teammate, will converge on the ball and opposition in an effort to create a loose ball and turnover.
- Defenders (not shown) are tight on the checks and midfielders will have to drop closer to their goal if the opponent gets behind them.



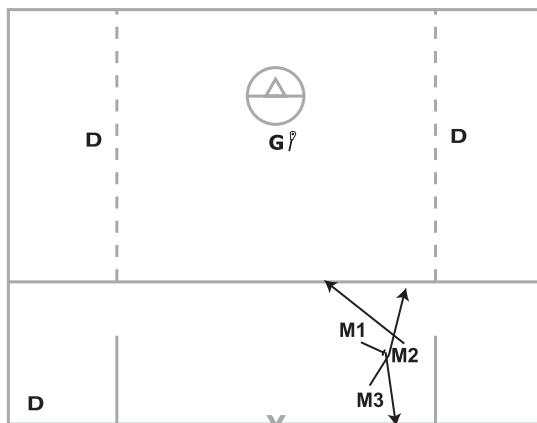
Clears

1. 3-4 - The midfielders use V or L cuts to get open.



NOTE:
The two defenders on either side of the goalie must be your best stick handlers. The goalie needs to be calm and cool under pressure and willing to cross centre if necessary. Patience is the key to all clears.

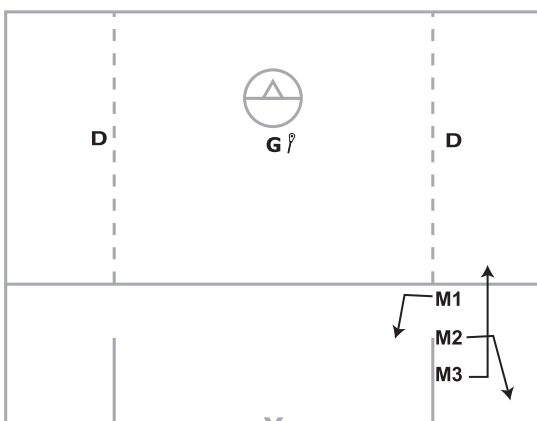
2. 3-4 Triangle



NOTE:

- M1 picks for M2.
- M2 breaks for the ball from the goalie.
- M3 cuts off M1's pick.
- M1 waits for M3 and breaks up field.

3. 3-4 Stack



NOTE:

- M1 cuts right and up field.
- M2 cuts left and up field.
- M3 comes right down the middle.



NOTE:
 For tips on stance, body position and other coaching tips and techniques, see the *Community Development coaching manual*.

Face-offs

Winning face-offs is extremely important in the game of field lacrosse as compared to the indoor game where a team must shoot the ball every 30 seconds. This activity ensures countless possessions throughout the game. In contrast, field lacrosse allows a team to maintain possession of the ball after a shot. Therefore, a team can dominate possession of the ball with an effective face-off man. Equally as important as a great draw man is strong wing play to support a good face-off man. A good face-off man is only as good as his teammates is a true adage. Wing play must know their face-off man's strengths and signals to fully complement an excellent possession team. They need to anticipate the placing of the ball, ward off and outplay their opposing wing man, and work tirelessly for the loose ball.

Techniques

“Flip” - *On the Whistle*



- Rather than attempting to clamp the ball from your opponent, roll your stick under your opponent's stick and allow him to clamp the ball into your stick.
- Once the ball has been clamped into your stick by your opponent, pull the ball forward with your right hand and simply flip the ball forward and release yourself from the centre region to pursue the ball.
- This can be a very effective tool to use when trying to create a fast break opportunity and put pressure on the opposing team.
- If unable to gain control of the ball yourself look to direct the ball to your wingman whose check has released him to pursue you.

Up and Over - *On the Whistle*

- Lift the head of the stick over the ball and into the head of your opponent's stick.
- Once the stick has moved far enough forward (along with your opponent's) over the ball then attempt to put the stick down on the front side of the ball.
- After placing the stick back on the playing surface, direct the ball to a teammate coming in from the wing or to an open area to retrieve it.



NOTE:
This is a very effective draw to use when facing-off against strong and powerful players who clamp the ball.

MENTAL PREPARATION**Module****5****Goal:**

To develop the mental skills as a part of playing lacrosse so that they are as natural as passing, shooting or beating a player one-on-one.

Objectives: At the Training to Train Phase of development, coaches will be able to:

- teach players how to use the visualization and relaxation techniques to reinforce the technical skills;
- help players become aware of how their emotions can interfere with learning and performance;
- develop the belief system that leads to positive self-talk;
- lead players through a progressive warm-up of mental, physical, technical and tactical activities that will bring players to the optimum performance state; and
- help players develop a strategy for maintaining or regaining emotional control and concentration throughout a game.

Introduction: It has already been discussed how learning is the intuitive change that occurs in response to meeting challenges in a self-directed manner. At the community level, the changes happened naturally while the players were:

- developing the coordination to execute the game fundamentals;
- acquiring the feel for controlling the stick and ball;
- learning how to play the game.

At the competitive level, the cognitive changes that must occur are not quite so obvious.



“We’ve worked hard to get where we are because it doesn’t come easy. Guys expect it. I expect Markus Naslund to go out there and compete hard every night, and he expects the same thing from me. That goes through the whole line-up. We don’t have guys just speaking it: we have guys doing it.”

- Todd Bertuzzi

“I think our players are understanding more and more what it takes to be good on a nightly basis. And they’re bringing it. They’re the ones doing it.”

- Marc Crawford

The challenges of:

- creating automatic responses to game situations;
- practising and executing tactics and strategies;
- controlling emotions; and
- playing in pressure situations.

are more complex, and learning how to meet these challenges is as important as the challenges themselves.

For example, knowing how they learned to control emotions or to win in pressure situations are skills players will need throughout their careers. Professional players are constantly referring to the effort and work that is required to learn how to win. The Vancouver Canucks found themselves at the top of the league standings at the Christmas break in 2002.

The Canucks lost their next game to Colorado and Naslund responded with: “I think it is not being prepared for them to come at us hard”.

Mental Preparation is learning how to use the mental skills to first learn the technical skills, then to learn how to perform on a consistent basis in competition and finally to be able apply the mental skills when and where they are needed.

The most important fact of all is that it takes as long to learn these mental skills as it does the technical, and therefore they should be learned as a way of playing lacrosse right from the beginning.

TASK 1:

Explain what the following phrases mean:

- 1. “Learning what it takes to win”;***
- 2. “You need to lose before you can win”.***

Preparing to Compete 1 - Part I:

The First Two Years

1 . Understanding the problem

When children are learning to play a sport their enthusiasm for play and their effort to perform are enough to trigger the concentration and control required to learn their skills and to have fun. However, as the players develop expertise, a need to do more than just play and have fun starts to grow: they want to achieve goals, they want to win, and most importantly, they want to feel good about their playing. Unfortunately, this is not easy.

- The opponents are trying to achieve the same things, which for various reasons, makes playing and having fun difficult for everyone.
- Learning how to compete requires concentration levels not yet achieved.
- New successes place players in new situations, which will give players a new set of emotions to deal with.

For many players this will be the first time they are faced with distractions that break their concentration and interfere with their performance.

Application: Creating Awareness

- a. Help the players identify the optimum performance state
Ask the players how they feel after a good game, what they found easy to do and what they were thinking about.
- b. Determine the factors that interfere with optimum performance
Ask the players how they felt after a bad game. Compare what they were thinking, feeling doing in the two games. Compare:
 - Emotional Control
 - anger;
 - frustration;
 - fear; and
 - anxiety.
 - Attentional Control
 - focus of attention; and
 - concentration.

TASK 2:

Give examples of the problems players have in controlling their emotions and in achieving and maintaining concentration in practices and games. i.e. When do players get mad or frustrated and how do they show it? Which players use their emotional reactions in a positive manner and which ones use them negatively?

How can coaches prevent negative responses to frustration?

TASK 3:

In lacrosse, mental control and skills have to be performed while the player is in action. Create the progressions that will lead a player to be able to relax while running down the field on a 4-3 break.



2. Establish a Base

Establishing a base is the process of learning how to automatically use the mental skills as needed. Just as we would like our players to automatically roll and drive for goal when a defensive player lunges to intercept a pass, we want players to automatically increase concentration to stay with a check or to soften the hands and use the body to shoot. When nervousness or anger sets in, players should automatically take a deep breath and visualize a strategy to offset the problem instead of worrying about outcomes or reacting to the anger, i.e. “when the going gets tough, the tough get going”.

During the Learning to Train Phase of Development the players should have been:

- using the soft hands method of relaxation before practising the stick skills;
- visualizing instructions before execution; and
- controlling negative self-talk.

EXAMPLE:

Seeing themselves go through the pattern of a drill before they do it.

EXAMPLE:

Everyone creates the soft hands and then while maintaining the feeling, they practise their stick skills.

Application:

1. Choose a skill and have the whole team rehearse the skill.
2. Re-focusing: For various reasons: fatigue, increased pressure, low level of ability etc., the players will lose their control of anger, tension, concentration, relaxation or self-talk. Stop the action and give the players time to re-focus. Beginners need to stop all other activity to re-focus and must start at the beginning of the mental skill in question. Help the players relax the arms, or jaw, visualize the state they want to achieve and then slowly move to the active state. Each time the players go through the process, the re-focusing becomes more natural and the players will be quicker to activate the correct mental state when needed.
3. Players are asked to think about their games and practices and to find solutions for plays and skills they want to improve on. For example, if channeling anger is a problem. Have the players think about being very angry and then see themselves applying the energy from the anger to checking with increased concentration, to running their plays more aggressively, or making more intense one-on-one moves.

Preparing to Compete – Part 2:

The Second Two Years

Mental skills, like technical skills, change and evolve as the players mature and gain experience. Each level that players move to demands and inspires another level of visualization, concentration, relaxation and control in order to meet the increased levels of emotions, distractions, speed, intensity and skill of the competitive phase. To move up to the next level, the players must go through the re-focusing stage to bring the mental skills up to the new performance level.

The mental skills are used in conjunction with each other. Being relaxed helps players to visualize and concentrate and vice versa.

Consequently, you will see athletes doing a relaxation technique before executing a skill in order to get rid of the tension, i.e. a basketball player who takes a deep breath and exhales before taking a foul shot, or tennis players who focus on their racquet strings to block out unwanted thoughts. The relaxation helps both players bring up the image and feel for the next shot.

DEVELOP THE PATH THAT LEADS TO THE “ZONE”

The ideal mental state for top performance is described as being in a zone, living in the moment, being centred, having confidence, having momentum or sometime with children, being lost in their own little world. It is a world of deep concentration where people lose track of time and even their surroundings. The brain is clear of all thoughts except for those of the task at hand and there is a feeling of relaxed readiness.

The question in sport is: “How is this optimum performance state created and maintained?” With most players and teams it happens by chance, others do it naturally as a result of the game situation and some teams bring in sport psychologists to do mental training workshops. The best way, however, is to prepare players early in life as we are now doing. By presenting the mental skills in progressive steps, coaches can teach the understanding and skills the players will need to deal with emotional and attentional problems. So instead of getting anxious before important games, with their minds full of unproductive thoughts, the players will find it quite natural to mentally rehearse their game plan, stay calm and yet be psyched and ready to play.

EXAMPLE:

The easier and quicker a player can free the body of tension through a relaxation technique the easier it is to visualize, control inner thoughts (selftalk) and to concentrate (attentional control). As the player moves into deeper levels of concentration, the images become stronger, interfering thoughts disappear and the player moves into deeper levels of relaxation. Also, one skill is often used to engage another such as when players visualize a quiet time in order to relax.

TASK 3:

HOW CAN COACHES TRAIN PLAYER'S MENTAL SKILLS DURING THE FOLLOWING TIME PERIODS?

Pre-Game

Warm-up

Start of game

Between quarters

Post-game

Practice

During off-time at a tournament



1. Application: Creating Awareness

How can players use their mental skills to improve their decision-making during odd man breaks?

2. Preparing Players to Play – The Holistic Warm-up

The warm-up must be progressive and must involve the physical, mental, technical and tactical components of preparation. Being in the zone is a holistic state and is initiated by keeping thoughts on the process until the behaviour becomes automatic.

The Warm-up

The following sequences pertain to the skills and game simulations only. It is not intended that coaches will ignore the stretching and the other parts of the warm-up.

Playing catch:

- Use the soft hands technique or any other body part where tension is felt, i.e. jaw, shoulders etc. At any time that tension enters a body part, stop the action and RESTART the relaxation sequence.
- Use all the joints in order to throw.
- Watch the ball into the stick when receiving.
- Generate all force from the core area.
- Gradually add force while focusing on accuracy.
- Control the breathing by exhaling as the pass is thrown.
- Introduce visualization by looking to where the defender would be and throw to the stick.

The rest of the warm-up:

- As the tempo and complexity increases players are to be alert to the presence of tension or unrelated thoughts. Follow the above techniques to keep focused and tension free.
- Break the pattern of the motion offense into its two-on-two and three-on-three segments and run through the game options at half speed. Then put them together, including the defence, to run the full pattern of the motion offence at first half speed and finish with full speed. As the players get their bodies ready to perform at speed, they are also intuitively increasing their concentration to complete the passes and to stay with their checks, and developing the timing and coordination of the pattern. The

familiarity, rhythm and repetition of the activity all blend to build the confidence that leads to relaxation and increased feel and therefore even greater confidence. The players become excited about starting the game rather than anxious about uncertain outcomes.

Starting the Game

The start of the competition is another time for uncertainty and anxiety to creep in. Start with what has been rehearsed, e.g the basic pattern of the motion offence. Running the simulation activity on the first few shifts of the game can reactivate the feeling, relaxation and confidence of the warm-up. Once again the thoughts of how to run the offence or to stay on ones check are the task related thoughts that will block out self-doubts or thoughts about outcomes.

On the Bench

Players should be thinking about what they will be doing on the next shift. This is the time to re-focus, keep the body parts soft and plan strategies. Keeping the mind on the task keeps it off of the outcome. This is the practise that players need to do in order to prepare themselves for critical games that have to be won, or for the critical parts of the game when goals have to be set up and scored.

Snap Shots:

1. You cannot visualize what you have not done. The better players know their plays and the more automatic their skills, the better will be their performance and the easier it will be for them to use their imagery. This means that not only should players practise their technical skills but also the mental ones right down to practising using the mental skills in warm-up and doing the visualization between shifts. The guide for coaches is: what players can't visualize is what they don't know, and therefore, will not be able to perform in a pressure situation. Have you ever wondered why players will regress to what they know best when under pressure?
2. Players must know the material – i.e. be well drilled and practise
– in order to see themselves playing a whole game without a mistake.



One of the key factors in the execution of mental skills is the way players focus their attention. This is an inherited characteristic that can be altered through training and is a part of the training to become a better coach or an elite player.

3. Players learn how to use their mental skills in their own way and on their own terms. Like athletic abilities, cognitive abilities are inherited, and players will see and feel how to do things in different ways and at different levels.
4. Once the skill has been used successfully under stress, the whole process will become easier the next time.

Individual Differences

The development of the skill to use self-talk and visualization should be done on an individual level. Each player will have their own problems and their own solutions. Once the players understand the mental routines of warm-up and cool-down, coaches or assistants must work with individuals to continue the development of the mental skills.

Attentional Control

Attentional Control is the ability to focus. It can mean focusing externally which, involves things in the environment and internally, which involves how we think about things. In both environments the focus of attention can be broad or narrow. As individuals, we can be very strong or weak in one category, weak, semi or very strong in all of them or a mix of the various combinations. The ideal is to have skills in all areas and be able to switch from one to the other as needed. There are pros and cons to every mix and it will be up to the coaches to first discover strengths and weaknesses in themselves as well as those of their players. The second step is to develop and expand abilities in the weaker areas.

Attentional Control is a hereditary factor that can be enhanced through training. It is attained by learning to concentrate and focus, which leads to the ability to centre and then to eventually being able to get into the “the zone”.

TASK 5:

One of the unique features of field lacrosse is the requirement that three players must remain in the offensive zone at all times and four players must remain in the defensive zone at all times. This means that, for example, an attack may be on the field watching for an extended period of time while the other team has the ball. What are the effects of this situation on the mental skills of players? How can mental skills better prepare players for these situations?"

Application:

For Coaches:

Internally:

Coaches should have a broad focus or vision to set goals and to plan the seasonal planner and then be able to focus in on writing the individual lesson plans and working out the needs of the individual player.

Externally:

It means coaches should be aware of what all players on all parts of the field are up to and yet be able to focus in on the needs of the individuals who are having problems. Coaches who can't do this tend to keep their players all together and do one drill at a time.

For Players:

Internally: Players should be broad enough to work with others and to plan team goals, and yet have the ability to focus in on their own needs and to spend time practising.

Externally: Players should be able to see the whole field, i.e. to see the open players, and then be able to narrow in to shoot or pass accurately.

Definitions**BROAD-EXTERNAL**

Strengths: Reads a complex environment well. Good "game sense".

Weakness: May react too quickly without thinking.
Has difficulty focusing on details.

NARROW-EXTERNAL

Strengths: Good concentration on one thing.

Weaknesses: May stick to the same response even though it is not working. May not see other players or read field situations.

BROAD-INTERNAL

Strengths: Good analytical ability. Organizes and sets goals.

Weaknesses: Can become overly theoretical, has trouble sticking to one thing. May not react quickly enough, often dwells on the previous play.
Has difficulty following through with the execution of the plan.

NARROW-INTERNAL

Strengths: Good concentration on one thing (e.g. a thought or idea such as a game plan).

Weaknesses: Fails to attend to and incorporate new information.
Has difficulty seeing the whole picture, understanding consequences and setting goals etc.



PHYSICAL PREPARATION

Module

6

Goals:

1. To provide coaches with the knowledge of how to design practices that will physically prepare players for the ever increasing demands of competition.
2. To refine player skills by improving coordination and balance.
3. To nutritionally prepare players for competition.

Objectives:

1. Coaches will be able to design practices that will develop the physical abilities of endurance of the cardiovascular system; endurance to maintain performance involving strength and speed; strength and speed; and flexibility.
2. Coaches will be able to refine player skills by improving coordination and balance by: analyzing skills; correcting coordination and balance problems; planning practices that will improve balance and coordination; and helping players use their mental skills when working on skill development and coordination problems.

Motivation can be enhanced by involving the players in setting goals, in planning how to achieve the objectives and in the development of skills.

LTAD and Physical Preparation

The Training to Train stage (Bantam and Midget) is based on the onset and end of the growth spurt, which are generally ages 11 to 15 for girls and 12 to 16 for boys. At this stage, they are ready to consolidate their lacrosse-specific skills and tactics. These youths may play to win and do their best, but they still need to focus more on skill training and physical development over competition. This approach is critical to the development of top performers and maintaining activity in the long-term, so parents should check with their national organization to ensure their child's program has the correct training-to-competition ratio (see Module 7).

- Make aerobic training a priority after the onset of PHV while maintaining or further developing levels of skill, speed, strength, and flexibility.
- Emphasize flexibility training given the rapid growth of bones, tendons, ligaments, and muscles.
- Consider the 2 windows of accelerated adaptation to strength training for females: the first occurs immediately after PHV and the second begins with the onset of menarche. For males, there is 1 window and it begins 12 to 18 months after PHV.



Note that both aerobic and strength trainability are dependent on the maturation levels of the athlete. For this reason, the timing of training emphasis differs depending on whether athletes are early, average, or late maturers.

The Learn to Train and Training to Train stages are the most important stages of athletic preparation. During these stages, we make or break an athlete!

Once the players understand the importance of maximum effort and recovery, and once they experience the benefits of being strong and fit, they will also understand what it takes to compete well.

Introduction:

The Training to Train Phase of Athlete Development must include a training component that will prepare players for the increased speed, intensity and endurance that will be demanded of them. Unfortunately, there isn't time within the schedule or even the field-time to organize separate training sessions. Therefore, to ensure that the players are adequately trained and prepared for competition, coaches can extend practice time through the use of off-field venues for warm-up and cool-down and must ensure that the practice activities will overload the muscles and cardio-vascular systems enough to stimulate a training effect plus be fun and challenging enough to motivate maximum effort.

Both these objectives can be met by teaching lacrosse as a running game, by making practices fun and challenging and by combining physical preparation with technical development to ensure that muscles are trained in the way they are used.

TASK 1:

Discuss how endurance affects performance, i.e. speed, strength, and the execution of technical and mental skills.

NOTE:

Strength endurance is the ability to repeat a strength activity many times.

The Physical Abilities

Endurance

Endurance is the physical ability to maintain whole body functions (cardiovascular endurance) or repeated muscle contractions involving strength and speed without a deterioration in effort, intensity or coordination. Endurance is trained through repetition of an intense activity until fatigue sets in, coupled with an appropriate amount of recovery time.

Strength

Strength is the amount of force that can be generated in a single contraction. Strength is achieved by activating the maximum number of muscle fibres and motor units required for a specific

activity and by increasing the size and number of the muscle cells used to produce energy. Strength at the Training to Train Phase of Development is trained through plyometrics and use of body and partner weight as the resistance.

Speed

Speed is determined by:

- how fast muscles can contract (inherited);
- technique and coordination; and
- the other abilities of strength, flexibility and endurance.

Speed is best trained at the beginning of the practice after warm-up and a good stretch of the muscle groups being trained.

Flexibility

Flexibility is the unrestricted range of motion about a joint.

Training the Physical Abilities

In the early stages of the Training to Train Phase of Player Development (or of the season), the emphasis is on technique, endurance and flexibility. Once players have learned what to do and can sustain a continuous effort, strength and speed can then be introduced. It is important to follow the principles of training at all times.

Principles of Training

- Training requires that the muscles be overloaded. They must work harder, longer or faster than what they are accustomed to in order to trigger the changes that will result in improved levels of fitness.
- To ensure that the stated physical ability is being trained, the recommended exercise time, intensity, total work time and recovery time must be followed.
- The recommended intensities, duration, resistance and recovery must be adjusted to match the abilities of the player. Personal training programs are recommended with players keeping their own performance records. However, motivation can be increased if players with similar abilities train as a group.
- Training is very specific, which means that the closer the training activity resembles performance in a game, the greater the training

TASK 2:

Discuss what effect strength has on performance and the execution of skills?

TASK 3:

Identify where maximum speed is required in lacrosse.

TASK 4:

How does the lack of flexibility affect the execution of skills and mobility e.g. running?

TASK 5:

What are the difficulties in training while practising? How can they be overcome?



effect. By adding the training variables to scrimmages, minor games and drills to overload the energy systems, players will be trained while they are practising the technical components of lacrosse.

Designing Training Programs

1. Select the physical ability that needs to be improved.
2. Decide which energy system is used to supply the energy.
3. Isolate the part of the game where the physical ability is used, and design an activity or a drill that can be used to train the physical ability along with the skills involved.
4. Adapt the activity to accommodate the energy system variables of exercise time, intensity and recovery time.
5. Add the number of reps and sets as dictated by the physical ability and age of the players.

Step 1. Select the physical ability

Guidelines for selecting abilities to train.

- Decide what part of the game needs improving
- Build an aerobic base first, ie. pre-season, to establish the cardiovascular system. (The aerobic system is then maintained and developed during the season using the Interval training method.)
- Match the importance of the physical ability with the time spent on training it.
e.g. Endurance is the most important factor in lacrosse at the training to train phase of development and therefore this factor should receive the most attention. Endurance is best trained using aerobic interval training methods.

Factors to consider when planning training programs.

- When training for speed and strength, endurance is also trained when the maximum number of sets are used.
- When training for speed and strength, flexibility is also trained because the momentum from the forces that are applied extends the range of motion around the joints.
- Flexibility training enhances all physical abilities because of the reduced resistance to movement and the increased blood flow that it allows.
- Select only one factor to train per practice.
e.g. Training for speed should be done at the beginning of a practice with the remainder of the practice run at half to three quarter speed to allow recovery of the energy systems trained.

Step 2. Select the energy system needed to train the physical ability

To increase speed, strength and endurance focus on training the systems that supply the energy. As a result the central nervous system and psychomotor pathways will also adapt to the new demands.

Definitions				
Energy System	Performance Factor trained	Description	Variables	When trained
Anaerobic Alactic Training increases the times this system can be engaged.	Speed, Strength	Maximum force or speed applied in a single rep., or repeated reps lasting not longer than 8 to 10 sec. Energy is stored in the muscle cells.	Exercise Time: Up to 10 sec. Intensity: 90% to 100% of maximum Recover Time: 8 – 15 x the exercise time	In-season for players learning how to compete. At this stage of development, the focus is on the endurance of these factors.
Anaerobic Lactic Training increases the intensity and the length of time this energy can last.	Speed / Strength Endurance Power = speed x strength	Maximum effort lasting up to 2 min. Produces Lactic Acid	Exercise Time: 10 sec.- 60 sec Intensity: 75% - 80% of max. for 10 to 30 sec. Lower for longer periods of time Recover Time: 6 - 12 x exercise time	Pre-season and into the season. Maintained to the end.
Aerobic Training increases the intensity at which this energy can be applied.	Endurance Cardiovascular Muscular	CO ₂ , water and heat are byproducts.	Heart Rate is kept at 150 to 160 BPM for 12 to 15 minutes. Or Interval Training where: moderately high intensity & 1:1 rest/pause ration is used for any exercise time.	Pre-season (low intensity) In-season for high intensity use of the aerobic system.

NOTE:

To prepare players to play lacrosse as a running game, and where obesity is a concern, focus on the interval training of the aerobic energy system. (The offence/defence style of play that junior/senior teams are now using focuses attention on fast and frequent line changes, which frequently promotes the use of the 10 second anaerobic alactic system. As a result, training is moving away from the fat burning, oxygen delivering aerobic system, which is the one used when running is part of the play and not just on and off the field.)



Step 3 and 4: Select the activity and apply the variables

Physical Ability:

NOTE:
The intensity levels must always be as hard as the players can go without moving up or down into one of the other energy systems.

Description of Activity	Variables
	Intensity: Exercise time/ rep: Pause between reps:

Step 5: Add the number of reps and sets (Use the guide below)

Reps/Set:

No. of Sets:

The number of reps and sets will vary according to the fitness level and age of the players.

When starting with younger or less fit players start with fewer reps and sets and allow extra time for recovery. As the players get more fit, increase the reps to the maximum that is recommended, decrease the recovery time to what is required by the energy system, and then increase the number of sets.

The Seasonal Planner:

The seasonal planner should show a weekly increase in the load (intensity, resistance, repetitions, sets or reduction of recovery time) until the end of the season is reached where the training is tapered (reduced) to allow two weeks for the body to recover and to store energy for play-offs.

Reps and Sets

<p>Anaerobic Alactic Energy System</p> <p>Use 4 to 7 seconds. per repetition.</p> <p>Note: The amount and intensity of the work load and recovery time are regulated so the players can perform as close to maximum effort as possible. Once the players fatigue, stop the training or make an adjustment to one of the variables.</p>	<p>No. of Reps. 6 to 10</p> <p>Pause between reps: 8 to 15 times the exercise time</p> <p>Sets: Up to 3 sets</p> <p>Pause between sets: 3 minutes</p> <p>Total work time: <i>2 to 3 minutes</i></p>
<p>Anaerobic Lactic Energy System</p> <p>Use 30 sec. to 90 sec. for the exercise time. The exercise and work times are determined by the abilities of the players. When the players start to fatigue then the lower intensity energy system will kick in and change the focus of the training session.</p>	<p>No. of Repetitions: 3 to 10</p> <p>Pause between reps: 6 to 8 times the exercise time</p> <p>Sets: Up to 3 sets</p> <p>Pause between sets: Up to 5 to 10 min.</p> <p>Total work time: <i>4 to 6 minutes</i></p>
<p>Aerobic energy System (Interval Training)</p> <p>The aerobic system can be used to mirror the exercise time of the other two energy systems. The idea being that if maximum effort is not required in either of these systems, the aerobic system will take over at a fairly high rate of delivery.</p>	<p>No. of Repetitions: 6 to 12</p> <p>Pause between reps: 1 to 2 times the exercise time</p> <p>Sets: This training can eventually be used for half the practice.</p> <p>Pause between sets: 5 minutes</p> <p>Total work time: <i>Up to 30 minutes</i></p>



Training for Aerobic Endurance

Adequate aerobic conditioning is important in lacrosse, as it is a running game. Athletes need to be in peak physical condition in time for competition and to maximize the physiological adaptations that are derived from aerobic endurance training.

During the off-season it is important for athletes to develop a base of cardiorespiratory fitness. This can most effectively be completed by long-duration and low-intensity workouts, most commonly by running. During the preseason workouts should focus on increasing training intensity, maintaining or reducing training duration, and incorporating all types of training into the program.

There are a variety of ways to train for aerobic endurance.

1. Long, slow distance
Training sessions at approximately 80% of age-predicted maximum heart rate (220-age), for at least 30 minutes duration
2. Pace/Tempo
Aerobic/anaerobic interval training.
Can be steady (continuous training for 20-30 minutes at competition pace) or intermittent (competition pace but consisting of shorter intervals with rest breaks)
3. Interval
Working at 85-90% max heart rate for 3-5 minutes work intervals, with equal rest intervals.
1:1 work:rest intervals.
4. Repetition
Working at 90-100% max heart rate for 30-90 seconds with 5x rest interval.
1:5 work:rest intervals.
5. Fartlek
Combination of all training types.

Training for Speed & Agility

Speed is the ability to achieve a high velocity. Agility is the ability to explosively brake, change direction and accelerate again. Speed-strength is force developed rapidly or at high velocities. Speed training involves an interaction between stride frequency (leg turnover rate) and stride length. Stride rate is generally believed to be more trainable.

Sprint-type training has greatest effects on the anaerobic alactic energy system. Training should be conducted after warm-up but before fatiguing exercises in order to conserve the energy system. Training will involve brief work bouts and frequent rest periods of minimum 2-3 minutes to in order to maximize power availability during successive repetitions and sets. Intense intermittent training is generally superior to submaximal distance or duration methods in developing the metabolic power and capacity needed in high-intensity sport.

Assisted and resisted sprinting can be used to develop speed and agility. Assisted sprinting uses methods to artificially increase speed as a way to improve stride frequency. Gravity-assisted sprinting such as downhill sprinting is an example, or high-speed towing using a harness and stretch cord is another example. When performing assisted sprinting, arm and foot turnover rate, having the foot plant directly underneath the hips, and aggressively exploding through the movement need to be emphasized.

Resisted sprinting uses resistance to improve speed-strength and stride length. Running uphill, up stairs, or with a harness, parachute or sled are examples of resisted sprinting. Explosive arm and knee punching action and explosive leg drive off the ground should be emphasized when performing resisted sprinting to gain the desired training effects.

Agility will be improved when the component parts of agility (balance, speed, strength, and coordination) are improved and by practicing the movements in training. Agility training includes the use of agility ladders, or using players sticks lined up like a ladder. Following are a few examples of agility ladder exercises:

- Run through the ladder placing one foot in the middle of each square; Emphasize arm swing, powerful high knee drive with the toes dorsiflexed and quick ground contact
- Run through the ladder touching both feet in each square. Emphasize arm swing, powerful high knee drive with the toes dorsiflexed and quick ground contact.
- Begin by standing sideways to the ladder
Moving in a lateral fashion to the right, step into the first square with the right foot. Step in with the left foot; step back out with the right foot; step back out with the left foot. Repeat sequence all the way along the ladder.



Training for Strength

Training to increase strength is most effectively done through resistance (weight) training and plyometrics. Incorporating resistance training exercises that mimic the movement patterns of the sport increases the likelihood that the muscles involved in the sport will be recruited. From pre-season to in-season, the training program should progress from general to sport specific. An appropriate weight training program should be put together by a qualified strength and conditioning professional who is familiar with lacrosse.

Plyometric exercise refers to activities that enable a muscle to reach maximal force in the shortest time possible. It involves a quick, powerful movement using a pre-stretch or counter movement.

Due to the high intensity of plyometric training, there is a risk of injury. It is important the athlete have a sufficient base of strength, speed, and balance before beginning a plyometric training program. They must be sufficiently mature both physically and physiologically and be able to take instruction well. Research has yet to determine the age at which one is physically able to participate, but prepubescent children should not participate in depth-jumps or other high intensity lower body plyometrics. Proper technique must be demonstrated, and performance of exercises needs to be monitored. In addition, landing surfaces should have adequate shock-absorbing properties, for example a grass field or rubber mat.

There are 3 main modes of plyometric training:

1. Lower Body
Used to improve horizontal, vertical and lateral movements. Includes jumps in place, multiple hops, bounds, box drills, and depth jumps.
2. Upper Body
Includes medicine ball throws/catches, and several types of push-ups.
3. Trunk
Movements need to be shorter and quicker to elicit the plyometric response.

As the intensity of plyometric exercises increase, the volume or number of repetitions and sets should decrease. 1 to 3 training sessions per week is appropriate and dependent on the level of conditioning. It is important to make sure there is 48-72 hours recovery between training sessions. Because plyometrics involve maximum efforts to improve anaerobic power, complete recovery is important.

<p>LOW INTENSITY (Beginner)</p>	<p>MEDIUM INTENSITY (Intermediate)</p>	<p>HIGH INTENSITY (Advanced)</p>
<p>Squat Jump Assume squat position, interlock fingers behind head; explosively jump up to a maximum height; Land in squat position & immediately repeat the jump.</p>	<p>Double-Leg Tuck Jump Assume a comfortable upright stance; explosively jump up using arm momentum; pull the knees to the chest, grasp knees with both hands & release before landing; land in starting position & immediately repeat jump.</p>	<p>Pike Jump Assume a comfortable upright stance; explosively jump up using arm momentum; keeping legs straight & together try to lift them to the front & try to touch toes with hands; land in starting position & immediately repeat jump.</p>
	<p>Double-Leg Hop Assume comfortable upright stance; with double arm swing, jump as far forward as possible; land in beginning position & immediately repeat the hop.</p>	<p>Single-Leg Hop Assume comfortable upright stance on 1 foot; explosively jump forward using both arms to assist; land in starting position & immediately repeat hop using the same leg. Repeat sequence with opposite leg.</p>
<p>Skipping Begin with 1 leg lifted to approx 90 degrees; as 1 leg is lifted the opposite arm is lifted; jump up & forward on 1 leg; land in the starting position on other leg. Immediately repeat the skip.</p>	<p>Single –arm alternate leg bound Jog at comfortable pace; begin with the left foot forward. Push off with the left foot as it contacts the ground. During push off bring right leg forward by flexing the thigh to a position parallel with the ground. Land on right leg & immediately repeat sequence. Goal is to cover as much distance as possible.</p>	
	<p>Push-Up with Clap Lie in push-up position; lower chest to ground; on up phase explosively push body into the air & clap hands in front of chest before returning to ground; with hands on ground repeat movement.</p>	<p>Incline push up depth jump Two mats, three to four inches high, placed shoulder width apart; A box high enough to elevate your feet above your shoulders when in a pushup position; Face the ground as if you were going to do a push-up, with your feet on the box and your hands between the mats; Push off from the ground with your hands and land with one hand on each mat; Push off the mats with both hands and catch yourself in the starting position. Keep the catch time to the shortest time possible.</p>



Flexibility

Flexibility is the range of motion available in a joint or group of joints.

Flexibility is important for:

- the execution of skills;
Tight muscles restrict movement and will prevent full wind-up and follow-through, which will effect speed, accuracy, coordination or balance.
- decreasing the potential for injury;
Stretching increases the elasticity of the muscles, and therefore when external forces are applied, instead of tearing or stressing the tendons and attachment sites the muscles stretch.
- reducing post-exercise soreness and stiffness, and speeding up recovery;
Muscles tend to shorten and tighten after vigorous exercise. Stretching the muscles increases blood flow, which speeds up the removal of lactic acid and promotes the healing of micro injuries caused by exercise.

Training:

- Training for flexibility is different than using stretching to prepare players for activity. Flexibility training is best done in the preseason. (For players with flexibility problems off-season training with a specialist should be considered.)
- General Stretching Technique
- Start all stretches with:
 - a light warm-up involving continuous, dynamic efforts (e.g.: light running for 5 minutes).
 - an easy stretch and then extend until a mild tension is felt.
- The exercises are performed without the help of a partner, The muscle or muscle group must be stretched in a controlled and gradual manner, without any interruption of the movement and until a slight tension is felt. Any fast contraction or forced extension of the joint will trigger the body's reflex to contract the muscle.
- Take a deep breath and then exhale during the stretch, (this helps relax the muscle and allows for a full stretch).
- Stretch the muscles on both sides of the body and/or joint.

Active Stretching for Warm-up

- Warm up by starting with easy jogging, passing & catching, etc., and progress to steady run. Approximately 6-8 minutes.
- Recent research has shown static stretching can be detrimental to muscle performance; therefore dynamic stretching is more appropriate for warm-up. Static stretching should still be performed after exercise.
- Stretches can be performed by moving from goal line to restraining line.

TASK 6:
Using the guidelines above, plan a stretching program you would use for your team warm-up.

Sample Dynamic Stretches

Lunges with Twist

Purpose:

- Warms up – hip flexors, quads, low back/ core, general warm up

Technique:

- With stick on shoulders, athletes perform slow lunges and twist upper body towards front leg.

Prescription:

Perform as many lunges as possible to 1/2 way distance between crease line and restraining line (~10yards), then light jog to restraining line.

Walking on Heels/Walking on Toes

Purpose:

- Warms up – ankles, calves, shins

Technique:

- Walking with normal stride length but keeping toes off the ground – walking only on heels.
- Walking with normal stride length but keeping heels off the ground – walking only on toes.

Prescription:

- Perform to 1/2 way distance between crease and restraining line then switch to walking on toes only, until restraining line.

High Knees

Purpose:

- Warms up – hip extensors, glutes, hamstrings

Technique:

- With each walking stride lift knee as high as possible towards the chest.

Prescription:

Perform at slow walking speed to 1/2 way distance between crease and restraining line, then full speed/jog speed to restraining line.



Straight-Leg Raises

Purpose:

- Warms up – hip extensors, glutes, hamstrings

Technique:

- At walking speed; hands overhead holding stick, with each step raise leg in front of body, keeping leg straight. Bring arms down with each step and try to touch toes of straight leg with shaft of stick.

Prescription:

- Perform at walking speed to 1/2 way distance between crease and restraining line, then jog to restraining line.

Airplanes (advanced)

Purpose:

- Warms up – hamstrings, calves, torso/core, good for improving balance and ankle proprioception.

Technique:

- Taking larger than normal step forward, sweep opposite arm towards foot and raise alternate arm and leg.

Prescription:

- Perform for the distance 1/2 way between crease and restraining line, then jog to restraining line.



Butt Kicks

Purpose:

- Warms up – hip flexors, quads

Technique:

- Light jog but bringing heels to butt.

Prescription:

Perform for the distance from crease to restraining line.

Alternating Side Squats

Purpose:

- Warms up – groin, inner thigh, hamstrings, glutes

Technique:

- Begin by facing one end of the field. Step out with foot to a squat position, hold, bring feet back together. Turn 180 degrees to face other end of the field and repeat.

Prescription:

- Perform to 1/2 way distance between crease and restraining line, then jog to restraining line.

Sprints

Purpose:

- Prepare the body for high speed running.

Technique:

- Sprint the distance from restraining line to crease.

Prescription:

Repeat 2 times.

- Continue the warm-up with progressive activity that moves the players to game speeds.
- Execute the main game skills by exaggerating the full range of motion for each skill.
- Continue the dynamic stretching in the game simulated activities by extending the range of motion. I.e. sprinting with high knees, shooting with full wind-up and follow-through.

Passive Stretching (Cool-down and flexibility training sessions)

- Static stretching involves moving into a stretched position and holding that position for a period of time with no movement.
- Static stretching is used for cool down and for flexibility training. It helps to reduce delayed onset muscle soreness, improve range of motion in the joint being stretched, and returns the muscle to normal resting lengths.
- Hold the stretches for a minimum of 30 seconds to give the muscles time to overcome the stretch reflex.
- Stretches should be done on the ground or by supporting the body part being stretched to decrease body tension and allow for extend stretches.
- For flexibility training, do the stretches a second time to extend the stretch.
- Stretch the main muscle groups worked particularly those of the legs, torso, and shoulders. However, if a particular muscle group is going to be used in a practice make sure these muscles are stretched during the cool-down.
- To relieve the boredom during the long slow stretches, use the time to discuss the practice/game just played or to be played, seasonal plans or goals, team plans, etc.



Motor Abilities

Coordination and balance involve the psychomotor pathways that are programmed during hours of repetition and playing. They are the part of learning that happens at the subconscious level in response to practising; and function most efficiently at the automatic level. They are the part of training that involves habits and motor memory, which is the reason for expressions like “you play as you practice” and for focusing on sound fundamentals.

Coordination improves as players learn to pass and shoot more accurately and as they learn to play with greater intensity and speed. Coaches can speed the learning up by sharing the learning process with their players and by giving the players time to develop their coordination in stages from drills to games.

Balance is developed as players learn how to handle the forces of increased speed and intensity. After the mechanics of balance are demonstrated and practiced in drills, players need to be in controlled game simulations that will give enough repetitions for learning and strength.

Coordination

Coordination:
A sequence of movements that are performed in a given order.

- Movement – Muscles are paired so they can produce movement in two directions, flexion and extension, e.g. when the biceps contract to flex the arm, the triceps must relax and when the triceps contracts to extend the arm, the biceps must relax. Any contraction or tension in the opposite muscles, called the antagonistic muscles, will interfere with movement and thus interfere with coordination, accuracy and power.

Therefore, the development of coordination involves the training of the muscles to contract and relax at the right time. Efficiency of movement occurs only when those muscles that are required to produce the desired movement are activated.

- Example: When beginners throw or cradle the ball for the first time they have no idea what is going to happen. They have no feel of when and where to apply force and muscles contract out of order or all at once which makes the ball difficult to control. Learning how to cradle is actually learning how to stay relaxed by using only those muscles that are needed.
- Joints in Order – Coordination also involves the use of joints or body segments in their correct order, and when maximum force is required, all the joints that can possibly be used must be part of the chain.

Application

Coordination is developed whenever players work on refining their skills or make an effort to reach the next level of play. At the Training to Train Phase of Development, the coach's task will be to help players practice their skills in progressions of coordinated movements and to break through the mental barriers that block or impede the process. The visualization that players have been encouraged to use will now become an important tool in programming coordinated movements.

Planning Practices that will Develop Coordination

Gather the information:

1. Decide which skills are fundamentally weak, or for advanced players, which skills break down under pressure.
2. Isolate the problem area.

Plan the Practice

1. Ensure all players are using all five phases of the skill and teach the parts that are missing.
2. Add the force producing movements by using:
 - all the joints that can possibly be used; and
 - the joints in their correct order;
3. Increase the speed or force to game levels and observe each player to ensure they are executing all phases of the skill.
4. Use chaining or shaping to plan drills for teaching the missing links.

NOTE:

The problem most players have is in not preparing properly or in the loss of coordination when applying force.

CHAINING VS SHAPING

There are two different ways of teaching skills. Chaining views the whole sequence of a skill as a chain of events in which players use their joints in the proper order. Shaping, also called the whole-part-whole method, teaches skills by focusing on one part of the skill until the whole skill can be performed."



Run the Practice

It is critical that coaches and players attend to what happens when new coordinated movements are attempted in drills, scrimmages and games. When new patterns are being formed:

- The movements must be accurate and consistent to reinforce the muscle memory. Any incorrect repetition will undo previous attempts.
- The repetitions must be performed at a slow enough rate to ensure that each repeated action is identical to the desired coordinated movement.
- The number of repetitions required to program muscle memory depends on how difficult the player finds the task.
- As the players begin to feel how to move the body parts in a coordinated fashion, they can speed up the movement. The feel is the imagery and the feed back from the muscle memory working together to make the whole process automatic.

Evaluate the Performance

The evaluation of the performance is the information the coach uses to design the next practice. Coaches and players are to take note of:

- when the skill breaks down, i.e. when does the player lose coordination;
- what causes the skill to break down;
- how the drill or activity needs to be changed to make it more or less complex depending on the degree of success;
- what parts of the skill have and have not been mastered, i.e. which parts of the skill need to be isolated; and
- how imagery can be used to bring up the feel.

This process is repeated until the players can visualize the full coordinated movement.

Choose a Skill: _____

1. Execute the skill using all five phases

Demonstrate the five phases of the skill (Module 4 of the Community Coach Development Manual)

- Preliminary Movements
- Preparation Movements
- Force Producing Movements
- Critical Instant
- Follow-through

2. Apply the biomechanical principles of movement to the skill

1. Stability (The Preliminary Movements)

2. Use all the joints possible.

3. Use the joints in order.



Preliminary Movements and force producing movements

With a partner, demonstrate and then list, in their correct order, all the joints that can possibly be used to execute the skill.

Teaching Points

When working with players:

- Start slowly with simulated movements and visualization.
- Use chaining to start with the first joint and then focus on each joint as it comes into play. (Teaching players how to use their joints in the order that they are used is called chaining.)
- Once the players can execute the parts of the skill in their correct order then speed up the movement.
- Execute the skill using as little force as possible. Any time the player feels tension, use one of the relaxation techniques and start over.
- If there is one part of the skill that a player doesn't understand then practice this part only until the whole skill can be performed (this is called shaping).

TASK 7:
To plan a progression for teaching the coordinated movements of a skill. i.e. the information players need before they can start learning.



TASK 8:
Plan the activities that will make the coordinated movements automatic.

COACHING TIP:
Start the players at a slow enough pace so that they can consciously perform the skill as they have practised. When the play speeds up and the players forget, stop the play and have the player or players repeat the action until they regain their coordinated form.

A big part of training to train is learning how to keep the body free of tension while under the duress of competition.

Once players understand how to do the skill using the conscious mind, the coordinated movement patterns must then be programmed into the subconscious. This is achieved by guiding players through a number of learning activities that progress from simple to complex.

For example:

- Drills: Name or describe a drill players can use to develop the coordinated movements of the skill.
- Minor games of 2-on-2 and 3-on-3: List the rules of a minor game that will focus attention on the proper execution of the skill.
- Half-field scrimmage and then full-field scrimmage. Scrimmages offer distractions that will cause players to resort to old habits rather than the new coordinated movements just learned.
- League games: Games are where coaches and players test and evaluate the learning of the coordinated movements. It is important to take note of skills or parts of skill that happen automatically and those that don't. The failures become the focus of the next practice.

Factors that Interfere with Coordination

Coordination is the result of the interaction between muscles, nerves and an internal feedback loop. Keeping these pathways open is necessary for the continuous coordination that becomes a constant struggle for athletes learning how to compete or to win. The pressure of needing to play harder, faster or more accurately creates tension that blocks or interferes with the signals traveling back and forth along the neuromuscular pathways and therefore causing a breakdown in coordination.

There will be much more written on this subject at the next level. At this point coaches will need to understand the factors that interfere with coordination and know how to prevent or deal with them.

Overcoming the factors that interfere with coordination

The factors that interfere with coordination are:

- using the joints in the wrong order;
- applying force through the body parts instead of the core;
- mentally blocking the pathway with unrelated thoughts arising from fear, thinking about outcomes, anxiety, lack of confidence, poor concentration, etc.

To overcome the factors that interfere with coordination:

- use the joints in the correct order;
Whenever players lose the feel of using the joints in the correct order, repeat the above teaching sequences.
- apply force through the core instead of the body parts;
To promote the feel of applying force using the muscles of the body core:
 - Prepare the players by using the soft hands or spaghetti arm warm-up. Anytime that tension is created in the body part e.g. just picking up the stick, enough tension will be created to interfere with coordination
 - Apply resistance to the force producing movement of the skill. When the players strain to overcome the resistance they are forced to engage the core muscles.
 - Strengthening the core muscles will promote the feel for using the core in the execution of skills as well as to improve stability and balance.
 - Tighten the core muscles as force is applied, i.e. the exhaling while shooting and the grunt in tennis forces players to tighten the core. The exhaling also promotes relaxation.
 - Use a progression of slowly increasing the force or speed of the skill until the players start using the upper or lower body instead of the core.
 - Start over in any teaching sequence whenever:
 - the force starts coming from the arms, and
 - the feeling of using the joints in order disappears.
- Mentally opening the pathway using the mental skills:
 - Train the players to use their mental training skills to eventually stay relaxed and centred and to control inner thoughts to maintain coordination when performing technical skills. It only takes one stray thought to cause coordination to break down. Being able to maintain coordination under stress and in competitive environments leads to what is known as “being in the zone”.
 - To teach players how to train, players must be exposed to a variety of conditions that will increase the pressure to stay coordinated.



Balance

Balance, like coordination, is in a constant state of development from when infants learn to sit and then walk, through the childhood years of playing and into the teens where balance is further developed through advanced activities like biking, skating, boarding and playing lacrosse etc.

The development of balance is dependent upon strength, coordination and the maturity of the central nervous system, which means that readiness is one of the controlling factors.

The conscious and subconscious interaction between the muscles, (tendons, joints and ligaments) and the central nervous system is called proprioception. Proprioceptors are sites located along the neuromuscular pathway where their job is to give feedback about the location of body parts in relation to each other and to their range of motion. They play an important role in providing the feedback the body needs in coordinating movement and maintaining balance. Training must relate to the growth and development needs of the player:

9-12 year-olds:

Fitness training is incorporated into the playing of minor games rather than fitness drills. Technique and coordination training should be the focus of attention as this is the prime age for developing reflexes, mobility, coordination and balance.

13-16 year-olds:

Puberty and individual differences are the key factors for this age group. Changing body proportions will create the challenges for proprioception and strength development and therefore the quality of performance should not be emphasized during rapid growth stages. However, during growth plateaus and at the end of the growth period, strength and balance need to be built up and greater emphasis is to be placed on fitness programs.

Application

Coaches can reduce stability by narrowing the base of support by having the players:

- balance on one foot, hop, pass and catch while standing on one foot;
- do stretching exercises that requires one foot or a narrow base;
- lunge walk or run;
- balance on an exercise ball or balance board; and
- execute exercises or skills while on a balance board.

Balance training occurs whenever the players are challenged to stay balanced when their stability has been compromised.

Training

Balance requires strength, flexibility and coordination, and in fact balance is the coordinated recruitment of muscles, which need to be strengthened to support the body whenever the base is narrowed.

For example:

- ankles and legs to move and support the body, and to maintain balance against other players;
- the stabilizer muscles in the core and spine to support balance;
- flexibility in hips and shoulders to support balance when the centre of gravity is moved outside the base.

Players can train for strength, coordination and flexibility by:

- Reducing their base of support or by holding balancing positions and stretches for extended periods of time such as is done in:
 - yoga;
 - pilates; and
 - tai chi.
- Using the core strengthening exercises particularly those using balance boards or balls and by performing exercises and skills on one foot.
- Executing skills in fundamentally sound ways. For example, when players are allowed to take short-cuts in the execution of skills they miss the opportunity to develop the strength, balance and coordination required to execute those skills. For example:
 - Trying to stick-check instead of learning how to gain and maintain good defensive position.
 - Checking from behind or even from the side instead of getting between the player and the goal.



- Running through a player instead of learning the numerous dodges and rolls.
- Using the strongest players as the offensive weapons instead of a motion offence.

TASK 9:

Plan practice activities that can be used for developing balance and strength. For each exercise, record the distance and/or time plus the number of repetitions.

SUMMARY

The extra effort and motion, the starts and stops and basically playing lacrosse as a running game push the players to speeds and angles where balance, strength, flexibility and coordination are challenged and therefore developed.

The single most important factor in promoting coordination is to use the core to not only apply force but to initiate all movement in the execution of a skill. Why?

- Using the core to initiate movement leads players to intuitively engage all their joints in a coordinated fashion.
- Focusing or centreing on the core also engages the nervous system and the neuromuscular pathway and tends to block out the interfering thoughts.
- Players who have learned to use the core to centre and to stay coordinated can execute their skills powerfully and effortlessly under the most difficult conditions.
- Training for balance also develops coordination and strength.

NOTE:

Use the teaching progressions in this module when players have difficulties learning team plays and learning how to execute plays under pressure.

Nutrition Tips

Eating Habits

Poor eating habits can result in:

- unjustified fatigue, frustration, anger, irritability;
- uncharacteristic performance; a slump or failure to maintain or achieve expected standards of play;
- inability to concentrate, learn or understand; and
- a decrease in enthusiasm, morale, endurance and efficiency.

What to Pack

It is common that men's field lacrosse players play more than one game per day on a competition day (i.e. a tournament), so it's very important for players to keep up and replenish their energy levels over a period of 8 hours or longer. Recommended foods may not be available at the competition site, so athletes should pack nutrition as part of their equipment. Make use of the nearby grocery store to stock up, if necessary, on nutritious snacks without spending too much money.

- Portion packs of juice
- Fruit (fresh or dried)
- Fruit yogurt
- Cheese and crackers
- Muffins and quickbreads
- Bagels
- Pudding
- Fig newtons, arrowroot biscuits
- Small boxes of cereal
- Water

NUTRITION TIPS

"A proper diet can't make an average athlete elite, but a poor diet can make an elite athlete average".

Costill. 1983

COACHING TIP:

Encourage players to stick to their packed lunch in between games. Save the trip to McDonald's until the end of the day. But remember, even when the games are over, players can still make healthy choices when eating "fast" food.



Water

It is a general rule of thumb to drink 8 to 10 oz glasses of water a day. Obviously this amount increases for active individuals. The body's need for water increases during periods of heightened activity or in a hot environment. It is important to remember that proper hydration should be maintained before, during and after any period of physical exertion.

Water is still the best option.

Here are some tips to help you get the most out of your workout:

- Two hours prior to exercising, drink at least two 8oz (~500ml) glasses of water,
- One hour later, drink at least one 8oz (~250ml) glass,
- Bring water along with you; when training drink at least 8oz of water every 15-20 minutes or 500ml every 30 minutes.
- After activity drink at least two more 8oz glasses of water.
- The sensation of thirst lags behind the need for water replacement, so if you're thirsty you're already dehydrated! If you're not thirsty and you've been working hard, then you're really dehydrated!

Replacement of water is critical. Water loss as little as 2% of body weight can negatively impact performance, cause inadequate thermal regulation that could result in heat exhaustion or heat stroke. Larger water losses can have serious, life-threatening effects. Always have water at practices and have even more on hand when it is hot. Encourage participants to drink, and watch for signs of dehydration.

Signs of Dehydration

Mild to Moderate

- Dry mouth
- No tears when crying
- Inactivity or lethargy

Severe

- Very dry mouth
- Fast and weak pulse
- Dry and wrinkled skin
- Disorientation
- Fussy behavior

- Muscle cramps
- Sleepiness
- Deep, rapid breathing
- Sunken eyes
- No urination for several hours
- Cool and blotchy hands and feet

During prolonged exercise lasting longer than 90 minutes, during exercises session in the heat, and perhaps during repeated bouts of anaerobic exercises a sports drink, such as Gatorade or Poweraide, may be appropriate. These drinks contain carbohydrates and electrolytes which may minimize disturbances in temperature regulation and cardiovascular function better than water alone. It is recommended that these drinks be diluted by half with water prior to consumption. Sports drinks may also be appropriate after an exercise session to aid in the replenishment of carbohydrate stores.



Pre-competition and between event nutrition

Choosing the right foods and eating them at the right time are the keys to pre-competition and between event nutrition. Presented below are some pointers on this topic and the next page presents some sample menus.

What is the Aim?	Why?	How?
An empty stomach and gastrointestinal tract, but enough fuel for the muscles and enough food to prevent hunger.	<p>So that blood will go to the working muscles, not the digestive organs (which can cramp if food is present).</p> <p>Because muscles rely primarily on fuel stored from meals eaten in the days before competition. Food eaten on the day of the event fuels the brain and keeps the muscles topped up when the competition is long or intermittent.</p>	<p>Timing food intake and the type of food eaten. Eat lean and eat lighter the closer the event is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fats take 5 to 9 hours to leave the gastrointestinal tract • Proteins leave the gastrointestinal tract in 3 to 4 hours. • Carbohydrates take 1 to 3 hours to leave the gastrointestinal tract. • Liquids usually leave the gastrointestinal tract faster than solids.
A settled stomach and a confident athlete.	So that to pre-competition nerves don't upset the stomach and so that the athlete benefits from the psychological influence of familiar foods and those he or she has confidence in.	Encouraging athletes to learn which foods affect them adversely, which foods are easily tolerated. Discourage athletes from trying new foods on competition day.
A well-hydrated, comfortable athlete.	<p>Because salty, sugary or high fibre foods can attract water to the gastrointestinal tract and cause bloating, heaviness and dehydration.</p> <p>Because caffeine and alcohol promote water loss (are diuretics).</p>	Encouraging athletes to avoid sugary drinks, high sugar and salty foods and snacks, high fibre foods (apples, bran, granola, etc.) and alcohol. Tea and coffee are permitted in moderation.

Sample pre-competition and between event menu

Timing/Meal	Description
<p>1 hour before the competition/event Plain or fruit yogurt milk and a edium banana Instant breakfast/milk</p>	<p>High carbohydrate Low fat, little protein Low fibre, primarily liquid</p>
<p>2 hours before the competition/event Cereal, banana and milk Plain muffin and fruit juice Toast with jam and milk</p>	<p>High carbohydrate Low fat, little protein</p>
<p>3 hours before the competition/event Sandwich Lean meat, fish, poultry or egg Milk, fruit</p> <p>2-3 ounces lean meat, not fried 1 medium potato or rice or pasta Fruit and milk</p> <p>Large bowl cereal Fruit, yogurt Toast, fruit</p>	<p>High carbohydrate Moderate fat, more protein</p>



PLANNING**Module****7**

Goal: To train coaches how to design and develop a seasonal planner which takes into account the length of the season, all the necessary technical, physical and mental preparation required by the athletes and the team.

To train coaches how to interact with coaching staffs.

Objectives: Coaches will be able to design practices that follow and correspond with the seasonal planner which will:

- divide the season into the correct phases of training e.g. pre-season, in-season and play downs;
- indicate the correct phase for each part of the physical and mental training;
- points out all important dates and deadlines which can impact the athletes and the team.
- develop a team philosophy and job descriptions for all coaches.

Introduction:

The training to train phase of athlete development must include a coaching tool which enables the coach to plan for the complete season. The tool must be such that it indicates to the coach when and how each physical and mental aspect of training will be conducted. This will enable the coach to take each practice and fit it into the overall seasonal plan.

This planner takes into account when and what systems need to be trained. The coach can then alter the training after pre-set evaluation sessions and in that way be assured that every athlete was offered an opportunity to reach his or her maximum potential.

The planner will also indicate to the coaching staff all the import dates and deadlines to ensure that the team and its athletes meet all necessary commitments for a successful season.

The coach must take into account all the interaction required to have a cohesive and productive coaching staff.



The Importance of Assistant Coaches

As the level of competition increases, there is a need for assistance to successfully run a field lacrosse team. Aside from the administrative duties that go with coaching, the game has many facets that demand an equal amount of attention.

The delegation of these duties allows the head coach to oversee all operations of his/her team and make adjustments when needed. If more coaches are needed in order for the team to work productively then add them as needed.

TASK 1:

What are the advantages and disadvantages of using current (or recent former) players as assistant coaches?

On a full roster of 23 players, a coach:

- provides information to at least four positions
- makes correct line changes with the correct personnel;
- has responsibilities for extra man offence (EMO) and man down defense (MDD); and
- makes general observations to help adjust a game plan or to make improvements at the next practice.

With all of these duties for one person to perform, you could miss huge portions of the game. Below is a sample list of assistant coaching titles and responsibilities:

Offensive Coordinator

- calls all offensive plays or sets;
- responsible for extra man offense (EMO); and
- responsible for all offensive personnel.

Defensive Coordinator

- runs defensive system(s);
- responsible for man down defense (MDD);
- responsible for all defensive personnel; and
- responsible for line changes in transition (offence to defense and defense to defence).

When a coaching staff exceeds a total of four people, there is a greater chance of confusion with communication as well as some coaches coaching outside their role which can create animosity between staff members.

TASK 2:

What are the possible sources of conflict between assistant coaches? What steps can be taken to avoid coaching conflicts to ensure that the coaching staff operates cohesively and productively?

Dressing Room & Bench Management

It is understood that this part of coaching can be vastly different depending on the age and caliber of competition. Nevertheless, coaches should be aware that whatever the level, dressing room and bench management play an important role in the training and development of athletes in the game of lacrosse.

“Routine” is very important, this keeps players in that “Comfort Zone”. Things like:

- What happens when you call a time-out
- Time of arrival for games
- What you do before every game
- How the line-up is posted
- What is said post-game
- What is said at half-time

Let's take a look at each one and the following will point out some of the critical items the coach should be aware of.

What happens when you call a time out:

- Remember that comfort zone, don't dwell on something that has already occurred and you can't do anything about,
- Don't try to envision something that may happen, KEEP the ATHLETES FOCUSED, ONLY DWELL ON THE MOMENT,
- Ensure the athletes respond to the time out in a orderly fashion, you only have 30 seconds,
- Make sure the athletes maintain eye contact with the speaker

Time of arrival for games & what you do pre-game (pre-practice):

- Minor games should be no less than 's of an hour, seniors no less than 1 hour,
- Your pre-practice routine should mirror your pre-game routine,
- Establish a professional routine that physically and mentally prepares the athletes and set it up so it is preformed with out any coach interference, let them (athletes) take ownership of the game,
- Ensure you have established a pre-game “Warm-up” routine for those occasions where on-field time prior to a game is restricted,
- Coaches MUST be at all games (and practices) prior to the posted time



**TASK 3:
WHAT ARE A COACH'S
RESPONSIBILITIES DURING
THE FOLLOWING TIME**

QUARTERS

How the line-up is posted:

- The first step, pre-game or pre-practice, is to put up game line-up listing all special teams etc and a practice routine for all practices,
- This takes away any chance that the athlete will be confronted at the last moment with anything that will get him out of focus and out of that comfort zone.

Pre-Game

What is said post game:

- Depending on the age and caliber of play coaches may discuss scouting reports,
- Present all subject matter in such a way as to instill confidence,
- Visit briefly with that athlete who requires a boost to his/her self image,
- Don't dwell on any subject matter or use any tone of voice that will move the players out of the comfort zone,
- The last few minutes before the opening whistle are important, not being mentally prepared to play will put you down goals,
- Start all games with a line-up of athletes who are always ready to go.

At Half Time

Time-Outs

What is said at half time:

- Give the players that first couple of minutes to wind down,
- Ensure all players are in a relaxed position and at rest,
- In the first few minutes do any one-on-one talking that is required,
- Start a routine whereby you ask "What did we do well?" and follow-up with the question "What could we improve on". The first few times may require you as the coach to send out the key words to stimulate responses however, after the athletes have experienced this routine with no one blaming individuals or yelling the responses will flow and will always start with the phrase "WE",
- Ensure all parents at the pre-season in minor are aware that they are not to visit the dressing room between quarters unless specifically asked by the coaching staff.

Post-Game

Typical Seasonal Planner Use

The following will point out the principles a coach should consider when utilizing this coaching tool. The task of operating and supervising a coaching staff has become more difficult with the changes in society we now encounter. Lacrosse, in a majority of cases, is not the only sport an athlete participates in. This coupled with the extreme pressures of a host of other activities taxing the time allotments makes the task of training and preparing the athlete and the team for a successful season paramount. The seasonal planner can make that task much more obtainable.

Things to Consider

- **Length of your season.** The breakdown of months can be different from division to division and from caliber of play – house league up to and including U-19 and senior provincial teams. This section of your planner will reflect those considerations. For example:
 - A coach of a Bantam team in BC would be given a team list probably in September. This coach's season would start in October and, with a break over December and January, would run through until April at best.
 - A coach of a U-19 team in Calgary might have two seasons. It might begin with player recruitment and selection in November, practices in January and February, and a major tournament in March. They would then take off April-July for the box season. Practices would start again in July, with the national tournament over Labour Day in September.

The principles remain the same, only the length of time in each training period changes.

- **Periods of Training.** Although there are different terms for the periods of training, the most common ones are pre-season, in-season, and play-downs. More advanced programs also have post-season and off-season periods (this is discussed in Competitive-Development). The length of time that the athletes are under the direction of the coaching staff will determine the length of the pre-season. The amount of material contained in the pre-season training will be again subject to certain conditions, ie., the availability of the athletes and training facilities, and the division and the caliber of play.



The length of the in-season and play-downs are set by the league in which the team participates – again it varies depending on the province, the division, and the caliber of play.

Once the start dates are known by the coach a horizontal line is drawn from the top to the bottom of the seasonal planner and this establishes the three periods of training.

- **Administrative Duties.** This feature of the planner will provide the coach with a reminder of all events/duties that must be adhered to in order to ensure a successful year of play, ie., medical history forms, provincial deadlines, etc.
- **Evaluations.** In order to have a training system will produce the necessary results the coach must establish the “starting line.” It is imperative that the coaching staff conduct an evaluation of the athletes very early in the pre-season period, and they may even want to set another session a couple of weeks into the in-season. More than this would be at the discretion of the coaching staff. Once the initial evaluation is completed the coaching staff can put into place practice plans that address the areas that require attention. The follow-up evaluations will give the coaching staff a true indication of whether the practice plans established to address the problem areas were working and producing the necessary results.
- **Physical Preparation.** The list which appears on the seasonal planner indicates the different items a coach should be concerned with. Again this will vary greatly with the category and caliber in which the coach is practicing his/her profession. The coach after having completed the module on physical preparation will be able to fill in the seasonal planner. The planner will indicate when the athlete will be introduced to the training, when he/she will be doing enough to maintain the desired level and when if necessary the training will be re-visited or enhanced.
- **Mental Preparation.** Similar to the physical preparation and technical skills, mental preparation takes equally as long to master in the game of lacrosse. Once the mental preparation module is complete, the coach will be able to fill in the seasonal planner. Apply the same principles indicated in the physical preparation module – introduce, maintain, and enhancement.
- **Individual Skills.** The list which appears in the seasonal planner contains some of the skills that would be considered as individual skills. The coach must determine which individual skills he/she

needs to address. Once the initial evaluation takes place the coaches will have a precise list of skills that need to be addressed and what time frames need to be given to each skill. Individual skill enhancement will dominate the practice sessions during the pre-season phase and gradually lessen as the season progresses.

- **Team Skills.** The list which appears in the seasonal planner contains some of the necessary team skills and strategies. Once the coach has determined his/her players' skill levels through initial evaluations and early pre-season practice sessions, the coach can then introduce the appropriate team skills into his/her practices. As you approach the first game and as the season progresses the coach will increase the time allotted to team skills. It should be noted that the switch to more team skills and less individual skills, is somewhat deceptive because the athlete continues to hone his/her individual skills while practicing team strategies. Just prior to play-downs or tournaments the team strategies will dominate the practice times.

TASK 4: "What are the differences in seasonal planning for box and field lacrosse?"

TASK 5: "Each coach should fill out the seasonal planner with particular emphasis on the pre-season, in-season, and play-downs."



SEASON PLANNER CALENDAR

DATE: _____ TEAM: _____

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
Administrative Duties																										
Evaluations																										
Physical Preparations																										
Mental Training																										
Individual Technical Skills																										
Team Technical Skills and Strategies																										

Months >>

Weeks >>

Provincial Deadlines

Medical History Forms
Tournaments
Team Meetings
Team Socials

Skills
Physical Fitness
Mental Status

Aerobic
Anaerobic
Muscular Strength
Muscular Endurance
Flexibility
Cardio

Relaxation
Attention Control
Emotional Control
Actualization

Passing
Catching
Shooting
Stick Protection
Dodging
Feeding
Defensive Skills
Goaltending

Team Offense
Team Defense
Extra Man Offense (EMO)
Man Down Defense (MDD)
Clearing/Riding
Special Circumstances

APPENDIX**A****RECOMMENDATION REGARDING PRACTICE-TO-GAME RATIOS**

Stage	Off field (min per week)	On field skill (min per week)	Competition specific training (min per week)	Game (min per week)	Number of lacrosse sessions/week
Active Start	0	60 min	0	60 min	2
Fund 1	0	60 min	0	60 min	2
Fund 2	0	100-108 min	12-20 min	60 min	3 (1 game; 2 training sessions)
L2T	0	105-120 min	30-45 min	75 min	3 (1 game; 2 training sessions)
T2T	45-60 min	105-120 min	30-45 min	90 min	4 (1 game; 3 training sessions)
L2C	20-30 min	75-100 min	50-75 min	240 min	4 (2 games; 2 training sessions)
T2C	20-30 min	100 - 120 min	60-80 min	300 min	4 (2 games; 2 training sessions)
L2W	20-30 min	100-120 min	60-80 min	300 min	4 (2 games; 2 training sessions)
T2W	20-30 min	100-120 min	60-80 min	300 min	4 (2 games; 2 training sessions)
Active for Life: Competition	20-30 min	30 min	30 min	60 min	2 (1 game; 1 training session)
Active for Life: Recreation	0	0	0	60 min	1 (1 game)

- Active Start and Fundamental Session is defined as 60 minutes
- L2T session is defined as 75 minutes
- L2C session is defined as 120 minute training session; 120 minute game

Off field training is defined as an 'organized session focusing on physical and/or mental preparation'

On field skill training is defined as 'individual technical lacrosse skills such as passing, catching, loose balls'

Competition specific training is defined as 'team tactics such as transition systems, picks and screens, breakouts'

Game is defined as 'organized, structured competition'

Notes:

- These are averages that are spread out over the season. For example, during the pre-season phase the practice ratio will be higher due to evaluations and tryouts, but during the play-downs phase the practice ratio will be lower. In addition, the ratio of "on-field skill" versus "competition-specific" training will fluctuate depending on the time in the seasonal plan. See the sample seasonal plans for more information.
- Personal practice time statement should supplement the practice-to-game ratios

STATEMENT REGARDING PERSONAL PRACTICE TIME

Lacrosse is one of the very few team sports where players can practice sport-specific skills independently on their own or in small groups. All players, regardless of age or skill level, should be encouraged to work on their lacrosse-specific skills outside of the structured team environment. All that is required is a stick, a ball, and a wall. The wall could be in an outdoor box with regulation nets, or it could be as basic as a school wall. Repetitions of throwing and catching the ball against a wall will dramatically improve stick skills. Over time, players can start to increase the accuracy of their passing and shooting by focusing on a specific spot on a wall and increase their stick quickness by standing closer to the wall. Other variations include: switching hands, switching the type of pass/shot (overhand, sidearm, underhand, over-the-shoulder, etc), and trying "tricks with sticks" to improve cradling and hand-eye coordination. When in small groups, players can work on other skills like loose balls, dodging, and defence. To keep the fun going, players can play games like pig in the middle, posts, or HORSE.