Competitive Coach Introduction

BOX LACROSSE MANUAL

National Coaching Certification Program

Programme national de certification des entraîneurs

Association canadienne de crosse
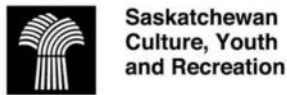
Canadian Lacrosse Association

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.

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How to be a better coach

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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.

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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;

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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 spe-cific 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:

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Coach Pathway
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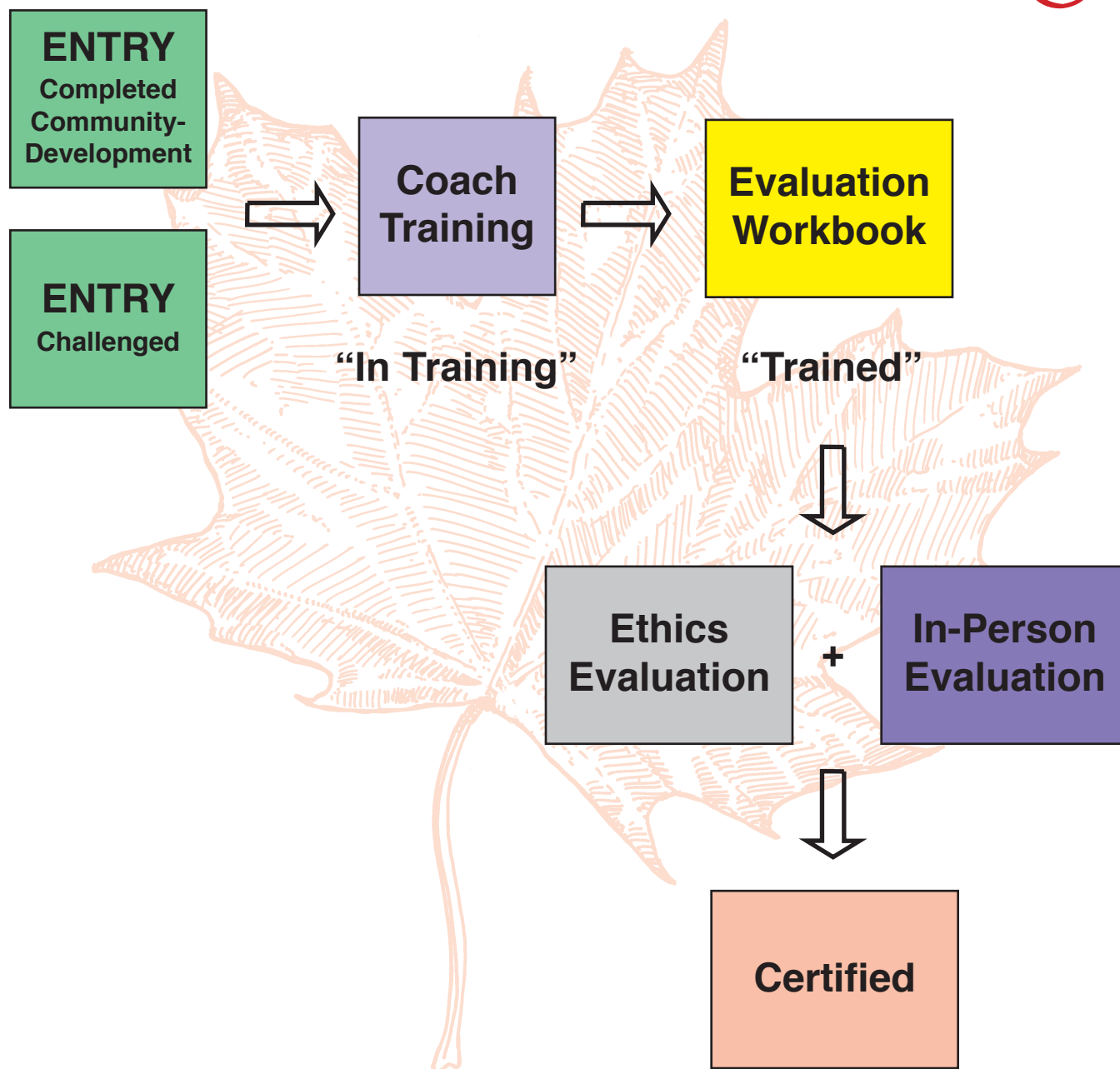
ENTRY
Completed
Community-
Development

ENTRY
Challenged

**Coach
Training**

"In Training"

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COACHES INTRODUCTIONS

TASK 1 Find someone you don't know, then:

- Introduce yourself.

My partner's name is _____

- Gather information regarding other sports coached and played, how long they have been coaching, etc.

- Define your approach to coaching.
    1. Why have you decided to coach? What do you hope to achieve?
    2. Why have your players decided to get involved in sport and, in particular, to play lacrosse?
    3. What do you think parents expect their children to get out of playing lacrosse?

List the common themes that arise from the three questions.

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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 Compete
Older teens start training to compete for titles.

Learning & Training to Win
Players train solely for competitive results.

Active for Life
Players move from formal competition and focus on wellness.
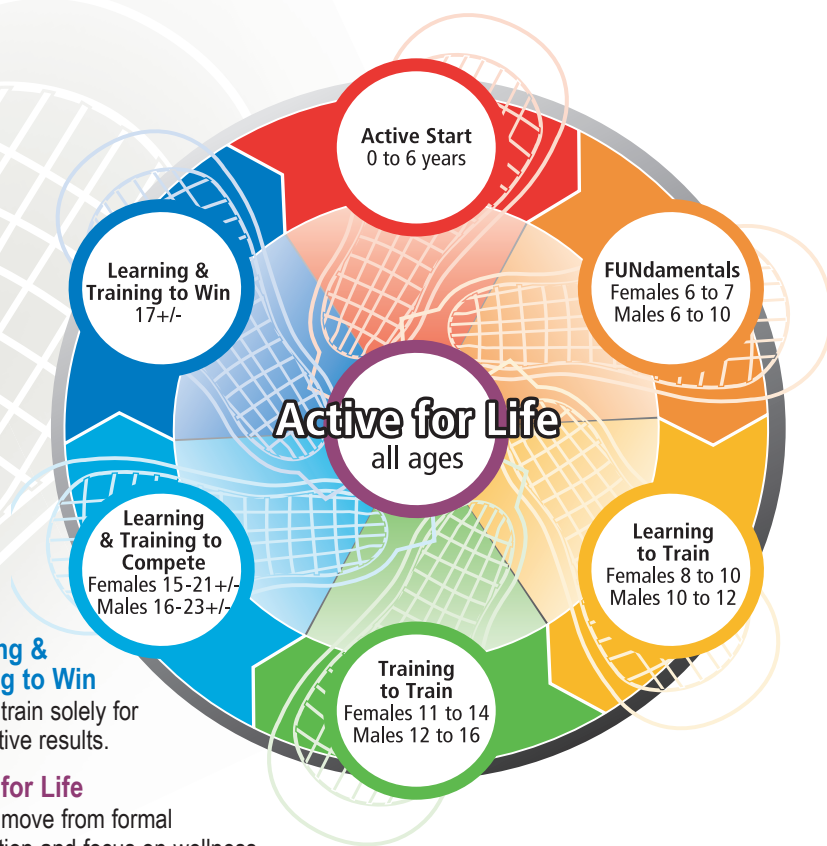
THE MALE ATHLETE

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 Field	CATEGORY Box	Play for	Competition Host	Description
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)
T2T		Game	11-14	U-15	Bantam 13-14	School Club	Local Assoc. MA	
T2C	L2C		15-16	U-17	Midget 15-16	High School Club	School Board	Skill refinement; athlete specific training programs; model high competition in training; some specialization to attack/defense/ midfield; late entry opportunities
T2C	T2C	Specialize in Lacrosse	17-18	U-19	Major 17+	MA Provincial	MA CLA	Year-round training begins for National players
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	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?
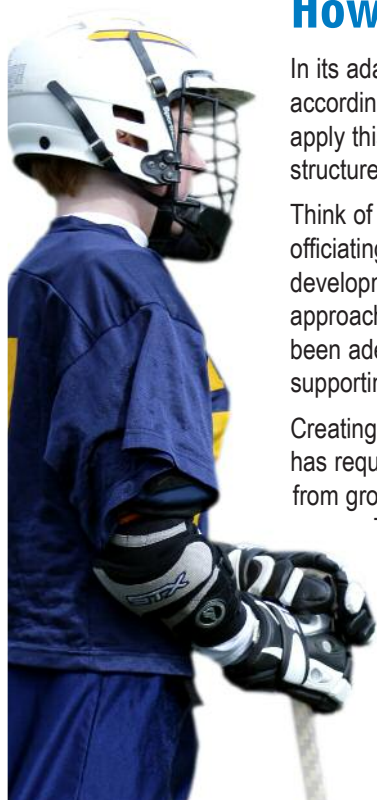
In its adaptation to lacrosse, LTAD will maximize the development of lacrosse players across Canada according to a consistent and scientifically-founded methodology for training and development. However, to apply this systematic methodology to training, LTAD has to be supported by the surrounding organizational 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 knew 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:

<u>**Strong Minds**</u>
> The development of confidence, a positive self-image and the ability to use mental training to their advantage.

<u>**Strong Bodies**</u>
> The development of strength, endurance, flexibility and speed.

<u>**Strong Spirits**</u>
> 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 c**oncentrate – 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**

This phase of player development will be designed to meet the needs of Intermediate, Junior, and Senior Coaches. Along with the advanced skills and the information on tactics and strategies, coaches will receive specialized training in the areas of mental and physical preparation. The basic difference between the second, third, and fourth phases of athlete development is the commitment coaches and players make to the game. Therefore, learning to win is the process of increasing the levels of concentration, the intensity of the activity, and the attention to detail.

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 breakout patterns instead of letting one player go for a shot.*
    - *Play all players at both ends of the floor instead of specializing as is done in field lacrosse and football.*
- 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

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 five runners 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 floor balance,
- a high percentage of passing and good shooting opportunities,
- use of all players,
- the positive evolution of lacrosse,

DECISION MAKING

The fifth key for developing competency in coaching is to ensure that you understand how to make decisions that will result in positive outcomes.

TASK 2: Make a list of the kinds of decisions coaches have to make.

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The Coaching Association of Canada (CAC) has identified five Core Competencies[1] 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.)

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[1]Core 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.

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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 box 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 do 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 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 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.

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.

Introduction: 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, lacrosse is similar to basketball, hockey, and soccer. Coaches and players must be aware of the rules in lacrosse that are the result of poor implementation of the basic lacrosse skills slashing, high sticking and checking 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.

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 fol-lowing 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.

Once the competent coach understands the broad scope of skills and strategies open to him/her, makes an assessment of the players (mod-ule 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 1:
Develop a statement that best describes a game of 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 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.

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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 ?

_____

_____

_____

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.

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

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

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.

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 no face-off after a penalty call, now become vitally important to both teams as the play resumes immediately. The offensive team want to get their power play unit on the floor quickly before the thirty second clock runs down and the defensive team must worry about getting their man-down unit on the floor.

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. Slashing, high sticking, illegal cross checking and back checking are a result of poor coaching. There are more efficient methods of performing the act of defensive play then the infractions which cause the aforementioned rules to be enforced.

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), the officials 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.

NOTE:
The coaches code of conduct states "respect towards officials". This must also be filtered down to the athletes.

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.

NOTE:
The decisions you make as a coach have far reaching effects, therefore you must seriously consider the following:
CONSISTENT APPLICATION OF THE RULES

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 from mini/tyke up has affects on lacrosse right up to the senior 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.

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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 thirty-second clock);
* to develop player skills (e.g legal cross checks and the bigger player who is not able to beat his check one-on-one because he was always allowed to charge through and over the checker).
* to promote an environment that encourages the positive evolution of the game of lacrosse.

Rules and Athlete Development

Note:
controlling the amount and type of contact throughout the minor system can force a more thorough learning of the defensive skills.

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. _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Note:
coaches promote the spirit of sport by not allowing slashing, hacking, wrap-arounds, and one-handed checks. using the stick for legal cross checking, makes lacrosse safer, enjoyable, thrilling and creative.

NOTE:
SLASHING WITH THE STICK IS A FORM OF INTIMIDATION AND NOT A FORM OF DEFENCE.

TASK 6:

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

A. _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

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Appendix A: ANSWERS

Task 1: What is a game of lacrosse?

- Played with a stick and ball.
- Played six (6) players a side which includes a goaltender.
- Physical contact allowed with the stick within the rules.
- No off-sides.
- Played on a surface similar to a hockey sized arena.
- Similar to a game of basketball played with a stick and ball.
- Three periods of play.
- Excellent hand-to-eye coordination.
- Fast non-stop action.
- Players change during play.
- Good control of the scoring object (the ball).

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 GOOD scoring opportunities.
- Control the ball.
- Control the clock.

Defence

- Keep the GOOD scoring opportunities to a minimum.
- Turn over the ball.
- Control the clock.

Transition to Offence

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

Transition to Defence

- Stop the fast break.
- Prevent odd-man situations.
- Decrease the time left on the thirty-second clock prior to the offence entering the offensive zone.
- Cause a turn over.

Task 4: Goals which will enhance the objectives for:

Offence:

- Move the ball quickly.
- Move your feet.
- Create open space.
- Create odd man situations.
- Set picks on and off the ball.
- Load zones.
- Quick breaks.
- Create a motion offence.
- Create mismatches.
- Good verbal and body language communication.
- Good stick skills by the goalkeeper.

Defence:

- Maintain good body position.
- Maintain good stick position.
- Keep your feet moving.
- Good communication.
- Good patience (thirty-second clock).
- Prevent mismatches.
- Press the ball carrier.
- Balanced defence.
- Good mid-pointing position on the non ball carrier.
- Transition to defence must be quick.
- Know your assignments.

Transition to Offence

- anticipate the clock;
- fast and accurate passes;
- goalkeeper who can pass; and
- fast break to produce odd man situations.

Transition to Defence

- get back fast;
- pressure the ball; and
- prevent odd man situations.

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

- slashing;
- hitting from behind;
- high sticking;
- interference;
- illegal cross checking; and
- unsportsmanlike conduct.

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

- thirty-second clock;
- interference;
- face-offs;
- 24-foot dotted line;
- crease play; and
- dead ball.

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 floor; 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 floor or 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.

1. The Coach as an Educator - Learning

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.

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 Vaill[1]) 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.

[1]Vaill 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.

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.

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.

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, NLL 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.

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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.

SUMMARY

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.

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.

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.

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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.

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?

1. Understand what leadership is.

> *(Paraphrased from Inside Guide, Spring 1990, p. 66,67[2]) 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".*

"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."

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.

[2]McConkey, 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.

[3]Covey, 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

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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?

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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

Establish the facts of the situation

- *Is this a situation that has legal implications?*
- *If the situation has no legal implications, what ethical issues might be involved?*

Once you know the facts, determine what are the issues

Have all the facts been identified?

Consider potential options for action or decision, and their potential consequences

How does each option lead to a fair decision with regard to the:
- *outcomes or results*
- *means used to achieve results*

Assess the pros and cons of each option

Select the best option

- *Have I thought about factors that might influence my decision?*
- *What values must be preserved in the situation?*
- *Is this a just and reasonable decision?*

Implement the decision and manage the consequences

What is the best course of action to follow? Who should be involved?

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   **NO**

Actions to take
Inform appropriate authority:

- Police
- Child protection service
- Employer
- Other

Use the ethical decision-making process

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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

Do nothing or make no decision	Intermediate options	Most comprehensive or liberal action or decision that can be made
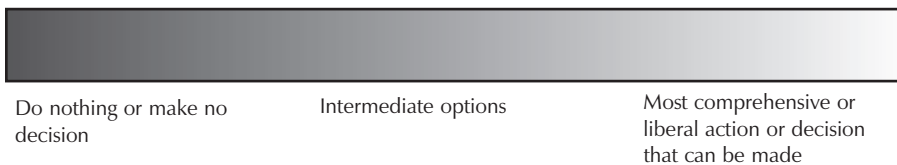
Once several options for decision have been identified, think about "What might happen if …". This will enable you to assess potential consequences that may result from each option. In many ethical situations where a "Yes – No" decision must be made, the following questions are likely to arise:
- What 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

Personal Experiences

- Previous experience with a similar issue

- Positive or negative outcomes of previous similar decisions

Personal Values

- Family background/upbringing
- Formal education
- Religious beliefs
- Age
- Personal moral development
- Cultural background

Personal Circumstances

- Employment
- Coaching level and development
- Reputation
- Personal relationships

Internal Influences

Decision-Making

External Influences

Economics and Politics

- Economic impact of decision on context

- Political/rights-based issues of the situation

Severity of Situation

- Immediacy of the decision
- Who is affected?
- How many people are affected?

Organizational, Institutional, and Social Aspects

- Relations and links with:
  - organizations
  - individuals
  - communities
- Social norms and conventions
- NCCP Code of Ethics

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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.

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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.

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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.

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

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:
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

Knowing the Players

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.

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 then 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 selfdetermination, 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.

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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-yearolds, which will compound the problem, so listening, observing and counseling will be valuable skills for coaches to develop.

SUMMARY

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:

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

- 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.

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 floor. 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.

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-itall 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 floor they will understand how to handle adversity. Coaches have to be aware that problems on the floor 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 then 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.

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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.

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

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.

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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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

Players	Skills & Concepts	Learning Level	Personal Characteristics

TECHNICAL PREPARATION

Module 4

Goals:

1. To introduce the concepts of the Training to Train Phase of Team Play and Special Teams.
2. To demonstrate the advanced TEACHING TECHNIQUES of refining and evaluating individual skills.

Objectives: At this level the coach will be able to: Instruct players on concepts and strategies associated with:

- Face-offs.
- Presses;
- Transition - defence;
- Player changes;
- Transition - offence;
- Special circumstances;
- Man-down;
- Man-up;
- Team defense;
- Team offence;

Instruct athletes in improving advanced specific skills associated with:

- Stick control.
- Shooting;
- Passing;
- Picks and rolls;
- Defending;
- Goaltender defensive and offensive skills;

The trained coach will expand on the sound lacrosse principles learned previously.

The collection of player skills must be used as a TEAM, therefore the coach must facilitate players to make capable decisions required to "Think the Game" as a part of a team.

The coach must guide the team in learning how to react to the opposition's concepts and strategies and anticipate the opposition's reaction to his/her game plans.

*The resulting chain of events are…
action, reaction, anticipation,
action, reaction, anticipation,
action, reaction, anticipation,
action, reaction, anticipation,
action, reaction, anticipation,
action, reaction, anticipation,
action, reaction, anticipation,
etc.*

Players generally have reasonable technical skills and only require instruction for maintenance and refinement.

Team Offence (Motion Offence)

Motion offence is the concept of team offence that every player is involved while using movements and skills to create opportunities for scoring goals.

The movements are designed to be a structured free flowing system that creates odd man situations which give the offensive players the advantage.

NOTE:
Coaches are encouraged to modify these BASIC drills based on the team's needs.

The following sequence of five (5) drills demonstrates the specific elements of a motion offence. The drills are taught in sequence until players are competent with the motion. Further complexity is added in each step. Once the concepts are ingrained, the introduction of defence transforms the drills into games that simulate game situations. This allows the players to freelance and experiment, thereby utilizing self-discovery to increase their "GAME SENSE".

These drills create "game-like" simulations for goaltenders.

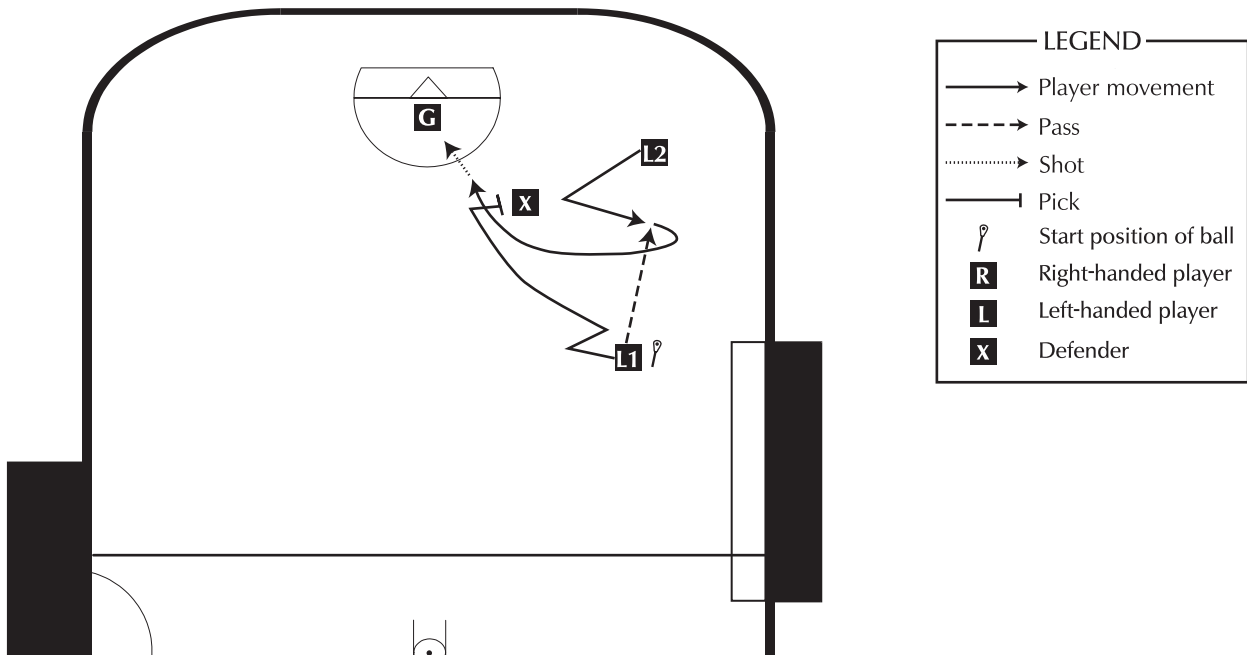The coach can evaluate the success of the training by monitoring whether:

NOTES TO CONSIDER:
• ball starting from the strong and weak side.
• the first option in a game is to go to the net to score.
• players who work effectively with a partner(s) create more scoring opportunities.
• if the weak side player makes a cut and does not get a pass then give options (around the net, flooding, etc).

- offensive players are all moving with a purpose;
- players are recognizing opportunities;
- scoring opportunities are coming from all players;
- players are experimenting and testing the defence;
- players are freelancing and creating strategies.

Principles for Players

- Players making passes must ALWAYS continue in the direction of the pass until the pass is caught. If the pass is unsuccessful then the player is already going in the proper direction to help with a loose ball.
- Players making cuts through the middle must always have their stick prepared to receive a pass.
- Players without the ball must engage a defender and either drive or pop-out. This creates space and separation between a defender and an offensive player.
- Players roll-off picks with sticks flashed to the ball carrier.
- Ball carriers must protect the ball in a triple-threat position while cradling.

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Motion Offence Drill #1

LEGEND

——→	Player movement
- - -→	Pass
······→	Shot
——⊢	Pick
⚲	Start position of ball
R	Right-handed player
L	Left-handed player
X	Defender

1. The ball starts with L1.
2. L2 uses a jab step or V-cut to engage the defender. Then L2 popsout to receive a pass from L1.
    a. Emphasize the timing of the pass as L2 disengages from the defender.
3. L1 drives to the prime scoring area looking for a return pass. L2 fakes the pass.
4. L1 sets a pick for L2.
5. L2 drives around the pick to shoot.
    a. Emphasize the need for L2 to use timing to engage and drive past the defender.

• 4 lines of players: 2 lines of right-handers and 2 lines of left-handers.
• Repeat the drill from the right hand side of the floor.
• The next players rotate into starting positions and begin the drill.

NOTES:

Motion Offence Drill #2

```
┌──────── LEGEND ────────┐
│  ────────►  Player movement
│  ─ ─ ─ ─►  Pass
│  ··········►  Shot
│  ──────┤  Pick
│   ⚲        Start position of ball
│  [R]       Right-handed player
│  [L]       Left-handed player
│  [X]       Defender
└────────────────────────┘
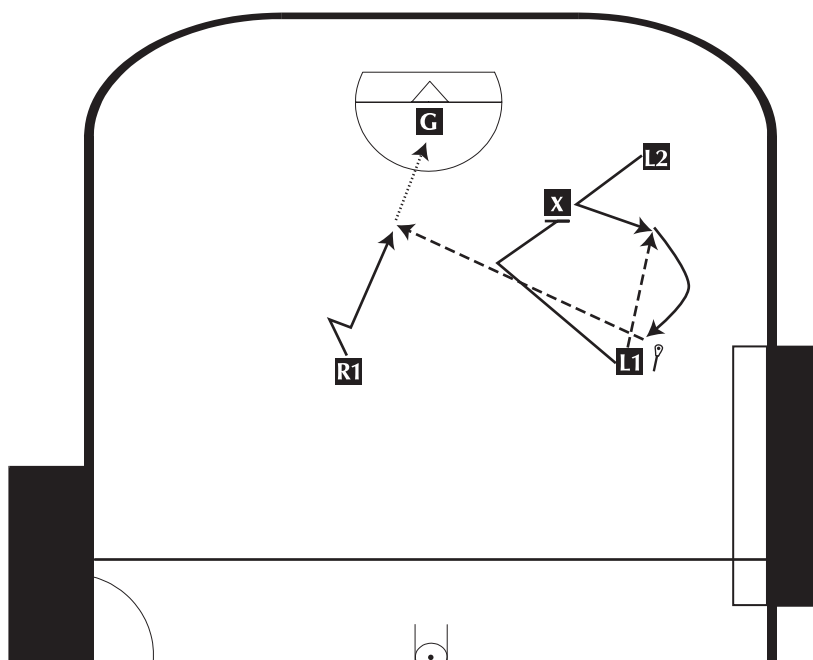```

*NOTE:*
*Actions 1-3 are identical*
*to drill #1.*

*NOTES:*

1. The ball starts with L1.
2. L2 uses a jab step or V-cut to engage the defender. Then L2 popsout to receive a pass from L1.
3. L1 drives to the prime scoring area looking for a return pass. L2 fakes the pass.
4. L1 sets pick for L2. Pick is set on different location on defender.
   a.  Emphasize the need for L2 to READ L1's actions.
5. L2 drives around the pick and passes to R1 breaking to the prime scoring area for a shot.
   a. R1 must read the development of the play and time his/her cut to the net.

• 3 lines of players:  1 line of right-handers and 2 lines of lefthanders for drill as shown.
                        1 line of left-handers and 2 lines of righthanders for the opposite side of the floor.

• The next players rotate into starting positions and begin the drill.

# Motion Offence Drill #3



LEGEND

| | |
|---|---|
| → | Player movement |
| ----→ | Pass |
| ······→ | Shot |
| ⊢ | Pick |
| ⚑ | Start position of ball |
| R | Right-handed player |
| L | Left-handed player |
| X | Defender |

*NOTE:*
***Actions 1-4 are identical***
***to drill #2.***

1. The ball starts with L1.
2. L2 uses a jab step or V-cut to engage the defender. Then L2 popsout to receive a pass from L1.
3. L1 drives to the prime scoring area looking for a return pass. L2 fakes the pass.
4. L1 sets a pick for L2.
5. R1 drives to the prime scoring area looking for a pass. L2 fakes the pass.
6. R1 sets a pick for R2.
7. R2 engages the defender and drives to the prime scoring area and receives a pass from L2 for a shot.

- 4 lines of players: 2 line of right-handers and 2 lines of left-handers for drill as shown and for drill from opposite side of the floor.
- The next players rotate into starting positions and begin the drill.
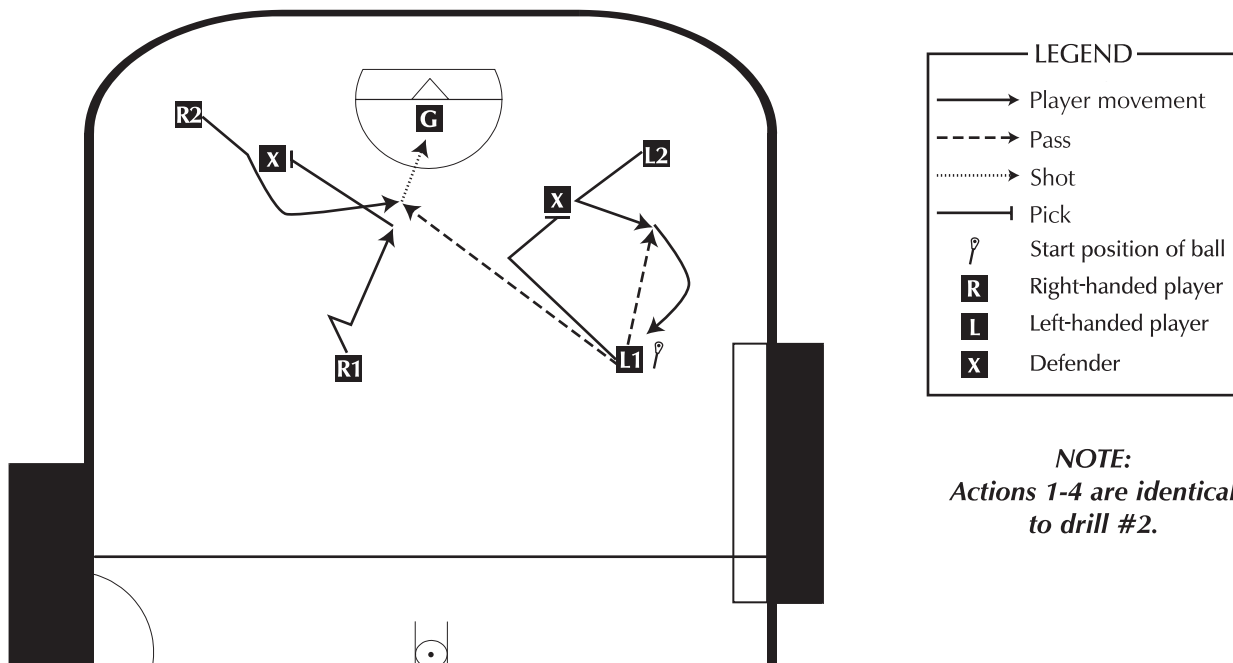
*NOTES:*

# Motion Offence Drill #4

┌─────── LEGEND ───────┐

→ Player movement

----→ Pass

·······→ Shot

⊢ Pick

⅃ Start position of ball

**R** Right-handed player

**L** Left-handed player

**X** Defender

*NOTE:*
*Actions 1-4 are identical*
*to drill #3.*
*Actions 7 and 8 are identical*
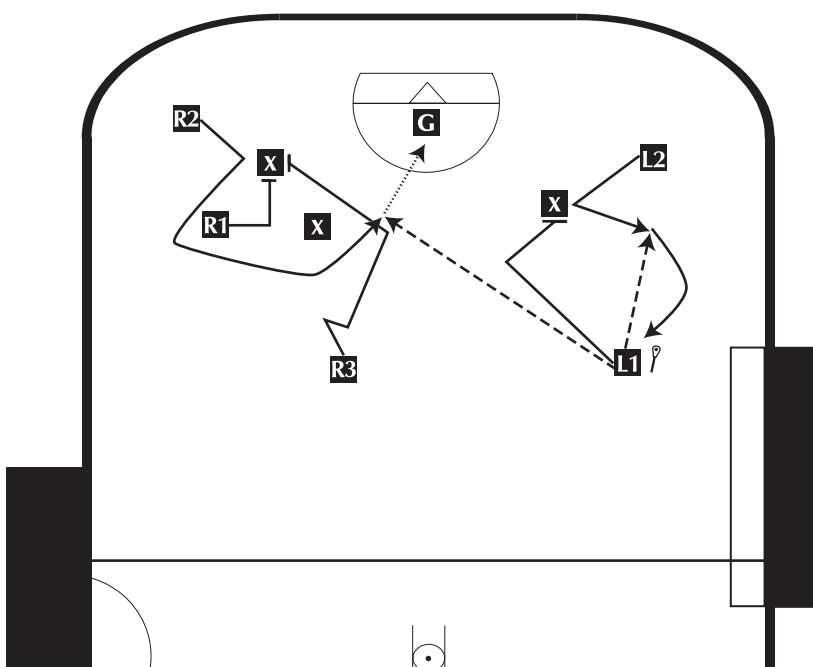*to actions 6 and 7*
*from drill #3.*

*NOTES:*

1. The ball starts with L1.
2. L2 uses a jab step or V-cut to engage the defender. Then L2 popsout to receive a pass from L1.
3. L1 drives to the prime scoring area looking for a return pass. L2 fakes the pass.
4. L1 sets a pick for L2.
5. R3 drives to the prime scoring area looking for a pass. L2 fakes the pass.
6. R3 sets a pick for R2 and continues to the corner.
7. R1 sets a pick for R2.
8. R2 engages the defender and drives to the prime scoring area and receives a pass from L2 for a shot.

• Run this drill in 5-man units.
• With 3 left-handers and 2 right-handers, the drill is run the opposite way.

# Motion Offence Drill #5



**LEGEND**

→ Player movement
⇢ Pass
⋯⋯⋯► Shot
⊢ Pick
⌇ Start position of ball
**R** Right-handed player
**L** Left-handed player
**X** Defender
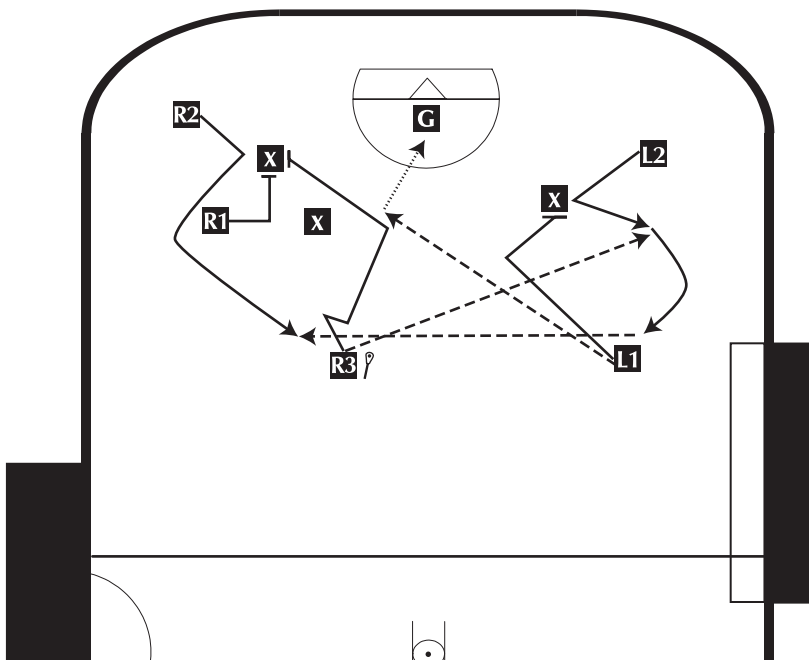
*NOTE:*
*Many of the actions are similar to the actions in previous drills but motion is continuous (i.e. no shot at goal). Add defenders to simulate game-like contact and congestion.*

1. The ball starts with R3.
2. L1 Drives to the prime scoring area looking for a return pass. R3 fakes the pass.
3. L1 sets a pick for L2.
4. L2 uses a jab step or V-cut to engage the defender. Then L2 popsout to receive a pass from R3.
5. R3 drives to the prime scoring area looking for a pass. L2 fakes the pass and continues to the area previously held by L1.
6. All right-handed players' actions in the next three steps happen simultaneously.
   a. R1 sets a pick for R2, rolls to the ball and continues to the area previously held by R2.
   b. R3 sets a pick for R2, rolls to the ball and continues to the area previously held by R1.
   c. R2 engages the defender and pops-out high for a pass from L2.
7. Players assume new positions and repeat the sequence.

- Run this drill in 5-man units.
- With 3 left-handers and 2 right-handers, the drill is run the opposite way.

*NOTES:*

## OFFENSIVE PLAY

Along with the motion offense steps, coaches should be aware of other systems of teaching athletes the skills set needed to produce team offense. Coaches can't stress enough the importance of "off-ball" play. Setting up the defense player in order to have a good pick set both off and on the ball or creating open space requires practice and understanding by the athlete as to why defensive players do certain things in certain circumstances.

During the learning phase athletes placed in situations of one-on-one, up to and including three-on-three are placed in a better situation to see the floor, to see reactions by both the offensive and defensive players. It also provides the coach with a better view of the athlete during these sessions. Players can get 'lost' in five-on-five situations and never get the opportunity to enhance their ability to play better offense, (this also applies to defense). The result of sound technical drills and "little Games" of one-on-one up to three-on-three will result in athletes playing good five-on-five team offense and defense.

## Picks and Rolls – Offence

☐ A pick is the result of two or more offensive players working together to create space for each other by setting picks on a teammate's defender. The purpose of the "pick and roll" is to: 1) assist the ball carrier to get a good scoring opportunity in the PSA; 2) ball carrier passes to a teammate ("roller") to get a good scoring opportunity in the PSA; 3) creates space, motion, and maintains possession to set up another opportunity.

☐ There are many different types of picks. Here are some of the common ones:

- An ***up pick*** is when the creaseman comes "up" the floor (away from the net) to set a pick on the cornerman or pointman.

- A ***down pick*** is when the cornerman or pointman goes "down" the floor (towards the net) to set a pick on the creaseman.

- A ***cross pick*** is when a player goes across the floor to set a pick for a teammate on the other side of the floor.

- A ***ball pick*** is when a pick is set on the ball carrier's defender.

- An **off-ball pick** is when a pick is set on a non-ball carrier's defender.
- A **frontdoor pick** is when the player sets a pick on the net's side of the defender.
- A **backdoor pick** is when the player sets a pick on the board's side of the defender.
- A **brush pick** occurs when the teammate sets a conspicuous pick and waits for the defender to call "switch." While the defenders are in the process of switching, rolls to the net for a quick pass from the ball carrier.

☐ Regardless of the type of pick and roll there are certain principles:
- The pickee **MUST** occupy the defender by, such as, faking a cut.
- Picker must disguise that they are setting a pick by making the defender believe that you are making a ball cut.
- The picker must ensure that the ball carrier's defender is unaware of the pick being set.
- The picker must place themselves in a position to the side and slightly behind the pickee's defender. Their knees should be slightly bent (bracing for contact), and their stick should be up and not in the cross-check position.
- The pickee goes to the side that the pick is set on
- The picker rolls open to the ball

## Screens

☐ While picks are used on a teammate's defender, "screens" are set against your own defender. Purpose of the screen is to get a high percentage shot for the ball carrier. The 'screening' player sets the screen in the general area of their teammate, who then tries to work their checker into the 'screen'. They then fake to the outside and goes around them, as closely as possible to their 'screen' shoulder. As the teammate passes them, the screening player pivots, holds the stick horizontally at his waist to interfere with the progress of the defensive player. So, set the 'screen' near your teammate, who then brings their defender into the 'screen' and cuts closely to allow you to interfere with their defender with both your body and your stick.

☐ A variation is the high post screen. In this case, the cornerman allows themselves to be checked closely by the defender. The creaseman, who has the ball, comes up to the corner position – forcing his defender into the stack of the cornerman and their defender – and shoots around the screen. A high post screen shot is hard to stop because the goalie cannot see the ball being released.

To increase the offensive opportunities, players can incorporate a "screen and roll". Once the 'screen' is set and the defenders counteract by switching, the player who sets the screen rolls off towards the net for a pass. A player will set a screen for a team-mate on his side of the floor. When the defenders switch, the player who set the screen rolls off for a pass, a "screen and roll".

## FACE-OFFS

With the removal of the face-off circles in the end zones coupled with the new centre face-off a different mind set must occur. Coaches should be familiar with all the occasions a face-off can occur and also all calls associated with them (Module 1). At the competitive level because of the limited number of face-offs in would not be unusual to see teams selecting and training face-off units. These units would probably consist of only six (6) or seven (7) players.

The centre-man or draw man is still the key person during any face-off. Selecting a player for this role is vital therefore coaches should be aware of some of the attributes normally associated with this position;
- Good upper body strength
- Excellent loose ball skills
- Ability to take a check and still make a play
- Quick reflexes
- Bigger is better as the age division increases

Lining up at the rag lines by the remainder of the players can also play an important part of being successful in face-off situations. Most teams will line up with two players in each of the offensive and defensive zones. Teams who are in a "protect" mode will put one extra player from the offensive zone side into the defensive side to stop the quick break or offensive advantage if the draw is lost. Teams who are not successful with the face-offs will also adopt this strategy.

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Coaches can also utilize positioning and speed to their advantage on face-off situations. Selecting players with great reflexes to the whistle, fast break speed and good loose ball skills can be a advantage worth trying. Normally one player with these attributes are placed in each zone. The remaining players can be utilized to legally impede the opposition if again you select players with excellent "break-away" speed on the whistle who's task is to get in front of players from the opposition who possess the same attributes listed above.

Getting set at the face-off position is vital, successful teams get there immediately and always before the opposition to ensure they are in the best position to carry out the roles assigned to them during the face-off. Lining up on the opposing players stick side can also be used to your advantage.

# Team Defense
# (Sagging man-on-man - Help defence)

Sagging man-on-man is the concept of team defence that includes every player using communication, movement and skills to prevent scoring opportunities.

The movements are designed to restrict and prevent odd-man situations which give offensive players the advantage. Assuming the team's defensive skills of positioning and proper cross-checking are adequate, team defence is primarily a learned concept that requires communication and cooperation among team mates.

*NOTE:*
*Introducing team defence during the team's offensive practices is the best way to simulate game situations. Coaches move the focus from using a TOKEN DEFENCE to using a TOKEN OFFENCE. Game situations are the best format for players to discover the techniques and team work needed on team defence.*

## Even Strength (5-on-5) Sagging man-to-man defence

1. Assuming a press is not instituted, players must get back immediately when the opposition gains possession. All players return to the defensive end aware of any loose balls or possible change of possession.
2. Upon reaching the defensive end, all players face the opposition. The goalkeeper must communicate with defenders to help recognize any unchallenged threats.
3. Players should line up at the top of the dotted line in a straight line.
   a. All players are even with each other and can communicate efficiently.
      i. Each player should indicate through LOUD and CLEAR communication which offensive player they will be defending. The defending team has the ability to manage any special defending match-ups they prefer – whether for size or ability reasons.
   b. Players can see other defenders picking up offensive players.
4. After all players have picked up their defending assignments, the player defending the ball carrier can aggressively check the ball carrier to create a turnover.
5. Players checking non-ball carriers must sag off using mid-pointing. This prepares them to help the defender covering the ball carrier in case of a breakdown.
   a. If the non-ball carrier is threatening the prime scoring area, then the defender must actively prevent him/her from receiving a pass.
   b. If a non-ball carrier is threatening to set a pick, the defender must actively prevent him/her from doing so.

*NOTE:*
*A coach should utilize walkthrough instructions to help players visualize and learn the various situations.*

*NOTE:*
*The farther your check is from the ball and the prime scoring area, the further you can cheat towards the front of your goal crease.*

LEGEND
- Start position of ball
- X Defensive player
- O Offensive player
- Sagging man-to-man
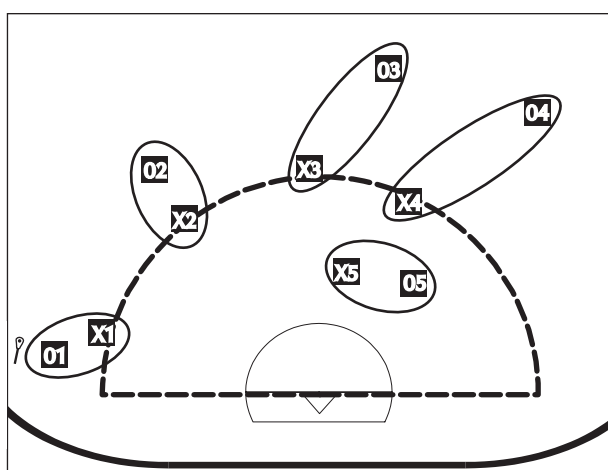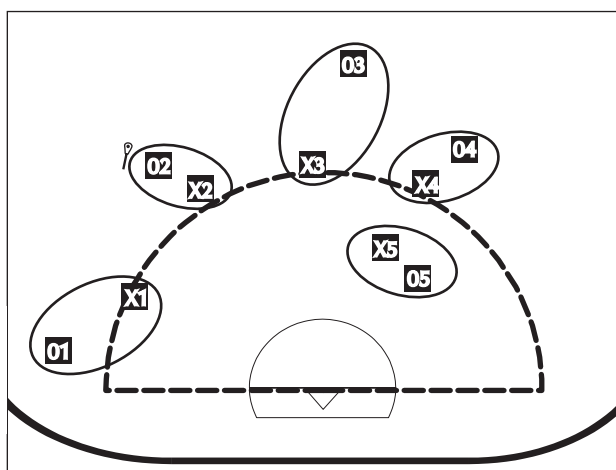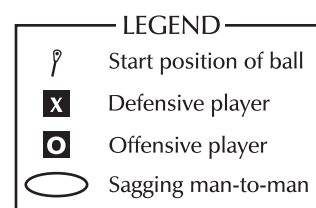
## Half-Floor Press

Each player covers (or shadows) the player nearest him/her until the opposition either turns the ball over or the offensive team moves the ball out of their zone. Once the offence moves the ball out of their zone, the defenders drop back into a sagging man-on-man defence.

This defence is useful but dangerous because:
• it can create quick turnovers;
• alert offensive players will beat their defender one-on-one because they have a lot of space to work with;
• if a defender makes a mistake the offence has an odd-man situation.

## Full-Floor Press

Same as half-floor press but each player covers (or shadows) the player nearest him/her but continues the coverage all the time.

This defence is useful but dangerous because:
• it can create turnovers;
• alert offensive players will beat their defender one-on-one because they have a lot of space to work with;
• if a defender makes a mistake the offence has an odd-man situation;
• it is physically very demanding.

## Why Use Press Defences?

Press defences are used:
• to change the flow of the game;
• to force the opposition into a mistake;
• if a team is behind in the game and needs scoring opportunities.

**Key Components of
Good Defence**

*PATIENCE*

*COMMUNICATION*

*PRESSURE*

*More than any facet of lacrosse,
TEAM DEFENCE puts the
accent on TEAM. Team
defence is unique for its
integral dependency on one's
teammates.*

# Principles of Good Defences

1. Get back into the defensive zone quickly and set up as a team.

2. Call out match-ups (proper match-ups considering the opposition's strength and size).
   - Left-hander should defend a right-hander.
   - Right-hander should defend a left-hander.

3. Call out checks by sweater number.
   - This encourages communication among teammates.

4. Look like you can't wait to defend a player.

5. The player defending the ball carrier tells the entire team what the offensive player is doing – driving, passing, shooting, etc.

6. Focus on your check first then mid-point to watch the ball carrier.

7. Defenders must protect their teammates by preventing picks and screens. There are three options (in order of priority) in defending picks and screens.
   - Don't let the pick be set. A defender can prevent a pick or screen from being set by pushing the player away from setting a pick or screen.
   - Slide through a pick by a player checking the picker. This requires communication. Teammates have to call out picks (pick left, pick right, etc). A player about to be picked can adjust their body position to prevent their check from utilizing the pick. Players remain with their original check.
   Switch checks. This is a last recourse because it is the hardest to manage by defenders. Note, the switch is only called by the player being picked as they are the one who knows if they can slide through it or not.

8. Never let an opponent stand in front of your goal unchallenged.

## Individual defence in the open floor

The previous section on cross-checking is based on a contained area for both the ball carrier and the defender. What happens in a transition situation where there is plenty of space on the floor? Imagine a situation where the ball carrier is running and hits centre at full speed, while the defender is stationary at the top of the dotted line. If the defender remains stationary, he/she will easily be beaten by the ball carrier. Instead, the defender should "close the gap" by gradually moving towards the ball carrier, and then when a couple of steps away from the ball carrier, should start to back-peddle. The defender should be a couple of steps away from the ball carrier and take away the middle of the floor. In this way, the

defender is using space to help prevent a scoring opportunity and he forces the player to a lower percentage shooting area. When the ball carrier moves into the prime scoring area, then the defender begins cross-checking.

## Mid-Pointing

Checking the non-ball carrier is just as important as checking the man with the ball.  For often, the non-ball carrier is moving into position to receive a pass and if left unguarded, he may be the one to gain the prime scoring area and, thus, get a good shot on net. Instead of playing a non-ball carrier tightly, players should instead position themselves at the mid-point. Mid-pointing allows the defender to see both the ball and his/her man.

This allows them to help if their teammate is beaten and allows them to check their man if they receive a pass.  Defenders need to keep their head on a swivel. The important rules of maintaining this defensive posture are never to follow the non-ball carrier deep into the corner or behind the net. Maintain your position and be prepared to help out your team-mate.

## Fronting

Many coaches emphasize the common fallacy of staying between your man and the goal. The emphasis should be more properly on the development of proper body position to protect the middle of the floor. To be successful defensive players must learn to do this by restricting movement of the offensive players toward, or down the middle of the floor, and encourage or direct the movement towards the boards (see diagram).

This skill requires patience, body control and mental alertness. Do not overextend yourself defensively if your check is making little of no attempt to cut through the middle or set picks. Defensively, it is best to face the side boards and side-step with the player maintaining containment, but being alert for a cut or an attempt to set a pick. Cross-checks or should hits may be necessary to prevent a cutter, or stop a player who has moved to the top in front of the goalie.
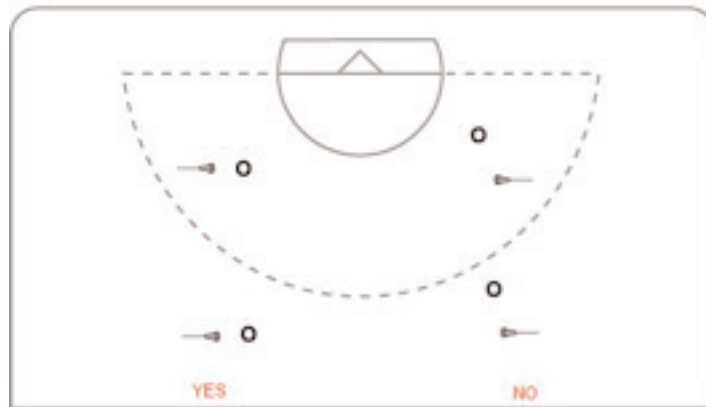
## Double Teaming

Double teaming is defined as a second defensive player leaving his check to assist a teammate who is checking the ball carrier with the sole purpose of forcing a turnover. There should be a designated area on the floor and/or pre-arranged set of circumstances which should trigger a double team. Some teams, for example, use the floor markings as the place where a double team will occur if other circumstances are present.

### Rules of Double Teaming

☐ The ball carrier must not be in the midst of an offensive move when the double team is initiated. The most opportune time is just after the player has received the ball or just after he has tried a one-on-one move and been repulsed.

☐ Do not hesitate. If you are going to double – then do it! Stay with the double team until the ball carrier no longer has the ball, either because the ball is loose or it has been passed.

☐ The other defenders should rotate, leaving the furthest pass open (see Diagram).

☐ There are two ways that a double team can be initiated:
1. The "helper" calls the double team by yelling "double." The checker of the ball carrier has the option of calling it off.
2. A silent double team, when the "helper" sees the back of the ball carrier's helmet. Do not give the offence an opportunity to read the play.

☐ There are two ways that a double team can occur:
1. The original defender stick checks the ball carrier, allowing the "helper" to play the body.
2. The original defender plays the body of the ball carrier, allowing the "helper" to strip the stick.

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☐  Do not double team in the following circumstances:
1.  When there is less than ten seconds on the shot clock
2.  If the offensive player being left open is in a better shooting position than the ball carrier
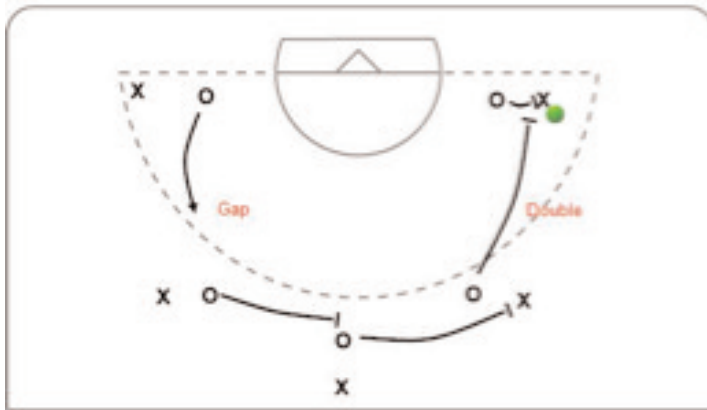


## Walling

Walling is a basic team concept of containment defence. After the offence has committed themselves to their sides of the floor, the defence must create a wall which is an imaginary line that runs parallel to the side boards (Diagram Walling 1). It is this line which establishes the line of intense confrontation; the line which marks entry to the prime scoring area (the "alley"). The wall is established by the collective fronting of offensive players. In this defence, the area outside of this wall is referred to as the lane.

### Diagram Walling 1
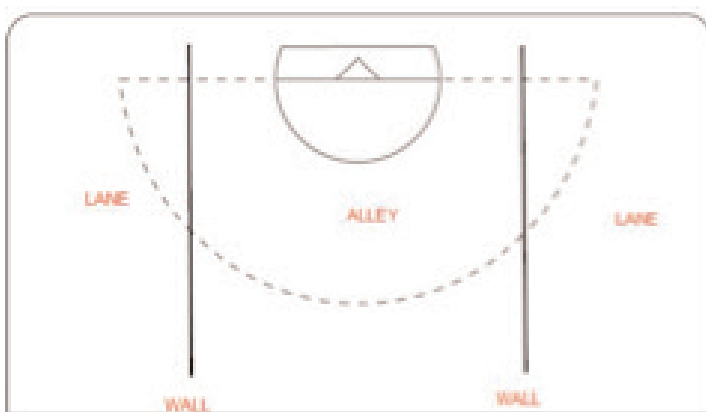


Movement of the offence up and down the lanes must be controlled by fronting, but no attempt should be made to restrict it. Any attempts by the offence to pick off defensive players can easily be negated by having the defensive player step back and slide through, while still fronting his check (Diagram Walling 2).

## Diagram Walling 2



Cutters must be escorted through the alley by running with them and covering their sticks with either the stick or the body. Any attempt by an offensive player to move to the top of the alley must be restricted by cross-checking and steering.

If the ball carrier starts a one-on-one from the top of the alley, the defensive players must only attempt to steer him to the weak side of the wall. Walling is not a muscular exercise in moving players. Offensive players are not restricted in moving up and down the lanes, but are only resisted when they attempt to move into the alley.

Team walling is based on group fronting. There will be situations, especially on the strong-side, where the defenders will play a quasi-zone. In this situation, the top defender will switch to cover the top offensive player, instead of forcing the bottom defender to make his way through a number of bodies to stay with his man (Diagram Walling 3).

Many offensive players, especially those of dubious ability will take the path of least resistance. Their movement up and down the lanes satisfies their concept of offence and puts little pressure on the defence. By making these players feel they are taking an active part in the offence, the defence has in essence taken them out of the play. This allows the defence to concentrate on the real offensive threats.

### Diagram Walling 3



☐ 4-17, after man-up (Power Play) – defence. Add the following sections on 6-5s and Situational Lacrosse.

## 6-on-5 Power Play

This formation in lacrosse is extremely important and can be used in numerous situations. Coaches need to spend more time with 6 on 5 because opportunities are increasing and the margin of error is smaller due to having two more players on the floor from the regular 5-4 power play. The regular power play set up is used with the extra man in the middle. Another formation is to keep the middle clear and have three righties and three lefties. This formation confuses defences because they usually place their extra defender in the middle like a box and one. The diagrams will show some set plays with man in middle and with the middle clear. The situations that 6-5 can be used are as follows:

☐ delayed penalty

☐ end of period or game with under 30 seconds on shot clock

☐ sneak play when overloading one side and pulling goalie

☐ after a time out or stoppage of play

☐ during any regular man possession

## 6 on 5 Advantages

It can create quality scoring chances under numerous situations as outlined above. It should allow the offensive team to maintain possession of the ball and to control the pace of the game or situation. It is a way of scoring quicker than a 5 on 5 situation where each defender has a man. Another advantage of 6 on 5 is that it can break the routine or change the momentum of the game especially if the 5 on 5 offence is not working.

## 6 on 5 Drawbacks

The drawbacks of 6 on 5 are that in some situations, you expose your team to an empty net goal. In certain situations, it can be the reason for giving up a crucial goal. However, in most instances, pulling the goalie for an extra attacker is used because the offensive team desperately needs a scoring opportunity.

# Man-up (Power Play) - Offence

The man up offence is usually the result of a penalty(ies) given to an opponent. However the concepts are consistent for all man up situations. The traditional man up offence positioning and principles are discussed in this section.

*NOTE:*
*Coaches are encouraged to use these principles to develop a team philosophy and strategy based on the team's abilities.*

## Creasemen - 2

- Tough individual (must be able to take a "hit").
- Takes close-in shots (good at faking and quick release shots).
- A good player at gaining possession of rebounds/loose balls (aggressive and disciplined).
- Generally height is an advantage.
- Requires one player playing left-handed and one playing righthanded.
- Takes initial position at the crease between the goal line and the top centre of the crease.

*NOTE:*
*The offensive team must continue with motion offence philosophies of moving the ball and playing to open spaces.*

## Shooter (/Cornerman) - 2

- Good shooter (must be able to deliver the "junk") – overhand, sidearm, and underhanded shooting abilities are a must.
- Pass and catch in one motion while under pressure.
- Player must be alert and have the ability to freelance and recognize opportunities.
- Requires one player playing left-handed and one playing righthanded.
- Takes an initial position at the furthest points of the prime scoring area triangle.
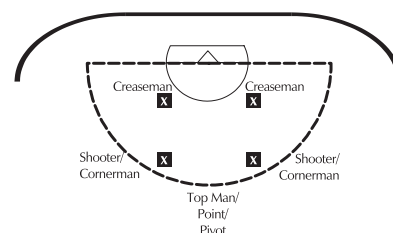


*ALL PLAYERS MUST MOVE THE BALL AND THEIR FEET.*

## Top Man (/Point /Pivot) - 1

- Leader and quick thinker (mental attribute).
- Sees and generates opportunities.
- Good overhand shooter.
- Good hard accurate passer.
- Ability to play either left or right-handed.
- Takes initial position at centre of floor outside the prime scoring area.

## Basic Strategy: Freelance or Set Plays

- Teams utilizing a freelance system may incorporate set plays in order to determine how the defence will react. Examples are:
    1. Where and how the goalie tracks the movement of the ball.
    2. If a goaltender moves out to cut down the angle of a shooter, plays to the creaseman should be the priority.
    3. If a goaltender remains close to the goal line, plays to the shooters should be the priority.
    4. Where and how the defensive players move.
    5. Take advantage of what you observe.
    6. Time is a consideration (i.e. the end of a game or period) and if the offence is gearing for a single scoring opportunity.
- Set plays are preferred for players learning and discovering the actions of defences. It helps players discover reactions to plays by the defence.
- Set plays are often used to force predictable defence reactions.
- Freelance play is preferred to prevent predictability of offence.

*Three BASIC Plays to learn how to run your man up offence.*

## Power Play Option #1

1. Pass the ball back and forth between the shooter and the top man a minimum of three to four times.
2. The off-side shooter breaks, receives a pass and quickly shoots.
3. If the top man on the man short team closely follows and checks the breaking man:
    a) the top man of the power play slides into the vacated area and receives the pass and takes a quick shot.
    b) it is important that the shooter passes right through the box and that the passing shooter fakes the pass prior to releasing the pass to the top man.
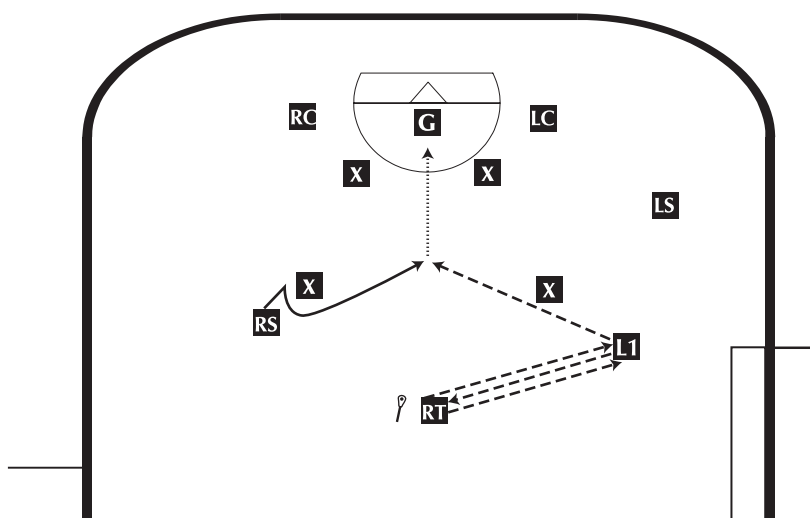


LEGEND

| Symbol | Meaning |
|---|---|
| → | Player movement |
| - - -→ | Pass |
| ·········→ | Shot |
| ⊢ | Pick |
| ⌑ | Start position of ball |
| RC | Right Creaseman |
| RS | Right Shooter |
| RT | Right Top |
| LS | Left Shooter |
| LC | Left Creaseman |
| X | Defender |

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*Three BASIC Plays to learn how to run your man up offence.*

## Power Play Option #2

1. Pass the ball back and forth between the shooter and the top man a minimum of three to four times.
2. The off-side shooter breaks for a pass and then quickly acts to place a pick on the bottom man short player. The right creaseman rolls around the pick and receives the pass and shoots.
3. If the man short beats the pick and follows the creaseman through, hit the pick man with the pass. Ensure a good fake of the pass to the creaseman is provided to free up the pick man.

```
┌─────────── LEGEND ───────────┐
│ ──────▶   Player movement     │
│ ─ ─ ─▶   Pass                 │
│ ··········▶  Shot             │
│ ────┤    Pick                 │
│  ⌐     Start position of ball │
│ RC      Right Creaseman       │
│ RS      Right Shooter         │
│ RT      Right Top             │
│ LS      Left Shooter          │
│ LC      Left Creaseman        │
│ X       Defender              │
└───────────────────────────────┘
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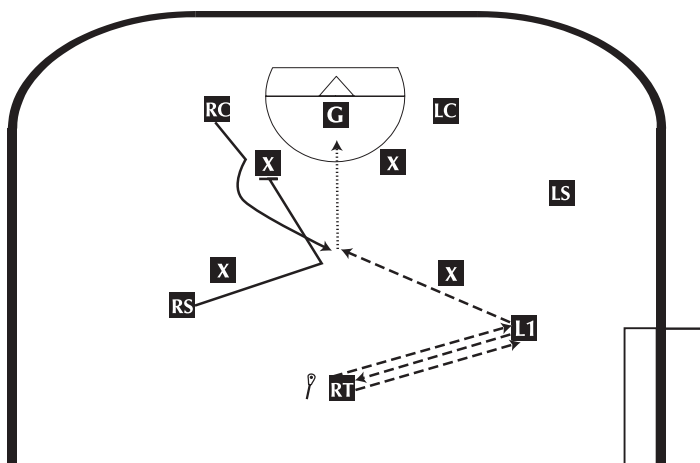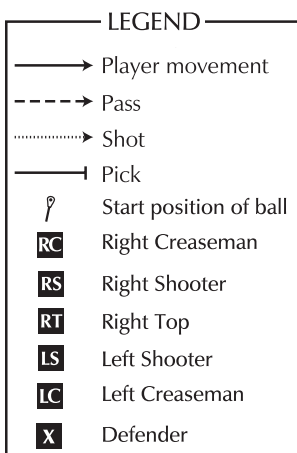

Power Play Option #3

1. Pass the ball back and forth between the shooter and the top man a minimum of three to four times.
2. The left creaseman slides into a position behind the goal crease. The top man passes to the creaseman and receives a return pass and shoots.
3. If either top men of the man short team pick up the top man cutting, the shooter from the side that the man short checker left, quickly cuts in for the pass and shoots. It is important that the top man of the power play carry right through the box.

```
┌─────────── LEGEND ───────────┐
│ ──────▶   Player movement     │
│ ─ ─ ─▶   Pass                 │
│ ··········▶  Shot             │
│ ────┤    Pick                 │
│  ⌐     Start position of ball │
│ RC      Right Creaseman       │
│ RS      Right Shooter         │
│ RT      Right Top             │
│ LS      Left Shooter          │
│ LC      Left Creaseman        │
│ X       Defender              │
└───────────────────────────────┘
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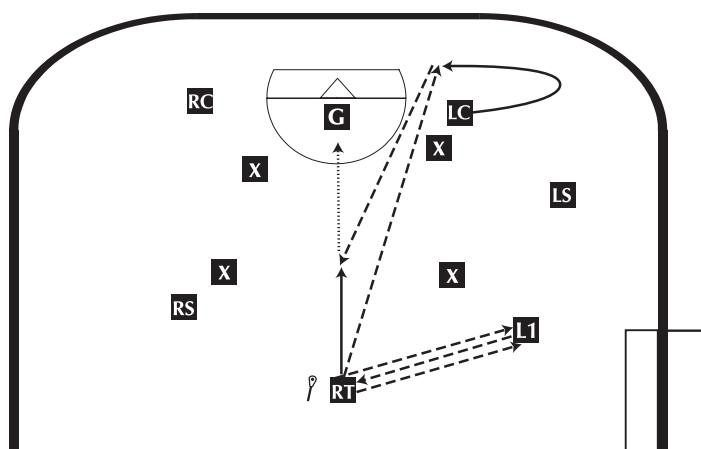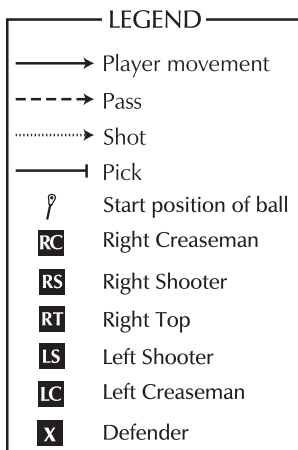
NOTE:
Generally defenders play closer to offensive players when midpointing to cut away passing opportunities.
NOTE:
Beware of:
• checking too close as to create an isolated defender;
• the offensive team pulling their goaltender;
• time left in a penalty;
• time left on the shot clock.

Man-up (Power Play) – Defence

The man up defence is similar to the sagging man-on-man – help defence except the team has an extra player that can be used to:

- pressure the ball carrier or other opponents;
- make risky plays to regain possession; and
- take up a position near the middle of the prime scoring area (safety valve).

Man-down Defence (Short Man)

The man-down defence is usually is the result of a penalty(ies). However the concepts are consistent for all man-down situations. The standard defence positioning is based on two basic formations: the box formation and the diamond formation.

When to use a 4-man box:
• The goaltender is strong on outside shots or is an angle goaltender.
• The opposition has strong creasemen.

Aspects:
• Passive defence on the ball carrier.
• Generally easier to play effectively.

When to use a 4-man diamond:
• The goaltender is weak on outside shots or is a reflex goaltender.
• The opposition has a strong top man and shooters.

Aspects:
• Aggressively attack the ball carrier.
• More difficult to play effectively.

Four-man Box Formation

• Two bottom defenders are positioned 3/4 of the way up the crease, as wide as necessary to prevent passes to the nearest creaseman and without screening the goaltender when the ball is in the shooter position.
• Two top defenders are positioned in a line between the shooters and their nearest goal post, near the shooting line. They must remain close enough to the middle to prevent the top man from entering the prime scoring area unchallenged.
• Sticks must be up and ready to intercept or prevent passing except when offensive player enters the prime scoring area. In this case the defender MUST defend the player.

NOTE:
Similar to man up situations coaches are encouraged to use these principles to develop a team philosophy and strategy based on the team's abilities.

4-Man Box

4-Man Diamond
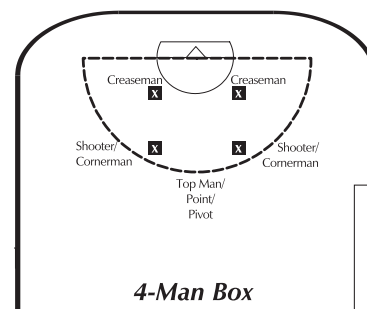
- Defending the area around the defenders position is paramount and players must resist the temptations to move from their respective areas of defence. These decisions are complicated by deciding when to chase loose balls.
- Pressure on the ball carrier can be used to thwart the man-up offence.

Diamond Formation

- The single bottom defender is initially positioned at the top centre of the crease and he/she is responsible for both creaseman. The player moves along the crease to remain on the ball side of the player in possession of the ball to prevent passes to the creaseman on the ball side. He/she must communicate with the goaltender to prevent screening.
    - The single bottom defender is the quarterback of the short man unit.

- The three top defenders are initially positioned in standard manon- man positioning with the shooters and top man of the man-up unit.

- The defenders move using the following rules:
    - The ball carrier is covered with pressure man-on-man;
    - The two players closest to the ball carrier are covered man-onman;
    - The other defender must cover BOTH remaining offensive players.

- These formations and rules must be adjusted when the offence uses player movement to create problems for defensive formations.

- Rotating between box and diamond formations is a popular way to disguise team defensive strategies.

Man-down Offence (Short Man)

The man-down offence is similar to the full strength offence. The 30- second shot clock is in effect (in minor lacrosse), therefore teams must decide whether their intention is to run the penalty down or attempt scoring opportunities.

Penalty time killing strategies:
• A player runs with the ball into open space with other players creating space by vacating areas of floor where the ball carrier is going.
• Traditional Motion Offence Ball Wrag.

LEGEND

→ Player movement
---→ Pass
·······→ Shot
—| Pick
⚲ Start position of ball
RC Right Creaseman
RS Right Shooter
RT Right Top
LS Left Shooter
LC Left Creaseman
X Defender
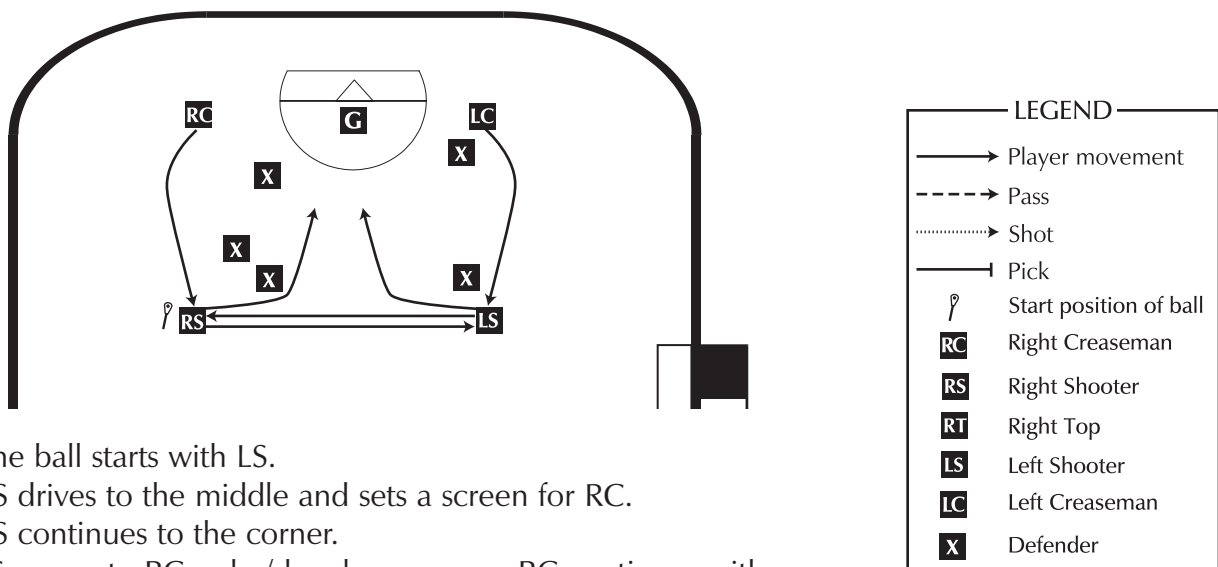
1. The ball starts with LS.
2. RS drives to the middle and sets a screen for RC.
3. RS continues to the corner.
4. LS passes to RC as he/she clears screen. RC continues with the ball away from the pressure.
5. LS drives to the middle and sets a screen for LC.
6. LS continues to the corner.
7. RC passes to LC as he/she clears screen. LC continues with ball away from pressure.
8. RC drives to the middle and sets a screen for RS.
9. RC continues to the corner.
10. LC passes to RS as he/she clears screen. RS continues with the ball away from the pressure.
11. LC drives to the middle and sets a screen for LS.
12. LC continues to the corner.
13. RS passes to LS as he/she clears screen. LS continues with the ball away from pressure.

All players are now in their original positions.

Transition - Offence

The basic strategies employed for offence transition is a controlled break-out or a fast break-out.

Principles of the fast break

- Front players charge up floor as quickly as possible.
    - If they are quicker than the defenders a break-away opportunity is created.
    - If they are slower than the defenders then the players create a large vacated space for their teammates to move the ball up the floor with less resistance.
    - Routes taken during the charge up the floor generally are up the sides of the floor (floor positioning principles should be maintained).
        - Reduces possibilities for interceptions.
        - Prevents the opposition goaltender from easily retrieving errant passes.

- Passing the ball to an open man-up the floor is essential.
    - Passes should be made directly up the floor (not across the floor) until reaching the shooting line
    - Passes move the ball quicker than carrying the ball.
    - Passes more than 20 metres are riskier than two or three shorter passes.

- The goaltender is key to starting the transition/fast-break. Good goaltenders must be able to:
    - communicate the start of the break-out;
    - pass the ball well to any position on the floor;
    - help other players as a target or outlet when they are trying to move the ball from the defensive end.

The controlled break-out consists of getting the ball into the opponent's zone in a low risk controlled fashion. Teams learning the concepts of line changes can use this approach to best ensure a proper transition.

Principles of a controlled break-out

- Players move the ball away from pressure (passing or carrying).
    - With no pressure the ball moves forward with low risk passes.
- Players give the ball carrier two options for passes.
- Players have specific routes on the floor.
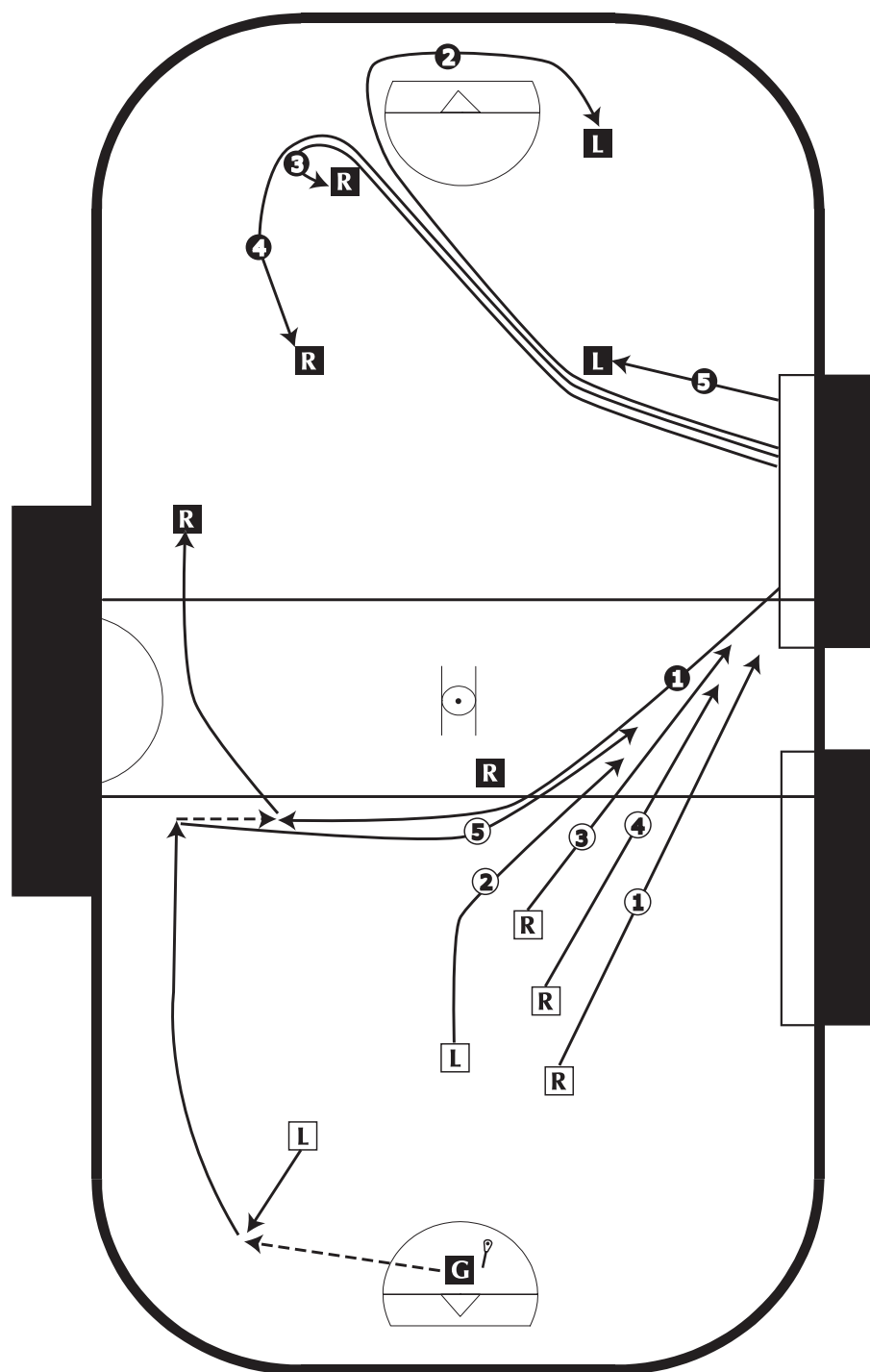
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NOTE:
Changes at stoppages in play are self evident but MOST of the changes are made during the flow of the play. Some teams disguise player's shortcomings by using specialized offence/defence systems (where players may play only offence or only defence). The best systems used are the ones that employ each player playing each end of the floor once before changing.

NOTE:
The system on the next page allows players to be aggressive in the PRESS and be responsible defensively. Some (usually two) players change when their team has possession and others change when the team loses possession. The advantage of this system is that you always have players that are remaining on the floor. Players learn both offence and defence. The speed of the transition is part of the game.
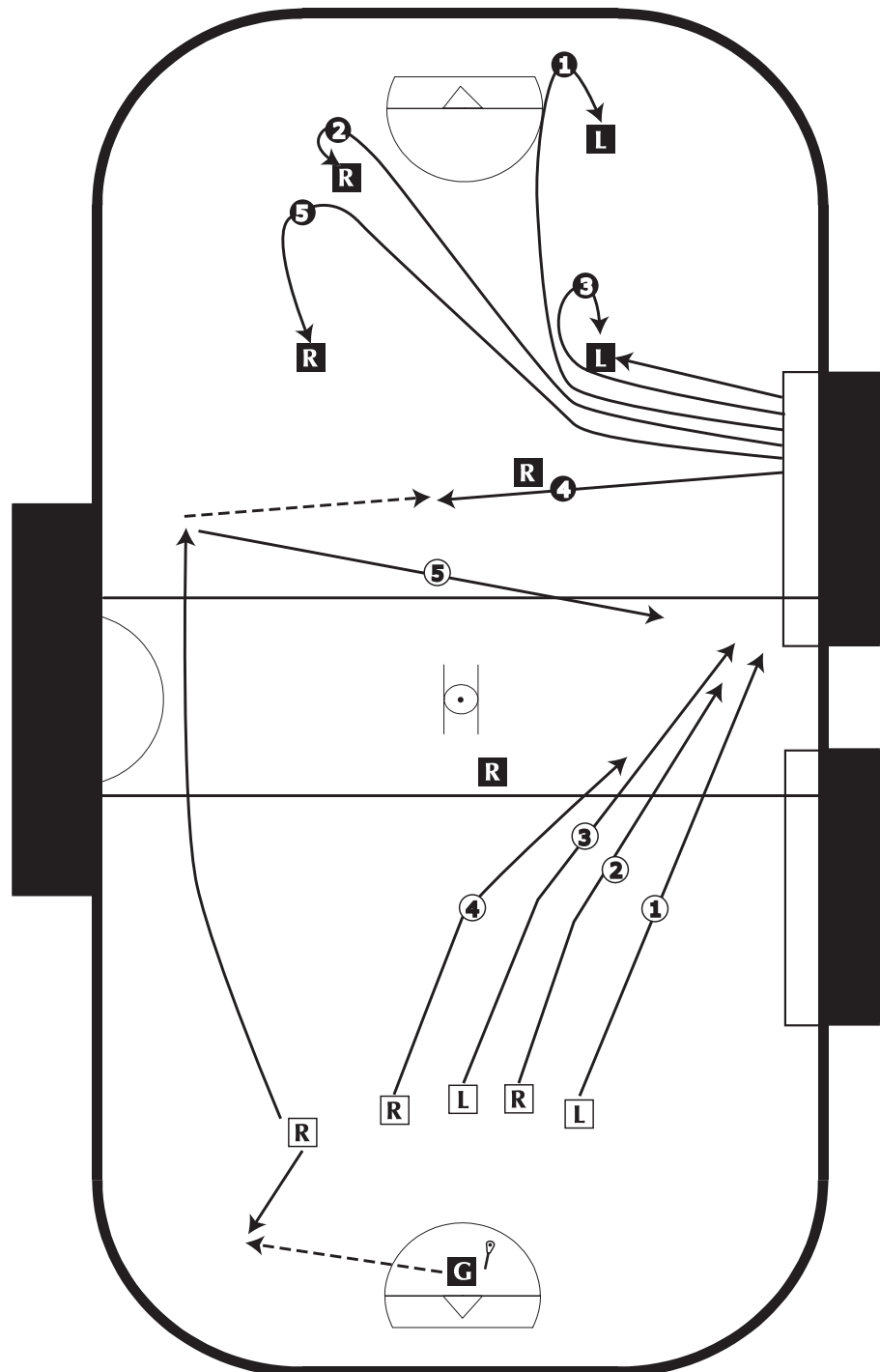
Players

R L R R L (shown)

or

R L L R L

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3s and 2s is a simple name for a line change format that puts more pressure and speed into line changes. 3s are responsible for playing defence then offence and then return to the bench. 2s play offence then defence and then return to the bench.
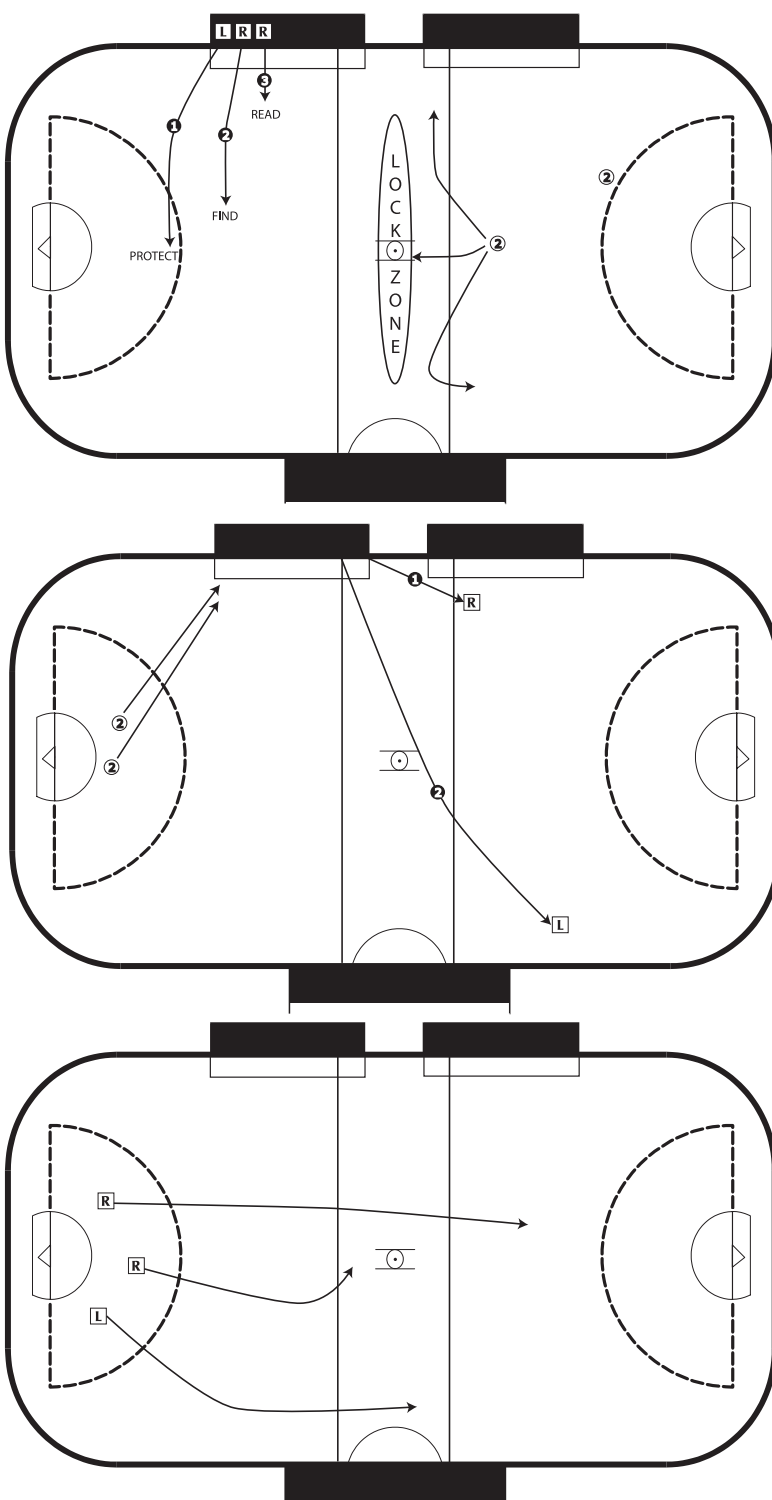
SCENARIO 1:
WHEN POSSESSION IS LOST
2's: Press the ball – one on the ball and the other in the lock zone. They must NOT let the ball get past them.
3's: Run to the bench as fast as possible. The first 3 off the bench runs to the top of the dotted line – PROTECT. The second 3 runs to help the 2s or picks up the furthest opponent on the floor – FIND. The third 3 reads the play – usually sets up in a defensive posture near the top of the dotted line – READ.

SCENARIO 2:
WHEN POSSESSION IS GAINED
The ball is moved to a 3. The 3s move the ball up the floor quickly in an attempt to create an odd man situation. If unsuccessful, retain possession until the 2s enter offence. The first 2 is often available for the fast break off the front end of the bench.

NOTES:
• The ball is moved up the same side it started (i.e. no cross floor passes).
• Three quick passes of 10-15 metres are more effective than one long pass.
• 2s are usually 1 left-handed and 1 right-handed player.
• 2s are usually top players.
• 2s try to delay an opponent's offensive transition.
• 3s must leave the floor immediately upon loss of possession.

Player Skills – Refined

Goaltender - Defence

Goaltender instructions should be part of every practice session. They require special considerations and training is different from other athletes in lacrosse. Modify your skill drills and conditioning to give goaltenders the maximum benefit.

NOTES:
- Goaltenders must communicate with teammates.
- Always allow goaltenders time to stretch appropriately before facing shots.
- Goaltenders will face up to 400 shots in a practice session which is 8-15 times more shots than in a game. Be aware that he/she must add extra padding or allow breaks for safety considerations.
- Never allow fatigued goaltenders to face shots in practice as they become susceptible to injuries.

Goaltenders must constantly work on the subtle visual clues given by the shooter. The following is an example of designing a drill that helps goaltenders improve a specific advanced skill.

- Line a 5-man unit around a 24' shooting line.
- Each player has a ball.
- In sequence, starting left to right have players shoot at a designated goal area (i.e. top left corner).
- Teaching points to emphasize are:
  - the goaltender must begin with a stance consistent with proper angle coverage;
  - the goaltender must read the body language of a player's shots to a specific goal area. By giving the goaltender clues for game situations this helps with anticipating shot targets.

    Note: Shooters will start to learn to read goaltender's body language.

HINTS FOR GOALTENDERS:
In general:
• overhand shots are taken from close in or in front of the goal by moving shooters
• sidearm shots are taken from sharp angles by stationary shooters
• sub-shots are taken from outside or screen situation by outside shooters.

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Goaltender – Offence

- During face-offs and team offence (assuming the goaltender is not directly involved in the offence), the goaltender should be positioned outside the shooting line but close enough to cover the net in case of a scoring opportunity by the opposition. This positioning allows the goaltender to help retrieve loose balls and get them back to his offensive players sooner (i.e. rebounds and errant passes).

- After a shot, save or loose ball, the goaltender must communicate with teammates what is happening with the ball and give commands to start the team's break-out.

- If the goaltender can retrieve the ball in his/her crease it is an advantage for his/her team because the opposition cannot check the goaltender while inside the crease.
  - Goaltenders should attempt to collect rebounds or loose balls behind the goal line when possible.
  - The goaltender should step to the side of the net as he/she has five seconds to move the ball from the crease. Generally the goaltender should exit the crease from the back.

- Goaltenders should be taught to throw short, hard, accurate passes with the accent on a quick release. Long, looping passes may look very impressive when completed but they are too risky to be used as a primary break-out.

- Goaltenders may also participate in the break-out as an outlet pass.

Stick Skills

This section assumes all players are accomplished at the skills of catching, cradling, passing and shooting. Coaches must design practices to encourage improvement of stick skills. Coaches should evaluate the player's body mechanics to help refine and improve stick skills.

If an athlete has perfect mechanics the only improvements needed are to increase strength and speed of the:
• core body muscles;
• leg muscles;
• shoulder and arm muscles.

Catching
• Practice catching under pressure:
    • by adding stronger defense to practices;
    • by having players look away until after the pass has left his/her partner's stick;
    • while running at full speed;
    • while under time pressure;
    • take the pass over the shoulder.

Cradling (stick handling between catching and passing/shooting)
• Practice fakes before passes or shots in practices.
    • Fakes are a motion made with the stick to confuse or deceive the defender(s). The stick usually moves in a direction to feint an action that creates a predictable reaction from a defender for an advantage to the offensive player(s).
• Players must have the opportunity to explore different variations of fakes and deceptions.

Passing and Shooting (passing and shooting are variations of the same skill)
• The passer or shooter can improve power by increasing:
    • body momentum;
    • the number of body parts moving;
    • the timing of moving body parts;
    • body strength.

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Inside Shooting

The mechanics of shooting are largely the same whether it is an outside or inside shot. Nevertheless, there are a few additional elements that are involved with inside shooting.

1. Power and accuracy are less important than quickly getting off your shot. This means that you do not need a big windup or step in to your shot. The shot is done almost entirely by wrists and arms.

2. Shooters have two major options: 1) a quick shot to an open area of the goal; or 2) make the goalie move by a stick-fake and then shoot to the open area of the goal

3. Shooters can shoot for the near side or the far side of the goal.

4. When shooting to the far side of the goal, the shooter should step towards the mid-part of the floor, fully extending their arms, using the additional stick length to shoot around the goalie.

Faking

A useful part of shooting is deception by using a stick fake. The most simple, but still incredibly effective fake, is the overhand fake. The faking has to resemble an actual shot as realistically as possible. The purpose is to force the goalie to move to cover a corner or to freeze him in place. Then just as the ball is about to leave the pocket, the player quickly snaps the top hand wrist towards the inside of the body. This keeps the ball in the pocket and allows the player to shoot where he/she really wants to go. Players can either fake side to side or up and down. The key in stick-faking is to use the body, the stick, and the eyes in deceiving the goalie

Over-the-Shoulder Pass

☐   This is used when the open receiver is opposite the ball carrier's stick side and the ball carrier is being defended tightly. Instead of passing across the front of their body, the ball carrier uses an over-the-shoulder pass. The over-the-shoulder pass is also a very useful technique for the pointman on the powerplay to quickly swing the ball. To be successful, this type of pass requires a lot of practice.]

☐   *Preliminary Movements*. The ball carrier protects the ball against a defender. The ball carrier moves into a double threat position. The defender overplays the ball carrier. There is an open teammate to the backend of the ball carrier.

☐ *Preparatory Movements*. The ball carrier's stick moves toward the open teammate by turning the stick slightly away and behind the body.

☐ *Force Producing Movements*. Rotate the shoulders and hips. Start moving the stick over your shoulder. Top hand pulls back to the elbow and bottom hand drives forward.

☐ *Critical Instant*. Snap the wrists as the ball is released. The ball is released when it is behind the ball carrier's head.

☐ *Follow-Through*. Let the stick follow-through in the direction of the target.

Sidearm Shot

☐ At the training to train stage of development, players need to utilize different types of shots. As goalies improve, players need to mix up both the location of their shot and the type of shot. The sidearm shot is similar to a baseball swing and is used about 30 feet from the goal.

☐ *Preliminary Movements*. The shoulder is facing the target. The foot on the same side as the stick should be behind and at a 45 degree angle to the front foot. The arms are extended back slightly. Both hands are at the end of the stick, approximately a glove width apart. The arms are extended away from the body.

☐ *Preparatory Movements*. Move the stick into a horizontal position. The weight is on the back foot.

☐ *Force Producing Movements*. Fully extend the arms. Rotate the hips and shoulders. Make a baseball-like swing motion with the stick in a horizontal position.

☐ *Critical Instant*. Snap both wrists as the arms move in a full swing. The ball is released when the stick becomes parallel with the shooter.

☐ *Follow-Through*. Follow-through has the stick moving in a much wider arc. Bring the back foot forward as in taking a step.

Underhand Shot

☐ The underhand shot is similar to a golf swing.

☐ *Preliminary Movements*. The shoulder is facing the target. The foot on the same side as the stick should be behind and at a 45 degree angle to the front foot. The arms are extended back slightly. Both hands are together at the end of the stick.

☐ *Preparatory Movements*. Move the stick so that the head of the stick is near the floor. The weight is on the back foot.

☐ *Force Producing Movements*. Make a golf-like swing motion with the stick in a horizontal position. Rotate the hips and shoulders.

☐ *Critical Instant*. Snap both wrists as the arms move in a full swing. The ball is released when the stick becomes parallel with the shooter.

☐ *Follow-Through*. Let the stick follow-through in the direction of the target. Bring the back foot forward as in taking a step.

Over-the-Shoulder Shot

☐ *Preliminary Movements*. As the player crosses in front of the net, he shows his regular shooting motion. The goalie crosses with him.

☐ *Preparatory Movements*. The player's stick moves to the open side of the net by turning the stick slightly away and behind the body.

☐ *Force Producing Movements*. Rotate the shoulders and hips. Start moving the stick over your shoulder. Top hand pulls back to the elbow and bottom hand drives forward.

☐ *Critical Instant*. Snap the wrists as the ball is released. The ball is released when it is behind the shooter's head.

☐ *Follow-Through*. Let the stick follow-through in the direction of the target.

Scoring Strategies

Here are some suggestions on shooting.

☐ Remember to use the Prime Scoring Area

☐ Shoot on the run, rather than in a stationary position

☐ The primary area to shoot for is from the goalie's hips to his knees.

☐ Secondary areas are the corners, both low and high, depending on the goalie's style

☐ The five-hole between the goalie's legs is also available when the goalie is forced to move laterally.

☐ Study the opponent's goalie tendencies.

☐ Faking

☐ Quick Sticks

☐ Don't telegraph your shot. Do not look directly at the place that you want to shoot. You have to make it look like you're going for one spot and shooting for another.

Mix your shots up. Use overhand, bounce, sidearm, underhand, and over-the-shoulder. Aim for different spots on the net.

Defending

Players defending one-on-one require good anticipation and quick movement skills to counteract all offensive players moves. They must be able to maintain proper defensive positioning and communicate with teammates. Advanced defensive players move from being reactionary to acting pre-emptively to force the offensive player into doing what he doesn't want to do.

For example, if an offensive right-handed player wants to come across the top to improve his angle and take a shot, force him to the side for a poor angle shot. If he wants to go right, force him left, etc.

NOTE:
Practice defence skills during offence drills.

Defending is done in two phases.

1.   Contact Phase
     i.   The defender sets up in the athlete's ready position for aggressive contact by the opponent. The defender prepares for shock-absorber action with legs bent, body lowered, back straight, arms slightly bent, wrists cocked and in a ready position to control his/her opponent. The purpose is to stop or slow an opponent's momentum by absorbing it and then straightening him up.

NOTE:
Individual defence is a combination of repetition and concentration.

2.   Aggressive Phase
     i.   The defender is in a square crouch position to cushion the contact by an attacking player. The attacking player is usually higher with his/her front leg bent and the back leg almost straight.
     ii.   The defender is now in a recoil position, he/she then uses leg strength and extension to further push the attacking player.
     iii. The defender then returns to the athlete's ready position to play his opponent one-on-one.

The good defender is able to sense by minute body movements of opponent his intentions. The defender than does what is necessary to not allow his opponent to complete his intentions.

Analyzing Skills
The Five Phases of Skill Execution

Phase Analysis of Skills is the process of breaking a skill into five separate steps from the initial movements to the follow-through. Analyzing skills by breaking them into their phases will help coaches develop effective teaching progression, to pinpoint problem areas and to separate the cause of problems from their symptoms.

1. **Preliminary Movements**
   The Preliminary Movements are movements required to set the body and its parts in the correct or "ready" position before initiating the skill. There is also a mental aspect of the preliminary movement as the player decides what action to take.
   • Purpose of the skills
   • Feet position
   • Body orientation
   • Knee flex
   • Stick position

2. **Preparation Movements**
   The Preparation Movements are in the opposite direction to the movements that produce or absorb force. They are usually the wind-up of the body and its parts and sometimes the recovery movements of the follow-through from the previous skill.
   • Body rotation
   • Arm extension
   • Weight transfer

3. **The Force Producing Movements**
   The Force Producing Movements are initiated by the unwinding of the large muscle groups as in the:
   • weight transfer
   • hip, trunk and shoulder rotation
   • leg and arm extension

4. **The Critical Instant**
   The Critical Instant is the point of release or contact.

5. **The Follow-Through**
   The Follow-through is what the player uses to dissipate the forces that are built up. Errors made in the follow-through are usually a result of errors in one of the earlier phases.

Stages of Skill Development

Stages of skill development as they progress from beginner to advanced/elite. Coaches will be trained to provide athletes with ways to develop each skill to the highest level possible once athletes enter into competitive events.

LEARNING LEVELS OF BOX LACROSSE PLAYERS				
1 Beginner	**2** Beginner-Intermediate	**3** Intermediate-Advanced	**4** Intermediate	**5** Advanced
PERCEIVING Movements are those in which players become aware of and come to understand the fundamental positions, stances, and patterns of their sport. **PATTERNING** Movements are those in which players execute the components of movement in the correct order – but usually in an awkward and unsynchronized manner.		**ADAPTING** Movements are those in which participants modify selected movement to perform them under different conditions and in different locations. **REFINING** Movements are those in which movements are smooth and efficient and are consistent under more complex conditions. **VARYING** Movements are those in which participants invent personal responses to competitive situations. At this level, these responses are limited to different ways of performing specific movements and the result of the immediate situation.		**IMPROVISING** Movements are those in which participants invent responses on the spur of the moment **COMPOSING** Movements are personal interpretations of movement or personal combinations of movement into unique motorpatterns. Composing movements are the ultimate movement of sport. The creations of the superstars of sport

(Side label: **STAGES OF SKILL DEVELOPMENT**)

Levels 1 –2 = Low level of execution
Level 3 = Average (correct form)
Levels 4 –5 = High level of execution
Note: The majority of athletes in the competitive environment should be at level 3 or above.

The Skill Assessment Charts are provided as a guide to:
1. Help the coach understand proper technique of the fundamental skills as they pertain to athletes competing in a competitive environment.
2. Enable the coach to quickly get a read on the skill level of his/her players. This could be used as a teaching tool.
3. Assist in goal setting for individuals and the team in terms of raising skill development over the course of the season to the highest possible levels.

LOOSE BALLS

Criteria/Level	1 Beginner	2 Beginner-Intermediate	3 Intermediate-Advanced	4 Intermediate	5 Advanced
Hand & Body positioning	- Knees not bent resulting in sliding top hand down the shaft of stick - Not planting foot beside the ball on the pick up - Doesn't focus well on ball	- Stick not parallel to ground - Body not low enough; learning to bend knees - Not always focused on ball distracted by opposing player	- Knuckles on floor; both hands on stick - Stick parallel to floor - Plants foot beside the ball - Knees bent & butt down - Eyes focused on ball - Aware of opponent but may not cut them off	- Knuckles on floor; both hands on stick - Stick parallel to floor - Plants foot beside the ball - Knees bent & butt down - Eyes focused on ball - Cuts opponent off to be first to the ball	- Technically correct body positioning - Anticipates the loose ball well - Takes the shortest route to get to the ball
Recovery of ball & Transition to Cradle	- Stops to recover ball resulting in another loose ball as it is checked almost immediately - Frequently pushes the ball along the floor - Doesn't block out opposition with body	- Slows down to recover ball - Occasionally pushes the ball along ground - Doesn't block out opposition with body - Often bobbles the ball and can recover but forgets to cradle	- Begins cradle as soon as ball is in stick - Maintains speed as approaches ball - Recovery is smooth, rarely bobbles the ball - Sometimes blocks out opposition with body	- Immediately protects ball by changing cradling level quickly - Maintains speed as approaches ball - Runs aggressively through the ball - Recovery is smooth, no bobbling of ball - Blocks out opposition with body	- Aggressive in traffic to win ground ball - Good instincts - Blocks out opposition with body - Immediately protects ball by changing cradling level quickly
Practice situations	- Requires constant reminders/demos of proper technique; bobbles ball in practice situations	- Requires some reminders of technique; can perform skill in practice	- Demonstrates good technique in drill situations	- Works on weak hand in all practice situations; pick-ups are becoming more consistent with weak hand	- Uses both hands equally well recovering loose balls
Game play	- Pushes loose balls along; fear of crowds	- Picks up most loose balls cleanly; still having problems with crowds	- Executes well in open floor; becoming more confident in crowds	- Confident in crowds; determination in winning loose balls	- Wins most ground ball situations
Switching hands (using both hands)	- No weak hand competency	- Limited weak hand competency; will attempt in practice situations	- Attempts to use either hand in open floor situation	- Use both hands in game situations; will revert back to dominant hand space permitting to get the loose ball	- Mechanics executed well with either hand; will use most advantageous hand for winning the loose ball

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GRIP AND CRADLE

Criteria/ Level	1 Beginner	2 Beginner-Intermediate	3 Intermediate-Advanced	4 Intermediate	5 Advanced
Top hand Grip	- Tight grip, V at back of stick; Poor positioning	- Top hand not at throat of stick; Stick moves in hand, rotates in hand; V usually out of proper positioning	- Top hand at throat of stick; Relaxed grip; V formed with thumb and fore-finger at front of stick	- Top hand at throat of stick; Relaxed grip; V formed with thumb and fore-finger at front of stick; demon-strates some ability to use one hand on stick	- Top hand at throat of stick at appropriate times; Relaxed grip; V formed with thumb and forefinger at front of stick; demon-strates some abil-ity to use one hand on stick
Bottom hand/arm Grip	- Too far up the shaft of stick	- Not at butt end of stick	- Bottom hand/arm at waist level	- Bottom hand/ arm at waist level	- Bottom hand/arm at waist level
Motion of Cradle	- Very mechanical motion; arms not synchronized concentrating on stick, looking at ball	- Very mechanical motion; too much wrist action; not enough forearm action	- Has rhythmical motion to cradle using full arm motion; begin-ning to change levels when cradling; attempting to use bottom arm to move the cradle	- Has rhythmical motion to cradle plus demon-strates some cre-ativity in motion (i.e., change of level to protect ball);	- Has rhythmical motion to cra-dle; has a cre-ative style to cra-dle (i.e., can use cradle to beat an opponent);
Practice situations	- Requires con-stant reminders/demos of proper tech-nique	- Requires some reminders of technique; coach must build in weak hand sit-uations into drills	- Demonstrates good technique in most drill situ-ations; attempts weak hand on own	- Demonstrates good technique in drill situations; Works on weak hand in all prac-tice situations	- Creative flare to cradling drills; regularly uses weak hand in drills
Game play	- Will drop ball in open floor situa-tions	- Can handle ball on open floor; lacks confidence in cradling in tight checking situations	- Very confident on open floor; becoming more confident cradling in tight checking situations	- Concentration is on the flow of the game rather than the stick	- Confident with cradling in tight situations; main-tains flow of game
Switching hands	- No weak hand competency	- Limited weak hand competen-cy; would not attempt weak hand in game situation	- Becoming com-fortable with switching hands, might attempt to use weak hand in open floor game situation	- Able to use both hands in game situations; will revert back to dominant hand	- Very difficult to check as can use both hands equally well; uses weak hand to their advan-tage

CATCHING

Criteria/ Level	1 Beginner	2 Beginner-Intermediate	3 Intermediate-Advanced	4 Intermediate	5 Advanced
Giving a Target	- Standing stationary when giving a target - Rigid, elbow stiff	- Attempts catching on the run; target up high only	- Establishes a visible target with stick; attempts different levels	- Establishes a visible target with stick at a variety of levels	- Gives target in advantageous position including off-stick side
Receiving the ball	- No give; doesn't absorb the ball - Often bobbles the ball - Stationary catch only	- Starting to cushion the ball better - Catching most of the time, even though not technically correct - Can't maintain speed while catching	- Cushions the ball by absorbing with arms - Able to catch at all levels with both hands - Able to maintain good foot speed when catching the ball	- Ability to catch at all levels with both hands - Capable of catching while closely marked - Performed at top speed	- Catches at all levels with both hands - Capable of catching while closely checked - Performed at top speed - Effective catch in heavy traffic
Transition to Cradle	- No cradle, so focused on catching the ball	- Attempts to cradle after catching; often too much wrist and not enough arms	- 'V' in front of stick allowing smooth transition to the cradle - Absorbs ball and immediately goes into cradle	- Proper stick positioning for cradle - Comfortable in closely checked situations	- Proper stick positioning for cradle - Catches & switches hands immediately
Practice situations	- Requires constant reminders/demonstrations of proper technique	- Requires some reminders of technique - Works on weak hand in practice situations; wouldn't use in a game yet	- Demonstrates good technique in drill situations; concentrates well on technique - Developing confidence in weak hand	- Concentrates on tight checking situations - Good with weak hand	- Works on one hand catches; both hands equally strong
Game play	- Struggling to perform open floor catches properly; cannot maintain possession of the ball in pressure situations	- Can make open floor catches; even though technique is not correct - Panics under pressure resulting in dropped ball situations	- Open floor catches executed properly; not as confident in tight situations; uses mostly predominant hand; starting to use weak hand	- Comfortable catching in tight situations and at different levels - Will use either hand to their advantage	- Confident receiving in tight situations and at different levels; ability to get stick on all passes - Uses both hands effectively
Use of Weak Hand	- No weak hand competency	- Limited weak hand competency; will attempt in practice situations	- Becoming comfortable switching hands, attempts weak hand catch in open floor situation	- Use both hands in game situations; will switch to dominant hand, space permitting, to make the next pass	- Very difficult to mark as can use both hands equally well; mechanics executed well with either hand

OVERHAND PASS

Criteria/ Level	1 Beginner	2 Beginner-Intermediate	3 Intermediate-Advanced	4 Intermediate	5 Advanced
Top Hand	- Poor positioning resulting in poor pass - Elbow positioned well below shoulder to begin the motion; results in poor mechanics to throw	- Top hand not at throat of stick, when it slides too far, results in lack of control in pass - Elbow positioned below shoulder to begin the motion on most passes, results in short pass	- Top hand begins at throat of stick, slides down shaft slightly to make pass; responsible for follow through; - Elbow positioned at or slightly above shoulder to begin the motion on most passes	- Top hand begins at throat of stick, slides down shaft slightly to make pass; follows through in the direction ball is to travel; responsible for follow through - Elbow positioned at or slightly above shoulder to begin the motion	- Top hand begins at throat of stick, slides down shaft slightly to make pass; follows through in the direction of ball; responsible for follow through - Arm positioned with elbow slightly above shoulder to begin motion
Bottom hand/arm	- Hand too far up shaft of stick; not able to generate any power when passing	- Hand not at butt end of stick; greater than 90° angle at elbow; not utilizing bottom arm to power the pass	- Bottom hand/arm at waist level or above; this arm powers the pass	- Bottom hand/arm above waist level; bottom arm providing power to pass; good follow through with bottom arm	- Bottom hand/arm above waist level; strong pass generated due to power provided by bottom hand
Transition to Pass	- Very mechanical motion; poor transition from cradle to pass: can't maintain foot speed; poor weight transfer, wrong foot forward	- Very mechanical motion; sometimes demonstrates balanced body positioning & sometimes able to maintain foot speed	- Throwing mechanics well established; opposite foot to throwing arm is forward; transition still a little rough	- Transition from cradle to passing mechanics is smooth, maintains foot speed	- Creative style to pass; very smooth transition from cradle to passing mechanics; easily maintains foot speed
Practice situations	- Requires constant reminders/ demos of proper technique	- Requires some reminders of technique	- Demonstrates good technique in drill situations; concentrates well on technique	- Works on weak hand in practice situations; strength in weak hand passing improving	- Creative flare to passing drills; uses both hands equally well for passing
Game play	- Struggling to execute open floor passes; short passes predominant; panics under pressure, reverts to poor technique	- Open floor passes are sometimes executed properly; panics under pressure, reverts to poor technique	- Open floor passes are executed properly; not as confident in tight situations; dominant hand used predominantly	- Greate open floor passes; Comfortable passing in tight situations; distance better with dominant hand	- Confident with passing in tight situations; good distance with both hands
Switching hands	- No weak hand competency	- Limited weak hand competency; will attempt in practice situations	- Becoming comfortable with switching hands, attempt to use weak hand pass in open floor situation	- Able to use both hands to pass in game situations; will revert back to dominant hand space permitting to make the pass	- Very difficult to check as can use both hands equally well; mechanics executed well with either hand

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.1

- 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

TASK 1:
Explain what the following phrases mean:
1. "Learning what it takes to win";
2. "You need to lose before you can win".

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.

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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?

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.

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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 vise 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 periods

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

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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".

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 floor 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.

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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 floor, 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 floor 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!

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 floor-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 offfloor 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.

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.

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.

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.

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

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

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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.

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?

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

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 cardio-vascular 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 consequently 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 floor.)

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

Physical Ability:

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.

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Reps and Sets

Anaerobic Alactic Energy System Use 4 to 7 seconds. per repetition. 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 fatique, stop the training or make an adjustment to one of the variables.	No. of Reps. 6 to 10 Pause between reps: 8 to 15 times the exercise time Sets: Up to 3 sets Pause between sets: 3 minutes Total work time: *2 to 3 minutes*
Anaerobic Lactic Energy System 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.	No. of Repetitions: 3 to 10 Pause between reps: 6 to 8 times the exercise time Sets: Up to 3 sets Pause between sets: Up to 5 to 10 min. Total work time: *4 to 6 minutes*

Aerobic energy System
  (Interval Training)
 	
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.
	No. of Repetitions: 6 to 12
	
	Pause between reps:
	   1 to 2 times the exercise time
	
	Sets: This training can eventually be used for half the practice.
	
	Pause between sets: 5 minutes
	
	Total work time:
	Up to 30 minutes

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. <u>Lower Body</u>
   Used to improve horizontal, vertical and lateral movements. Includes jumps in place, multiple hops, bounds, box drills, and depth jumps.
2. <u>Upper Body</u>
   Includes medicine ball throws/catches, and several types of push-ups.
3. <u>Trunk</u>
   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.

LOW INTENSITY (Beginner)	MEDIUM INTENSITY (Intermediate)	HIGH INTENSITY (Advanced)
Squat Jump Assume squat position, interlock fingers behind head; explosively jump up to a maximum height; Land in squat position & immediately repeat the jump.	**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.	**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.
	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.	**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.
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.	**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.	
	Push-Up with Clap Lie in push-up position; lower chest to floor; 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.	**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 floor 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.

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.

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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.

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 at 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

<u>Purpose:</u>
- Warms up – hip extensors, glutes, hamstrings

<u>Technique:</u>
- 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.

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

Airplanes (advanced)

<u>Purpose:</u>
- Warms up – hamstrings, calves, torso/core, good for improving balance and ankle proprioception.

<u>Technique:</u>
- Taking larger than normal step forward, sweep opposite arm towards foot and raise alternate arm and leg.

<u>Prescription:</u>
- Perform for the distance 1/2 way between crease and restraining line, then jog to restraining line.

Butt Kicks

<u>Purpose:</u>
- Warms up – hip flexors, quads

<u>Technique:</u>
- Light jog but bringing heels to butt.

<u>Prescription:</u>
Perform for the distance from crease to restraining line.

Alternating Side Squats

<u>Purpose:</u>
- Warms up – groin, inner thigh, hamstrings, glutes

<u>Technique:</u>
- 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.

<u>Prescription:</u>
- 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 floor 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.

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- 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 use 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.

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

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 floor scrimmage and then full floor 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.

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.

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.

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

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.

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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.

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.

SUMMARY

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.

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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 box 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 ad cardiovascular function better that 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.	So that blood will go to the working muscles, not the digestive organs (which can crmap if food is present). 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.	Timing food intake and the type of food eaten. Eat lean and eat lighter the closer the event is: • 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 her 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.	Because salty, sugary or high fibre foods can attract water to the gastrointestinal tract and cause bleeding, heaviness and dehydration. Because caffeine and alcohol promote water loss (are diuretics).	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.

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Sample pre-competition and between event menu

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

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. To train coaches in dressing room and bench management.

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

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.

*TASK 1:
Each coach should fill out the seasonal planner with particular emphasis on the pre-season, in-season and play-downs.*

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.

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 calibre of play – house league up to and including major senior and junior. This section of your planner will reflect those considerations. For example:

  - a coach of a midget aged team playing in a 'B' calibre league would be given a team list probably in March or April. This coach's season would start in April and run through until July or early August at best.
  - coach of a Junior A team on the other hand knows the majority of the team roster and may have training starting in January and ending in late August.

The principals 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 utilized the common ones are pre-season, in - season and play downs. In some instances and depending on the complexity of the program, an additional period called post-season may be added. For the purposes of this coaching stream only the three major periods will be discussed. Depending on the length of time that the athletes are under 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 – availability of the athletes and training facilities, the division and the calibre of play, to name a few.

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The length of the in-season and play downs are set by the league in witch the team participates – again it varies depending on the division and the calibre 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 administratively that must be adhered to in order to ensure a successful year of play.

• Evaluations: In order to have a training system that 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 season (pre-season) and they may 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 calibre in which the coach is practicing his 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 practice 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. Others such as face-offs, screening, etc can be added. 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 preseason phase and gradually lessen as the season progresses.

- Team Skills: Again the coach will determine the list which will appear on the seasonal planner. Skills such as break-outs, line changes, six (6) on five (5), etc can be added to your final list. 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 session 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.

The Importance of Assistant Coaches

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

On a full team roster of 20 players, a coach:
- provides information for at least four positions (situations) - offence, defence, transition and goaltending;
- makes correct line changes with the correct personnel;
- has responsibility for the power play (odd man) and man short; and
- makes general observations to help adjust a game plan or to make improvements at the next practice.

NOTE:
In some cases a team may carry a goaltender coach who is responsible for the training of the goaltenders. Depending on the calibre and level of competition, teams may use assistant coaches for the compiling of certain team stats.

The following is a sample list of assistant coaching titles and responsibilities.
The number of assistant coaches for each team will vary depending on the calibre and level of competition.

Offensive Coach - Responsibilities

- Establishes offensive patterns (motion offence)
- Sets the breakout (fast break)
- Responsible for the power play; and responsible for offensive skill training
- Sets six (6) on five (5) plays

TASK 2:
What are the advantages and disadvantages of using current (or recent former) players as assistant coaches?

Defensive Coach - Responsibilities

- Runs team defence
- Responsible for the man short
- Responsible for defensive skill training
- Responsible for line changes in transition (offence to defence and defence to offence)

TASK 3:
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?

When the coaching staff becomes to large, 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. Coaches will also have specific roles assigned for benches during game situations.

Dressing Room & Bench Management

TASK 4:
What are a coach's responsabilities during the following time period?

Pre-Game

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".

Between Periods

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

Time-Outs

- What is said post-game
- What is said in between periods

Post-Game

- What is the responsibility of the door persons

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

What happens when you call a time out:
- Remember that comfort zone, don't dwell on something that has already occurred and you can' do anything about,
- Don't try to envision something that may happen, KEEP the ATHLETES VOCUSED, 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 that _'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-floor time prior to a game is restricted,

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- Coaches MUST be at all games (and practices) prior to the posted time

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.

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.

What is said between periods:
- 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 periods unless specifically asked by the coaching staff.

What is the responsibility of the door persons:
- Only certified coaches and trainers, or a player (usually the backup goalie) can man the doors. There are no designated "doormen" that are allowed on the bench.
- Door operators should be "lacrosse" who don't only watch the game,
- The "in-door' operator should use key words to keep the self image of the athletes high and start them on their relaxation and rest cycle of work,
- They don't get into passing on direction as to what an athlete should or should not be doing, that is a coaching task,
- Their conduct is the responsibility of the head coach who must be accountable for all their actions

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SEASON PLANNER CALENDAR

DATE:

TEAM:

Category	Item	Months >>																									INDEX	
	Weeks >>	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	#	Description
Administrative Duties	Provincial Deadlines																												
	Medical History Forms																												
	Tournaments																												
	Team Meetings																												
	Team Socials																												
	Player/Team Registrations																												
Evaluations	Skills																												
	Physical Fitness																												
	Mental Status																												
Physical Preparations	Aerobic																												
	Anaerobic																												
	Muscular Strength																												
	Muscular Endurance																												
	Flexibility																												
	Cardio																												
Mental Training	Relaxation																												
	Attention Control																												
	Emotional Control																												
	Visualization																												
Individual Technical Skills	Passing																												
	Catching																												
	Shooting																												
	Defending																												
	Pick & Rolls																												
	Stick Control																												
	Goaltender Defensive Skills																												
Team Technical Skills and Strategies	One on One																												
	Draws																												
	Breakouts																												
	Transitions																												
	Man Short																												
	Power Play																												
	Team Defense																												
	Team Offense																												
	6 on 5																												
	Face-offs																												

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.