

# **Barnstable Youth Lacrosse**

## **Coaches Guide**

**Club Philosophy:** Barnstable Youth Lacrosse is an instructional program aimed at introducing youngsters to the exciting and fun game of lacrosse. As an instructional program, emphasis will be on learning stick skills, game fundamentals, and most of all, having fun.

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## Just Some Tips

Coaching youth sports can be very exciting and rewarding. However, it is not a casual endeavor. Children and their parents have high expectations of coaches (not unreasonable expectations), and doing the job well takes preparation.

What does this mean? **First**, don't come to practice expecting to wing it. Take an hour before practice and write down what you expect to accomplish during the 1.5 hours you have with your team. Don't try to do too much, and don't do the same drill over and over until you have lost the kids attention. As an example, break the practice down into manageable blocks of time -- say 30 minutes for warm up, running, stick skills, etc.; 30 minutes for team skills; and 30 minutes for scrimmage (learning to play under game conditions). The drills listed on the following pages should help with the details for each of these blocks of time – some work better than others, so try them all and see what works best for you.

**Second**, as team leaders, your actions will be judged by the players to see what they can get away with under practice and game conditions. Let them know from the start what you expect (profanity will not be tolerated; respect for all players, coaches, and parents is required; demonstrate good sportsmanship; do your best; etc.), and make sure they understand what the consequences of inappropriate actions entail (laps, pushups, sit out part of a game, etc.). Once you earn their respect and confidence, everyone will have fun.

**Third**, during practice, **none of the kids should be standing around watching as others are completing drills**. Lacrosse is a game of running and skill. Make additions or small alterations to each of your drills to ensure as little down time as possible during and between drills (cradling, passing, dodging, running, etc.). Take short water breaks at planned times during practice.

**Fourth**, take an active role in practice. Be animated, talk to the kids, give them tips on how to get better at specific skills, run with them, throw with them, **be enthusiastic!** The more you take part in the practice, the more each child will want to work harder, get better, and have fun.

**Fifth**, teach them the importance of communication. This is a critical component of the game. Don't just tell them how important it is to communicate with teammates, show them in practice – do as you would want them to do. Speak loudly and clearly. Make it fun.

Finally, try your hardest to make sure everyone is learning and having fun!! Have a great season.

**Remember, kids look up to you as their leader and role model. Do your best!**

# Lacrosse Drills

Whether one uses Warrior, STX, or Brine equipment, there are many drills that a young lacrosse player can use to better his game. **A young lacrosse player needs to work on 3 parts of his game- running, sticks skills, and the end game (shooting).**

The **running drills** do not involve any equipment. A young player should run 2 miles around a block. It's hard and tough but will help his endurance. He should go from 2 miles during the first week, to 3 miles in the 2nd week and by the end of the season he should be able to run 3 miles during practice.

Another **running drill** should be full field running. The young player should start on the end line and run to the midfield line, run back to the end line, run full field to the opposite end line, and back to the original end line. He should do this twice at the beginning of practice and once at the end.

Working on his **stick skills** can separate a good player from a bad player. A great drill is to set up ten cones in a line 5 yards away from each other. Have the lacrosse player run through the cones switching hands at each cone. The important thing for the lacrosse player to do is work on his left hand more than his right.

Another **drill** is to make the young player go one on one with another defensive player. The objective of the defensive player is to get the ball from the offensive player within a minute. The only way for the offensive player to keep the ball from the defensive player is to keep switching hands. This drill will enable a player to switch hands quickly during a game.

**Shooting drills** are very important. The first shooting drill is to position an attack man behind the goal and have a midfielder about 15 yards away. Have the midfielder throw the ball to the attack man and have him run towards the goal. The attack man should give him the ball about five yards away from the goal and the midfielder should crank shot. This drill should be done 50 times a practice or until the midfielder can position the ball where he wants to in the net. The two players can switch roles half-way through - this will help them understand each other's roles.

Another drill similar to the one-on-one drill mentioned earlier involves a short stick and defenseman going one on one. It varies from the other drill because the objective of the drill is for the offensive player to score and not hold on to the ball. One also needs a goalie in the drill to make it fair for the defenseman. The short-stick player should benefit from this drill, as it is very much like a game situation.

# More Lacrosse Drills

## CRADLING

### Against the Wall

Stand with your back to a wall and cradle. Try to make your stick touch the wall on both sides without dropping the ball. This is a drill to practice keeping your stick vertical and to make sure you cradle completely from side to side.

### Obstacles

Make a line with about 10 players standing about 4 yards apart. The rest of the players line up with all the balls. One by one, each player weaves in between the other players, back and forth, cradling from one side to the other. If the player is dodging a person to their left, then they cradle to the right and vice versa.

### Pivot Points

A pivot point is a spot where a player will stop all forward movement with one foot forward and turn around by twisting his body instead of taking extra steps. If a player pivots on his left foot, for instance, he will stop with his left foot forward, and swing his cradle strong to his right, almost over his head, while twisting around and facing the way he came. Pivot points can be crucial in shaking a defender because the speed and direction is changed so quickly. Pivot points can be added to just about any drill, especially relays.

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## PASSING

### Line drills

Two lines face each other, the player at the head of one line has the ball. The first two players in each line run towards each other and the player with the ball passes to the other. When the ball is received, the next player in the first line comes out and the ball is passed again. After each player's turn is finished, they run to the end of the line to which they threw.

### *Variations*

Add defense. After a player passes the ball, he immediately plays defense against the person he threw to.

Underhand throws.

Ground balls

Left-handed

Make more than one set of lines doing the drill with 6 players to a set.

### Squares

There are four lines (A,B,C and D), each at a point on a square. Player A starts with the ball and runs toward player B. Player B runs toward line C (perpendicularly to player A's movement) and receives the ball from player A. Player B continues with the ball as player C moves toward line D. Player B passes to player C, who advances toward line D. The ball continues to be passed around the square.

### *Variations*

Add more than one ball

Change directions

Left-handed

Make the square smaller for tighter, faster passing

### **The Weave**

There are three lines of players (A, B and C) at the fifty yard-line facing the goal. The middle line (line B) is supplied with all of the balls. The first players in each line start down the field, the middle line cradling the ball. Player B passes the ball to his left to player C, and runs behind him to take his place at the left wing position. When player C receives the ball, he crosses the field to pass to player A, then runs behind him to take the right wing position. When player A receives the ball, he crosses the field and passes to player B, then runs behind him to take his position, and player B crosses again to pass to player C.

Get it? It's hard to explain, but in broad terms, it's a drill in which the attack wings making long, leading passes across the field while advancing toward the goal. The extra person just makes each line replenish itself.

### *Variations*

Add 1, 2 or 3 defensemen

Finish with a shot on goal

### **Give-and-Go**

There are three lines at the 50 yard-line: two at center, and one a wing position. One of the lines in the center is for defensemen, the other center line starts with the ball. The first player in the defense line comes out to about 10 yards in front of the first player in the ball line. The players start down the field toward the goal, and the defender attempts to check the center's stick and to slow him down by body checking. Once the defender has been drawn closely to the player with the ball, and the center senses he's in trouble, he will pass it to the wing. The defense sprints to defend the wing, and when he has been drawn away, the wing will pass it back to center who has sprinted ahead for the goal.

### *Variations*

Add a pivot point.

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## **PICK-UPS**

### **Bowling**

There are two lines at the 50 yard-line and one person between them with all of the balls. The middle person rolls a ball out ahead of both players and the first players in both lines sprint for the ball, bending deep to scoop it. Whoever comes up with the ball goes for the goal, while the other plays defense.

This drill can also be done with the balls rolling toward the two players. The center person can either roll the ball straight through the middle, or to either side to compensate for the difference in speed between the two players.

## **Line Drill**

There are two lines facing each other, just like in the passing drill. The player starting with the ball runs out toward the other line and rolls the ball to the advancing player. That player picks it up and does the same for the next person in the first line. This drill can also be used to roll the ball away: as the player with the ball reaches the other line, he shovels it behind him, away from the first person in the line he just reached.

## **Relays**

There are four people in each line (make as many lines as you need). Four balls, each about 20 yards apart, are placed in front of both lines all the way up to the opposite end-line. When the whistle is blown, the first person in line sprints for the ball, picks it up and brings it back to his line. As soon as he has crossed the line, the next player sprints for the next ball, scoops it up and brings it back to his line. This continues until the last ball has been brought back and the one who reaches the line first wins.

## **Steal the Bacon**

A ball is placed at midfield and the players are divided into two teams. Each team spreads out along opposing lines about 25 yards away from the ball (or around the circle). Each player has a number and the numbers on one team coincide with those on the other. The coach calls a number and the two players who have those numbers sprint for the ball in the center. The player who picks up the ball must then cradle and cross his own line when a point is scored.

### *Variations*

Call two numbers to have four players fighting for the ball. Make the players pass once before they can attempt to score.

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## **SHOOTING**

### **Rapid Fire**

About 15-20 balls are lined up on the top of the arc. A player begins at one end of the line of balls (depending on whether he is right- or left-handed), and when the whistle is blown, he quickly scoops the ball and shoots at goal. He goes around the top of the arc, shooting each ball one by one.

If this drill is done sloppily, it won't do much good. Make sure that each player bends low to get good control of the ball, takes a cradle or two and shoots accurately at the corners.

### *Variations*

Put targets in the corners of the goals.

Put a goalie in.

Limit the time in which each player has to shoot all of the balls.

Shovel shots.

## **Quick Stick**

This is a scoring drill that's lots of fun, but in a game situation it must be used in only the most perfect of circumstances. There are many ways to lose possession of the ball doing a Quick Stick.

There is one line at the top of the fan. One player or the coach stands behind the goal with all of the balls. The players sprint one at a time straight toward the goal and the coach lobs a ball high just as the advancing player enters the arc. The player lets the ball sink lightly into his stick, after which he quickly whips it into the goal. There is no cradling, and the ball is never brought under full control. Make sure that the player's stick does not enter the circle.

## **One-on-One**

There are two lines: one at the 50 yard-line (A), and one behind the goal (B). Line B has all of the balls. Player A runs toward the goal, and player B makes a long pass to him. Player B advances to defend player A after he catches the ball. Player A attempts to dodge and out-run the defender to score, while player B tries to check and body-check player A to prevent a goal. *Note:* Player B must defend closely to player A while in the arc to prevent a "blocking the shooting space" or "three seconds" call in a game.

### *Variations*

Add more than one attack line and/or defense line

Have the goalie make the initial throw

Add a pivot point

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## **FOOT WORK**

Drop a stick on the ground and:

1) with the stick horizontally in front of you, step over the stick with one foot, then the next. Then step backwards with the next foot, and follow with the other. Basically, you're running in place very quickly, back and forth over your stick. Make sure that you're knees are high.

2) with the stick still horizontally in front of you, squat down a little and slide to the side of the stick, step forward so you're in front of it, then slide to the other side of the stick and step back behind it. Repeat this so you're really just sliding around the stick, but the squat position makes you're quads do a lot of the work and your constant forward position makes your feet get a great workout.

3) with the stick vertically in front of you, jump over it with both feet, then again to the other side. It's like you're slalom skiing. Again, make sure that you're knees are high.

4) with several sticks in front of you, line them up about a foot apart and step forward between the sticks with your knees as high as possible. It's like that drill you see football players doing stepping through tires.

See what other drills you can make up using your stick to improve your footwork, for example:

- place the stick in front of you vertically. Stand at the bottom of the stick and jump (with feet together) forward, then over the stick, then back to the bottom, and then over to where you started. you are jumping in a box around your stick (do these drills for about 1 minute).

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## **GOALIE**

**Improving the goalie's accuracy and distance of clears and cutting and receiving clears for field players.** Basically the goalie stands in the crease. One field player will stand in front of him and pass him a ball. This field player will then play defense against the goalie, trying to block his clear. The other field players line up on both sides on the goal. When the ball is passed to the goalie, he will say "Clear" or whatever term he usually uses to communicate with his team. Two field players will then sprint from the end line and cut to receive the ball. Field players can also line up at mid-field for this drill, or for more of a challenge two defense players can be added. Field players must have their sticks up and ready to accept a pass before the goalie clears the ball. If players do not do this the goalie can leave the crease and dump the ball back in, giving him an additional 10 seconds and forcing the field players to continue cutting.

# Individual Lacrosse Drills

**A lacrosse player, a lacrosse stick, a ball and a wall can turn an average lacrosse player into an elite player.** The wall acts as a tool to make one's stick skills excel. The wall provides another person who can catch almost all passes and complete almost any drill with ease.

Some great walls can be found at racquetball courts, tennis courts, parks and the backs of houses. Look for a wall that does not have any windows or anything nearby that could break.

The first drill that one can do with a wall is the switch hand drill. Throw the ball against the wall and catch the ball with the opposite hand. Do this for about 5 minutes, continually switching hands.

The next drill one can do is the roll dodge drill. Throw the ball with your strong hand and do a fast roll dodge- as well as fully changing hands. If you wish to become good with both hands do this drill from both sides or do this drill exclusively from your weak hand to your strong hand.

The next drill that the wall is great for is the quick stick drill. Throw the ball against the wall ten times with your strong hand. The trick to this drill is that you do not cradle-just in the stick and out of the stick. This drill is especially important for that attackman who has a split second to shoot and score. Definitely do this drill with both hands.

Another drill one can do is the ground ball drill where one throws a low pass to the wall and does a quick scoop. Do this with both hands and one will see the difference in his game time ground balls. Practicing this drill with both hands will improve your confidence in the weak hand.

The shooting drill involves picking a point on the wall- a mark or a line and firing the ball at it. This drill will improve accuracy, but beware. The ball will bounce back so make sure to do this drill far enough from the wall so you don't get hurt after the shot.

The last drill involves running along the length of the wall and throwing the ball as you run. The wall will act as a running player. This drill will only work with a moderately long wall as one cannot run along a wall below 20 feet long.

# THE WALL DRILL

"Your lacrosse stick should become part of your body!"

To become proficient in passing and shooting, the player must be able to propel the ball from the stick with the wrist "snap." Many beginning players pass and shoot with an arm motion, or "push" the ball, which causes the ball to leave the stick on a low trajectory resulting in a low pass or shot. An excellent way to develop the wrist snap is to utilize the wall. Go to a cinderblock or brick wall and stand approximately 3 to 5 yards away. Any wall will work (no windows), but a smooth concrete surface at least 10 feet tall is the best.

You can and will observe daily improvement if proper technique is maintained. Increase the reps as wrists become stronger. Aim for as many reps as possible with desired form, however. This is a lefty-righty work out. Attempt to do as many reps as possible. Remember, your goal is to strengthen the wrists, to become proficient in releasing the ball with the snap of the wrists, to gain hand speed, and to develop a quick release.

Do as much as much of this routine 4-5 times a week for 15-20 minutes (no more). Beginning players should start at 30 reps with each hand before moving to a different part of the drill. Your goal should be to get through the entire drill (50 reps with each hand) with each hand in under 20 minutes. If you only get through part of the drill, it is easy to set a goal for next time.

## **Proper 1 hand technique:**

Wearing gloves, hold the stick in one hand at its balance point and then place the head of the stick in the "box" area next to the ear. Then with one hand, "snap" the wrist which will cause the ball to come out of the stick in a straight line and bounce off the wall straight back into the stick kept in the box area. This will be difficult at first. Do not take shortcuts. Keep the head of the stick in the box and not down off the shoulder.

## **Proper 2 hand technique:**

Wearing gloves, hold the stick with your top hand approximately half way down the shaft of the stick. Your opposite hand should cover the end cap. Snap the top wrist while bringing the bottom hand towards your dominant arm pit. This will help to keep your stick in a vertical position. Try to keep the head of the stick in the box at all times. Passing is like casting a fishing line. Be ready for the ball to return in a hurry. Change your foot stance as you change your hands, that is lead with your left foot if passing from the right, and so forth. Stick protection is important.

## **Proper Cross hand technique:**

This is the similar to two hand technique. Hold the stick such that the dominant hand is across your body. The head of the stick should be kept in the "box" near the opposite ear. This will be awkward at first but only the advanced players will get to this stage.

DRILLS: (Beginners 30 reps with each hand)

1 hand: catch and 1 cradle

2 hands: catch and 1 cradle

2 hands: quick stick

2 hands: split drill -catch righty, switch and throw lefty/ catch lefty switch and throw righty

2 hands: catch, face dodge, and throw

2 hands: catch, fake, and throw

You must be at 50 reps with each hand before passing this point.

2 hands: cross handed

2 hands: behind the back

2 hands: running along the wall throwing and catching.

Be creative: if you get to this stage, you have earned the right to!

Remember the above must be performed in the correct manner, that is: stick in the box, overhand motion, wrist snap. If your form is sloppy, such as letting the stick hang down off the shoulder, you will be slinging the ball and thus wasting your time. **CORRECT FORM MUST BE ADHERED TO, OR YOUR EFFORTS WILL BE WASTED.**