

# SAMLA COACH MENTORSHIP PROGRAM

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## 1. ROLE OF THE COACH

### SAMLA THANKS YOU

First, if no one has said **THANK YOU**, let us express to you the thanks of the players, their parents and SAMLA for volunteering to be a youth lacrosse coach.

Regardless of your background, your knowledge of the lacrosse, or your ability to teach young people, when you took on the title of **“COACH”** you became the most powerful person on your team. You now have a wonderful opportunity to make this season a very positive experience for your young players and those around them.

We hope this program will be especially helpful to you in establishing a philosophy about your role as a coach that will ensure a positive experience for you and those you influence during this lacrosse season. **GOOD LUCK**

### INTRODUCTION

The coach's qualifications, education and competencies have a direct influence on the experience an athlete will gain through the participation in lacrosse. Strong leadership during practices, games, and special events encourages each athlete to nurture and develop individual strengths physically, psychologically, and socially.

We live in a world of constant change with many challenges and confrontations. The sports world is no exemption, and the key person that is in the centre is the coach. Consequently, quality coaching is the single most important factor influencing the growth

and development of athletes as well as the sport itself.

While it is impossible to provide a totally beneficial experience, as a lacrosse coach it is your responsibility to ensure that the experiences are positive, a good learning environment is provided and the athlete's self-esteem is built up. To accomplish this, you must know and understand the multi-dimensional roles of a coach.

### BENEFITS OF PARTICIPATION

A player will benefit from a lacrosse program when the coach creates a positive environment and sets appropriate objectives. However, if the coach sets inappropriate goals this will create a negative environment and problems will result.

A well-educated, caring, youth coach helps players to:

- Develop appropriate skills
- Develop athleticism
- Develop fitness
- Develop a realistic and positive self-image
- Develop a lifetime pattern of physical activity
- Develop respect for rules and fair play
- Develop skills to interact with others
- Develop sportsmanship
- Develop teamwork
- Develop self-esteem
- Develop age-specific motor skills
- Develop the mechanics of playing lacrosse
- Develop future participation in lacrosse or other sports

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## COACH AS A ROLE MODEL

It seems well accepted that youngsters from the age of 5 – 16 years are especially interested in seeking a “**Role Model**” – a person they want to be like. Each and every one of you has the opportunity to be their role model! By the way, there are responsibilities that go along with the title – the responsibility to be a positive, morally correct example. These young players see and hear everything you do and say, and they do it “*because coach does it*” or they say it “*because coach says it.*” So whatever the coach says or does, it must be right, because he/she is being looked up to.

If you, as a coach, can make the things happen that are mentioned in the Benefits of Participation section, then you will be successful beyond your dreams. So what can you do to make it happen?

## COACHING SKILLS & ROLES

The role of the coach is to create the right conditions for learning to happen and to find ways of motivating the athletes. Most athletes are highly motivated and therefore the task is to maintain that motivation and to generate excitement and enthusiasm. The roles that you will find you undertake at some stage in your coaching career will be one or more of the following:

- **ADVISOR** - Advising athletes on the training to be conducted and suitable equipment.
- **ASSESSOR** - Assessing athletes performance in training and in competition
- **CHAUFFEUR** - Transporting them to games & practices when parents or family are unavailable to take them.
- **COUNSELOR** - Resolving emotional problems on the basis that sharing anxieties can be both relieving and reassuring.
- **DEMONSTRATOR** - Demonstrate to the athletes the skill you require them to perform. To achieve this it is important that you can perform the skill
- **FRIEND** - Over the years of working with an athlete a personal relationship is built up where as well as providing coaching advice you also become someone, a friend, who they can discuss their problems or share their success with. It is important to keep personal information confidential because if you do not then all respect the athlete had for you as a friend and coach will be lost.
- **FACILITATOR** - Identify suitable competitions for them to compete in to help them achieve their overall objectives for the year.
- **FACT FINDER** - Gathering data of national and international results and to keep abreast of current training techniques.
- **FOUNTAIN OF KNOWLEDGE** - This may be part of the advisor role in that you will often be asked questions on any sporting event, events that were on the television, diet, sports injuries and topics unrelated to their sport.
- **INSTRUCTOR** - Instructing athletes in the skills of their sport.
- **MENTOR** - When athletes attend training sessions you are responsible, to their parents and family, for ensuring that they are safe and secure. You have to monitor

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their health and safety whilst training and support them should they have any problems or sustain any injuries.

- **MOTIVATOR** - Maintain the motivation of all the athletes the whole year round.
- **ORGANIZER AND PLANNER** - Preparation of training plans for each athlete and organize attendance at meetings and coaching clinics.
- **SUPPORTER** - Competition can be a very nerve racking experience for some athletes and often they like you to be around to help support them through the pressures. Role of a 'Friend' and perhaps 'Counsellor' come in here to.

## THE COACH'S NON-TECHNICAL TOOL BOX

### Remember:

- Being a good coach is not just about having excellent sports-specific and technical knowledge
- The skill of effective coaching lies in asking the right questions
- It is important to ask yourself: Have I planned for perfection and covered all eventualities?

### Coaches as leaders:

- Require excellence; do not expect perfection
- Understand your athletes before you can influence them
- Create trust and command respect
- Motivate and inspire

### Communicating with your athletes:

- Keep the message concise and precise

- Work out whether your athletes receive the same message as the one you think you are communicating
- Remember your tone of voice and body language - only 10% of what we recall comes from the words spoken
- Understanding how your athletes tick:
- Think about how your athletes like to be coached
- Look at how well you know your athletes:
- What are their goals?
- What is stopping them from achieving this?
- What can you do to help?
- Think about how often you ask for feedback from your athletes about your coaching
- Understanding how your athletes like to learn:
- Understand what your athletes' preferred learning styles are
- Look at how your preferred coaching style is likely to be received by those with different learning styles
- Build the needs of those with different learning styles into how you present information
- If you feel you are not getting through to your athlete, remember that it might be the medium and not the message that is wrong

**“Because coaches are the number one factor affecting athletes’ skill development... it only makes sense to place coaching development at or near the top of a sport organization’s list of priorities”**

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were not getting the support needed to withstand expansion if and when it comes.

## INTRODUCTION TO MENTORING

Mentoring is not a new concept. Mentoring has probably been going on since the beginning of time. In the modern world, some of the more successful mentoring programs can be found operating in the business and education sectors. Even in sport, we see evidence of mentoring, however, formalized mentor programs are few and far between. In the case where a lone individual is acting as a mentor for a sports organization, the program often ceases to exist once that person decides to move on.

Because coaches are the number one factor affecting athletes' skill development, beyond the athletes themselves, it only makes sense to place coaching development at or near the top of a sport association's list of priorities and allocate resources accordingly. More often than not, sport organizations never carry their coaches' development beyond the National Coaching Certification Program. Unfortunately, the NCCP, although very well researched and prepared, does have its limitations. The greatest limitation being that there is no follow up with the coaches after the courses are complete. Inevitably, coaches find themselves needing help with often no place to turn to get it. Formalized coach mentorship programs have been proven highly effective at improving the quality of coaching and by default, the quality of the experience had by the athletes.

The executive of SAMLA recognized that the association coaches

We also realized that the players within our association were not getting everything that they deserved. It was decided that a Coach Mentorship Program would be one way to solve both problems. A Coach Mentorship Program will play an active role in the Revised NCCP curriculum.

## WHAT IS MENTORING?

Mentoring is not a new idea nor is it complicated in its basic form. More experienced coaches (mentors) work with beginner or less experienced coaches, providing feedback and encouragement in supporting the development of these coaches. This will ultimately result in improved player development.

Mentorship is an ongoing trusting, personal relationship between a mentor and a coach. Through directed learning activities and self-discovery, a coach, with support of a mentor coach, can confidently deal with the many challenges of the coaching environment. This mentoring process will enable the coach to become more successful in all aspects of coaching.

### Mentor...

- A wise and trusted teacher, advisor, counsellor, instructor, tutor and trainer.

### Mentoring...

- A relationship between a mentor and a coach, which enables the coach to become more successful in all aspects of his/her coaching skills

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- Involves providing coaches a secondary and continuous source of coaching education and support
- Provides players with more knowledgeable coaches further enhancing player enjoyment of the game
- Provides coaches with the opportunity for personal growth and development
- Encouraging the Coach to take responsibility for achieving their goals
- Helping them to learn from their mistakes
- Helping them to work out the answer, rather than just telling them
- Giving constructive advice, but not expecting to solve problems for them
- Giving them responsibility and monitoring progress

Mentoring is a two-way process in which both the Mentor and Coach benefit from networking and the sharing of ideas - an interaction that can lead to the betterment of both the coaches and the athlete.

The Coach receives support in targeted development activities and assistance in avoiding common mistakes.

## **BENEFITS TO THE COACH INCLUDE:**

- access to an informed second opinion,
- insight into one's own performance through a 'critical friend',
- the identification of personal development needs and opportunities
- learning from the experience of the Mentor.

## **BENEFITS TO THE MENTOR INCLUDE:**

- enhanced self-esteem,
- fulfillment of one's own developmental needs,
- organizational recognition,
- a great sense of community involvement

The Mentoring process is about empowerment and encouraging the Coach to take charge. The Coach Mentors will support this empowerment by:

## **PRIMARY COACHING SKILLS**

In a coaching role you will initially need to develop the skills of:

- providing instruction and explanation,
- demonstrating,
- observing,
- analyzing
- providing feedback.
- **In providing instruction and explanation you should:**
  - think about and plan what you are going to say,
  - gain the athlete's attention,
  - keep it simple and to the point and
  - make sure they understand.
- **In providing demonstration make sure:**
  - you are in a position where the athletes can clearly see you,
  - focus on only 1 or 2 key points,
  - repeat the demonstration 2 or 3 times (side, back and front view),
  - ask if they have any questions
  - then let them practice the skill.
- **In observing and analyzing:**
  - break the action down into phases,
  - focus on one phase at a time,
  - observe the action several times from various angles,

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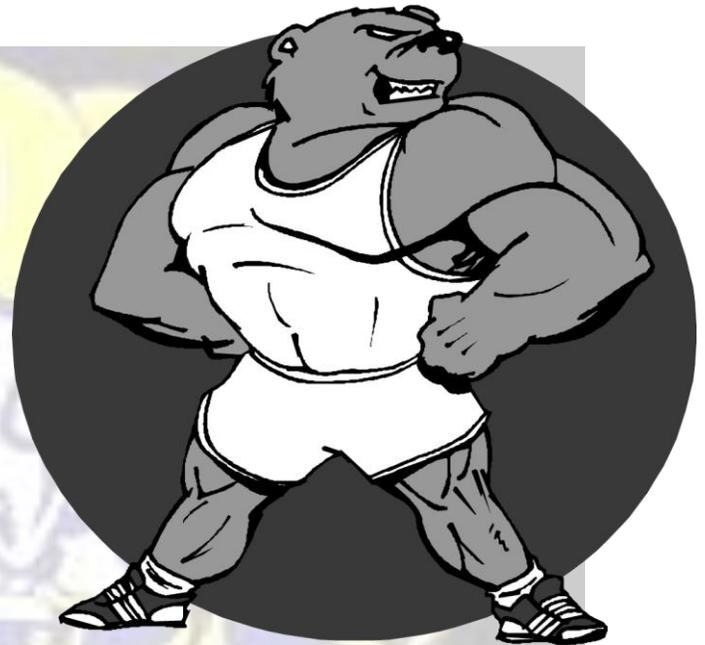
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- compare the action with your technical model
- and if appropriate determine what corrective action is required.

*“The role of the coach is one, which enables the athlete to achieve levels of performance to a degree that may not have been possible if left to his/her own endeavours”.*

- **In providing feedback:**

- encourage the athlete to self analyze by asking appropriate questions,
- provide specific and simple advice,
- limit the advice to 1 or 2 points
- make the whole process a positive experience for the athlete.



***“What makes a good coach?  
Complete dedication.***

George Halas

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## 2. PRINCIPLES OF COACHING

### DEVELOP YOUR COACHING PHILOSOPHY

A philosophy is a set of guidelines to govern your actions. They develop from:

- ideas formed from your experience
- opinions gained from the knowledge you gathered
- your desires for the future

In developing a successful coaching philosophy, you need to explain the following and search for answers.

- Why do you want to coach?
- Why do children participate in athletics?
- Who are some of the people I want to use as models?
- How can I communicate my philosophy to others?

Having a philosophy will remove uncertainty about training rules, style of play, discipline codes of conduct, competitive outlook, objectives and many more facets of coaching.

**To build a coaching philosophy, you must know yourself!!!**

### WHY DO I WANT TO COACH?

Consider the following reasons:

- To contribute to the overall growth of others
- I enjoy contact with people
- I enjoy the recognition
- I want to be a winner
- I like to see others having a good time
- I like the control factor in coaching
- I enjoy being a teacher
- I want to make a difference
- I want to give something back to the sport

### WHY DO CHILDREN PARTICIPATE IN ATHLETICS?

It is vital for coaches to consider why children want to participate in sports programs. If this is done, there is much less likelihood of there being misunderstandings in the future.

Reasons why children participate in athletics:

- Fun
- A feeling of belonging
- A feeling of direction
- Making friends
- Being part of a group
- For the thrill
- To succeed

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## WHAT DO PARENTS EXPECT FROM A SPORTS PROGRAM?

- Fun
- A safe environment
- Total family involvement
- Child's self-esteem built up
- Success for their children
- Fair play

Having considered the kinds of things the athletes, parents, and of course you wish to get out of the athletic experience, you must then formulate common goals so that everyone can focus their efforts in the same direction.

In establishing these goals, you should consider the following:

- All goals must be measurable
- All goals need to be observable
- Goals need to be challenging and inspiring
- Goals need to be achievable
- Goals need to be believable
- Finally, they should be goals of short term and long term

To be an effective coach, you need to develop a philosophy and continue to develop it on an on-going basis.

No matter what philosophy a coach develops, it should always start with the idea that:

**“ATHLETES FIRST –  
WINNING SECOND”**

Having athlete's first, winning second as your objective does not mean that winning is unimportant.

The immediate **short-term** objective of any contest is to win. Striving to win within the rules of the game should be the objective of every athlete and coach.

## FACTS ABOUT COACHING YOUTH SPORTS

Research in Canada demonstrated that others influence children's behaviours with the following impact:

- Friends 43%
- Mothers 52%
- Fathers 56%
- Gym Teacher 64%
- Coach 96%

## SUMMARY

Your primary purpose as a youth lacrosse coach is to maximize the benefits of participation in lacrosse while minimizing the detriments. To achieve this, you must organize, teach, model, and evaluate effectively. Your players learn not only from what you teach but also from what you consciously or unconsciously do. You are a very significant person in the eyes of your players. They notice if you are organized and fair, a good instructor, know the rules, interested in them or the win/loss record, know how to control your emotions, know how to present yourself, and treat others with respect. The choices you make and the actions you take determine how positive the experience is for the athlete.

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## 3. THE COACH: ADMINISTRATOR, MANAGER & LEADER

The coach's role is to provide leadership through the leading of their players, the managing of their teams and the administration of their policies. These are three distinct and separate skills we develop as a result of inherited abilities and experience. Coaches usually find that they have greater ability in one area than in the others and it is this natural ability that influences the approach that coaches will initially use. Module 3 will help the coaches identify their natural strengths and ensure that their style of coaching will eventually be the most effective way to interact with their players.

### THE DUTIES AND STYLES OF COACHING DEFINED

#### Administrators:

- Carry out policies formulated by others
- Do not make or change policies
- Use their power of control to carry out policies

Coaches who use an administrative style of coaching are autocratic in their approach. This means that they set the structure, policies, systems and standards of the team and then tells and directs the players what to do. There is very little feedback from the players and the players are expected to find out how to do things on their own. The players are given the opportunity to comply or, if they can't or won't, they sit on the bench or leave.

#### Managers:

- Are concerned with efficiency and I things are being done right
- Can influence policies but don't make them
- Choose and make decisions about systems of operation that will achieve the expected outcomes
- Use their organizational skills to ensure that systems are working

Coaches who use a managerial style of coaching are very good at delegating responsibilities. They like everything planned in advance. One of their strengths is recruiting players to improve the team. They are the X & O type of coach. They have the ability to devise strategies and tactics for winning games, organize systems for special teams and the transition part of the game. They are also very good at establishing systems to organize the bench and changing lines.



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## Leaders:

- Build and share the direction and vision for the team
  - Motivate and inspire
  - Are concerned with effectiveness
  - Encourage people to live up to their potential
  - Clarify roles and objectives
  - Promote two-way communication
  - Support new ideas and new direction
  - Are innovative and creative
  - Are problem solvers
- 
- Coordinate, consult and guide
  - Are open and frank
  - Promote team building, networking and manage conflict
  - Delegate responsibilities and monitor
  - Encourage planned risk taking
  - Use policies and control guides rather than dictate
  - Lead and pull rather than direct and push
  - Facilitate and mentor
  - Acknowledge and reward

Coaches, who use a leadership style of coaching, facilitate and mentor rather than direct and control. They share the knowledge of how to learn, evaluate with the players, involve the players in making team decisions and show their players how to direct their own learning.



- ***DIRECTING*** implies pushing people to do things.
- ***LEADING*** involves acting in a manner which people willingly follow.

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## 4. PLANNING

### WHAT IS PLANNING?

Planning is all about efficiency and organization. With the ever-expanding role of today's coach, time is at a premium. Whether you are coaching at the professional level or managing a youth team, planning is an essential part of coaching.

Other than the talent you have to work with, there is no other aspect of coaching more critical to your team's success than effective planning and execution of the daily practice. What does effective practice planning mean? The word effective by definition means, "producing a desired effect; efficiently." A desired effect could be winning a championship, performing to one's potential, or showing a certain amount of improvement. Effective planning means creating a practice session that provides the greatest opportunity for a team to reach the "desired effect".

### FACTORS TO CONSIDER IN EFFECTIVE PRACTICE PLANNING

1. Breaking the season into phases- For example: Pre-season, Mid-season, Post-season, and Off-season. It is important to remember that what you cover will vary from one phase to another.
2. Identify what is to be covered in each phase. The Off-season may emphasize individual skill development along with strength and conditioning. As the Pre-

3. Season rolls around, a master practice plan becomes a necessity.

Knowing exactly what is to be done and when and for how long takes time and preparation. The master practice plan is a starting point.

- *Playbook*- this is where it all starts. You must have a specific system of offence and defence in place before beginning any kind of practice planning. It should include the type of team offence and defence you are going to employ, special set plays, or special situations, etc.

### INTRODUCTION

The top two reasons coaches give for being involved in lacrosse is to provide an enjoyable experience for their players and to pass on knowledge or give something back to the sport. Learning how to do this effectively is the process of learning how to coach.

Once all the information has been gathered, the next step in the learning process is learning how to plan and organize the material into meaningful progressions of activity that can be practiced.

There is more to planning for a coach than planning a practice. The coach needs to develop a:

- Seasonal Planner
- Practice Plan
- Game Plan
- Dressing Room Plan
- Bench Management

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## SEASONAL PLANNER

Every coach should include a coaching tool that enables him/her to plan for the complete season. A Seasonal Planner is a great way to indicate short and long-term goals for the team. Goal setting is very important for all levels of lacrosse. A mini-tyke team will have very different short and long-term goals from a Midget "A" team but for both teams, having these goals is as important. A Seasonal Planner should include the following:

- Pre-Season Parent Meeting
- Pre- season plan
- Mid-season plan
- Post season plan
- Off-Season plan
- Technical preparation
- Physical Preparation
- Mental Preparation
- When and how each physical and mental aspect of training will be conducted
- When and what systems need to be taught
- Important dates and deadlines to ensure that the team and its athletes meet all necessary commitments for a successful season

When a coach takes the time to develop a comprehensive Seasonal Planner it will be much easier to design practices that will follow and correspond with the Seasonal Planner.

## PRE-SEASON PARENT MEETING

### Introduction

- Coaching Philosophy
- Team Goals
- Rules, expectations & commitment
- Dress Code (if applicable)

### The Season

- Level of Play
- Practice Schedule
- Tournaments
- Season Plan

### The Budget

- Team Funds
- Tournament Fees
- Jackets etc.
- Team Party

### Fundraising

- Are we going to fundraise
- If Yes – Ideas

### Miscellaneous

- Team Roster Cards
- Oranges, Freezies – during the game
- Post-game drinks

### Help – Get all parents involved

- Phoning – 3
- Jerseys – 2
- Fundraising – 4
- Treasurer – 2
- Timekeepers – 4

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## PRACTICE PLANNER

The purpose of this section is to give the coaches some basic information on what goes into planning a practice.

Planning is an essential part of any successful activity. The difference between a successful practice and an unsuccessful practice is planning.

### ***List of Fundamentals:***

Once you have your system of play in place, it is important to identify all the necessary fundamentals that your players will need to know to execute that system in a game. Both team and individual fundamentals need to be taken into account. You should also consider physical conditioning as part of each practice. Your ability to break your system down to its component parts and identify the necessary fundamentals is crucial in determining what you will eventually cover in practice.

It's important for the coach to refer to his/her Seasonal Planner before starting to design any practice.

In preparing a Practice Plan the coach should:

- Choose an objective for the practice
- Pre-plan the practice
- Select drills that are age specific
- Fill in the Practice Planner
- Complete a Post Practice/Game Evaluation

## Objectives

Each practice should have a specific objective, what are you trying to achieve from the practice?

- Objectives are based on information from previous practices or games
- Explain the objective of the practice in the dressing room prior to going on the floor and invite input from players
- Objective may be special preparation for upcoming game
- Refer to Seasonal Planner in order to keep on track

All objectives should have the following attributes:

**Specific:** Write objectives simply and describe exactly what will be accomplished when each objective is achieved

**Measurable:** The objective needs to be measurable so it can be determined when it has been achieved. If it cannot be measured it might not be manageable.

**Achievable:** Expect to achieve the objective and do not set objectives too high or make them unrealistic.

**Related to the vision:** The objectives must relate to the vision of your team.

**Time bound:** Each objective must have an achieve-by date. A deadline is a great motivator for achieving objectives.

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## Pre-Practice Plan

A practice needs to have different facets of the game of lacrosse to be successful. It doesn't matter whether it is Mini Tyke or Midget "A" every practice should include the following:

- Warm-up
- Skill Development
- Team Concepts
- Cool Down
- Next Practice

## **SAMLA Drill Directory:**

When planning a practice the coach should consult as much resource material as possible. The following are resource materials that will help in planning your practices:

- SAMLA Drill Directory
- BCLCA Coach's Drill Manual
- SAMLA Skill Development Manual
- Coach Mentor(s)

Identifying the type of drill you are going to use to teach the specific fundamentals to your players is crucial to your success. There are a number of factors to consider in choosing which drills to use such as the number of players it will involve at one time, the equipment necessary, the time of the season you are in etc.

Once you decide on your list of drills, you can then organize them into categories and sub categories for drills that are age-specific.

Suggested categories would be as follows:

- Warm-Up Drills
- Conditioning Drills
- Offensive Drills
  - Passing
  - Shooting
- Defensive Drills
  - Checking
  - Zone Defence (House)
  - Man-to-Man
- Special Teams Drills
  - Powerplay
  - Short Man
  - 6-on-5
- Team Concepts
- Cool Down Drills

Once the coach has a list, condense it to the number of drills required to fill the allotted time period, keeping the objective of the practice a priority.

When planning a practice the more variety that you can provide the players throughout the year the more fun they will have.

## **Practice Planner**

Once the coach has the condensed list of things to do during the practice, use the Practice Planner and fill in the following areas:

- Date & Time of practice
- Location of practice
- Objectives of practice
- Activity or drills
- Key elements of activities or drills
- Evaluation / Things to work on

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A Practice Planner allows the coach to reach the goals set out in the Seasonal Planner. It also helps the coach keep the timelines set out for the practice. The coach should keep the Practice Planners in a file for future reference. They will come in very handy for reviewing if the goals set out in the Seasonal Planner are met or not. The Coach Mentor will want to see the Practice Planners when evaluating the coach and the Coach Mentorship Program.

## **Post-Practice/Game Evaluations**

A very important criterion for determining what drills are going to be implemented in a particular practice plan comes into consideration after every practice and game.

The post-practice evaluation will identify what drills actually are helping your team and which ones are not helping. If you create detailed evaluations of both the team and yourself after every practice you are then able to view this information when you are planning your next practice. As the coach, you will have a record of what works and what doesn't for your team.

The post-game performance evaluation provides feedback on needed areas of improvement from actual game performance. The coach can review these as he/she plans future practices especially when preparing for an opponent their team has previously played.

The Coach Mentor is a resource that can be used throughout the season. The Coach Mentor will be able to help the coach with all aspects of planning a practice. If the coach finds that he/she is not achieving the goals that have been set out in the Seasonal Planner, contact the Coach Mentor of that division and he/she will help get that coach back on track. If for whatever reason that doesn't come up with solutions to get back on track then a meeting will be arranged with the Association Head Coach, all Coach Mentors and the coach.

The Coach Mentor will want to look at your Practice Planners periodically throughout the season to make sure you are following your Seasonal Planner. The Coach Mentor is there to help you reach your team's goals.

## **GAME PLANNER**

Planning for a practice may be considered by some as the most important task for the coach to complete throughout the year. That may be true but planning for a game is a very important task as well. A coach must be well prepared for every game. The coach must have the following prepared for every game:

- Pre-Game Warm-Up
- Game Plan
- Alternate Game Plan
- Game Line-Up
- Special Teams Line-Up
- Starting goaltender

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## Game Plan

### Pre-Game Warm-Up

A good Pre-Game Warm-Up is a very important part of every game. It sets the stage for how the team will start the game. If a team executes a proper warm-up they will be more likely to perform at 100% or close to it. A team that does not have a good Pre-Game Warm-Up will take part of all of the first period getting their body ready to perform at 100%.

A good Pre-Game Warm-Up will reduce the chance of injury due to cold and tight muscles.

The objectives of a good warm-up are to:

1. Increase the core body temperature so the player is sweating
2. Actively stretch all muscles necessary for playing lacrosse
3. Enhance the ability of the muscles to use oxygen (endurance)
4. Activate as many of the muscle fibres as possible (strength)
5. Increase the range of motion about all joints (flexibility)
6. Mentally prepare the players for the game
7. Create a positive team atmosphere
8. Create a feeling of readiness for every phase of the game

In minor lacrosse it is very difficult to achieve the above because there is a limited amount of time allotted for a Pre-Game Warm-Up. In order to achieve a proper and effective Pre-Game Warm-Up most minor teams will have to do most of their warm-up prior to going onto the floor. Lacrosse is a summer sport, so do the Pre-Game Warm-Up outside the arena.

A Game Plan is an important tool for every coach to use throughout the season. It doesn't matter if he/she is coaching Mini-Tyke or Midget "A" a coach should have a game plan written on paper ready for each game. Now a Game Plan for a Mini-Tyke team will look a lot different than a Game Plan for a Midget "A" team, but they will both serve the same purpose. The game plan will outline the systems that the team will run during that game. The systems will include offence, defence, line rotations, breakouts and any special plays that may be used during the game.

- Offence
  - Motion
  - Pick & Roll
  - Slide Strong Side
  - Powerplay
- Defence
  - Zone (House)
  - Man – to – Man
  - Sagging Man-to-Man
  - The Wall
  - Short Man
- Line Rotations
  - O / D
  - 3 – 2
  - 1 – 4 – 1
  - 5 in and 5 out
- Breakouts
  - 5 man Breakout
  - Fast Break
  - Goalie starting the breakout
  - Forward Coming into the crease to get the ball
- Special Plays
  - 6 – on – 5
  - Fast Breaks

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The Game Plan for the younger divisions will be more towards what the coach would like to achieve during the game. It may be as simple as making 3 consecutive passes during this game, or getting the players to successfully come back and set up the house. A Game Plan will be very specific to the age group and the competitiveness of that team.

The single most important thing a coach must remember when preparing a Game Plan is that it has to be attainable by the players on the team. It would be unfair to expect a team to perform something that they have never practiced, for example you can't expect a Mini-Tyke team to set up a house if they have never practiced it no more than you could expect a Midget "A" team to play a Sagging/Support Man-to-Man Defence if they have never practiced it. Make sure when preparing your Game Plans that it is something that your team can go out and perform and feel good about themselves when they do.

All coaches must agree on the game plan prior to entering the dressing room prior to the game. A team cannot have coaches on the bench with different Game Plans. This will only cause confusion between the coaching staff and the players and the product on the floor will be a reflection.

## **Alternate Game Plan**

The purpose of preparing an Alternate Game Plan will allow the competitive coach to change his team's direction during a game

This will not be an important step when planning for a game in the younger age divisions or in a House League.

Planning an Alternate Game Plan would be something that a coach would do for a team that plays in a competitive league like Peewee "A", Bantam "A" or Midget "A".

The only time a coach of a House League team or non-competitive team would prepare an Alternate Game Plan is when he/she is not sure of which players on his/her team are going to show up to the game. An Alternate Game Plan may be used to prepare for a short bench, missing skilled players etc. An Alternate Game Plan may be as simple as changing from man-to-man defence to setting up the house.

Just like the Game Plan an Alternate Game Plan must be attainable by the players on the team.

## **Game Line-Up**

All coaches should have a Game Line-Up prepared for every game. It is important that all coaches are organized and prepared for their team. An organized coach is likely to be more successful. It is very important to know what lines will be playing together prior to going into the dressing room to have the pre-game talk with the team. This doesn't matter if it is a Mini-Tyke coach or a Midget "A" coach.

If the coach has his/her Game Line-Up prepared prior to going to the arena he/she will be better prepared for any changes that will need to be made once he/she finds out that one or more of his/her players are not playing in the upcoming game. If at all possible, make all changes in a different colour ink than the original.

There are a number of Game Line-Up sheets that are available for coaches to use. There are a couple in Appendix 1. Find the one that fits your style and have it

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filled in prior to entering the arena. Always have a spare Game Line-Up sheet available in case you have to make too many changes on your original that it becomes confusing. Transfer the final line-up onto the spare sheet and tape this sheet up behind the bench for all players to see.

Competitive coaches will want to have a copy of the Game Line-Up for each coach that is on the bench. This will eliminate any confusion when it's time for line changes. It will also ensure that all coaches are on the same page when it comes to the game plan.

## Special Teams Line-Up

The Special Teams Line-Up is part of the Game Line-Up sheet. This part of the Game Line-Up sheet is not something that the younger age groups or the House Coaches will concern themselves with. The Special Teams Line-Up is mainly for the competitive coaches that will run a Powerplay, Short Man, and Loose Ball Team or have a special group for the last 30 seconds of a period or the game.

These Special Teams need to be set going into the dressing room prior to the game. The coach should have extras designated for each Special Team just in case they have a last minute scratch.

One way to include every player on a 20-man roster (18 runners & 2 goalies) is to prepare two Powerplays and two Short Man teams with all 18 runners included in one of the Special Teams. This will allow each player to feel like they are important and part of the team. To be able to achieve this successfully the coach must schedule Special Teams into his/her Practice Plans.

## Starting Goaltenders

There are various ways for a coach to decide which goaltender will start each game.

- A coach can decide by the performance of the goaltenders at the practice prior to the game. (This will make the goaltenders work hard in practice while creating a competition between the two)
- A coach can rotate his/her goaltenders equally game for game. (This is by far the most fair way of splitting the duties of the goaltender but it does not reward a strong performance in the previous game)
- A coach can decide just before the game starts. (This is not a recommended way of choosing who starts as it does not allow a goaltender to get mentally prepared)
- A coach can split the game into two and give each goaltender  $\frac{1}{2}$  game (This is the least recommended ways of splitting the duties of the goaltender for the following reasons:
  - The switch will never happen exactly at the half way point of the game,
  - It is unfair to pull a goaltender when he/she is having a strong game
  - It is unfair to some goaltenders to put them in cold. Some goaltenders can handle being put in the net half way through the game but most can't.

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## DRESSING ROOM PLANNER

All coaches, no matter if it is Mini Tyke or Midget "A" should have a Dressing Room Plan for every game. This plan can include all or parts of the following:

- Dressing Room Rules
- Seating Plan
- Game Plan
- Game Line-Up
- Pre-Game /Post-Game Talk
- Chalk Talk

### Dressing Room Rules

One of the most important aspects of being a good coach is to establish a set of Dressing Room Rules. These rules should be followed by everyone on the team including the coaches and should have consequences when they are broken. A good set of Dressing Room Rules will eliminate a lot of undesired behaviour both at your home arena and when you are visiting another teams arena.

The Dressing Room Rules will differ from team to team but they all should strive for the same goal(s):

- Organization in the dressing room
- Relaying all pertinent information prior to the game or practice
- Preparing a team for their upcoming game
- Keeping the dressing room clean
- Respecting one's team mates
- Respecting the dressing room

## Seating Plan

A Seating Plan in a dressing room is something that is done for a few different reasons:

- Develop chemistry between line mates
- Separate trouble makers
- Easier to talk to team
- Eliminate cliques
- etc.

A Seating Plan is not something that all coaches will feel the need to do. Some coaches like to designate spots in the dressing room according to the following:

- Lines
- Lefts and rights
- Positions
- Numerically

If a coach decides to designate spots in the dressing room it should be done for all games and practices

### Game Plan

A Game Plan as discussed on Pg 18 is an important aspect of a well-coached team. If a coach is prepared going into the dressing room prior to a game the team will reflect this when they are on the floor during the game.

A Game Plan must be attainable and the team must be able to understand what it is and be confident that they can achieve it. The coach must be able to communicate all aspects of the Game Plan to his/her team in a way that they **ALL** understand it and can go out onto the floor and execute it. Most of the preparation of the Game Plan is done during practice.

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## Pre-Game/Post-Game Talk

Part of the preparation for the game is the Pre-Game Talk. The coach has to be able to communicate to his/her players the Game Plan. The single most important thing to remember about a Pre-Game Talk is it has to be **POSITIVE!**

If there is more than one coach on the team it should be decided in what order the coaches will speak and what they are going to address during their talk.

The Pre-Game/Post-Game Talk needs to be kept consistent throughout the season. If more than one coach is going to speak, the order of who speaks should stay close to the same all year. What aspect of the game each coach addresses should be consistent throughout the year. The Head Coach should always speak last and he/she should keep consistent with what the other coaches have already said. Basically the Head Coach should summarize what has already been said by the Assistant Coaches. This will show the players that all the coaches are working towards a common goal.

The Post-Game Talk should not focus on what went wrong during the game. It should focus on the positive aspects of the game, especially if it is a younger team or a House League team. This doesn't mean that a coach can't bring up the parts of the game that didn't go according to plan. There is no reason why a coach can't talk about the negatives after the game as long as that's not the only thing that is discussed. Remember the Post-Game Talk should always end it with a positive thought. When a player leaves the dressing room he/she will be more likely to remember the last thing the coach says so make it positive.

## Chalk Talk

Whenever possible include Chalk Talk, as it is commonly known. All coaches should have a clipboard that has the outline of the lacrosse floor on the backside. This will allow you to draw out specific plays that you want performed during the game. Remember a picture is worth a thousand words. This is also a valuable tool for practices as the coach can outline the practice in the dressing room prior to the practice. This will minimize the amount of time explaining drills during the practice.

## BENCH MANAGEMENT

Bench Management, simply put is the Coach preparing for what is going to happen on his/her bench during that specific game. Bench Management will include:

- Rules of the Bench
- Bench Rotation
- IN Door and OUT Door
- Game Line-Up
- Hydration
- Between Period Breaks
- EAP (Emergency Action Plan)
- First Aid Kit

## Rules of the Bench

Every coach should establish a set of rules that will be followed by the players and coaches during every game. These rules can include the following:

- No profanity
- No negative talk towards team mates

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- Only positive comments when speaking to your team mates
- No directing any negative comments towards the official from the bench
- No directing any comments negative towards an opponent from the bench
- No asking “Can I go out”
- Etc.

## Bench Rotation

How a bench rotates or changes lines is one of the most important facets of organizing a bench during a game. The way a team rotates their bench will be totally dependant upon what offensive system the team is running.

A team that is running 3 lines will rotate 5 players in one door and 5 players out the other door. The important part of this style of bench rotation is having the lines stay together while on the bench. This will be the most common way of rotating a bench for all minor lacrosse teams.

A team that runs a 3-2-3 System will have no more than 8 players standing along the wall of the bench. The remainder of the players will be standing up on the bench. This will reduce any confusion as to who is going on the floor and at what time. Some Bantam “A” and Midget “A” teams will use this system.

## IN Door & OUT Door

Designating what door is the IN Door and which one is the OUT Door will depend on what system you use. For most minor lacrosse teams that run 3 lines will designate the door closest to your net as the IN Door and the door closest to the opposing team’s net as the OUT Door. The reason for this designation is to eliminate

unnecessary congestion of players coming off the floor and players going on the floor from the same door. If all players coming off the floor use one door and all the players going on the floor use the other door there will be no congestion and the line changes will be much smoother.

The coach who is working the IN Door should call out the number of players are coming off the floor so the coach that is manning the OUT Door knows how many players to allow on the floor. This will reduce the chance of the team having too many players on the floor. If this happens in the offensive zone it is only a possession call, but if it happens in the defensive zone it is a 2-minute penalty for TOO MANY PLAYERS.

Another important part of using the IN Door and OUT Door to the team’s best advantage is to set the OUT Door up so that you have the proper players ready to go on the floor.

If your IN Door is the door to the left of the two doors then the coach should have his/her players arranged in the following order ready to go on the floor through the OUT Door.

- Left handed shot with speed
- Right-handed shot with ball control skills
- The remaining three players can be in any order

The importance of having a Left-handed speedster first on the door is when the player steps on the floor he/she is on his/her proper side of the floor for shooting. The reason the player is fast is to create a fast break situation.

The importance of the second person on the door being Right-handed and have good ball control skills is to be an outlet for a controlled breakout. He/she will

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receive the pass and take the ball away from the bench to the opposite side of the floor.

If your IN Door is the door to the right of the two doors then the coach should have his/her players arranged in the following order ready to go on the floor through the OUT Door.

- Right handed shot with speed
- Left-handed shot with ball control skills
- The remaining three players can be in any order

The same reasons apply here but to the opposite sides of the floor.

It is also very important to have people working the door who understand all of these strategies. Whoever is manning the doors for your team should be someone who pays attention to the job that is required of him/her. Do not let anyone work your doors if they are not going to pay attention to their job and watch the game as a spectator.

## Game Line-Up

There are two rules of thought when it comes to the Game Line-Up on the bench. Some coaches like to tape a copy of the line-up behind the bench for all the players to see. Other coaches do not like to have the line-up taped behind the bench.

This issue is absolutely one for each coach to decide. There are too many reasons pro and con on this issue to start listing them all.

## Hydration

Water's most important role during activity is body temperature regulation. Active muscles generate heat, which must be removed. The evaporation of sweat from skin is the most effective way to dehydration. Dehydration is a major cause of fatigue and poor performance. It also increases the risk of cramps, heat exhaustion and life threatening heat stroke.

If an athlete is depleted of his/her water amount (dehydrated), he/she will not be able to perform to his/her peak capability. If you suspect an athlete of having a depleted level of body water, you can monitor their body water level, by observing the colour of and odour of the urine. Urine that is pale yellow and odourless reflects adequate hydration. If the urine is radioactive yellow, almost a neon green colour, the athlete needs to rehydrate quickly before a trip to the hospital is required.

## To Prevent Dehydration

1. **Before exercise:** Schedule water intake throughout the day. Drink at least 2L or 8 cups per day
2. **Prior to Competition:** In sports where heavy sweat losses occur, drink water up to 2 hours before start time, and then stop drinking. 15 - 30 minutes before game time consume as much water as is comfortable. This allows for the bladder to empty, then provides fluid (that will not reach the bladder) to help keep the body hydrated

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3. **During exercise or Competition:** Drink 100 ml – 250 ml every 15 to 20 minutes. Athletes who sweat heavily or compete in hot temperatures should drink more.
4. **After Competition:** Quenching thirst does not satisfy the body's need for water. Drink 1L of fluid for each kg of weight loss during exercise. Monitor urine colour and amount. A small amount of dark urine is a sign of dehydration. Plenty of pale urine during the day is a sign of sufficient fluid intake. Limit or avoid tea, coffee or cola beverages. All are “diuretics”. These may increase urine output and fluid loss.

## Breaks Between Periods

A coach should try and get his/her team to a cool place during the break between periods. A shaded area outside of the arena is an excellent spot to have a talk to the players between periods. Minor lacrosse does not allow long breaks between periods so the coach should check out the perimeter of the arena prior to the game and find a good spot that his team can access within 30 – 45 seconds. This will allow most teams to have 3 - 4 minutes for a chat.

Make sure that the players drink lots of water between periods, especially on hot days. It is a good idea to have freezies to give to your players in between periods or let them chew ice cubes. This will help cool down their core body temperature.