

# **Coaching Girls Lacrosse: Advanced Concepts & Drills Select Teams**

**Achieve Lacrosse Coaches Education  
Thursday, March 3, 2022**

# AGENDA

- Player expectations
  - Stickwork proficiency
  - Faster pace of play / decision-making
  - Understanding strategy
- Coaching decisions
- Game strategy
- Game scenarios

# PLAYER EXPECTATIONS

- Stickwork proficiency
  - Consistency with execution
  - Use of both hands
    - Understanding when to use the appropriate hand
    - Catching/throwing with the outside hand
    - Using right/left (away from the defender, around the crease, cutting, etc.)
  - Fluid, creative stickwork
    - Well-protected vs. exposed stick
    - Changing levels and varied cradles

# PLAYER EXPECTATIONS

- Faster pace of play
  - Execution at speed and under pressure
  - Ability to compete for 50/50 balls
  - Are you a leader or differential? Are you willing to take risks?
  - Ability to adjust to errant plays
- Decision Making
  - What do you do with the ball under pressure?
  - Forcing vs. control

# PLAYER EXPECTATIONS

- Understanding strategy
  - Settled offense
  - Team defense
  - Phases of transition
  - Restraining line considerations (holding, coming back, etc.)
  - Unsettled situations (can you recognize and identify a man-up, man-down?)

# COACHING DECISIONS

- Play-to-win philosophy
  - A competitive spirit, not a win-at-all-cost mentality
  - Put the team in the best position to be successful
- Inequitable playing time
  - Every player should get time, but minutes may be limited for some
- Positions
  - Put players in positions that will make them successful and that will make the team successful
  - Players should not be asking to play certain positions (unless the coaches is requesting it)

# GAME STRATEGY

- Settled offense
  - Sets
  - Reading the defense
- Settled defense
  - Defensive sets
- Unsettled situations
- Hold ball vs. need ball

# SETTLED OFFENSE

- Balance to begin the set
  - Helpful to start the offense by giving everyone a touch (if the defense allows)
  - Work together
- Everyone is a threat
  - Adjacent player creates ballcarrier dodging lanes
  - Don't carry the ball to where it just came from (toward the attacker who passed it)
  - When you start moving, be wary of your teammates and where they are moving
  - Anyone who enters the 8M should be prepared to receive the ball
- Quick ball movement
  - 3 second rule
  - Defenders who are not engaged see slides better and read the play faster



# OFFENSIVE SETS

- Free lancing
  - Gives the offense some leeway and creative ownership
  - Success depends upon players' aggressiveness to goal
  - 2 adjacent cut-throughs, dodge, release, pass, pass, re-attack
- Motion offense
  - Every player is involved in a motion
  - The movement is continuous and has a variety of options
  - No reset is necessary and generally the play takes time to develop
- Set plays
  - Scripted – a start, end, and reset
  - Coach can decide which players s/he wants in specific spots

# SETTLED DEFENSE

- Fundamentally sound on-ball defense
  - Good athletic body position focused on slowing the attacker down
  - Be directional
- Communication
  - Create a uniform vocabulary
  - Be vocal and listen
- Awareness off-ball/body positioning
  - Have head on a swivel and constantly adjust body position
  - Hedge: Always be in a position to help other defenders or the on-ball defender
  - Be aware of players entering the 8M and be ready for any loose ball or missed shot

# DEFENSIVE SETS

- Man-to-man
  - Most basic defense for players to learn – “every player should have a #”
  - All 7 defenders in on 8M; not extending beyond the 15M
  - Establish who is on ball and where the help is
  - Mark tightly on cutters all the way through the 8M
  - Looking for opportunities to send early and aggressive double teams
- Zone
  - Defensive players cover a territory and mark players in that space
  - Limits dodging opportunities and forces attackers to cut/feed
  - Cutters must be passed off; “If you see her, take her”
- Backer
  - On-ball defender: heavy on-ball pressure
  - Backer defender: responsible for following the ball to back up the on-ball defender
  - Other defenders responsible for playing zone/space

# DEFENSIVE SETS

- Face guarding
  - Similar to a Box-and-I in basketball, one defender is solely responsible for locking off an attacker (trying to limit touches on the ball)
  - To limit the number of touches and opportunities for an opponent's dominant attacker
  - To take an offense out of their routine
  - To make weaker attackers handle the ball, make decisions, and score goals
- Face guarding defender
  - Mentally and physically committed to only her assigned attacker
  - Communicate the location of the attacker at all times because she is not help/slide
- Other defenders
  - All defenders are in a position to hedge, help or slide
  - If the dominant attacker is able to get the ball, slide quickly

# UNSETTLED SITUATIONS

- Identify the situation
  - Players need to be aware if their team is man-up or man-down
  - Work together and communicate
  - Be patient – take advantage of the situation and play it out strategically

# MAN-UP / MAN – DOWN OFFENSE

- Man-up offense
  - Balanced spacing and quick ball movement
  - Hold space and limit the off-ball movement
  - Keep the low players on goal line extended but not behind the cage
  - Allow attackers to post up in the middle
- Man-down offense
  - Remain as balanced as possible and keep the ball active
  - If the defense is not applying pressure, the attack should be patient, work the ball around and try to reduce the time that they are man-down
  - If the defense is applying high pressure, the attack should keep the ball moving and try to find the 1v1

# MAN-UP / MAN – DOWN DEFENSE

- Man-up defense
  - Get everyone into the zone, organized and marked up
  - Get into a “backer set” – the extra defender should stay along the 8/12M mirroring the on-ball defender, being available to support/double in the event that the on-ball defender gets beat
  - The aggressiveness of the “extra/backer defender” should be at the discretion of the coach
- Man-down defense
  - All defenders (including the on-ball defender) should be sagged to the 8M
  - Establish who is on ball and where the open player is; if there is a player in the middle of the 8M, that player should always be covered
  - One defender is always going to have 2 attackers – communicate it and try to leave the least threatening attacker open on the backside
  - Don’t worry about getting the ball back; try to use as much time as possible

# HOLD BALL

- Hold ball
  - A hold ball situation occurs when the team that is winning has control of the ball in their offensive end
  - Coaches can decide whether or not their team should go to goal
- Keys to success
  - Get balanced and keep the ball moving in the same direction
  - Make sure that there is support on all sides of the ball
  - Look to penetrate the middle of the field and then kick the ball to the perimeter
  - Make sure that the player with the ball has their head up, feet moving and stick protected at all times; expect the pressure and expect the double team
  - Shoot (or take an 8M) at the coach's discretion depending on the timing/score/situation



# NEED BALL

- Need ball
  - A need ball situation occurs when one the team that is on defense is down and needs to get the ball back
  - Utilize a high pressure man-to-man or backer zone-defense
- Keys to success
  - Apply heavy on-ball pressure (generally with a double team)
  - Lock the adjacent to avoid easy outlet passes (make the defense throw long/skip passes across the offensive zone)
  - Try to trap the ball on one half of the field
  - Move at least 3 attackers up to the restraining line to be available for overthrows, defensive relief, or immediate support if the defense gets the ball back (1 attacker may remain by the 50-yard line in case a “Hail Mary” pass is needed)