



LEVEL ONE COACHING AWARD MANUAL

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INTRODUCTION

Engaging with people to enable them to improve can be a highly satisfactory personal journey. Coaching forms part of this group of work. By engaging with a formal coaching education program, you are starting on a pathway of learning how to develop participants in sport and provide them with a process to improve and retain them.

Coaching in sport is about placing the participant at the centre of the coaching process. Any person can set up and deliver a series of practices. This is not coaching, but merely organising. The phrase “every day is a learning day” should form the basis of every coaching session, where each participant should have the opportunity to develop their sport.

This coaching award is for people:

- with little or no coaching experience
- with or without knowledge of the game of lacrosse.

It enables candidates to organise and manage a range of coaching activities that will promote and engage people in the game of lacrosse in Ireland. Satisfactory completion of this award will empower you to introduce people to lacrosse with confidence.

Ireland Lacrosse has developed this manual to help potential coaches meet their potential.



SECTION ONE: The Fundamentals of Lacrosse

Lacrosse is an invasive team game. The fundamental objective is to invade the opposing team's territory by running and passing the ball and finally shooting the ball into a designated goal. In the field game, this is a 6 foot square goal cage defended by a keeper. Invasion of the opponent's territory is more than simply a physical exercise. As in any other game, it also demands rapid thinking and decision making in order to outwit the opposition. Good lacrosse play demands fast thinking and skilful players.

Sound technique is necessary to successfully play at all levels, but good technique in isolation is simply not enough in a complex competitive team game. Every technique must be modified to meet the specific demands of that particular occasion. Players will inevitably achieve the same end product with slightly different techniques. Providing the technique is sound and effective, these idiosyncrasies should be tolerated, even encouraged, for at the end of the day they are likely to ensure less predictability and greater adaptability in the player.

Game playing is not about reproducing a textbook technique. It is about out-witting the opposition. It is for these reasons that the game should be introduced from a tactical perspective and from the traditionally technical one. It is Ireland Lacrosse's belief that by stressing both the tactical and technical underpinnings of the game, we will increase enjoyment of all participants from the outset.

In this section, the general game principles of lacrosse are explained, followed by more specific Attack and Defence principles.

- Lacrosse is a high scoring invasive game.
- The objective of the team in possession is to move into a scoring position.
- Retaining possession, invasion and scoring are the key principles of attack.
- Players must learn from the outset to make decisions about when to hold onto the ball, when to pass it, when to shoot.

Basic Attacking Principles

The player in possession can:

- a) Shoot
- b) Invade/run towards goal
- c) Pass
- d) Hold possession / retreat

Such decision making is essential even for the novice. Other players must make similar decisions based on the three attacking principles of possession, invasion and scoring. The ball carrier is the prime decision maker and he/she must make their decisions appropriately and in a timely manner. These decisions may be represented as follows:

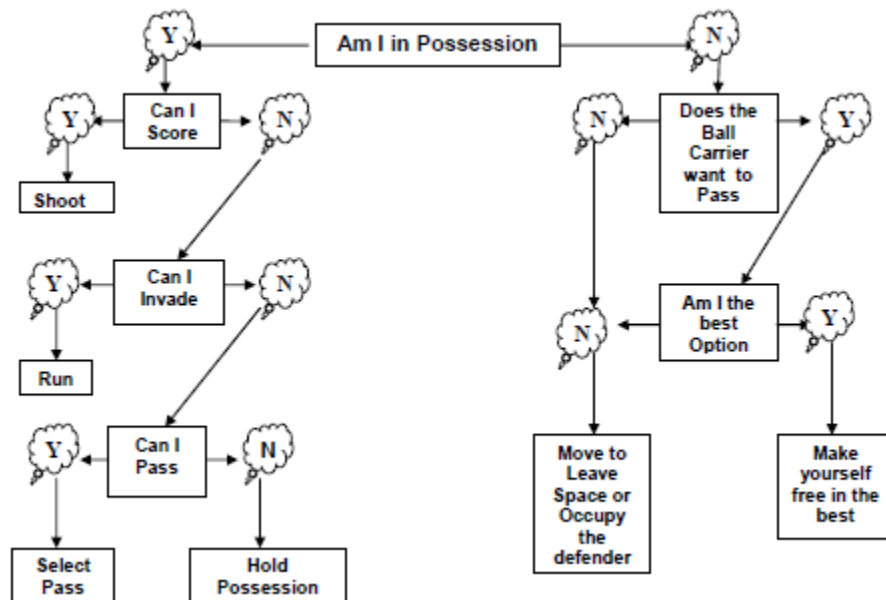


Image courtesy of UK Lacrosse

Basic Defending Principles

The team who are not in possession of the ball usually adopt a one to one defensive marking system. Each player takes responsibility for one opponent but also has team responsibilities. Decisions for players on the defending team rest on three fundamental principles: regaining possession, preventing invasion and preventing scoring.

The player on the team who is not in possession must ask the questions:

- Does my opponent have the ball?
- Is he/she in a scoring position?
- Am I the closest to the ball?

The Defensive Decision Making Tree:

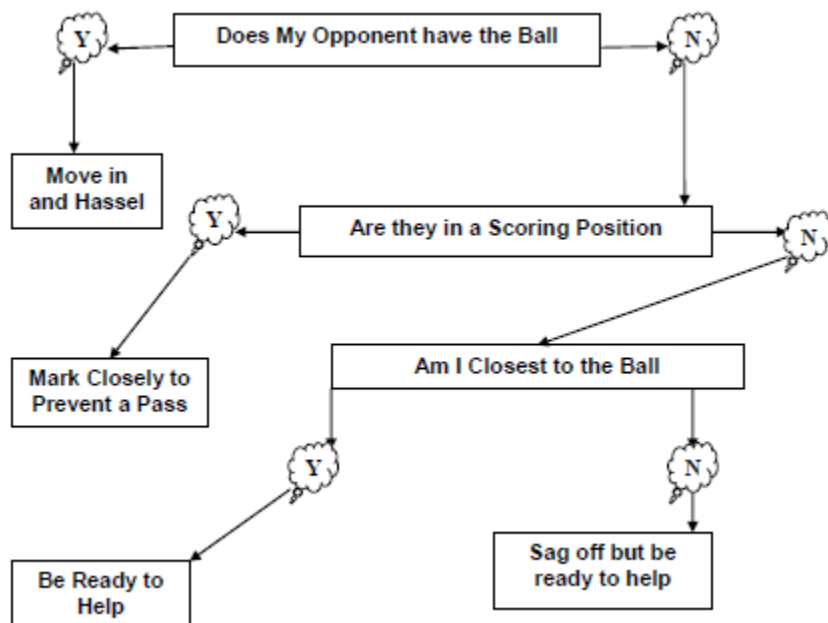


Image courtesy of UK Lacrosse



Underlying Basic Techniques

It is only necessary to acquire 6 simple techniques to be able to play and enjoy lacrosse –

- THROW
- CATCH
- PICK-UP
- SHOOT
- CARRY THE BALL (including CRADLING)
- CHANGE HANDS.

Four are based on every day actions and require only small modifications from carrying out the same actions with the hand. They should therefore be introduced from these and not made to appear any more complex.

Ambidexterity in lacrosse is essential. If it is stressed from the start, techniques should develop at almost the same rate. It is necessary to demonstrate each technique initially, but over emphasis on textbook techniques should be avoided. Most beginners will be successful quite quickly and should, from the outset, be encouraged to do each practice with either hand at the top of the stick.

The following Skill Sets show the techniques for the underlying basic skills.

SKILL SET 1: Throwing (coordination)

Over-arm Pass

- Practice with either hand at the top of the stick.
- Body sideways on to target.
- Hands well spread on handle, handle rests across palm of top hand.
- Stick head prepared well back with the bottom of stick lined up with target.
- Push top hand through, snapping the wrist over so the stick head points at the target.
- Bottom hand should end up at the top hands elbow.



Other Types of Passes:

- shovel or underarm pass: Swing stick head down and then towards target in a curved pathway, ball is tossed out of head of stick
- throw at different heights using both hands
- throw top hand towards target, at same time pull bottom hand in towards elbow of throwing arm or down towards side of body
- follow through high for loop pass at first, as improve aim for harder, flatter passes, which are more difficult to intercept.

SKILLS SET 2: Catching (coordination)

- watch the flight of ball into stick
- open face of stick fully towards the ball
- hands well spaced on handle
- top hand at top of the shaft of the stick
- give with the top hand as the ball hits the face of the stick as though you are catching an egg..



SKILLS SET 3: Carrying/Cradling (agility, coordination)

Grip

Make a "V" shape between the thumb and forefinger placed at top of handle. Move the stick towards the face, and then back away from the face. Use the following points of reference:

- Wide hands for control.
- Wrist of top hand extends and bends to turn the open end/front of the stick during the cradle.
- When running, a swinging rhythmic stick action fits into the running action.
- Cradle away from opponent.
- Running at speed, the stick will be held diagonally across the body to aid running and field vision.
- Players must protect the stick head by keeping it close to the body.



SKILLS SET 4: Scooping aka Ground Ball (agility, coordination)

Scooping stationary ball

- Line up the stick behind the ball.
- Lead with the same foot as the hand at the top of the stick.
- Bottom hand is raised on contact to absorb the pace on the ball.
- Bend the knees, moving stick head smoothly down so it is almost flat, front edge in contact with the ground behind the ball.
- Lean forward to make dispossession difficult, trying to get your body between the ball and any opposition (“boxing out”)
- Foot on non stick side is opposite the ball.
- Hands spread on handle for control.
- Push top hand through the ball, return stick to upright position as soon as possible.



Contested Ball

If immediate control is impossible:

- slide top hand down handle to extend reach
- manoeuvre ball to your side using your stick and your body to protect the ball or flick it to a team-mate
- pick up as above.

Ball rolling away

- As above but increase speed of stick under the ball.
- Begin cradling from low position gradually building rhythm to match running speed.

SKILLS SET 5: Changing Hands (agility, coordination)

Changing hands enables the ball carrier to have greater stick extension, width and reach therefore increasing possibilities for dodging, cutting, passing and shooting. The ability to easily change hands offers more efficient stick protection where the body forms a barrier between stick and opponent.

- Carry position is high and close with a vertical stick.
- Keep open end of stick towards the face at all times.
- Hands well spread on initial carry.
- Stick is moved across to opposite side of body.
- Bottom hand slides up the handle, gripping firmly.
- Return to carry position with stick high and vertical.
- Top hand moves down to end of stick.

SKILLS SET 6: Shooting (coordination)

Basic Shooting

The basic shooting technique is the same as for an over-arm throw but the top hand moves down the stick to shorten the lever and give more speed to the stick head on release of the ball.

- Head looking at goalkeeper and target, down the line of the lead shoulder.
- Shoulders and hips rotate to generate power.
- Wide base for stability.
- Top hand decides when to release the ball, “snap” the top wrist through the release.
- A long follow through is essential when shooting hard, end with stick head below your hips.
- Always start the stick head from the same position, behind the head, to limit the goalkeeper’s sight of the ball.
- Try to generate as much power as possible without losing accuracy.



Other Shot Types

- Over arm: High or low or bounced shots.
- Underarm: Inverted over arm motion but follow through stops at target.
- Quick Stick: The ball is fed hard and fast to the shooter. The stick head is taken well back in line with the ball to cushion the impact. As the weight of the ball is felt, the stick head is taken slightly back and then brought quickly forward propelling the ball at the goal. The catch and throw action is a smooth, controlled and continuous movement dictated by the top hand.
- Fake Shots: Faking causes the goalkeeper to react and often a small head and shoulders movement gives the desired impression and opens a space for a shot. The shooter should look to use a fast cradle to pull the goalkeeper away from an area, e.g. fake high shoot low.

SKILLS SET 7: Goalkeeping (agility, coordination)

Goalkeeping involves three tasks: Saving, Clearing and Communication

Body Positioning

Ensure the goalkeeper is square on to the shot at all times. Do not teach a goalkeeper to rely on the field markings. Coach the keeper to keep their hips square to the shooter. The keeper should understand that keeping the head of the stick in line with their own head will ensure good body position at all times.



The body positioning of the goalkeeper is critical.

- Positioning
- Quick and precise footwork
- Body in good balance
- Movement on an arc from post to post
- Keep body square to the ball at all times
- Watch the ball
- Hands one above the other quite close together
- Top hand leads the swing of the stick head to the ball
- Body behind and in line with the ball
- Step towards the shot and aim to catch the ball - keep on your toes.

**Footwork**

Keep the footwork to a minimum to ensure balance.

Non Stick Side Save

Stick should be facing out towards the ball, stick head pushed straight across in front of face to block and catch a shot to the non stick side.

Low or Bounced Shots

Hands close together on handle, stick is swung down rapidly to cover lower corners, body comes in quickly behind the stick. As the stick comes down, drop one leg to the knee to increase body save area.

Ball Behind Goal

Face back of goal watching the ball, one meter from the goal line ready to step to either post as the ball is driven round. Stand slightly to the opposite side to the ball, this helps with ensuring the goalkeeper is square on to the shot.

Clearing

Set up an attack by passing the ball to a free team-mate. This places the opposition under immediate pressure.

Communication

Call position of the ball in relation to the goal. Call out cutting players as they move through the area in front of goal. Indicate free players and help defenders time their moves to pick up free players.

SKILLS SET 8: Checking (balance, agility, coordination)

Safety is paramount. The area around the head and shoulders is protected so checks must be made away from the head. The stick must not be swung in an uncontrolled manner. No contact may be made with any part of the opponent's body.

- Remain goal side of opponent moving back to slow them down.
- Watch the movement of the ball carrier's stick.
- Top hand on the handle, the other hand near the bottom of the stick to provide good control.
- Short, sharp taps are made on the ball carrier's stick, into and away from stick to disturb rhythm and dislodge the ball.
- Body must be well balanced with feet apart, one in front of the other.

SKILL TROUBLESHOOTING

Catching

1. Ball rebounds out of pocket
 - Relax arms more
 - Give back more on reception
2. The ball is missed
 - Open face of stick to ball
 - Turn more sideways asking for ball further from body
 - Watch the ball towards the top hand/head of stick

Throwing

1. Ball drops short of target
 - Open shoulder more in preparation, stand more sideways
 - Increase follow-through upwards
 - Reduce follow through
2. Ball goes too high/is released too early
 - Decrease follow-through downwards
 - Incorrect preparation
 - Stick head dropped too far behind
3. Ball goes wide of target
 - Point butt of stick at target
 - Keep head of stick closer to own head

Scooping

1. Ball is missed
 - Prepare earlier
 - Get stick flat on ground
2. Ball pushed along ground
 - Get foot closer to ball before starting action
 - Increase speed and push
 - Head over ball at start of movement

Shooting

1. Ball drops out back
 - Prepare higher, reduce dropping of stick head in preparation
2. Ball goes over target
 - Increase follow through
3. Ball misses target
 - Bring head of stick closer to own head
 - Take more side-on stance

Cradle**1. Ball dropped**

- Keep stick vertical
- Ensure hands/arms work smoothly in unison
- Ensure face of stick pointing directly at player
- Relax grip a little

Changing hands**1. Ball dropped**

- Keep stick more vertical
- Keep movement smooth
- Ensure face of stick points at a player directly

2. Ineffective stick position after change

- Bottom hand not changed first
- Check initial hand position

Goalkeeping**1. Weak on bounce shots**

- More foot movement.
- Ensure that hand is at the top of the stick.
- Make sure that the body is in line with the direction that the ball has come from.

2. Weak off-stick side

- Ensure that the stick is away from the body (nearly arms length).
- More foot movement.
- Ensure that the hand is at the top of the stick.

3. Weak stick-side high

- Make sure that the stick is covering the area by the side of the goalkeepers head.
- Ensure that the hand is at the top of the stick.
- Ensure that the stick is away from the body (nearly arms length).

Remember textbook technique is not essential. Each player should be encouraged to work on their own techniques in their own time. However, they will need your guidance from time to time to assess progress and correct errors.

TACTICAL PRINCIPLES

Attacking

The basic attack principles have already been outlined. As the players become more familiar with the game they should expect to be under a greater amount of pressure when they are the attackers. In order to avoid heavy defensive pressure two-handed play is a distinct advantage. The player should be able to pass the ball off confidence at various heights and with either hand. It may be necessary to take time during training sessions to practice this.

It is important that players learn to protect the stick using their body, although there may be no permissible dispossession at this stage. They will learn to protect the stick with the body, turning away from a defender to ensure safe passage of the ball. Again, the ball carrier should be made aware that he is responsible for maintaining possession and decisions to pass off the ball rest with him/her.

The ball carrier should learn how to entice the defender to over-commit, to recognise it and dodge to beat the defender. Straight away, they can begin to recognise and use the “draw and dump”. The ball carrier can even be encouraged to try to outwit his opponent by simple fakes, pretending to pass or drive in order to force his opponent to react in a predictable fashion.

Other attackers must learn to free themselves from a close marking defender, and time should be spent on trying out ways of doing this. A good player will need a repertoire of effective ploys. Players should be encouraged to enjoy trying to fool each other, trying to be deceptive or unorthodox. They should watch their defender and try to capitalise on weaknesses.

Individual Attack Play - Basic Evasion

The individual needs to have an understanding of basic principles of stick control. As a coach, you need to introduce carrying practices using the stick and ball at an early stage in order for stick skills to progress.

Basic Evasion Principles:

- a change of speed
- a change of direction
- good stick protection (hold away from opponent)
- maintain possession (if currently in possession)
- attack open spaces

These principles apply to attackers not in possession (cutters) as well as those carrying the ball. This enables team attack to be more effective as all of the attacking unit can be utilised.

As in all field sports, lacrosse has evasive maneuvers that are commonly used. For example the Face-dodge, the roll-dodge or the split-dodge.

Attack strategy must involve team play as well as individual techniques and tactics

Decision making forms the basis of team attack. This can be enhanced by the use of grid work, utilising one-up drills (2 v 1, 3 v 2). All players must experience attack and defence in these situations to ensure



that all participants have an understanding of the decision making trees that effect each position (see page 6). As the group progresses, drills involving equal amounts of attack and defence can be attempted.

Once the players have progressed onto 3 v 3 games they can further develop attacking strategies. In attack, players have more options to consider in their decision making:

- the ball carrier can now elect to hold, drive, shoot or select one of two possible outlet passes
- the other two attack players must now consider the relative positions of each other as well as that of the ball carrier, the goal and the defence
- they must make decisions concerning which player is in the better position to receive the ball and react by moving into that space or creating a space for the other player. This is essential in give and go situations and in draw and dump.
- they must find ways of occupying their defender when they are not directly involved in the play so that the ball carrier is not double-teamed
- they must recognise when their defender is likely to slide (bring an extra defender to the ball) to cover or is tempted to double team and decide where they should move
- they can be led to appreciate that they must move to a goal-scoring position but within the vision of the ball carrier.

With 3-a-side teams, players can also be encouraged to look for individual strengths and weaknesses. The attack should build up a picture of the defender by watching their behaviour in particular situations. These may be fairly permanent characteristics of the opponent (e.g. slow to turn) or they may be more situational errors (e.g. ball watching).

With 3 attackers, the team can also appreciate the problems they can create by spreading the defenders and making it difficult for them to watch ball and player. This can be achieved in an exploratory way by suggesting that they try keeping their players compact in a confined space and then spreading them. Also, it is crucial that attack players communicate with each other at all times, so that attacking strategies can be developed.

They can now experiment with a somewhat unique feature of lacrosse, which is the use that can be made of the area behind goal. Even at this stage, without a keeper they can appreciate how much more difficult it is for defenders to track ball and player. The attackers will also notice the advantage of the feed from behind goal to the incoming player who can take the ball moving towards the goal and with the goal in vision all the time.

Defending

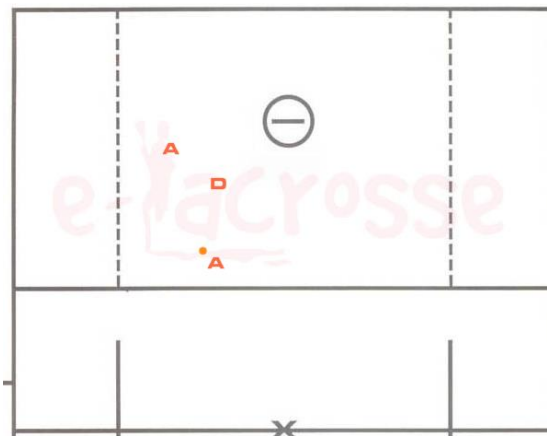
It has already been stated that a one-to-one marking system is usually employed with each defender taking responsibility for a particular opponent. Inevitably if this system is to be effective some form of team defensive system must be adopted, because not every defender will be able to contain his own player all of the time.

Individual Defence Play

Individual defence is all connected with position. The need for good footwork is crucial to successful defence. Footwork practice is recommended at all stages of development.

In a team defence, a player uses a tactic known as the triangle principle. When marking an opponent who is not in possession (often referred to as off-ball), the defender should open up his stance so that he can see both his opponent and the ball carrier, ideally with minimum turning of his/her head. A triangle is established between the defender (D), his/her attacking opponent (A), and the ball carrier (A.).

The defender's positioning is a balance between reducing his/her own attacker's level of offensive threat, either to receive a pass and shoot, feed or dodge, and the amount of help he/she needs to offer the ball carrier's own defender. Constant readjustment of position will be necessary to maintain the triangle. The defender should always try to be on the goal-side of his/her attacker. The example below shows alignments of the two offensive players discussed (A1 and M1) and a good defensive position using the triangle principle by the defender responsible for the off-ball attacker (D).



Basic Team Defence Play

With 2 defenders, defensive strategies can be developed further with communication always an important factor. A defender must consider the following:

- the relative merits of ball side and goal side defensive positions
- when to mark closely
- when to leave space/mark lightly
- how to avoid over committing
- what happens if they ball watch
- what happens if they player watch

Through careful guidance they will learn:

- the importance of positioning.
- Light marking - ready to help unless their player is in a dangerous scoring position.
- talking to each other, so that they know what is happening moment by moment, e.g. —I've got the ball, I've got left etc



At this stage, it may be that development of understanding is being hampered by the lack of technical skill to be able to pass and catch the ball effectively. It may be necessary at this stage for the coach to adjust the practice to give the attack more time e.g. defenders without sticks. The development of effective technique requires considerable practice and often when they cannot do what they want to in the game it will simply increase their desire to improve their basic handling skills.

The next progression is the 3 v 3 game which gives the players the chance to develop their support play. They need to appreciate the need for communication so that each player knows who is defending the ball carrier, who is in support on either side and ready to slide and cover an additional attacker. The importance of watching ball and player can be re-emphasised here. Players should be looking for individual strengths and weaknesses.

Defenders should look for typical patterns in the attack player. Characteristics, such as being reluctant to shoot should be noted and situational patterns identified e.g. a tendency to always dodge the same way.

A healthy 1 v 1 competitive approach should be adopted with each trying to outwit the other. In this way, their thinking game will develop. At the same time they will appreciate technical limitations in their own game and avoid developing stereotyped and predictable play.

Defending when the ball is behind the Goal

Even in a small sided game the players can appreciate how much more difficult it is for defenders to track the ball and player. They will need to practice the skills involved in the triangle principle so that defenders can assess various positions to reduce the scoring possibility.

Defenders can also be reminded of the importance of marking closely whenever their player is in a potential scoring position and can consider the merits of goal-side and ball-side marking when the attack is in the critical scoring area.

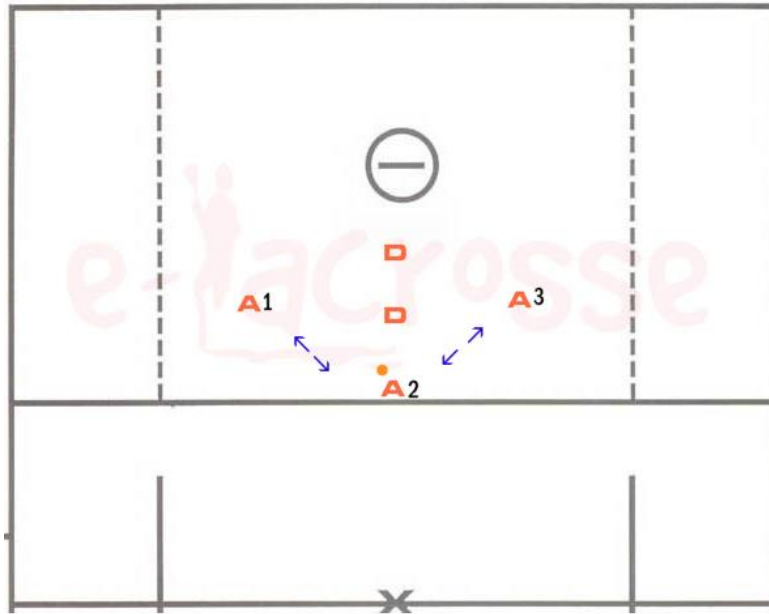
Selective Small Sided games

The use of small sided games is imperative to bring the participant into any field sport. The small-sided game ensures that the individual has a basic understanding of the sport and has the opportunity to implement skills and techniques they have learnt without the complexities of full field numbers.

Attacking and defensive principles should be learnt initially through small-sided games with team numbers increasing as players become ready for the increased complexity, e.g. more to look for, more options to consider.

3 v 2 (+1)

The diagram below shows the development of the attack position to create a more complex situation. The 3 v 2 is a common position for attackers to be faced with. The creation of a 3 v 2 can be emphasised through individual evasion skills.

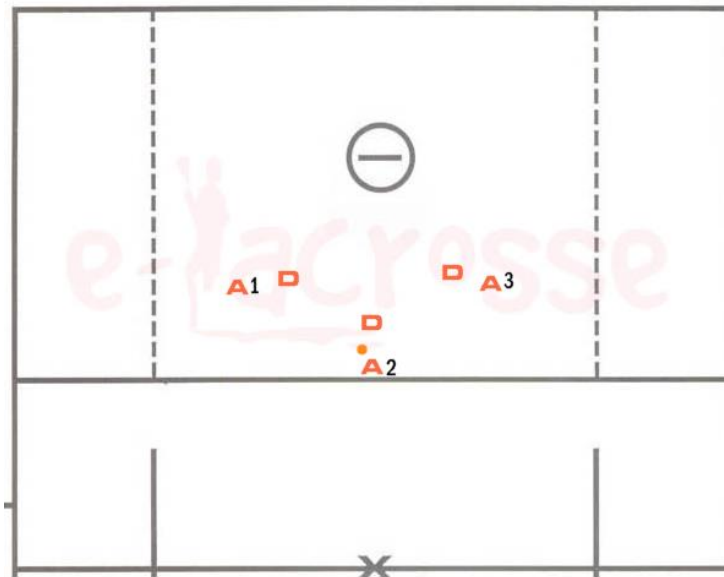


The A2 is in possession of the ball and is the main decision maker. Using basic principles, the ball carrier should decide whether to run, pass or shoot. By ensuring D plays A2, this would bring either A1 or A3 into a position with the potential to shoot. The example above has shown D moving, thus creating space for A1 to exploit closer to the goal. A2 should pass to A1 creating a shooting chance. This process is called “Draw and Dump” and can be applied to all man-up attacking situations.

The above game can be played in a grid with a target as a goal before moving to a goal area situation. The game is expanded by adding another defender who trails the ball carrier, thus limiting the 3 v 2 attacking opportunity. The defense in the latter example is attempting to try and limit the attacking shooting opportunities, to enable D3 to come into the defensive area, thus bringing the defense versus attack scenario back to all level numbers.

Three v Three

The situation of 3 versus 3 is crucial to all field sports. The formation of a triangle in an area creating angles of attack and ensuring space for evasion is critical in creation of shooting opportunities. An understanding of 2 v 1 and 3 v 2 is an essential requirement prior to attempting 3 v 3. The attack must grasp the need to create an extra player opportunity by evasion, either with the ball or without.



The figure above shows D2 playing the ball carrier with D1 and D3 providing cover through use of the triangle principle. The attack can create shooting opportunities through isolation or a give and go.

Isolation

If A1 has the ball, A2 moves towards A3, creating a path to goal for A1. If A1 beats D2, a 3 v 2 has been created which if the defence does implement 3 v 2 principles, A1 will run and shoot. If they do cover, a draw and dump will occur.

Give and Go

If A1 has the ball and passes to A3, A1 uses off the ball evasion skills, to move into the space in front of the goal, to receive the ball back from A3 to create a shooting chance.

The principles of isolation, “draw and dump” and “give and go” form the basis of all attack. Increasing the number of attackers and defenders is a natural progression. As the numbers increase the maintenance of a perimeter (a circle) is crucial to an attacking structure.

SECTION TWO: The Fundamentals of Coaching

Because individuals learn in different ways they need to experience different ways of learning if they are to achieve their potential. This requires the coach to adopt a range of coaching styles to find the best ways of working with all players.

Ireland Lacrosse believes a coach should design and manage tasks based on how the player and coach roles and relationships develop over time. Ireland Lacrosse emphasises that the player is at the centre of the participation program, not the coach.

The best coaches are those that constantly embrace new ideas, self-assessment, external assessment and professional development to further their coaching knowledge and delivery.

In this section, Ireland Lacrosse's fundamentals of coaching will be set out. These are

- Planning
- Basic planning
 - Facilities and equipment
 - Session format
 - Session Reviewing
- Learning and coaching styles
- Coaching Code of Conduct

PLANNING

Coaches who fail to plan and rely on off the cuff coaching with no shared sense of purpose cause players to become confused and de-motivated. Following a needs assessment, as a coach, you need to establish what the players should be able to do as a consequence of the coaching they receive and the practice that they undertake. To assess progress and enable you to evaluate your own coaching it is essential to keep a record of your coaching sessions in a coaching diary. Coaches should be aware of who they should communicate with to ensure the coaching session meets the expected aims. This will enable the staff involved in the delivery of a session to outline responsibilities to ensure the practice is successful.

Basic planning

The phrase “Perfect Planning Prevents Poor Performance” moves from the training of a group to their performance on the field of play. Detailed, well-directed planning ensures that players will quickly develop sufficient skill and understanding to enjoy playing lacrosse.

Your session planning should consider:

- Age of players
- Ability of players (level and range)
- Previous experience of players
- Needs of players
- Projected playing pathway
- Number of players
- Length of each session
- Number of sessions
- Facility – size and shape of space is significant
- Conditions – weather and playing surface
- Available equipment
- Safety considerations
- First aid arrangements

It is important to remember:

- the safety of the participants is paramount
- all equipment, playing areas and individual records must be checked to minimise risk
- equipment should be stored in a safe and clean environment to limit hazards to individuals in its use
- the movement of equipment should be thought through and appropriate to size and experience
- the participant register must be kept up to date with emergency contact numbers and relevant contact names
- personal information is confidential information and as such must be kept securely as set out in Ireland’s Data Protection Act 1988 and 2003.
- ensure you know where your overseeing coach or manager is to support you in your delivery and management of the session
- check through with your overseeing coach on the outcomes and means of your session.



Facilities and Equipment

Each coaching session should build on what has gone before. In order to provide profitable, focused sessions you need to focus on:

- **outcomes** - what you want players to know and be able to do by the end of a session or series of sessions
 - e.g. technical outcome: be able to receive and throw more quickly and accurately
 - e.g. tactical outcome: draw a defender before passing to a free player
- **means** - how you will help players to achieve those outcomes. i.e. the tasks players will undertake to achieve those outcomes – what you will look for as they practice, the interventions you will make to accelerate progress.

Within a game you should identify:

- Where the group is currently within their playing pathway
- What individual goals can be attained by each participant
- What team goals can be attained

Session Format

Coaching sessions constantly following traditional routes (warm-up → skill development → game) can get tedious.

Try to change your format; the hollow session (game, skill practice, game) or just playing a game first, can identify areas for the participants to improve on.

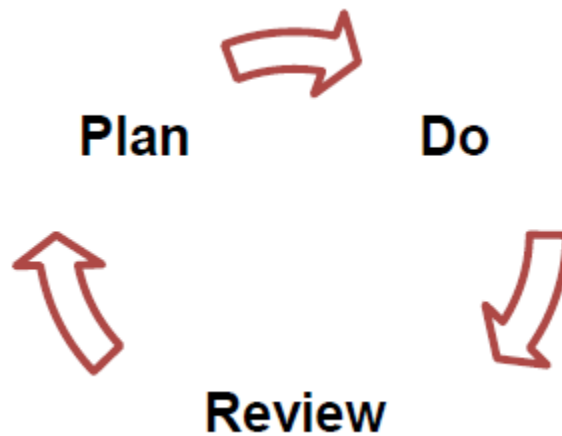
Planning Practices for Lacrosse Basic Skills

To play and enjoy lacrosse it is necessary to learn some simple techniques: throwing, catching, picking up, shooting, carrying the ball and changing hands (see Skills Sets).

Most beginners will be successful quite quickly and should from the outset be encouraged to do each one of the techniques with either hand at the top of the stick. If it is stressed from the start, techniques on each side of the body should progress at almost the same rate.

Reviewing your Session

A good coach will always reflect on the session they have just delivered. This enables the coach to distinguish between what went well and what possibly did not attain its intended outcome. Only through effective reflection and review will a coach understand areas that need to be addressed in delivery, initial planning or specific practices utilised. Reviewing coaching must also take into account the learner and other people involved in the delivery. Enabling feedback therefore forms an integral part of the review process.



INTRODUCTORY ACTIVITIES

Here are some tasks to kick-start planning a session. As you gain experience, you will begin to design your own tasks and replicate those you see being used by other coaches. In this way you will build up a repertoire of options and a wide variety of activities to stimulate your players.

Carrying the ball and changing hands

- Walk around with ball. In pairs, 1 stick and 1 ball each if possible.
- Walk around carrying the ball at different heights.
- Walk around with ball in other hand.
- Walk around carrying the ball at different heights.
- Repeat above moving quicker and changing direction.
- Repeat above changing hands on change of direction.
- Run with ball to a line, change hands and run back to partner (mini relay race).

Scooping

- Scooping stationary ball
- Scooping a moving ball from a stationary position and moving towards it.
- Scooping a ball rolled from different angles, standing, walking, running.

Catching

- In two lines, feed the ball to players.
- Repeat above using other hand.
- Moving towards the feeder at an angle to catch the ball, walking.
- Moving towards the feeder at an angle to catch the ball, running.

Throwing

- Practice throwing in a space without the ball.
- Individually, throw the ball into a large space or against a wall.
- Repeat from start of catching.
- Movement will improve and add complexity to the above activities.
- All the above should be practiced with left and right hand.

Evasion

- The entire group running in an area carrying a ball each
- Drop step task in pairs
- Sharks and Minnows
- Stick Tag

Warm-Up Activities

A warm up is important as it:

- raise heart rates
- warms up relevant muscle groups
- increases focus on the practice session starting
- provides a base for the coach to develop from.

Coaching and Demonstrating – A Good Practice Guide

A coach has many areas of responsibility. A good coach is one that identifies the weaknesses within their personal characteristics providing a professional development pathway, but also identifying strengths as a platform for initial competency.

Role Model

The coach must always be a role model for the participants. Some key areas include:

- Punctuality – arrive at the venue before the players and use this time to prepare the playing area.
- Dress – wear suitable smart clothing and footwear
- Approachability – be approachable but avoid intimacy
- Abide by codes and rules as set out by the sport
- Know the sport

Management

Undertake a safety check before starting any coaching session. Are there any hazards in the working area? If so, what can you do to eliminate the risk they pose to players. It is your responsibility to provide a safe, comfortable environment that has a sense of order.

Efficient management increases active learning time. Establishing routines will help your sessions run smoothly. Think about how you will:

- give out and collect equipment
- store spare equipment during the session
- use players to help you set out new working areas more efficiently
- prevent potential injuries that are sustained playing lacrosse
- how you will deal with injuries during and session and report them after
- conclude the practice and put away all equipment used.

Teacher / Instructor / Trainer

Coaching is about developing and improving people within a sporting context. It requires not just an imparting of information to individuals, but must allow individuals to take some responsibility for their own learning. The best coaches inspire participants of all abilities to achieve their potential and their aspirations.

Pitfalls can occur due to:

- Individuals being neglected during sessions
- Individuals being pointed out as specific examples of bad practice
- Individuals not being given enough time to practise – we all learn at different rates.

As a coach you should try to:

- Give all participants a role in the practice tasks or game play
- Set out codes of behaviour during all play
- Correct faults swiftly with the whole group without identifying individuals
- Give praise and encouragement where it is due
- Set individual expectations that meet the needs and the potential of all participants.
- Set out medium and long term goals that meet the needs of the group.

Using demonstrations

Demonstrate effectively, managing the demonstration, utilising different speeds and angles ensuring all have benefited from the demonstration.

Use a demonstration to:

- show how something is done so players can copy it
- focus attention on specific technical points or key features of the action
- clarify a tactical point
- motivate players to match the standards shown in the demonstration.

Show a demonstration more than once – you may want to slow it down (where that is possible) but always finish with a demonstration up to speed. Avoid saying too much – let the demonstration speak for itself. Ask questions of the observers to capture and retain their attention. Send them away knowing what to think about as they try to emulate the demonstration.

Promoting learning

Well directed observation of players will prompt you to respond by:

- correcting errors
- focusing attention on key points
- clarifying an instruction
- giving more information
- providing feedback on performance
- reinforcing efforts or improvement
- posing questions

Good coaching is characterised by:

- thoughtful planning
- business-like management
- well focused observation
- supportive responses to observed difficulties
- timely provision of feedback, correction and reinforcement
- sessions being purposeful but fun

If you engage in honest self-reflection about your own practice, and strive to do better next time, you will move on and grow into a respected and effective coach. Those coaches who repeatedly coach the same sessions from season to season regardless of what players bring to the situation will go no further in coaching and they do a disservice to the players.

Learning Styles - VAK

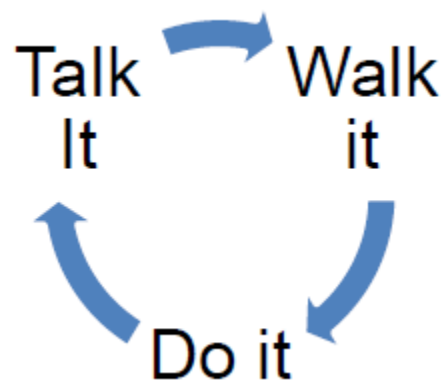
It is important to remember that people learn in different ways. The technical terms used for this area are:

Visual – see it

Audio – hear it

Kinaesthetic – do it

It is good practice to ensure all the learning styles are covered while delivering a session. A simple guide is:



In this way you ensure all participants have the best opportunities to understand the information being imparted to them. It also ensures best practice in planning and delivery.

Coaching styles

Understandably, developing coaches draw on their own experience as player and coach to establish their coaching style but the replication of traditional coaching inhibits the development of coaching and consequently of coaches. Because individuals learn in different ways they need to experience different ways of learning if they are to achieve their potential. This requires the coach to adopt a range of coaching styles better understood as different ways of working with players.

Two basic approaches to coaching have been identified, **direct approach** and **indirect approach**. Both are supported by Ireland Lacrosse.

Direct coaching (do as I say)

This autocratic approach is coach-dominant so it allows the coach to convey information and instructions to players by showing and telling. It is efficient, relatively easy to organise and players are expected to comply with the set task. It is a proven way of helping learners to acquire motor skills, especially where technical precision needs to be mastered. It puts the coach in charge so they make nearly all the decisions and they convey their knowledge and experience to players. This makes it a valuable tool when working with novice players.

However, if a coach uses a direct approach exclusively, a player can tend to:

- rarely think for themselves
- may only be submissively engaged in practice without understanding the purpose of what they are doing
- are unlikely to develop inventiveness and independence
- find it difficult to use their skills in a fluid game context.

Indirect coaching (players contribute as well as receive – democratic)

This democratic approach changes the relationship between coach and players as the latter are now expected to contribute through solving problems, making decisions, sharing ideas and evaluating outcomes. This is the key to understanding how a continuum of different styles from direct towards more indirect coaching evolves. It depends on the responsibility the coach affords to players and how much they are encouraged to contribute. Thus, indirect coaching can be more player-centred.

By adopting indirect coaching, it is possible that players can:

- become more involved and increasingly accept responsibility for their own learning
- make judgments and solve problems
- interact more with the coach
- interact more with other players (learn from each other).

However, if a coach uses an indirect approach exclusively players can become frustrated and sessions lose their sense of purpose.

Thus, both direct and indirect approaches have their place in coaching and the skilful coach will use them flexibly (even within the same session) to address players' needs and realise performance outcomes.



What defines a coaching style?

A coaching style is defined by the relationship between coach and players and how they interact with each other. For clarity, it helps to focus on the way a coach designs and manages tasks and how player and coach roles and relationships change as a result. Other considerations, such as whether or not a coach is approachable or aloof, business-like or bumbling, challenging or accepting, supportive or repressive will affect the climate in coaching sessions and define a personal rather than a strategic coaching style.

Descriptions of different styles and how they work in practice

The titles given to styles described below are taken from the original work of Musska Mosston who pioneered a spectrum of teaching styles in the 1980's. Examples are given from lacrosse to illustrate how each style works in practice. They develop along a spectrum from direct to indirect coaching.

Command Style

Often referred to as 'drills' these tasks require players to work collectively and uniformly – all doing the same thing, at the same level, having the same number of turns over the same period of time. 'Drill' implies conformity, imposed discipline and unquestioning compliance. Because of the distance between coach and players any feedback or correction is made public.

Lacrosse example:

Purpose: to improve the reliability and speed of pick-up into the cradle action.

Organisation: players spread out along a line – each with stick and ball.

Task: run out cradling the ball until level with me, roll the ball along the ground, pick up and cradle to the far line and stop.

Repeat to the other side.

Practice Style

Erroneously referred to as drills, these tasks tend to predominate in coaching sessions. The coach sets up a specific task to improve a technical or tactical aspect of performance and releases players to repeat the task at their own pace. As the players are now managing the task, this releases the coach to move to groups and individuals to provide private feedback and correction.

Lacrosse example:

Purpose: to improve accuracy of passing over short distances when under pressure and to defend with persistence and control.

Organisation: players form groups of 3 with a stick each and one ball. They set out cones in a square.

Task: two players try to make as many passes as possible within that area before losing possession.

Third player tries to tackle, intercept or force the ball out of the area. Change roles after each breakdown. When ready, reduce the size of the square to increase pressure on attackers.

Guided Discovery Style - convergent

A convergent task leads players towards a looked-for or preferred solution by the coach asking players to respond practically and/or verbally to a series of questions. They seek a solution largely through trial and error and evaluation.

Lacrosse example:

Purpose: to improve control, running pace and vision when cradling.

Organisation: run freely in the area avoiding other players as you go.

Task: when cradling on the run try keeping the stick vertical and then try holding it diagonally across your body. Which method helps you to run faster and see other players more easily?

Looked-for response: when running at speed, holding the stick on the diagonal aids running and field vision.

Guided Discovery Style - divergent

A divergent task leads players towards several suitable solutions by the coach asking players a series of questions. Players seek solutions by exploring different ideas in practice and through discussion.

Lacrosse example:

Purpose: to move the ball past a defender and gain ground towards goal.

Organisation: set up rectangular grids – 2 attackers and 2 defenders.

2 attackers start at one end of the grid with the defender at the far end – all 3 enter the grid at the same time. Second defender moves outside the grid.

Attackers: find and show 2 different ways in which you and your partner can draw a defender to the ball and go beyond them to score over the far line. What can you do if the defender charges at the player with the ball? What can you do if the defender holds off and does not commit to the ball? What do you need to do if the defender is very quick on their feet? Defenders: if you get the ball can you pass accurately to the second defender before being challenged?

Problem-Solving Style

The coach defines a problem and prompts players to seek solutions. Finding effective solutions relies on trial and error and the coach asking the right questions. Players need to experiment with possible solutions and learn from the experience. Having found one or more effective solutions these can be selected, refined and tested.

Lacrosse example:

Problem: our players rarely score goals when they are close to the goal and the area is crowded.

Solutions to seek: what can we do to score more goals when under pressure close to goal?

Organisation: play in the final third of a pitch thus restricting play close to goal. Select a suitable number of attackers and defenders according to ability.

Search for solutions: a feeder, positioned centre side of attacking zone, passes to an attacker – attacking team try to score – defenders try to get the ball and pass it back to the feeder. Feeder restarts after a goal or after receiving a pass from defender.

Discuss potential solutions: e.g. improving techniques to get shots away more quickly and from different angles; better player movement to create more space in front of goal.

Experiment with best-bet solutions: explore shooting techniques from different angles; try bounced shots; try different movement patterns of attackers in front of and behind the goal coupled with delivery of passes to shooters.

Select and refine solutions: construct practices to improve precision, speed and player movement.



What benefits can be derived from adopting different styles of coaching?

Flexibility is required so that players capable of only skilled mechanical responses can develop into players who match their skills to the demands of the game and threaten the unexpected.

Using different styles of coaching can achieve these outcomes because they:

- take account of players' learning preferences
- introduce variety
- improve motivation to learn
- introduce the potential to develop resourceful, intelligent players
- help learners to learn from one another
- give learners more responsibility for their own learning and performance
- accustom players to responding to unpredictable situations and find their own solutions to problems.

Coaching in a Game

DO	DONT'S
Give each player a position name and role within a team strategy	Give out the bibs and leave them to play without any structure or purpose
Use a game as a learning activity	Use the game merely as a reward for practice
Allow a game to settle down before introducing the learning objective	Accept early play as typical
Make adjustments if opponents are unevenly matched	Let one team or one or two players dominate a game
Employ anticipatory coaching – clueing in ahead of the play	Don't always let things go wrong and then try to pull them back and do it "right"
Let the game flow as much as possible – move with players as the play unfolds	Keep stopping a game to emphasise a point – freeze frame
Help players off the ball as well as on the ball	Use vague comments like: "spread out", "move", "pass", "recover", "run"
Help individuals, small units and whole teams	Throw out comments like confetti without the intended recipient knowing it is directed towards them
Encourage players to anticipate and read play for themselves	Just tell players what to do – help them to think for themselves
Give players help with the interpretation of rules	Ignore rules during game play



Ireland Lacrosse Coaches' Code of Conduct

The coach must ensure that the activities they direct or advocate are appropriate for the age, maturity, experience and ability of players.

The coach must develop an appropriate supportive relationship with each player based on mutual trust and respect.

The coach must encourage and guide players to accept responsibility for their own behaviour and performance.

The coach should check players' equipment to ensure it is legal, comfortable and safe.

The coach should at the outset clarify with the player and the other club coaches / managers (and where appropriate with the parent) exactly what is expected of them and also what the players and parents are entitled to expect from their club.

The coach must always promote the appropriate code of conduct and positive aspects of the sport (e.g. fair play to players, officials, parents and spectators alike). They must never condone violations of the laws of the game, behaviour contrary to the spirit of the game and relevant rules and regulations, or the use of prohibited substances or techniques.

The coach must consistently display high standards of behaviour and be a role model for players, parents and spectators.

Child Protection

It is the aim of Ireland Lacrosse to ensure that all children and young people enjoy the game in a safe environment. Ireland Lacrosse is also aware of the need to assure all member organisations who provide children and young people the opportunity to play are aware of their responsibilities.

To Promote Good Practice in the Care of Children

Responsible adults involved in lacrosse have a responsibility to protect children from harm. They should be aware of the impact of their words and actions on young players. From an ethical and legal point of view they have a duty to ensure that their verbal and non-verbal communication with all lacrosse players, but especially children, is positive. Any behaviour, words or actions which could be construed, by others or the child, as sexual in nature should be of very serious concern. It is possible to reduce situations for the abuse of children and help to protect staff and volunteers by promoting good practice. Child Protection is not just about protecting children, it is also about ensuring that coaches and officials are not the subject of accusations.

The following are more specific examples of care which should be taken when working with children:

- Always be publicly open when working with children.
- Find other ways of correcting technique, other than physically handling a child.
- Keep up to date with technical skills, qualifications and insurance in sport.
- Where possible, parents should have responsibility for their children in the changing rooms.
- If groups have to be supervised always ensure that adults work in pairs.
- Where there are mixed teams away from home, a male and female member of staff or responsible adults should accompany.
- Secure parental consent in writing to act in loco parentis, if the need arises to give permission for the administration of emergency first aid and/or other medical treatment.
- Keep a written record of any injury that occurs, along with the details of any treatment given. Where staff witnesses an injury this must be reported to the parents at the first opportunity.
- Request written parental consent if club officials are required to transport children and/or young people in their cars.
- NEVER spend excessive amounts of time alone with children away from others.
- NEVER take children alone on car journeys, however short.
- NEVER take children to your home where they will be alone with you.
- NEVER engage in rough, physical or sexually provocative games.
- NEVER share a room with a child.
- NEVER allow or engage in any form of inappropriate touching.
- NEVER allow children to use inappropriate language unchallenged.
- NEVER make sexually suggestive comments to a child, even in fun.
- NEVER allow allegations made by a child to go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon.
- NEVER do things of a personal nature for children, which they can do for themselves.
- NEVER invite or allow children to stay with you at your home unsupervised.

It may sometimes be necessary for staff or volunteers to do things of a personal nature for children, particularly if they are young or have disabilities. These tasks should only be carried out with the full understanding and consent of parents and the children involved. If you accidentally hurt a child, or he/she seems distressed in any manner, or appears to be sexually aroused by your actions, or misunderstands or misinterprets something you have done, report any such incident as soon as possible to an Ireland Lacrosse Executive or Director and make a written record of the incident. Parents and carers should be informed of the incident.

Whistle Blowing

Any adult, child or young person who has concerns can contact Ireland Lacrosse in complete confidence. Any Ireland Lacrosse executive or director can be contacted to report concerns.

Managing Challenging Behaviour

Staff/volunteers who deliver sports activities to children may, on occasions, be required to deal with a child's challenging behaviour. These guidelines aim to promote good practice and to encourage a proactive response to supporting children to manage their own behaviour. They suggest some strategies and sanctions which can be used and also identify unacceptable sanctions or interventions which must never be used by staff or volunteers. The guidelines will also include the views and suggestions of children. These guidelines are based on the following principles:

- the welfare of the child is the paramount consideration
- all those involved in activities (including children, coaches/volunteers and parents/carers) should be provided with clear guidelines about required standards of conduct, and the organisation/club's process for responding to behaviour that is deemed unacceptable
- children must never be subject to any form of treatment that is harmful, abusive, humiliating or degrading.

Some children exhibit challenging behaviour as a result of specific circumstances, eg a medical or psychological condition, and coaches may therefore require specific or additional guidance. These and any other specific needs the child may have should be discussed with parents/carers and the child in planning for the activity, to ensure that an appropriate approach is agreed and, where necessary, additional support provided e.g. from external agencies, Children's Social Care services etc.

Sport can make a significant contribution to improving the life experience and outcomes for all children and young people. Every child should be supported to participate and, only in exceptional circumstances where the safety of a child or of other children cannot be maintained, should a child be excluded from club activities.

Planning Activities

Good coaching practice requires planning sessions around the group as a whole but also involves taking into consideration the needs of each individual athlete within that group. As part of session planning, coaches should consider whether any members of the group have presented in the past or are likely to present any difficulties in relation to the tasks involved, the other participants or the environment. Where staff/volunteers identify potential risks, strategies to manage those risks should be agreed in advance of the session, event or activity. The planning should also identify the appropriate number of adults required to safely manage and support the session including being able to adequately respond to any challenging behaviour and to safeguard other members of the group and the staff/ volunteers involved.

When children are identified as having additional needs or behaviours that are likely to require additional supervision, specialist expertise or support, this should be discussed with parents/carers and where appropriate young people. The club should seek to work in partnership with parents/carers, and where necessary external agencies, to ensure that a child or young person can be supported to participate safely. A copy of the government's "Better Outcomes Brighter Futures: the National Policy Framework for Children and Young People 2014 – 2020" can be found at www.dcy.gov.ie

Agreeing Acceptable and Unacceptable Behaviours

Staff, volunteers, children, young people and parents/carers should be involved in developing an agreed statement of what constitutes acceptable and unacceptable behaviour (code of conduct) and the range of sanctions which may be applied in response to unacceptable behaviour. This can be done at the start of the season, in advance of a trip away from home or as part of a welcome session at a residential camp. Issues of behaviour and control should regularly be discussed with staff, volunteers, parents and children in the context of rights and responsibilities. When children are specifically asked, as a group, to draw up a code of conduct that will govern their participation in club activities, experience indicates that they tend to arrive at a very sensible and working set of rules with greater buy-in from participants than those simply imposed by adults within the club. If and when such a code is compiled, every member of the group can be asked to sign it, as can new members as they join.

Managing Challenging Behaviour

In responding to challenging behaviour the response should always be proportionate to the actions, be imposed as soon as is practicable and be fully explained to the child and their parents/carers. In dealing with children who display negative or challenging behaviours, staff and volunteers might consider the following options:

- time out - from the activity, group or individual work
- reparation - the act or process of making amends
- restitution - the act of giving something back
- behavioural reinforcement - rewards for good behaviour, consequences for negative behaviour
- de-escalation of the situation - talking through with the child
- increased supervision by staff/volunteers
- use of individual contracts or agreements for their future or continued participation
- sanctions or consequences e.g. missing an outing
- seeking additional/specialist support through working in partnership with other agencies to ensure a child's needs are met appropriately e.g. referral for support to State Social Care

services (as available), discussion with the child's social worker if they have one, speaking to the child's school about management strategies (all require parental consent unless the child is felt to be at risk or in need of protection)

- temporary or permanent exclusion.

The following should never be permitted as a means of managing a child's behaviour:

- physical punishment or the threat of such
- refusal to speak to or interact with the child
- being deprived of food, water, access to changing facilities or toilets or other essential facilities
- verbal intimidation, ridicule or humiliation.

Staff and volunteers should review the needs of any child for whom sanctions are frequently necessary. This review should involve the child, parents/carers and in some cases others involved in supporting or providing services for the child and his/her family, to ensure an informed decision is made about the child's future or continued participation. As a last resort, if a child continues to present a high level of risk or danger to him or herself, or others, he or she may have to be suspended or expelled from the group or club activities.

Physical Intervention

The use of physical intervention should always be avoided unless it is absolutely necessary to prevent a child injuring themselves or others, or causing serious damage to property. All forms of physical intervention should form part of a broader approach to the management of challenging behaviour.

Physical contact to prevent something happening should always be the result of conscious decision-making and not a reaction. Before physically intervening, the member of staff or volunteer should ask themselves, "Is this the only option in order to manage the situation and ensure safety?" It is good practice to ensure that if you have to physically intervene in a situation with a child/young person, it is in the least restrictive way necessary to prevent them from getting hurt, and used only after all other strategies have been exhausted. The following must always be considered:

- contact should be avoided with buttocks, genitals and breasts
- staff/volunteers should never behave in a way which could be interpreted as sexual
- any form of physical intervention should achieve an outcome that is in the best interests of the child whose behaviour is of immediate concern
- staff/volunteers should consider the circumstances, the risks associated with employing physical intervention compared with the risks of not employing physical intervention.

The scale and nature of physical intervention must always be proportionate to the behaviour of the young person and the nature of harm/ damage they might cause. All forms of physical intervention should employ only a reasonable amount of force –ie the minimum force needed to avert injury to a person or serious damage to property - applied for the shortest period of time. Staff/volunteers should never employ physical interventions which are deemed to present an unreasonable risk to children or staff/volunteers. Staff/volunteers shall never use physical intervention as a form of punishment.

Physical intervention should NOT involve inflicting pain. Where children are identified as having additional needs or behaviours that are likely to require physical intervention this should be discussed

with parents/carers and where necessary the club or Ireland Lacrosse will seek advice from or to work in partnership with external agencies to ensure that a child or young person can be supported to participate safely. This may include asking for the provision of a suitably trained support worker/volunteer or accessing staff/volunteer training in physical intervention. Any physical intervention used should be recorded as soon as possible after the incident by the staff/volunteers involved using the Incident Report Form and passed to the Club Welfare/Child Protection Officer as soon as possible.

Views of the child or vulnerable adult

It is clear from the accounts of children and young people that physical intervention provokes strong feelings. Children may be left physically or emotionally hurt. Even a child who hasn't directly been involved in the situation may be fearful that it will happen to them in future or have been upset by seeing what has happened to others.

A timely debrief for staff/volunteers, the child and parents should always take place following an incident where physical intervention has been used. This should include ensuring that the physical and emotional well-being of those involved has been addressed and on-going support offered where necessary. Staff/volunteers, children and parents should be given an opportunity to talk about what happened in a calm and safe environment. There should also be a discussion with the child and parents about the child's needs and continued safe participation in the group or activity.

It is important that staff and volunteers are made aware of and understand the organisation/club's guidance about managing challenging behaviour to ensure that they are aware of ways in which they may need to intervene and are clear about the practice guidance in this area.

A policy for managing challenging behaviour

In conclusion, all organisations that have a duty of care to children and young people should develop and implement a policy and procedures on managing challenging behaviour or consider incorporating this into a child protection policy. It should clearly set out the following:

- the standard of conduct expected from staff/volunteers and participants
- how the organisation will respond to unacceptable behaviours
- how your organisation will respond to high risk behaviours (this will give children and young people a clear message about when staff may need to get involved to stop a particular form of behaviour, and describe options to avoid confrontation through for example, time out)
- the circumstances in which children will be restrained
- a decision to restrain a child should be firmly based on the safety of the child and must NEVER be made as a punishment or to get children to comply with instructions
- the guidance, information or any support and/or training available to staff/volunteers, particularly where they are supporting a child with recognised challenging behaviour to access club activities
- the circumstances where external agencies will be contacted for support or in response to concerns e.g. – Children's Social Care services, An Garda Síochána
- what will happen after an incident? Your organisation must have in place arrangements to check on the physical and emotional wellbeing of the child and staff, guidance on recording, who should be informed and a system for recording and monitoring.

First Aid Policy and Coaching

First aid

In recent years, the issue of first aid and who should apply treatment has been the subject of much debate. Health and safety regulations require the provision of adequate and appropriate equipment, facilities and personnel to enable first aid to be given to employees at work. Whilst this may not directly relate to the many voluntary sports clubs, it is advisable for your club to understand its responsibilities for first aid for normal club activities and any major events / competitions it may hold.

It is desirable for a qualified first aider to be present at club training sessions and events. This is not always the responsibility of the coach. This is not usually a problem where a club hires a facility from a local authority that will have a qualified first aider on duty at all times. In these circumstances, clubs should make themselves aware of the staffing and facilities available at the premises they use. However, clubs often have to use their own facilities or a site where there is no qualified first aider.

It is recommended as good practice to encourage coaches to attend recognised first aid training courses so that they can respond to first aid situations confidently and appropriately. There are a range of first aid training courses available for club personnel.

Emergency procedures/Reporting incidents and accidents

It is good practice to record and store reports of any accidents or incidents that are dealt with by club members. Such information can help identify accident trends and provides documented evidence of action should this ever be required. As a coach you should know who your lead 1st Aid person is for that session and where the incident book is kept.

Keeping records; attendance and medical registers

It is strongly recommended that the appropriate coach or team manager keeps a register of attendance at each coaching session for young people. This may help in picking up trends in attendance that could be related to the effectiveness of the sessions. Clubs should collect details on each performer in order to ensure that those with responsibility for young people are fully informed. Details to be collected include:

- contact details for parents/carers whilst at the club
- home address and telephone number
- important medical information (including allergies) and emergency contact details, in case of accidents or incidents.

This will enable quick access to the information should the need arise in competition or during coaching. It should be noted that only medical information that is relevant to the sport environment should be included, this must also be kept in the strictest of confidence.

Health and Safety Checklist Template

Learner's name:				Date:	
Facility name and location:					
Location of first-aid kit:					
Emergency Contact Details					
Role	Name	Location	Telephone		
Emergency Evacuation Procedures:					

Please tick ☒ to confirm that the following items have been checked:

- All equipment is safe and appropriate (eg sticks, balls, goals, cones, markers)
- The playing area and facilities have been checked for actual or potential hazards (eg lighting, pitch surface, spectator area, changing/toilet facilities)
- A register of participants has been taken.
- Participants' previous experience has been established.
- Participants' clothing, footwear, personal protective clothing, eyeglasses and jewellery have been checked as appropriate.

Please tick ☒ to confirm that the following have been explained to participants:

- Health and safety procedures of the venue/session
- The rules of the venue/session
- Any potential hazards of the venue/session
- The emergency procedures.

Accident Report Form Template

About the Person who had the Accident			
Full name:			
Address:			
Postcode:		Age if under 16:	
Occupation:			
Activity being undertaken at the time of the accident:			

About the Person Reporting the Accident <i>(if not the same as above)</i>			
Full name:			
Address:			
Postcode:		Age if under 16:	
Occupation:			
Role being undertaken at the time of the accident:			
Signature:		Date:	
Print name:			



Example of a Venue Risk assessment form

Name of Organisation:

Venue:

Name and position of person doing check:

Date of check:

Playing/training area:

Check that the area and surroundings are safe and free from obstacles.

Is the area fit and appropriate for activity? Yes ☐ No ☐

(If no, please outline the hazard, who may be at risk and action taken, if any.)

Equipment

Check that it is fit and sound for activity and suitable for age group/ability.

Is the equipment safe and appropriate for activity? Yes ☐ No ☐

(If no, please outline unsafe equipment, who may be at risk and action taken, if any.)

Performers

Check that the attendance register is up to date with medical information and contact details. Check that performers are appropriately attired for the activity.

Is/are the register(s) in order? Yes ☐ No ☐

(If no, please outline current state and action taken, if any.)

Are performers appropriately attired and safe for activity? Yes ☐ No ☐

(If no, please outline unsafe equipment/attire and action taken, if any.)

Emergency points

Check that emergency vehicles can access facilities, and that a working telephone is available with access to emergency numbers.

Are emergency access points checked and operational? Yes ☐ No ☐

(If no, please outline the issues and action taken, if any.)

Is a working telephone available? Yes ☐ No ☐

(If no, please outline the issues and action taken, if any.)

Safety Information

Check that evacuation procedures are published and posted somewhere for all to see.

Ensure that volunteers and staff have access to information relating to health and safety.

Are emergency procedures published and accessible to those with responsibility for sessions in the club? Yes ☐ No ☐

(If no, please outline what information is missing and action taken, if any.)

Does the club need to take any further action? (If yes, please specify.)

Signed:

Date:

Name:



Summary

It is important to balance the player pathway with the coaching pathway. The player is at the centre of the participation programme, not the coach. The coach is a part of the players' development and many coaches will have an influence over a player's pathway.

The manual presented is a set of basic techniques and principles that are to be adapted using a coach's personal experiences and knowledge. The best coaches are those that constantly embrace new ideas, self-assessment, external assessment and professional development to further their coaching knowledge and delivery.