



**BUILDING**

**LACROSSE ATHLETE  
DEVELOPMENT MODEL**

**ORGANIZATIONS**



# WELCOME

*TO A NEW WAY*

## WHERE ATHLETES

**Learn** the sport better

**Love** the sport more

**Play** the sport longer



# MEET THE LADM

## LACROSSE

A pretty awesome sport everyone should have the chance to play and love

## ATHLETE

Anyone with a body

## DEVELOPMENT

To grow, progress, mature, prosper, thrive, flourish, blossom

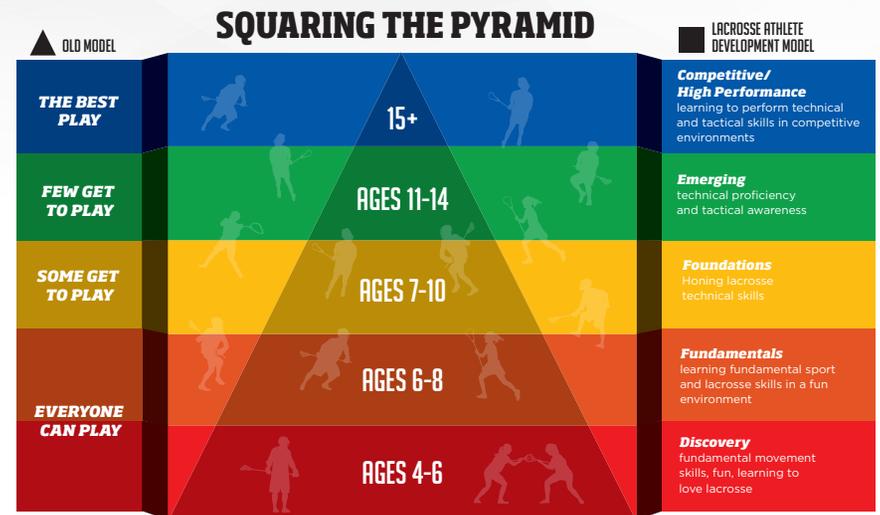
## MODEL

A system used as an example to follow or imitate

**#PLAYERSFIRST**

# WHAT IS A LACROSSE ATHLETE DEVELOPMENT MODEL ORGANIZATION?

Lacrosse Athlete Development Model Organizations are lacrosse organizations that use the lacrosse athlete development model as a road map for success and demonstrate the six core values of lacrosse athlete development.



## CORE VALUES

**THE CORE VALUES OF LACROSSE ATHLETE DEVELOPMENT ARE:**

- Designed for Development
- FUN and Kid-Centered
- Small-Sided Competition and Free Play
- Coach Training
- Physical Literacy
- Multi-Sport Participation

# NO MORE STATUS QUO

If someone observed a lacrosse program in an LADM organization,

**THEY'D SEE THE VALUES OF ATHLETE DEVELOPMENT IN ACTION.**

They'd see kids experiencing lacrosse in a way that is developmentally appropriate and aligned to maximize their enjoyment, learning, and success in the sport.

They'd see methods and activities that look different than expected but are providing kids with continuous engagement and lots of lacrosse learning.

In this document, we'll define the values of the lacrosse athlete development model, describe what they look like and point you to how to get the tools you need to build the values into your program and offer the best experience to players of all ages.

In other words, we'll show you how to be a

**LACROSSE ATHLETE DEVELOPMENT MODEL ORGANIZATION.**



# THE **PLAYERS FIRST** ORGANIZATION PLEDGE

We see potential in YOU.

We promise not to make ultimate judgments about your lacrosse ability until you've had a chance to grow and mature, learn and develop.

We will allow you space to try other sports and physical activities in addition to lacrosse. We will also allow you time to rest and recover.

Competition will be first and foremost about your development as a lacrosse player. Winning comes second until it really counts, and at that point we want to have prepared you to be the best competitor you can be.

We will provide you with coaches who understand you on this journey of growing up, growing into an athlete and what it means for your development as a lacrosse player.

We will have high expectations of you but we will not expect you to do things you're not developmentally ready for.

We see you as an athlete and desire that you see yourself that way too. The confidence you learn here will stick with you for life, no matter what physical activity or challenge you take on.

We will design your lacrosse experience to most of all be fun - not what we think is fun but what you think is fun - even when it requires hard work.

We know you want opportunities to try your hardest and to receive meaningful feedback from your coaches. We will strive to provide that to you.

We want to help you be the best lacrosse player you can be today but also set you up to succeed in the future - in life and in lacrosse.

**#PLAYERSFIRST**

# **THE VALUES**

## VALUE:

# DESIGNED FOR DEVELOPMENT

Think about your smartphone. We take for granted that the apps will open, swiping certain ways and pressing certain buttons will do certain things, and that the device will do what we need it to in a certain way every time we access it. Why it behaves this way is because of its operating system.

That's what Designed for Development is all about. In LADM organizations, how seasons are planned, how competition is structured, how coaches conduct their practices, how kids are engaged on the field is all informed by the underlying operating system of the lacrosse athlete development model and its framework. This is what makes everything else go.

It's about development first, not short term wins and losses.

## THE SIGN

Lacrosse Athlete Development Model organizations use the lacrosse athlete development model as their operating system and the athlete development framework/design guide (see appendix) to inform their programming decisions.

What you see occurring in a Lacrosse Athlete Development model program in each player grouping should closely align with the recommendations in the framework for each stage of development.

## HOW:

- Leaders participate in LADM certificate track to learn the ins and outs of the concepts behind athlete development and the lacrosse model.
- Download and review the athlete development model framework and evaluate your program for alignment.
- View the webinar on “How to implement the LADM in your organization” on [learning.uslacrosse.org](http://learning.uslacrosse.org)
- Consult US Lacrosse staff about how to go about evolving your program and to gain ideas for an alignment plan.
- Adopt the US Lacrosse youth rules coach training standards through the coaching development program.
- Provide the LADM tools to coaches.
- Adopt the LADM program pledge.
- Communicate to parents of athletes in your organization about the methods you are using in your program and the benefits of LADM.
- Work with coaches to use the LADM aligned evaluations to establish plans for each player's development over the course of a season.



## VALUE:

# FUN AND KID-CENTERED

Would you back a business where it lost about 70 out of 100 of its customers every year? This would be unacceptable to shareholders, its board, and would mean it wasn't really offering a lot of value to its customers.

9 out of 10 kids say that fun is the main reason they participate in sports. 70% of kids are dropping out of youth sports by age 13, and the top reason is--you guessed it--that it wasn't fun anymore. If lacrosse is not fun, kids (their customer) will find other ways to fill their recreational time.

Lacrosse athlete development model organizations recognize this and create cultures where FUN is number one because that's what kids want and will keep them playing. They also recognize that the experience should be about the player, not the adult or adult expectations for their sports experience.

## THE SIGN

Lacrosse athlete development model organizations put the kid at the center, which means you'll see a lot of fun and games--games that are intentional about developing their physical literacy, technical and tactical abilities. At the same time, the kids are having a great time. Kids are also engaged in the action more than they are not. You'll see fewer lines, more stations, games from your childhood with a lacrosse twist. Even with older kids you'll see game-like situations that run them like crazy and have them high-fiving afterward. Coaches demonstrate creativity and a willingness to be flexible while creating an engaging learning environment.

## HOW:

- Use the tools: ADM resources and tools have the fun by age built right in. Coaches who participate in LADM training, the coach development program, or by just reading the guides, using the practice plans or accessing Mobile Coach drills automatically have ideas and tips at their fingertips to run station based practices, games for skill and tactical development and ways to just have fun.
- Learn from a US Lacrosse webinar on station-based practices or teaching games for understanding.
- Coaches who participate in CDP and LADM training will receive education and ideas on keeping it fun.
- Ask the kids--build into your program culture ways to get feedback from the kids to adapt your systems and activities.
- Create a culture where your coaches have permission to have some fun. Establish some of the best practices for kid-centered training sessions and coaching methods.
- Award your most creative coaches, tap into their expertise.

**ACCORDING TO A RECENT STUDY BY GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY, FUN WAS THE NUMBER ONE REASON KIDS PLAYED SPORTS. WHERE DID WINNING RANK? 48TH.**



## VALUE:

# SMALL-SIDED COMPETITION AND FREE PLAY

All kids love competition--that's part of the fun of sport. What sets athlete development model programs apart is their perspective on competition.

The purpose of competition in LADM organizations is that it is primarily for the enjoyment and the development of the athletes up until the Competitive stage of the LADM, where learning to compete becomes the focus more so than technical and tactical development, which occurs earlier in this model.

LADM organizations also realize that by putting kids on smaller fields with fewer players and playing by modified rules gives them more touches, more involvement, more improvement, more fun. That's what small-sided competition is all about.

LADM organizations also leave space for free play. Time for free, spontaneous pick-up play should be built into the fabric of programs embracing the lacrosse athlete development model. Lacrosse lends itself to free play and this is where kids can have fun, build skills, and learn life-lessons outside of the ultra-organized environment driven by adult organization which is often what makes kids lose interest in sport as play.

## THE SIGN

If someone were to show up on "game day" at a lacrosse athlete development program they would see smaller fields and fewer players, progressing up in size and number as the athletes get older. They would see fewer kids twirling their sticks and chatting it up with their teammates away from the ball and more kids in the action more often. They may also see pick up games where kids are playing on their own and making it up as they go.

## HOW:

- Adopt the US Lacrosse Youth Rules for your program. They're informed by the athlete development model and include small-sided play at the appropriate age-groups.
- Participate in a US Lacrosse webinar on facilitating free play.
- Review the LADM framework guidelines for competition structure.
- Coaches and leaders participate in the LADM using competitions for development webinar (or achieve the LADM certificate of which this is a component).
- Tap into resources at US Lacrosse to assist you in making the case for small sided competition.
- Distribute the LADM practice plan and drill guides to your coaches--these contain all kinds of fun games that are skill-building drills in disguise.



## VALUE:

# COACH TRAINING

Would you send your child to a school where the teacher had not earned a degree in teaching, studied how to teach, how kids learn and the specific subject matter? Then why should we be OK with sending our kids to learn a sport from someone who isn't trained in coaching?

Lacrosse Athlete Development Model organizations recognize how critical it is for coaches to be trained in how to teach the game in a way that fits what we know about child and athlete development.

LADM organizations expect coaches to be trained and are committed to giving their coaches the best possible coaching education--education that makes them effective teachers of the game for the age and developmental stage in which they coach. Model organizations put tools into coaches' hands that make it easy for them to help kids learn the game in a fun, developmentally appropriate way.

## THE SIGN

If you watch the coaches in an athlete development model organization, you'll see positive trained coaches running effective, age-appropriate practices with lots of engagement of the players, very little standing around, and teaching focused on milestones in sport skill development. You'll see kids having fun and playing games that reinforce the skills the coach is focusing on. You'll see coaches evaluating players and planning for their continued growth.

## HOW:

### TRAINING

US Lacrosse is the singular place where coaches and leaders can take advantage of education that is precisely aligned with the lacrosse athlete development model. Leaders need look no further than USL's Coach Development Program e-learning and local clinic opportunities to ensure their coaches are equipped to work effectively with their athletes.

### OPTIONS

- Coaches complete the age-group specific online education module (coming 2017) for the age-group they are coaching.
- Brain targeted coaching principles (creating optimal learning environments).
- Coaches complete the online LADM certificate track (series of courses to hone their expertise in overall athlete development).
- Coaches attend US Lacrosse hosted webinars on LADM centered topics
- Coaches participate in the US Lacrosse coaching education program training and certification tracks (Level 1, 2 and 3 online and in-person).
- Coaches participate in a hands-on LADM workshop.
- Leaders identify top-notch coaches within their organization to become Trainer Certified to deliver hands-on training events to coaches locally.
- Host a local Learn to Play for Coaches clinic (pre-coach training in basic lacrosse skills for potential coaches).

### TOOLS

Programs provide their coaches with the LADM tools. These tools are available in the US Lacrosse Mobile Coach app or available to download online or purchase print copies. The tools include:

- Mobile Coach Practice Planning & Drill App
- Progression Playbooks
- LADM PLayer Evaluations
- LADM Age-Group Specific Practice Plans and Drill guides

## VALUE:

# PHYSICAL LITERACY

Most likely you know what literacy is--the ability to read and write. But have you ever thought about what it means to have the ability to move your body in ways that allow you to use it in the way you want to? This is the idea behind physical literacy. Teach kids physical literacy and you give them the ability, confidence and desire to be physically active.



## THE SIGN

An outside observer of LADM organizations will see kids doing the darndest things--playing tag, running through obstacle courses, leaping, hopping, skipping over sticks, throwing balls without sticks and doing all kinds of physical activities that develop their bodies for sports, while at the same time preparing them for lacrosse and other physical activities as well. They would see older players fine-tuning sport-specific skills in creative ways and in combination with other sport connections. LADM organizations build physically literate kids, not just lacrosse players.

## HOW:

LADM programs can do the following to ensure a base of physical literacy in the athletes participating in their programs in the following ways:

- Run a soft-lacrosse program - a co-ed introduction to the sport curriculum designed to build physical literacy and lacrosse basics in players ages 4-7 who are new to the sport
- Offer the Ready for Lacrosse assessments and programming (program coming 2017)
- Follow the US Lacrosse progression playbook and practice plans and drill guides for 6U through 12U programming- physical literacy is built right in.
- Leaders and coaches participate in the Physical Literacy online training course as part of your LADM competency badge (coming 2017)
- Access physical literacy information at [uslacrosse.org/ladm](http://uslacrosse.org/ladm)

Programs that develop physical literacy through kids' lacrosse experiences set them up for athletic success in the future, whether that is in lacrosse or in other sports endeavors they ultimately pursue.



## VALUE:

# MULTI-SPORT PARTICIPATION

The verdict on sport specialization is out. A recent study showed found that high school athletes who specialized were more than twice as likely as athletes who did not specialize to sustain injuries. Lacrosse particularly is a sport that seems to be enhanced by sport-sampling. Out of the last four U.S. National Teams, only 3 out of 120 athletes played only lacrosse in high school.

LADM organizations recognize that lacrosse is a “late-specialization” sport and that it is impossible to judge kids’ ultimate athletic potential at ages 9, 10, 11 years old. Instead, they encourage sport-sampling and ample off-season rest from sport in general. These organizations also realize that specialization in lacrosse leads to burn-out, injury and drop-out sooner than it should in young athletes and counters that by encouraging other physical activity. This keeps kids in the game longer, helps them have more fun, and positions them to participate in many sport activities for a lifetime.

## THE SIGN

LADM organizations structure their programming so athletes are able to participate in other sports, take sport breaks, and don’t feel the pressure to participate year-round to hold their place or be considered for playing opportunities. They follow the guidelines in the model for sport sampling. They educate and communicate with parents about the benefits of sport sampling, the risks of sport specialization, and how to keep their child healthy through balance in sporting activities and rest.

## HOW:

- Structure your program using the guidelines in the LADM Framework.
- Provide your parents with sport sampling versus specialization information.
- Read up on the latest report from the American Academy of Pediatrics at [uslacrosse.org/blog/how-soon-is-too-soon-to-specialize](http://uslacrosse.org/blog/how-soon-is-too-soon-to-specialize)



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# MEASURING SUCCESS

## HOW DO I KNOW THIS IS WORKING?

Do They Enjoy it More?

Player /Coach/Parent Satisfaction Rating System

Do They Stick With It Longer?

Track Retention Tool

Do They Learn it Better?

Player and Coach Development Evaluation System

Evaluation tools available at [uslacrosse.org/ladm/eval](http://uslacrosse.org/ladm/eval)  
(coming 2017)

Opportunities are also available for LADM  
Organizations to engage in research studies through  
the Center for Sport Science at US Lacrosse.



# LET'S DO THIS

Let's rethink the way we do things. Reimagine the lacrosse experience through the eyes of someone 42 inches tall. Or a middle school girl. Or the kid who just fell in love with his stick. Be the change you know should happen. Set your program apart. Be a Lacrosse Athlete Development Model organization.

## 3 STEPS:

1. Embrace the values
2. Follow the model
3. Use the tools, resources and education available

We understand that no league, club or program is the same. Log on to our webinar at [learning.uslacrosse.org](http://learning.uslacrosse.org) to learn how to navigate the implementation process as an aspiring LADM program, or contact [adm@uslacrosse.org](mailto:adm@uslacrosse.org) for a personal consultation.

Ready to go big? Consider being one of our select Model Programs and be on the cutting edge of rethinking the lacrosse experience and developing better players.

**[USLACROSSE.ORG/LADM](http://USLACROSSE.ORG/LADM)**

# WHAT IS A LACROSSE ATHLETE DEVELOPMENT MODEL ORGANIZATION?

## *ELEVATOR PITCH*

They follow the lacrosse athlete development model and its developmental recommendations.

They train their coaches.

They leave room for sport-sampling.

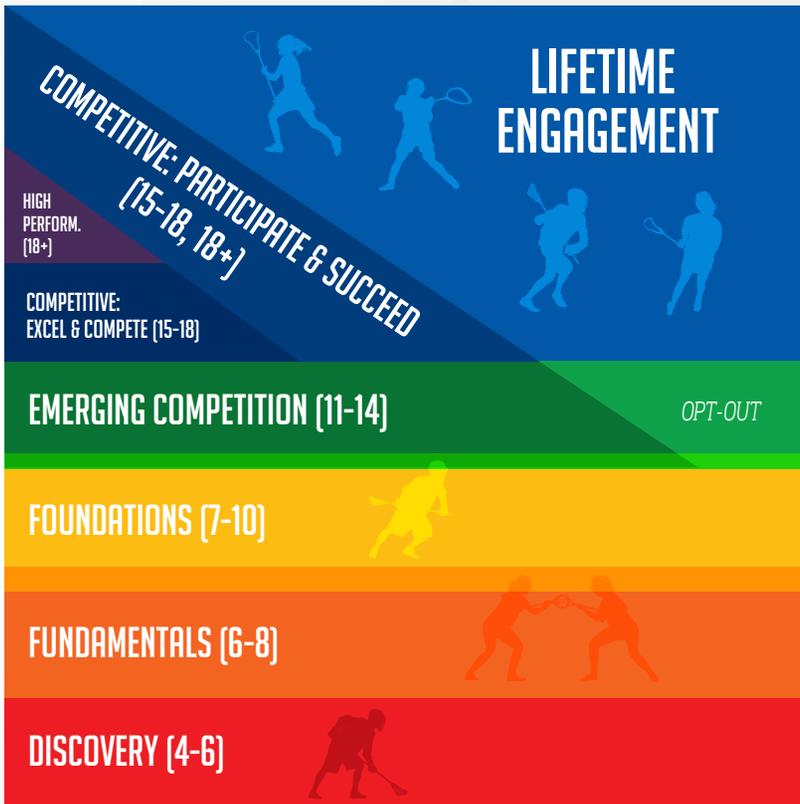
They run small-sided competition and provide athletes with free-play opportunities.

Their programs are kid-centered and FUN is the number one priority.

They develop overall physical literacy in the context of lacrosse.



**LACROSSE ATHLETE DEVELOPMENT MODEL**



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**LACROSSE ATHLETE DEVELOPMENT MODEL**  
**FRAMEWORK**

# LACROSSE ATHLETE DEVELOPMENT MODEL

## STAGE SUMMARY

### STAGE ONE: DISCOVERY

*(4-6 years old)*

Gives the youngest players the opportunity to develop basic movement skills like running, jumping, landing, kicking, scooping, throwing and catching in a fun setting built around informal play and positive reinforcement.

### STAGE TWO: FUNDAMENTALS

*(6-8 years old)*

Allows children to develop their movement ABCs - agility, balance, coordination and speed - and learn the basics of the game while emphasizing fun, cooperation and maximum touches with the ball.

### STAGE THREE: FOUNDATIONS

*(7-10 years old)*

The "golden age" of learning and sport skill development. Children become less self-centered and are able to reflect on their actions and learn from their mistakes. This is the optimal time to build a large repertoire of lacrosse-specific skills and learn the basic principles of play in a fun, challenging environment.

### STAGE FOUR: EMERGING COMPETITION

*(11-14 years old)*

The stage where children choose whether to continue participation in the sport. This is the time for developing strong technical skills and the dawning of tactical awareness. The onset of adolescent growth spurts makes it an ideal time for endurance training. Players are introduced to concepts like mental preparation, goal setting and coping with winning/losing. Players learn advanced technical skills and position-specific techniques.

### STAGE FIVE: COMPETITIVE

*(15-18 years old)*

Players are now working to hone their lacrosse skills under a variety of competitive conditions in a game format that mirrors adult play. Along with continued refinement of advanced techniques, players work to develop their tactical awareness, discipline and mental toughness.

### STAGE SIX E: HIGH PERFORMANCE

*(ages 18+)*

In this stage, athletes are ready to maximize fitness preparation and sport specific skills of performance on demand. The focus of practice and training is fully on optimal performance. Training programs are intense but periodized to prevent injury and burn out. Athletes are mainly focused on one sport for high performance.

### STAGE SIX P: PARTICIPATE & SUCCEED

*(ages 18+)*

Athletes who pursue a less intense path than high performance but have the ability, confidence and desire are able to compete at a level appealing to them. Athletes focus on performance excellence, fitness preparation and maximize sport and position specific skill performance. Athletes may choose lacrosse as their primary sport or may still engage in other competitive endeavors.

### LIFETIME: ENGAGEMENT

*(ages 15-99+)*

Making the transition from physically literate and confident lacrosse athlete to lifelong participant in the sport whether it be competitive or engaging as a coach, official, program leader or supporter. This occurs from athletes having a positive lacrosse experience in other stages of development.

# STAGE 1: DISCOVERY

4-6 YEARS OLD

## KEY OBJECTIVES FOR SUCCESS

### Focus - Where we spend most of our time

Fundamental Movement Skills

### Goals for this stage of development - What we are trying to achieve

To develop basic movement skills - body management, locomotor and object control - that build ability, confidence and desire to play lacrosse. Getting as many touches with the ball as possible.

### Player-centered environment - what it should look like

Fun, constant active engagement, relaxed, inclusive and positive with frequent changes of activity. Predictable routines. Games that build basic movement skills in the context of lacrosse. Lots of praise and reinforcement from coach and parents.

## PLAYER DEVELOPMENT

### Athletic Development

Running, jumping, hopping, twisting, turning, stopping, starting, static balance, catching a ball with two hands.

### Technical (Skills) Development

Introducing running with the ball, scooping, throwing, exposure to all skills, experimentation, terminology.

### Tactical (Strategy) Development

Experimentation with body, stick and ball in a defined space containing "special" areas (ie goal). Stopping, starting, changing pace, running to open space.

### Psychological Development - working to support athletes in these areas...

Trying new challenges, effort, following simple instructions.

### Social-Behavioral Development - we know that at this age athletes are...

Learning to share; learning to say thank you; like to be with friends; are the center of their worlds; parents are central for praise and approval; need balance and variety of new and familiar activities in short doses.

### Cognitive Development

Slower processing speed (time and amount of info) - must use repetition, be clear and concise, and use cue words. Can't filter out relevant and irrelevant information from the environment.

## TRAINING

### Ratio of Training (Technical and Tactical Skill Development) to Competition + Competition Specific Preparation

Competition is embedded in activity sessions.

### Primary Objective of Training

To develop physical literacy and basic movement skills in the context of lacrosse. Achieved through stations, games and activities; 1:1 ball to player ratio. Include self-directed play.

### Max Recommended Ratio (coach:player)

8:1

### Length of Training Sessions

30-45 minutes

### Frequency

1x a week, 8-10 weeks

### Multi-Sport Participation/Sport and physical activity diversification/Other sports and activities

Physical activity every day - lacrosse can be one of those activities; Gymnastics and movement education highly recommended.

## COMPETITION

### Competition Structure

Girls: 3v3 (no goalie); Boys: 3v3 (no goalie)

### Field Size

Cross-field

### Developmental Purpose of Competition

FUN, learning to follow simple rules, sportsmanship.

# STAGE 2: FUNDAMENTALS

## 6-8 YEARS OLD

### KEY OBJECTIVES FOR SUCCESS

#### Focus - Where we spend most of our time

Fundamental Athletic Skills

#### Goals for this stage of development - What we are trying to achieve

To develop agility, balance and coordination and speed for success in learning fundamental technical lacrosse skills. Getting as many touches with the ball as possible.

#### Player-centered environment - what it should look like

Fun, constant active engagement (kid+ball=fun), relaxed, inclusive, positive with and emphasis on learning new skills. Lots of enjoyable games that reinforce skill learning. Predictable routines. Focus on effort and trying your best. Activities are designed for success.

### PLAYER DEVELOPMENT

#### Athletic Development

Agility, dynamic balance, bilateral coordination, skipping, hopping, throwing/tossing and catching away from body with either hand, flexibility, strength.

#### Technical (Skills) Development

Proficient at stick grip and scooping, Exploring and developing other fundamental lacrosse skills--catching, passing, shooting, cradling, dodging.

#### Tactical (Strategy) Development

Developing 1v1 and 2v2 offense and defensive concepts, exploring 2v1 offensive and defensive concepts.

#### Psychological Development - working to support athletes in these areas...

Concentration, teachability, learning to make choices, respect, understanding rules, how to cope with winning and losing, learning to solve problems.

#### Social-Behavioral Development - we know that at this age athletes are...

Learning to cooperate with and help other children. Learning to consider other people. Learning through familiar activities. Want to do

their best. Can show responsibility through completing simple tasks and requests.

#### Cognitive Development

Better able to follow instructions; concentration is increasing; can introduce basic rules and fair play; learning the concept of winning and losing. Still may have difficulty with abstract concepts (i.e. complex plays, multiple choices of options etc.)

### TRAINING

#### Ratio of Training (Technical and Tactical Skill Development) to Competition + Competition Specific Preparation

Competition is embedded in activity sessions or 70:30

#### Primary Objective of Training

To develop physical literacy and introduce fundamental sport and lacrosse skills. Achieved through stations, games and activities, 1:1 ball to player ratio with 2:1 activities also factoring in. Include free play.

#### Max Recommended Ratio (coach:player)

10:1

#### Length of Training Sessions

45-60 minutes

#### Frequency

2x a week during 8-12 week season

#### Multi-Sport Participation/Sport and physical activity diversification/Other sports and activities

Sport-specific training twice a week during one specific season; participate in other physical activity or sport 4-5 times a week. Gymnastics and movement education highly recommended. Ensure time period in the year when there is a several week rest from all organized sport.

### COMPETITION

#### Competition Structure

Girls: 4v4 (no goalie); Boys: 3v3 (goalie optional as additional player)

#### Field Size

Cross-field

#### Developmental Purpose of Competition

FUN, introducing basic lacrosse concepts, exploring competing in lacrosse and basic rules, sportsmanship.

# STAGE 3: FOUNDATIONS

7-10 YEARS OLD

## KEY OBJECTIVES FOR SUCCESS

### Focus - Where we spend most of our time

Fundamental Technical Skills

### Goals for this stage of development - What we are trying to achieve

To develop a technically sound set of lacrosse skills and athletic movement skills necessary in lacrosse (agility, quickness, change of direction). Getting as many touches with the ball as possible.

### Player-centered environment - what it should look like

Fun, inclusive engaging, and positive; appeals to this age-group's desire for fun, improvement and teamwork through the progressive development of existing and new skill base. Focus on trying your best. Growth mindset.

## PLAYER DEVELOPMENT

### Athletic Development

Agility, footwork dynamic balance, complex coordination, linear speed, speed of coordination, strength, flexibility.

### Technical (Skills) Development

Proficient at most basic technical skills, developing dodge variations and exploring shooting/passing and cradling variations. Developing individual defense skills-body, footwork, stick positioning.

### Tactical (Strategy) Development

Proficient with 1v 1, 2v1 and 2v2 concepts, exploring and developing 3v3, 4v4, 4v3 variations and transition offense and defense.

### Psychological Development-working to support athletes in these areas...

Love of the sport, coachability, concentration, problem solving, becoming confident, making good choices, learning fairness, taking responsibility.

### Social-Behavioral Development--we know that at this age athletes are...

Learning to compete against other players. Learning the values of lacrosse. Learning independence and also how to work together as a team. Developing self-awareness, they start to be aware of what they

don't know or what they can't do. Like to help others and the coach. Able to listen to the coach.

### Cognitive Development

By age 9 or 10 developing the ability to think in advance of ball (anticipation); recall memory significantly improves; can follow more complex instructions; stay on task and focus longer; can understand where to move with and without the ball; can think in sequential thought and actions.

## TRAINING

### Ratio of Training (Technical and Tactical Skill Development) to Competition + Competition Specific Preparation

70:30

### Primary Objective of Training

To develop a lacrosse-confident athlete with solid fundamental skills and a general understanding of basic game play and strategy through small-sided play. Include free play.

### Max Recommended Ratio (coach:player)

12:1

### Length of Training Sessions

60 minutes

### Frequency

Up to 3x a week during an 8-12 week season

### Multi-Sport Participation/Sport and physical activity

**diversification/Other sports and activities** Sport-specific training up to 3x a week (for one specific season), participate in other physical activity or sport 4-5 times a week. Ensure time period in the year when there is a several week rest from all organized sport.

## COMPETITION

### Competition Structure

Girls: 7v7 field players plus goalies; Boys: 5v5 field players plus goalies

### Field Size

Cross-field

### Developmental Purpose of Competition

FUN, trying new skills in a team setting, learning and exploring overall play of the game, sportsmanship.

# STAGE 3-4: FOUNDATIONS/EMERGING

## 9-12 YEARS OLD

### KEY OBJECTIVES FOR SUCCESS

#### Focus - Where we spend most of our time

Honing Technical Skills/Fundamental Tactical Skills

#### Goals for this stage of development - What we are trying to achieve

To reinforce technical skills while learning and practicing tactical application in a progressive system. Getting as many touches with the ball as possible.

#### Player-centered environment - what it should look like

Fun, inclusive, accepting, engaging and positive. Focus on improvement and effort rather than outcome. Reinforce new and existing skills while learning to apply to tactics through small sided and engaging play and enjoyable practice. Opportunities to try new things. Growth mindset.

### PLAYER DEVELOPMENT

#### Athletic Development

Agility, footwork, dynamic balance, complex coordination, multi-directional speed, strength, core strength, flexibility.

#### Technical (Skills) Development

Consolidating and mastering all technical skills, exploring variations- developing consistency under pressure. Mastering individual defensive skills. Beginning to develop position-specific skills.

#### Tactical (Strategy) Development

Developing situational understanding of play up to 7v7; developing understanding of zones, proficient with riding and clearing, player to player defense. Working on space and time.

#### Psychological Development - working to support athletes in these areas...

Love of the sport, focus, simple goal setting, self-motivation, confidence, learning to make decisions, developing self-reliance, understanding winning and losing. Respect.

#### Social-Behavioral Development - we know that at this age athletes are...

More independent, able to share, improved decision making ability. Desire independence and are building confidence. Peer group

acceptance becomes important and physical competency plays a role in how one is perceived. Girls tend to form “cliques,” boys have more broad team relationships.

#### Cognitive Development

Increases in processing speed; learning encoding strategies for long term memory; still may ; find it hard to tune out or self identify what's important; understand winning and losing, may still need help coping.

### TRAINING

#### Ratio of Training (Technical and Tactical Skill Development) to Competition + Competition Specific Preparation

70:30 Boys/60:40 Girls

#### Primary Objective of Training

To reinforce basic technical skills and introduce tactical components of the game through progressions and small-sided play practice/teaching games for understanding. Include free play.

#### Max Recommended Ratio (coach:player)

12:1

#### Length of Sessions

60-75 minutes

#### Frequency

Up to 3x a week during an 8-12 week season

#### Multi-Sport Participation/Sport and physical activity diversification/Other sports and activities

Sport-specific training up to 3x a week (for one specific season), participate in other physical activity or sport 4-5 times a week. Ensure time period in the year when there is a several week rest from all organized sport.

### COMPETITION

#### Competition Structure

Girls 9v9 field players plus goalies, transitioning to 11v11 plus goalies; Boys: 6v6 plus goalies

#### Field Size

Modified field

#### Developmental Purpose of Competition

FUN, honing technical skills in game situations, exploring and applying new tactical skills.

# STAGE 4: EMERGING COMPETITION

11-14 YEARS OLD

## KEY OBJECTIVES FOR SUCCESS

### Focus - Where we spend most of our time

Technical and Tactical Refinement

### Goals for this stage of development - What we are trying to achieve

To combine technical skills with tactical understanding to develop as a well-rounded lacrosse player, while also improving physically and psychologically in preparation for more competitive settings.

### Player-centered environment - what it should look like

Fun, accepting, meaningful, safe and positive. Rewards improvement and effort, develops healthy peer relationships. Appeals to players' sense of need to belong yet also develop a positive personal identity through team dynamics. Recognizes individual strengths and potential. Growth mindset. Mastery environment is evident.

## PLAYER DEVELOPMENT

### Athletic Development

Agility, footwork, dynamic balance, speed, multi-directional speed, core strength, lower extremity strength (for injury prevention), endurance (at growth spurt), plyometric/power, flexibility.

### Technical (Skills) Development

Consistently demonstrates and can execute fundamental skills under pressure. Developing stick checking and body checking ability as allowable within the rules. Developing proficiency of position-specific skills

### Tactical (Strategy) Development

Exploring extra-player defense and offense, Mastering numbers situations and tactical play. Developing transition, riding and clearing skills for transition to full-sided play. Developing awareness and anticipation.

### Psychological Development - working to support athletes in these areas...

Autonomy, choosing one's activities, setting more complex and long-term goals, seeing long-term benefits to hard work, developing good peer relationships and teamwork, self-motivation. Respect for the game, teammates, opponents, coach, officials, and self.

### Social-Behavioral Development - we know that at this age athletes are...

Going through a time of rapid change physically, are very aware of body and differences in maturity. Self-identity is being formed. Participation in sport is largely dependent upon friends. Can understand full scope of rules of the game and consequences of one's actions.

### Cognitive Development

Starting to really understand tactical concepts; recall memory is as good as an adult by this age; can follow complex instructions; analytical thought; performance in competition can be inconsistent; able to run, cradle and think. Idea of covering field space with passes makes sense, eager to learn but still want to play.

## TRAINING

### Ratio of Training (Technical and Tactical Skill Development) to Competition + Competition Specific Preparation 60:40

### Primary Objective of Training

To refine technical skills and develop tactical proficiency. Practices include regular competitive situations in progressions, include competitive games that reinforce understanding, and high-repetition game-like drills. Include free play.

### Max Recommended Ratio (coach:player) 15:1

### Length of Sessions 90 minutes

### Frequency\* Up to 3x a week during an 8-14 week season

### Multi-Sport Participation/Sport and physical activity diversification/Other sports and activities

Athlete may decide to start focusing more on 1-2 key sports. If lacrosse rises to the top in motivation and desire, suggest picking another sport that is complimentary during another season. Such as field hockey, soccer, ice hockey, football, basketball etc.

## COMPETITION

### Competition Structure

Full-Field Game (can also stay with modified play early in stage depending on development)

### Field Size Modified field/Full Field

### Developmental Purpose of Competition

FUN, using technical proficiency to further expand tactical decision-making and develop situational understanding.

# STAGE 5: COMPETITIVE

## 15-18 YEARS OLD

### KEY OBJECTIVES FOR SUCCESS

#### Focus - Where we spend most of our time

Technical and Tactical Development for Competition

#### Goals for this stage of development - What we are trying to achieve

To optimize fitness preparation and individual, position and sport-specific skills to improve as a lacrosse player in a competitive setting. Develop mental aspects of performance, situational understanding/decision making, flexibility, and leadership skills.

#### Player-centered environment - what it should look like

Fun, rewards hard work, and improvement, values everyone's contribution to the team. Focus on individual planning and goal setting based on strengths and weakness for personal ability realization. Prepares the athlete for future success both on the field and off. Encourages autonomy, acceptance of responsibility and life lessons learned through lacrosse.

### PLAYER DEVELOPMENT

#### Athletic Development

Agility, footwork, dynamic balance, strength, endurance, speed, plyometric/power, flexibility.

#### Technical (Skills) Development

Repetition of fundamental skills, curbing bad habits, innovating, tweaking, fine tuning. Mastering position specific skills and defensive skills.

#### Tactical (Strategy) Development

Extending tactical understanding of the game to a variety of situations in full-field settings. Developing decision-making skills, identifying patterns, make adjustments. Proficient at judging space and time, anticipating.

#### Psychological Development - working to support athletes in these areas...

Self-defined enjoyment and participation in the sport. Willingness to be flexible and try new things, accepting responsibility, respect, making good choices, leadership skills, communication skills, interpersonal skills, mental toughness. Long-term goal setting and incremental steps to get there.

#### Social-Behavioral Development - we know that at this age athletes are...

Seeking independence without needing to ask permission all the time. Developing logical and deductive reasoning. Self-image is stabilizing but peers are very influential. Opportunity to explore and experiment within sport activity is important. Healthy adult/mentor relationships are beneficial.

#### Cognitive Development

Processing speed developed; able to select what they want to attend to. Can use abstract and logical thinking to make sense of the environment. Can problem solve systematically. Can learn complex plays and also find creative solutions. Can think abstractly.

### TRAINING

#### Ratio of Training (Technical and Tactical Skill Development) to Competition + Competition Specific Preparation 40:60

#### Primary Objective of Training

To hone technical and tactical skills in a competitive environment. Model competitions in training, use progressions, embed conditioning, make all practice activities as game-like and intense as possible while reinforcing technical and tactical skills. Include player-led play and choice.

#### Max Recommended Ratio (coach:player) 18:1

#### Length of Sessions Up to 120 minutes

#### Frequency\*

Up to 4x a week during an 8-14 week season; periodization and full training plans begin to factor in.

#### Multi-Sport Participation/Sport and physical activity diversification/Other sports and activities

Some athletes will begin specializing in one sport at this stage. What is important is the broad base of diversified physical activity that is supportive of the athlete's goals and desires. Many athletes will still choose to compete in a variety of sports. Two sports is entirely appropriate. Periodization is important to ensure proper rest and recovery.

### COMPETITION

#### Competition Structure Full Field Game

#### Field Size Full Field

#### Developmental Purpose of Competition

FUN, using technical proficiency to add creativity to game situations and further develop tactical decision-making. Learning to improve performance in a competitive setting.

# STAGE 6: HIGH PERFORMANCE/ COMPETE TO WIN

**18 YEARS OLD +**

## **KEY OBJECTIVES FOR SUCCESS**

**Focus - Where we spend most of our time**

Competing to Win-High Performance or Participation

**Goals for this stage of development - What we are trying to achieve**

To be in peak condition to perform on demand--mentally, physiologically, technically and tactically. To be an outstanding member of a team working toward the common goal of winning.

**Player-centered environment - what it should look like**

Enjoyable, focus on excellence and high effort. Character, leadership, contribution, qualities as a teammate as well as ability are valued. Coachability, flexibility, team over self, are valued. Pride in one's achievements.

## **PLAYER DEVELOPMENT**

**Athletic Development**

Agility, footwork, dynamic balance, strength, endurance, speed, flexibility.

**Technical (Skills) Development**

Full mastery of technical skills; developing ability to teach others. Focused on role-specific skills that benefit team as a whole.

**Tactical (Strategy) Development**

Working within a defined system. Extending understanding of the game and applying it to variety of contexts, rapid ability to make tactical decisions.

**Psychological Development - working to support athletes in these areas...**

Completely understands and accepts need for rules, regulation, planning and structure. Also sees long-term pay off of hard work and goal setting.

**Social-Behavioral Development - we know that at this age athletes are...**

Self-actualization and self-expression are important. Major decisions about life are of significant importance during this time. At this age there is also a high need to be self-directed and independent.

**Cognitive Development**

With fully developed cognition at this stage, coaches and players should include deliberate practice that exercises situational thinking and awareness.

## **TRAINING**

**Ratio of Training (Technical and Tactical Skill Development) to Competition + Competition Specific Preparation**

30:70

**Primary Objective of Training**

To be fully prepared for the next competition.

**Max Recommended Ratio (coach:player)**

Determined by resources and level of program.

**Length of Sessions**

Determined by training/competition cycles and periodization planning.

**Frequency\***

Determined by training /competition cycles and periodization planning.

**Multi-Sport Participation/Sport and physical activity diversification/Other sports and activities**

Athletes at this stage have committed to lacrosse is their primary sport. However, balanced training, periodization and participation in complementary physical activity can be beneficial from a performance and mental standpoint. Athletes who have benefited from a long-term athlete development focused sport system will have a strong athletic base to carry them through life, even if their focus at this point is high performance lacrosse.

## **COMPETITION**

**Competition Structure**

Full-Field Game

**Field Size**

Full Field

**Developmental Purpose of Competition**

FUN, achieving the best possible competitive outcome through fair and rigorous play.



### **MISSION**

As the sport's national governing body, US Lacrosse provides national leadership, structure and resources to fuel the sport's growth and enrich the experience of participants.

### **VISION**

We envision a future that offers everyone the lifelong opportunity to enjoy the sport of lacrosse.

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