"What a resource! Every girls' lacrosse coach in the country needs to have this book in their hands." –Diane Geppi Aikens, head women's lacrosse coach, Loyola College

THE BEAT FIELD PARENT'S GUIDE TO

COACHING GIRLS' LACROSSE

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with Maryalice Yakutchik

LACROSSE – Practice Plan

DATE: _____ **DAY:** _____

Warm Up	**Time:**
Drills	**Time:**
Other Activity	**Time:**
Comments:	

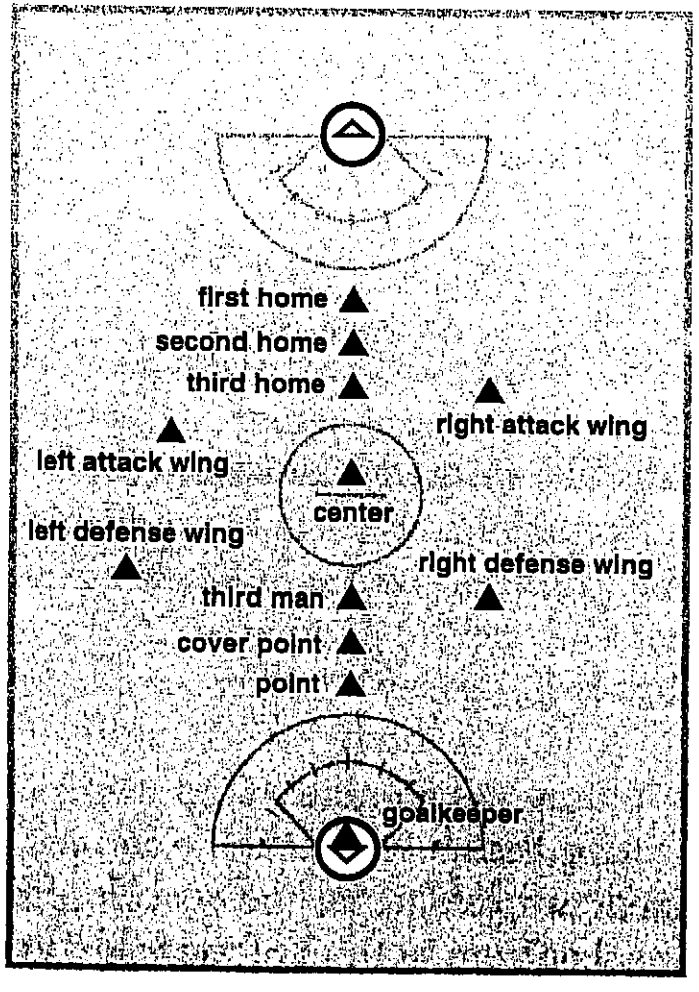
Wall Ball Routine F11

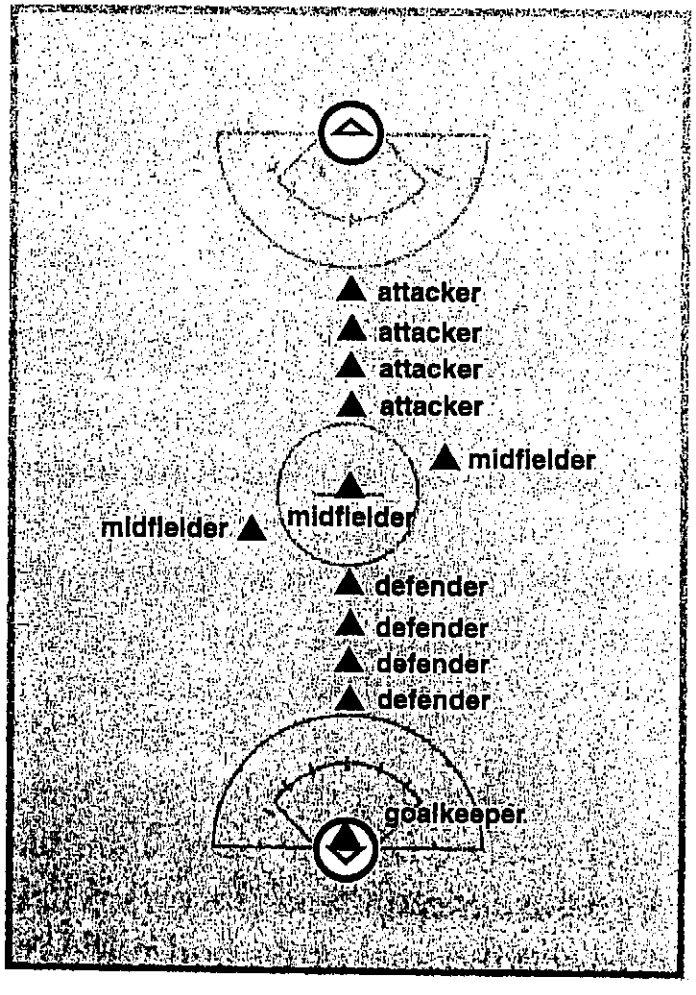
Purpose: To improve stick handling, cradling, throwing, and catching with both hands.

Number of Players: All

Equipment: 1 wall, 1 ball per player

1. Position players 6 to 8 feet away from a wall. Their top hand should be placed at least one-third of the way down the stick and their bottom hand should be out in front of the body.
2. With the stick in her right hand and her right hand up, each player throws the ball, bounces it off the wall, and catches it right-handed. She repeats 10 times and does a dip dodge (see pages 53–54) to the left hand.
3. With the stick in her left hand and her left hand up, the player throws and catches the ball left-handed. She repeats 10 times and does a dip dodge to the right hand.
4. With her right hand up, the player throws right-handed, catches right-handed, and does an extended twirl reaching to the left and then to the right. She repeats 10 times and does a dip dodge to the left hand.
5. With her left hand up, the player throws left-handed, catches left-handed, and does an extended twirl reaching to the right and then to the left. She repeats 10 times and does a dip dodge to the right hand.
6. With her right hand up, cradling on her right side, the player twirls her stick away from her head, throws right-handed, and catches the ball on the weak side. She should remember to flip her stick over, use soft hands so she can give with the catch, and push out her bottom hand. She repeats 10 times and then passes her stick through her legs to the left hand.
7. With her left hand up, cradling on her left side, the player twirls her stick away from her head, throws left-handed, and catches the ball on the weak side. She should remember to flip her stick over, use soft hands so she can give with the catch, and push out her bottom hand. She repeats 10 times and then passes her stick through her legs to her right hand.
8. With her right hand up, the player twirls away from her head twice, throws right-handed, catches right-handed, switches quickly to her left, twirls away from her head twice, throws left-handed, catches left-handed, and switches quickly to her right into her passing position. She repeats the series 10 times.
9. With her right hand up, the player drops her stick to her right hip, twirls once, passes sidearm, catches right, and does a dip dodge to her left. She drops her stick to her left hip, twirls once, passes sidearm, catches left, and does a dip dodge to her right. She repeats the series 10 times.





Left: Traditional player positions were more specific.

Right: Current player positions, as in the men's game, are more general.

Defenders typically remain in the defensive and midfield zones, behind the offensive restraining line. However, if a defender carries the ball out of the defensive zone during a transition play, she should be confident and comfortable enough to continue through the midfield and take the ball over the offensive restraining line and into the attacking zone. In this situation, one of the attackers or midfielders must remain behind the restraining line until the defender comes back over the line. Midfielders need to communicate with each other when they see a defender cross into the attacking zone to avoid being charged with an offsides.

Four Attackers The four attackers are the core of the offense and should understand their team's attack completely. Attackers control the tempo of the game, when to go to goal and when to settle the ball. Attackers are goal scorers and should have good stick skills. In the midfield, attackers make supporting cuts toward the ball carrier. Attackers are more rested than midfielders and must help bring the ball down the field during transition.

After a turnover in their offensive zone, attackers must redefend all the way to the restraining line. Attackers can cause many turnovers by riding, or putting pressure on the other team's defenders and midfielders as they transition the ball upfield.

Three Midfielders Depending on the level of play, midfielders will often be a team's best athletes and ball carriers. These three players are required to play both offense and defense, and they often are the players who carry the ball in the midfield or make midfield passes. Midfielders must know their team's offensive and defensive schemes because they participate in both. Midfielders should be good decision makers and well conditioned.

Goalie A goalie is the anchor of a team's defense and often serves as the initiator of a team's offense. Goalie play can be the defining factor between two teams. It is very difficult for a team to be successful without good goalie play. It is a common misconception that the goalkeeper position is the best fit for a player who is not as fast, athletic, or skilled as her teammates. A typical goalie is athletic and quick, is mentally tough and resilient, has good stickwork, has good hands and reactions, and is aggressive and directive. These characteristics are similar to those found in a top field player. See chapter 9 for more information on the goalie's role.

Rainbow

THE TRICK

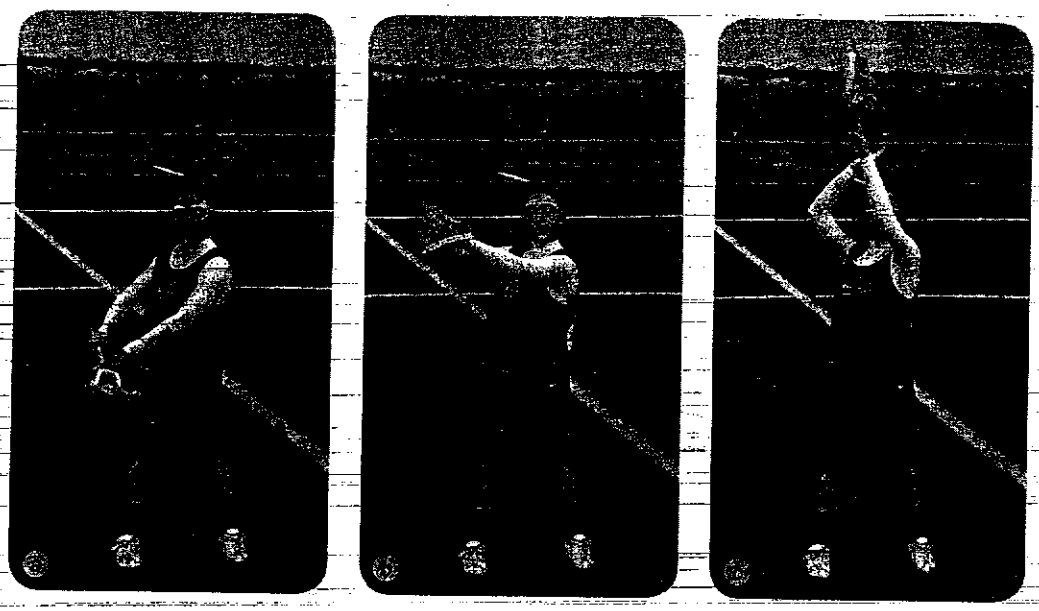
A player spins the stick and ball like a baton above her head from one side of her body to the other and catches one-handed; all the while the ball remains in the stick.

EXECUTION

1. Begin by holding the stick and ball one-handed at the right side of your body about hip level and parallel to the ground. Your right hand should be anywhere between the middle and the base of the shaft, and your left hand should be at your left side.
2. In one motion, bring your right arm up and, as if revving a motorcycle throttle, flick your wrist toward your left side and release the shaft up and over your head. Be sure that your motorcycle flick is even enough to keep the stick parallel to the ground even when it is flying over head.
3. Keep your eyes on the stick as it twirls over head. As soon as you spot the stick in midair with its head facing the ground, take your left hand and grab the shaft toward the outside, completing the rainbow shape.

COACHING POINTS

- Make sure the player's shaft remains parallel to the ground throughout the entire trick (even when above her head!). This will prevent the ball from flying out.
- If the motorcycle flick is too erratic, show the player how to use her left hand to stabilize the stick by placing it beneath the shaft, palm down and just below the head of the stick (see sequence on page 154). The left hand follows the stick through the previously mentioned steps and turns it outward and toward the left to go straight into the left-hand grab.



Rainbow stick trick with stabilizing hand.

VARIATIONS

With a Partner

Stand shoulder to shoulder with a partner. By using more power in the rainbow flip, one partner can do the overhead flipping with her outside hand while the other one catches with her outside hand (see sequence on page 155).

Back and Forth

Once you've perfected the rainbow from right to left, you can do the same trick from left to right and flip back and forth continuously.

Spin and Twirl

THE TRICK

A player spins in a circle with both the stick and the ball perpendicular to the ground, using centrifugal force to keep the ball in the stick.

EXECUTION

1. Start by holding the stick at the base of the shaft just as you would if you were cradling one-handed. Hold the stick almost perpendicular to the ground but with the base of the shaft angled slightly away from your body. Keep the head facing in toward your body so that the ball doesn't roll out.
2. While maintaining the slight angle on the stick, begin to spin in a tight circle to your left side.
3. As you begin to increase the speed of your tight-circle spin, you can begin to straighten out the angle so that the stick is now completely perpendicular to the ground, making the ball seem as if it were glued to your strings.

COACHING POINT

If a player is having trouble starting the spin without the ball flying out, have the player turn the head of her stick slightly toward the direction in which she is spinning.

VARIATION

Once you've perfected spinning in a full circle, you can do the same trick while standing still and spinning back and forth 180 degrees (instead of a full 360 degrees), changing direction from left to right, and from in front of your body to behind your back.

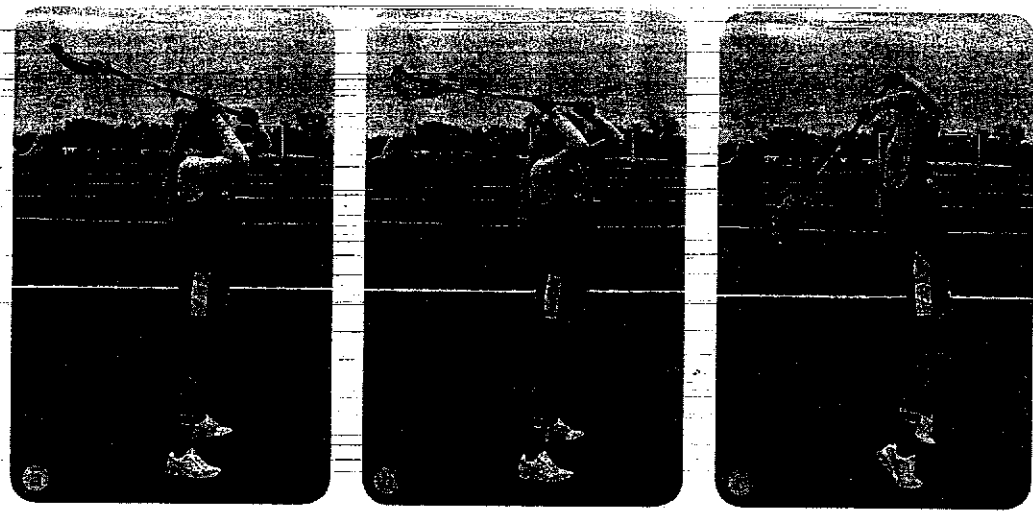
The Backbreaker

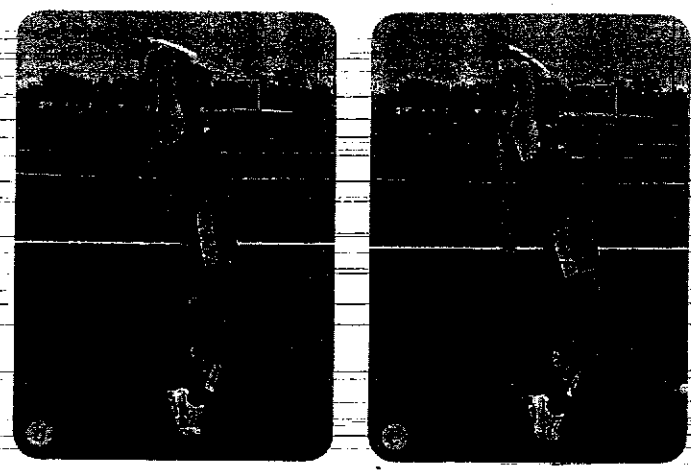
THE TRICK

A player makes a bounce pass from behind her back and in between her legs to a partner.

EXECUTION

1. Begin by holding the stick with a ball in it, using both hands. Your hands should be close together and toward the base of your shaft. Hold the stick parallel to the ground and behind your head as if you are going to make a huge over-the-head pass. The base of the shaft, and your hands, should be directly over your head; the head of the stick should be straight out, parallel to the ground and behind your body.





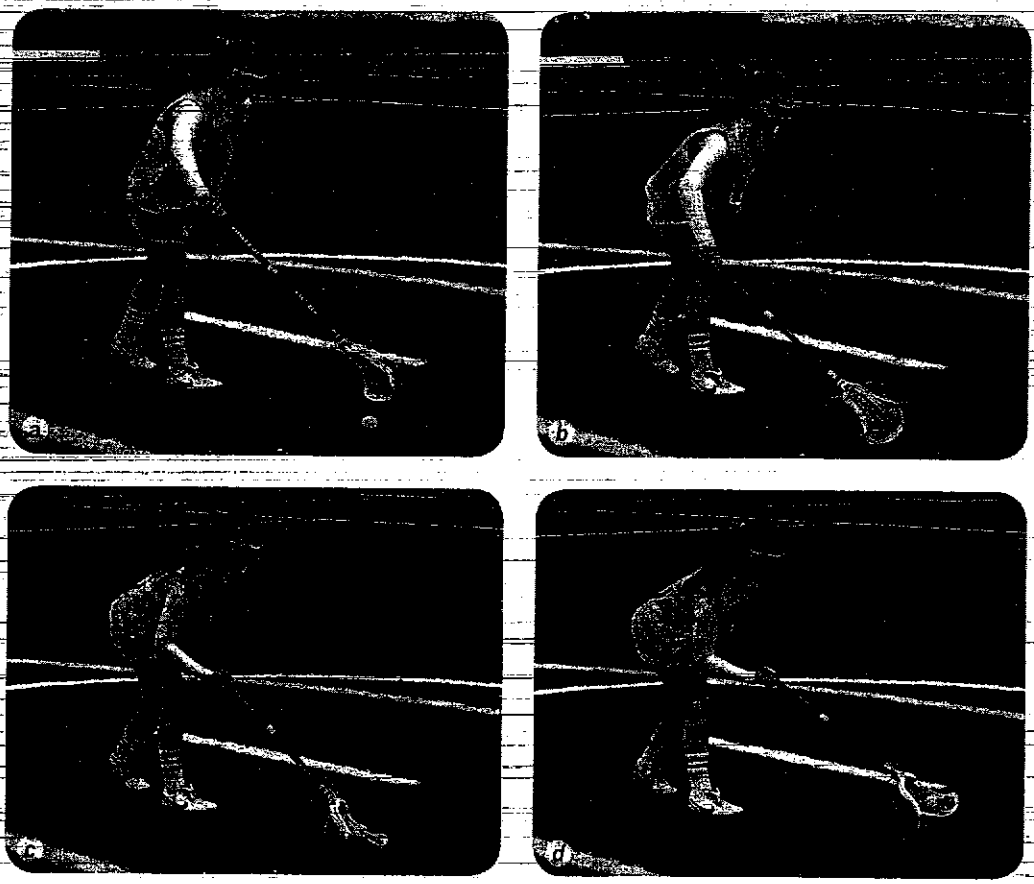
Quick Pickup

THE TRICK

A player picks up the ball one-handed in a magically swift motion without scooping from beneath or raking back the ball.

EXECUTION

1. Begin by holding your stick one-handed toward the bottom of the shaft. Put a ball on the ground in front of you.
2. By using the top left corner of the stick's head, rotate your wrist to the left, come over top of the ball, and get slightly underneath it. Use your wrist to flick the ball slightly upward, off the ground.
3. Once the ball is in the air (about 1 to 2 inches [2.5 to 5.1 cm] off the ground), turn your wrist back to the right, come underneath the hovering ball, and grab to catch it.



Sidewall Catch

THE TRICK

A player pops the ball to herself and catches the ball by balancing it on the sidewall of the head of the stick.

EXECUTION

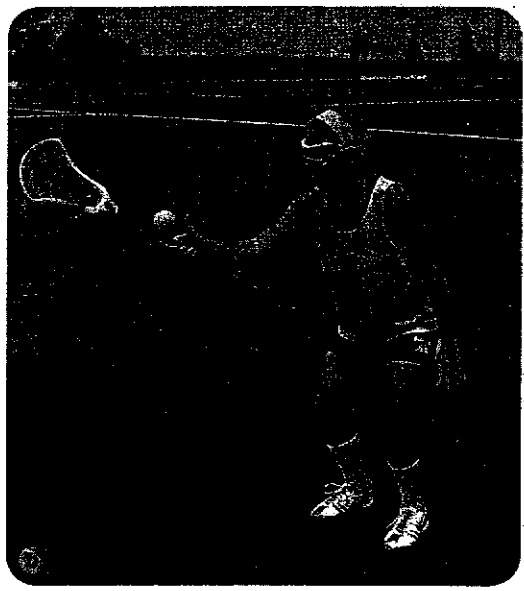
1. Begin with the stick in your strong hand with a ball in the pocket as if you are cradling low in front of your body.
2. Very lightly toss the ball up in the air. The toss should be a light wrist flick, or a pop. Make sure you do not pop the ball too high; the higher the pop, the more difficult it is to catch.
3. Turn the head of your stick so that the sidewall is facing up toward the sky, toward the ball that has been popped into the air. Raise the stick upward in that position and meet the ball you have just popped up in the air. When the ball and the sidewall of the stick are about to meet, give with the stick as though you are catching an egg or water balloon.

Sidewall Catch *(continued)*

The Roll

In this variation, after you have caught the ball on the sidewall, roll the ball down the shaft and catch the ball at the base of the shaft with your thumb.

1. Once the ball is on your sidewall, start by holding the stick in your strong hand at the base of the shaft.
2. Rotate your wrist upward so that the head of your stick moves slowly toward the sky. This will allow the ball to roll down the shaft toward your hand. This step relies on balance. Make sure that the ball rolls straight; otherwise, it will deviate from the shaft.
3. Free your thumb from the grip you are holding, and just as the ball is about to meet your hand, stop the ball with your thumb for the catch.



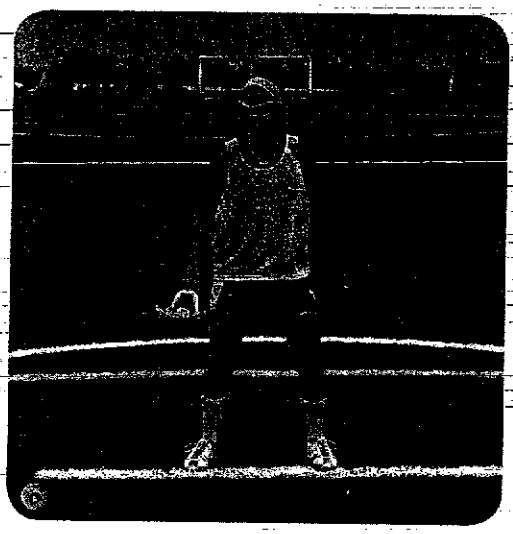
COACHING POINT

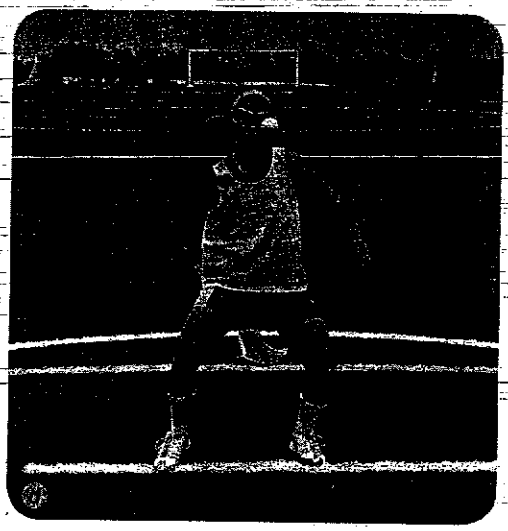
Make sure the player has the ball between her hands when doing step 2. Too often players think they have completed the trick by simply circling the falling ball with the head of the stick.

VARIATION

Once you have completed the Over and Under trick, you can reverse it and go under and then over the falling ball. You must do this one faster, however, because it is more difficult.

One-Handed Routine *(continued)*



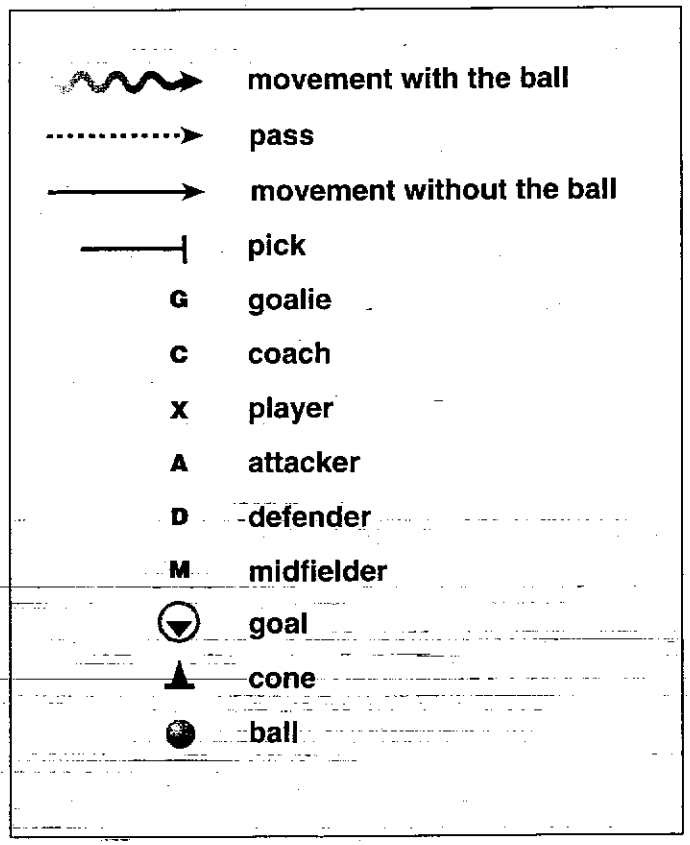


(continued)

FUN-damental Drills Are Fun!

This chapter introduces the basic skills your players need to enjoy the game of women's lacrosse. This information, combined with the offensive and defensive drills in chapters 11 and 12, will help get you started.

Diagram key.

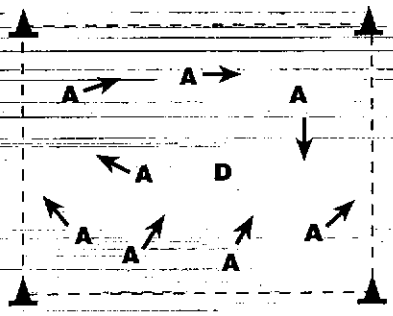


Flag Tag F2

Purpose: To teach the fundamentals of space and movement and to build agility and quickness

Number of Players: 9 (8 attackers, 1 defender)

Equipment: 4 cones, 8 practice jerseys



1. Place four cones in a 30-by-30-yard grid.
2. Nine players (without sticks) play at one time.
3. The eight attackers use their practice jersey as a flag, which they tuck into their shorts leaving half of it exposed.
4. The object is for the defender to tag an attacker by grabbing her flag and pulling it out of her shorts.
5. The attackers must move around the grid and try to avoid being tagged by using quick change-of-direction moves and anticipating where the defender is going.
6. If tagged, the attacker gives her jersey to the defender, and then she becomes the defender. The new defender can't catch the original defender but must attempt to tag other players. Modify the drill by adding additional defenders, one at a time.

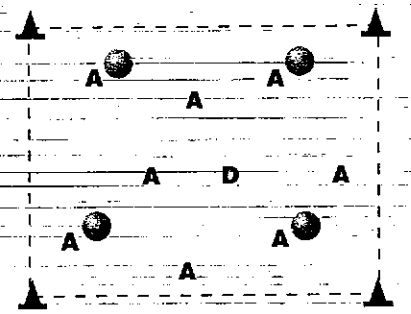
The game of tag is basic to the concept of understanding open and closed spaces. Offensive players need to move to open spaces by scanning the field and making good decisions about where to move and how to get there without coming into contact with others.

Grab-a-Ball Tag F3

Purpose: To develop change of speed and direction and movement into open spaces

Number of Players: 9 (8 attackers, 1 defender)

Equipment: 4 cones, 4 balls



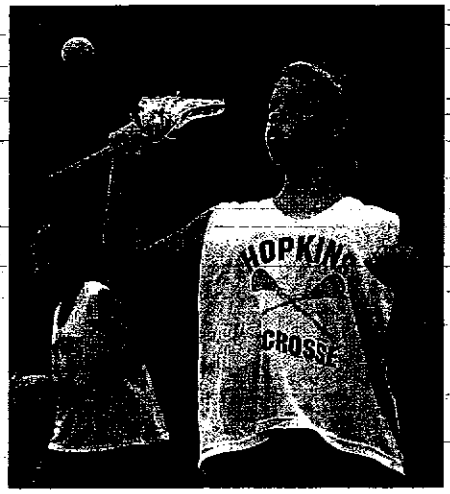
1. Set up four cones in a 20-by-20-yard grid.
2. Designate one player to be a defender inside the square.
3. Scatter the eight attackers inside the square and give four of them a ball to hold in their hand (no sticks).
4. The defender must tag a player with a ball. Once she does, the tagged player becomes the defender, and the original defender joins the offensive players.

Bounce off the Shaft F5

Purpose: To develop the ability to cradle and handle the stick creatively with both hands.

Number of Players: All
Equipment: 1 ball per player

Stick trick: popping the ball off the stick shaft.



1. Each player starts with the ball in the stick, holding it in the right hand.
2. Her hand is about 2 inches from the head of the stick for control.
3. The player tosses the ball into the air, brings the stick parallel to the ground with the stick head by her right ear, and bounces the ball off the stick shaft.
4. The player pops the ball straight up off the stick shaft and catches it.
5. The player repeats the bounce and catch 10 times and then switches to the left hand.

Remind players to bounce the ball straight up, not out away from their body, to make it easier to catch.

Bounce off the Sidewall F6

Purpose: To develop the ability to cradle and handle the stick creatively with both hands.

Number of Players: All
Equipment: 1 ball per player

Popping the ball off the sidewall.

1. Each player starts with the ball in the stick.
2. The player has both hands on the stick. The top hand is about one-third of the way down the stick, and the bottom hand is at the bottom of the stick for control.
3. With her knees bent and her body in a balanced position, the player holds the stick out in front of her body, parallel to the ground.
4. The player tosses the ball into the air, rotates the stick with her fingertips and wrists, and bounces the ball off the sidewall of the stick head.
5. The player pops the ball straight up off the sidewall and catches it in the stick.

Toss and Catch between the Legs F8

Purpose: To develop the ability to cradle and handle the stick creatively with both hands.

Number of Players: All

Equipment: 1 ball per player

Stick trick: catching the ball between the legs.

1. Each player starts with the ball in the stick, holding it in the right hand. Her right hand should be placed about one-third of the way down the stick shaft.
2. With her knees bent and her body in a balanced position, the player positions the stick at the right hip, parallel to the ground.
3. The player tosses the ball across the body to the left side and catches it behind her back.
4. After the toss, the player drops the stick head down, behind her right hip so that the stick is perpendicular to the ground, and then uses her wrist to bring the stick back up behind her back to catch the ball on her left side.
5. From behind her back, the player uses a flip of the wrist to toss the ball in front of her body.
6. Instead of catching the ball in front of the body, the player brings the stick up between her legs and catches the ball between her legs.
7. The player uses a flip of her wrist to toss the ball into the air and catch it behind her back again.
8. The player repeats the movement 10 times and then switches the stick to her left hand.

When players are moving the stick from behind their back to between their legs, and vice versa, they should remember to drop the head of the stick down and perpendicular to the ground and then bring it back up again.

12

Conditioning Drills

One of the most important elements of execution on the lacrosse field is focus. Fatigued players find it particularly challenging to focus, but those who can focus when tired have an advantage over the other players. Drills that force players to focus and execute when they are tired will reinforce the skill. Any drill will become a conditioning drill if players execute it at full speed and at their highest intensity. The following drills are particularly intensive. If players are able to execute skills and concepts at full speed throughout a full practice, they will be fit enough to execute during a game.

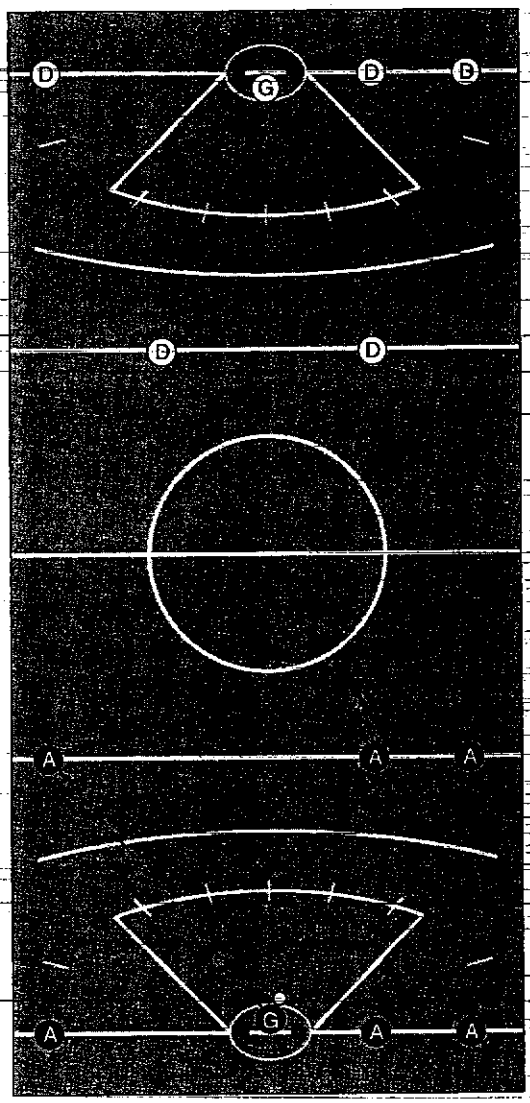
3v2 Continuous

PURPOSE

This drill allows players to work continuously on odd-man breaks; it also serves as a team conditioning drill.

SETUP

The team divides into two groups. The goals are positioned 40 to 50 yards (35.6-45.7 m) apart. Each team forms three equal lines along their goal line.



EXECUTION

1. One team is designated to be on defense first. Two players from this team step out.
2. The first three players on the opposite team step out and receive a clear from their goalie to start the drill.
3. The three attackers go to goal on a 3v2 against the other team.
4. The 3v2 ends as soon as the ball is thrown away, a goal is scored, a save is made, or a turnover is caused.
5. The last attacker to touch the ball drops out and returns to her team's line.
6. The remaining two attackers become the defenders. The other team (originally the defensive team) sends out three new attackers who receive a clear from their goalie and go to goal on their own 3v2.
7. This pattern continues over and over.

COACHING POINT

Make this a competitive drill for your team. Have them play up to 20 goals for a certain amount of time (10-minute halves or other timing). This makes the drill more intense and more fun.

Shooting Drill With Conditioning

PURPOSE

Shooting takes considerable focus. Shooters have a limited number of scoring opportunities in a game, and they need to be able to capitalize on these opportunities. Practicing shooting when players are tired will increase their ability to execute scoring opportunities in a game.

EXECUTION

Use any of the shooting drills listed in the Shooting Drills section of chapter 10 and add sprint repetitions between each set. For example, after the shooter takes a shot or a series of shots, have her sprint to the 50-yard line before getting back in line. The distance and number of sprints can be adjusted to increase or decrease the conditioning level.

Plan B: 2.5 Hours

- Warm-up (15-20 minutes)
- Stickwork (30 minutes)
  - Partner passing
    - Strong hand
    - Weak hand
    - Offside catch, strong-side pass
    - Offside catch, weak-side pass
    - Bounce passes
    - Behind-the-back passes
    - One-handed catch, strong-side pass
    - Strong-side fake, offside pass
  - Stationary protection drill
- Position-specific drills (20 minutes)
  - Give-and-go drill
  - Cutting off the pick
  - Three-line shooting drill
- Small-sided concept drills (30 minutes)
  - 2v2 picking plays
  - 3v2 in tight
  - 4v3 defensive box drill
- Big concept drills (30 minutes)
  - 7v7
  - Full-field transition (from attack to defense, from defense to attack)
- Scrimmage (25 minutes)
- Cool-down and stretch

Sample Practice Plans

Refer to chapters 10 and 12 for drills.

Plan A: 2.5 Hours

- Warm-up (15-20 minutes)
- Stickwork (30 minutes)
  - Partner passing
    - Strong hand
    - Weak hand
    - Offside catch, strong-side pass
    - Offside catch, weak-side pass
    - Bounce passes
    - Behind-the-back passes
    - One-handed catch, strong-side pass
    - Strong-side fake, offside pass
  - Stationary protection drill
- Position-specific drills (20 minutes)
  - Protection on the move
  - Basic shooting shuttle
  - Four corners shooting drill
- Small-sided concept drills (30 minutes)
  - Protection in double-team
  - 1v1 off the pass
  - 3v2 from restraining line
  - 4v4 attacking motion
- Big concept drills (30 minutes)
  - Attacking plays
  - Defensive setups (man-to-man, zone, high pressure, and so on)
  - Settled attack and settled defense
- Scrimmage (25 minutes)

Give-and-Go Drill

PURPOSE

This drill addresses stickwork on the move—passing, cradling, receiving—and includes conditioning. Players need to be able to execute stickwork when tired.

SETUP

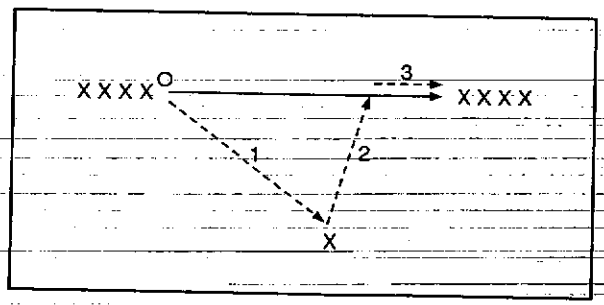
The team is divided into groups of seven to nine. The players in each group split into two lines, with the front of the lines facing each other. One player stands halfway between the two lines and acts as the passer.

EXECUTION

1. The first player runs toward the other line and passes the ball to the passer.
2. The passer receives the ball and immediately passes back to the player for a give-and-go.
3. The player receives the ball and passes to the first player in the opposite line, who then follows the same steps in the other direction.
4. This drill should be done quickly and consistently. After a while, switch another player to the passer position.

COACHING POINT

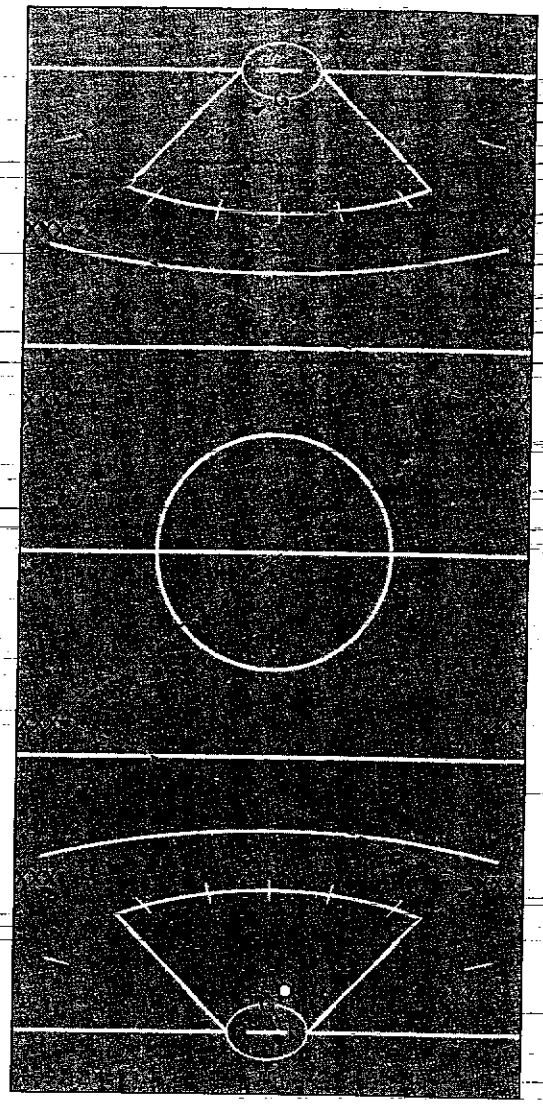
The drill must be done on the move with no stationary passing. The fewer players in each line, the harder the drill becomes from a conditioning standpoint. To increase the conditioning level, decrease the number of players in the line and increase the distance between the two lines. To increase the difficulty of the stickwork, have the players switch hands or receive the ball offside.



Full-Field Passing

PURPOSE

This drill works on transition passes and moving the ball down the field quickly. It also allows the goalie to be incorporated into a passing drill.



SETUP

Players form four equal lines in 20-yard (18.3 m) increments down each sideline (a total of eight lines). Goalies are in the goal at both ends.

EXECUTION

1. The goalie clears to the first line on one side.
2. The first player in line catches the ball and passes to the first player in the second line on the other side of the field.
3. The first player in the second line catches the ball and passes it to the first player in the third line on the other side of the field.
4. The first player in that line catches the ball and passes to the last (fourth) line on the opposite side of the field. This player takes a shot on goal to end the set.
5. The original goalie restarts the drill with a clear to the other side. The ball continues down the field as it is passed diagonally from line to line (four passes including the clear); each set ends with a shot on goal from the last line. The goalie alternates which side she clears to each time. The drill should be continuous.

COACHING POINT

Make sure players are going at full speed. This drill has built-in conditioning. If the team is doing well, add a trailing defender (the defender must always stay behind and look for back checks).

Cradle and Twirl F9

Purpose: To improve stick handling and cradling ability with both hands

Number of Players: All

Equipment: 1 ball per player

1. Each player cradles the ball on the right side of her head, from the ear to the nose (see Cradling on pages 41–43) and with the right hand placed about one-third of the way down the stick.
2. After a few cradles, when the stick is back by her ear, the player uses her fingertips to twirl the stick in a circular motion away from her head.
3. The player keeps her bottom hand in by her body while her top hand and arm extend slightly out from her body.
4. As the stick is twirled back into the regular cradle position, the ear-to-nose cradle begins again.
5. The player should remember to make a circle with the stick as it is twirled away from the head and then back to the ear. The ball remains on the *inside* of the circle. The player repeats the movement 10 times and then switches the stick to the left side of her head.

Cradle and Extended Twirl F10

Purpose: To improve stick handling and cradling ability with both hands

Number of Players: All

Equipment: 1 ball per player

1. Each player cradles the ball on the right side of her head, from the ear to the nose and with the right hand placed about one-third of the way down the stick.
2. After a few cradles, when the stick is back by the ear, the player uses her fingertips to twirl the stick in a circular motion away from her head.
3. The player keeps her bottom hand in by the body, but she steps with the left foot and extends the top hand and arm out from and *across* the body, really exaggerating the twirl.
4. As the stick is twirled back into the regular cradle position, the player brings her left foot back so the ear-to-nose cradle can begin again.
5. The player should make an exaggerated circle with the stick as it is twirled away from her head, really reach with her top hand and arm, and then bring her stick back to her ear. Again, the ball remains on the inside of the circle. The player repeats the movement 10 times and then switches the stick to the left side of her head.

This drill is a variation of the Cradle and Twirl.

6. The player repeats 10 times and then switches to the nondominant hand.

Variation: Have players try bouncing the ball on the sidewall as many times as possible before catching it.

Toss and Catch, Front and Back F7

Purpose: To develop the ability to cradle and handle the stick creatively with both hands.

Number of Players: All

Equipment: 1 ball per player

1. Each player starts with the ball in the stick, holding it in her right hand. Her right hand should be placed about one-third of the way down the stick shaft.
2. With her knees bent and her body in a balanced position, the player positions the stick at the right hip, parallel to the ground.
3. The player tosses the ball across her body to the left side and catches it behind her back.
4. After the toss, the player drops the stick head down, behind her right hip so that the stick is perpendicular to the ground, and then uses her wrist to bring the stick back up behind her back to catch the ball on her left side.
5. From behind the back, the player uses a flip of the wrist to toss the ball in front of her body and catch it.
6. The player repeats the movement 10 times and then switches to the left hand.

Catching the ball behind the back.

When players move the stick from in front of the body to behind the back, and vice versa, they should remember to drop the head of the stick down and perpendicular to the ground and then bring it back up again.

5. The players with a ball can pass the ball to another attacker who doesn't have a ball. If a player with a ball chooses to pass the ball to a player without one, the player without the ball has to take it and be aware of where the defender is.

Stick-Work Drills

Stick-work tricks are designed to help your players become comfortable with handling their stick. They are fun, creative ways to enhance your players' ability to handle the ball at all levels. Stick-work tricks encourage your players to have soft hands and a relaxed upper body when cradling, throwing, and catching. They inspire your players to handle their stick in ways they never thought possible. Be creative! Think outside the box! Practice really does make perfect, and stick-work tricks really do improve stick work. These stick-work tricks are described for a right-handed player, yet each one should be done with both the right and left hand.

Toss and Catch F4

Purpose: To develop the ability to cradle and handle the stick creatively with both hands

Number of Players: All

Equipment: 1 ball per player

1. Each player starts with the ball in the pocket and with the stick out in front of her body, parallel to the ground.
2. The player's top hand should be at least one-third of the way down the stick, and her bottom hand should be at the bottom of the stick for control.
3. With her knees bent and her body in a balanced position, the player tosses the ball into the air, rotates the stick with her fingertips and wrists, and catches the ball on the back of the pocket of her stick. Tell players to give with the catch as if they were catching an egg.
4. The player continues to toss the ball from the back of the stick into the air, rotate the stick with her fingertips and wrists, and catch the ball (she alternates catching it front and back). The bottom hand should do most of the work; the top hand is the guide.
5. Players start with their stick in their dominant hand, toss and catch 10 times, and then repeat with the nondominant hand.

This trick improves hand-eye coordination and encourages soft hands.

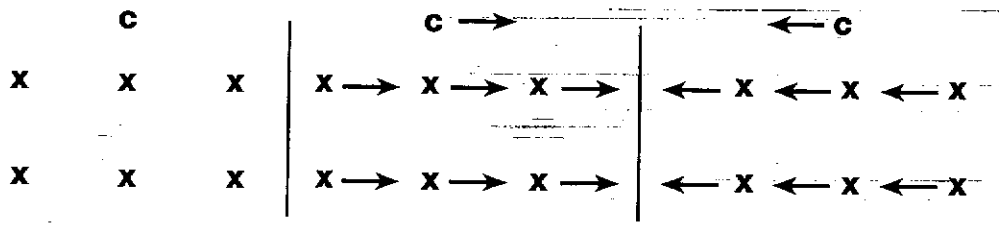
Warm-Up Drills

Fast Feet F1

Purpose: To increase foot speed and improve the ability to change direction quickly

Number of Players: All

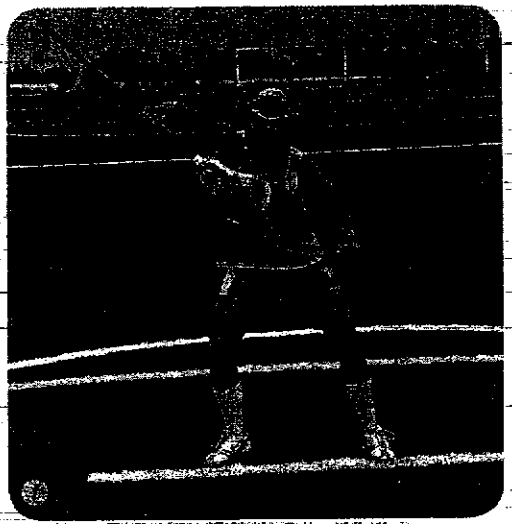
Equipment: None

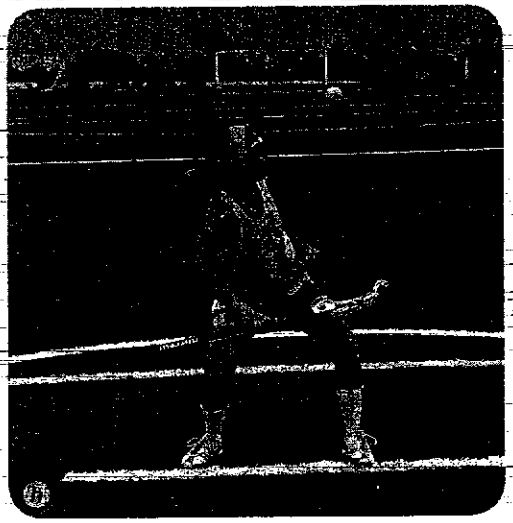


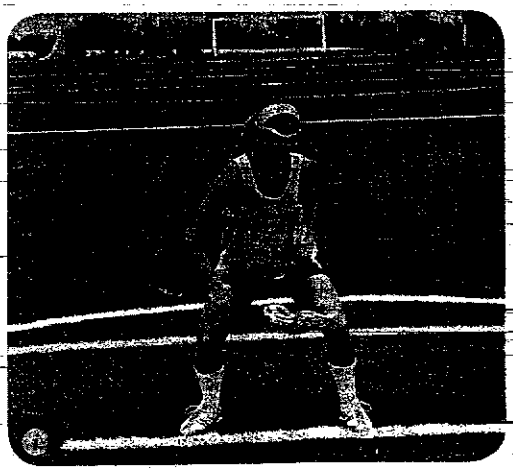
1. Spread your players out into three lines facing you.
2. Have them bend their knees, as if in a seated position, to get into their defensive stance.
3. They should bend slightly at the waist and lean slightly forward.
4. Sticks are straight up and down, and their arms are comfortably away from their bodies.
5. On the whistle, players move from foot to foot as quickly as possible while keeping their head up and their body weight balanced. Execute "fast feet" for 10 to 15 seconds and then stop. Repeat several times to get your players warmed up.

This drill helps players increase their foot speed. Remind them that their sticks must remain straight up and down and their body weight must remain balanced.

Variations: Blow the whistle and point to your left (your players' right). While still facing you, players must move in that direction, still maintaining their fast feet by taking small, quick, balanced steps. Now blow the whistle and point to the right (your players' left). They must change direction quickly (while still facing forward) and move to their left while maintaining their fast feet by taking small, quick, balanced steps. Do this for 30 seconds and then give the team a chance to shake their legs out. Repeat three times.







One-Handed Routine

THE TRICK

This trick involves a series of stick skills that when put together create a fluid routine that increases stick awareness.

EXECUTION

1. Flick to yourself: Begin by holding the stick and ball in your strong hand. Use your wrist to flick the ball straight up and catch it at your side.
2. Behind the back flick: From there, flip the ball to your opposite hip. Then bring the stick behind your back and catch where you just flicked the ball.
3. Flick out: Catch the ball behind your back. Then flick it from there back in front and catch it.
4. Between the legs: The ball is now directly in front of you. Flick the ball up in the air. This time, bring your stick behind you and between your legs to catch the ball.
5. Over and under pass: Flick the ball up to about eye level from between your legs. Then bring the stick back around in front of you. While the ball is in the air, bring your stick over the ball in a swimming motion. Come underneath the ball so that the head of the stick is pointing toward your body and catch the ball.
6. Catch behind: Continue the catch between your legs. Once the stick with the ball is between your legs, almost like a tail, flick the ball up toward your weak-hand shoulder.
7. Follow the ball: Follow the ball with your eye as it flicks over your shoulder and catch it underhand in front of your body.

COACHING POINT

Each of these steps is easier the more a player chokes up on her stick.

VARIATIONS

Around the World

Once you have mastered the steps described previously, you can add a one-handed Around the World. Bring your stick across your body and wrap your arm around your front side so that the stick is underneath your weak-hand shoulder. Combine that motion with an upward flick and catch the ball in front of you.

With a Partner

You can also do all of these steps simultaneously with a partner. Instead of flicking a pass to yourself in steps 6 and 7, you and your partner can flick a pass to each other.

(continued)

Over and Under

THE TRICK

A player defies gravity by popping the ball to herself, bringing her stick over and then under the ball, and catching the ball, all before the ball hits the ground.

EXECUTION

1. Begin by holding the stick and ball with two hands, parallel to the ground, in front of your body. Next, pop the ball up toward the center of your chest to about heart level.
2. While the ball is in the air, quickly bring your stick over the top of the falling ball and swiftly back under it in a circular motion (push upward and then downward). In order to complete the trick correctly, come over and under the ball with two hands on the stick. The ball must travel in between your arms and hands.
3. After you have come underneath the ball, swiftly shift your stick so that the head of the stick comes underneath the ball for the catch.

(continued)

COACHING POINTS

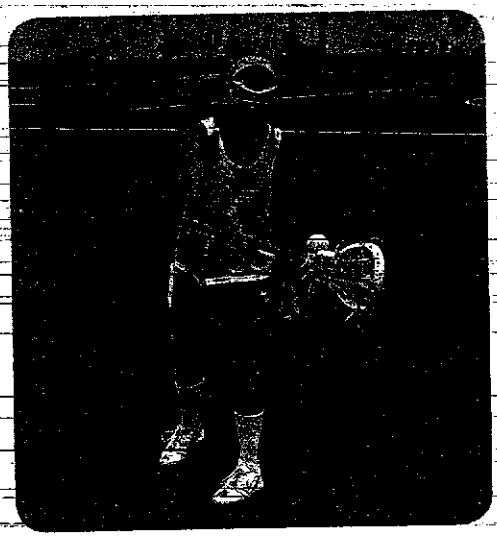
- When a player is popping the ball up in the air, make sure she releases the ball straight upward from the pocket of her stick; if the ball rolls out of the top of the stick when it is popped, the ball will begin to spin, making it more difficult to catch.
- Some sticks perform this trick better than others because of their sidewall design. To test out the best place to catch the ball on the sidewall, the player should use her hand to place the ball on the side of the stick and try to balance the ball. If the ball stays on the side of the stick and is balanced, the player will be able to catch it in that spot with enough practice.

VARIATIONS

The Magnet

This variation creates an effect where the ball seems to be glued to the sidewall.

1. Once you've caught or placed the ball on your sidewall, hold the stick in one hand at the base of the shaft and place it to one side of your body. (If you are right-handed, it sometimes is easier to start on the left side so that you end up with your right arm across your body.)
2. Raise your arm and bring the stick from one side of your body to the other, making sure that the head of the stick is underneath the ball at all times. When you bring your stick from one side to another, your elbow should remain fairly stationary.



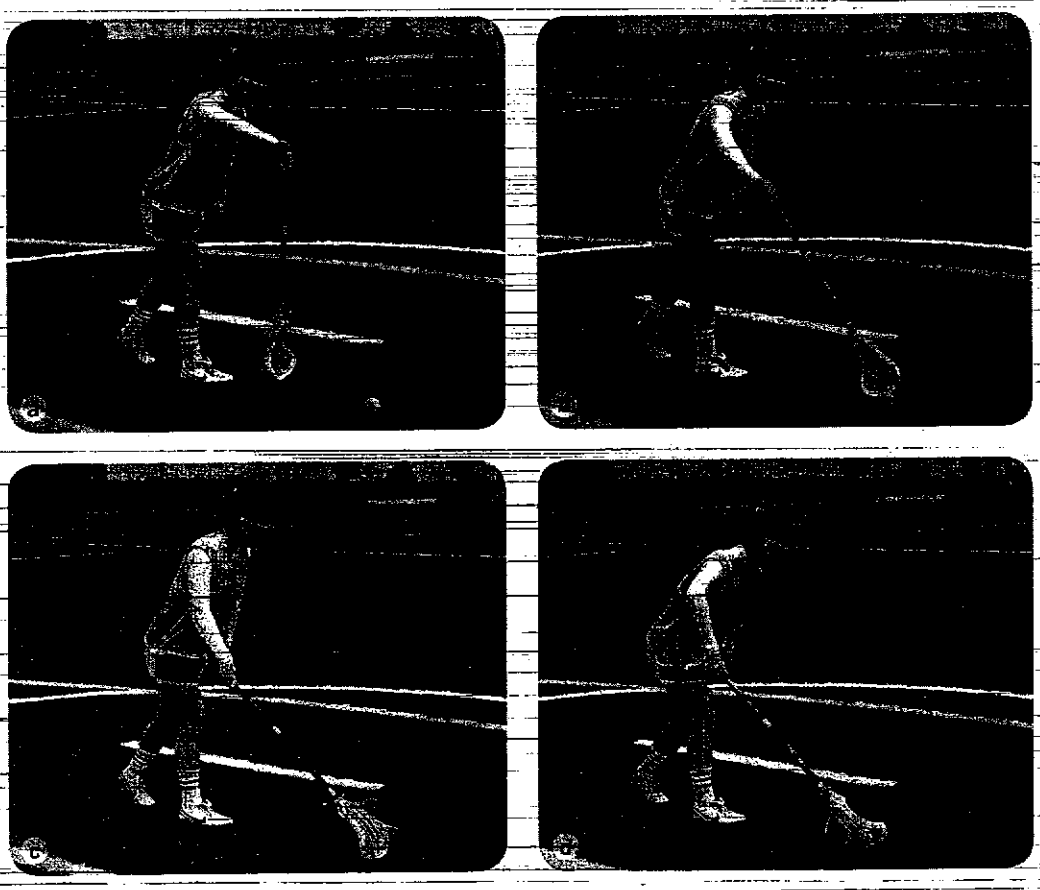
(continued)

COACHING POINTS

- If a player has trouble controlling the stick from the bottom of the shaft, have her choke up and start with one hand about halfway up the shaft, closer to the head of the stick. As the player masters the trick, gets stronger, and gains more control of her stick, she can move her hand back down toward the bottom.
- Cushy grass is often an easier surface on which to learn the trick than turf or pavement because the grass elevates the ball slightly.

VARIATION

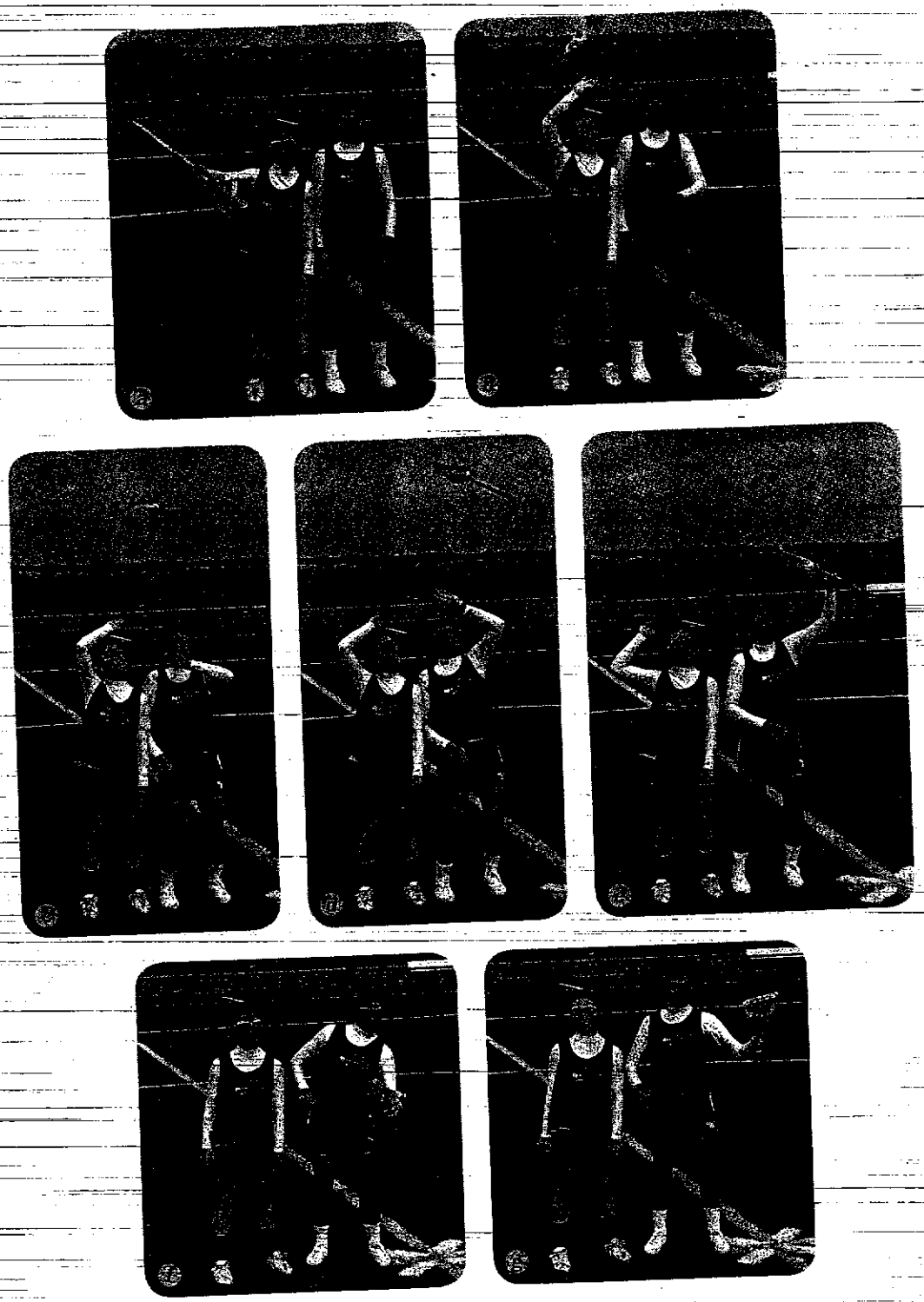
The same trick can also be done from front to back. Follow the same steps but keep your stick vertical, or perpendicular to the ground. Flick the ball toward your feet with the stick head facing you. Then rotate your wrists so that the stick head faces away from you and allow the ball to either flick or roll into the head.



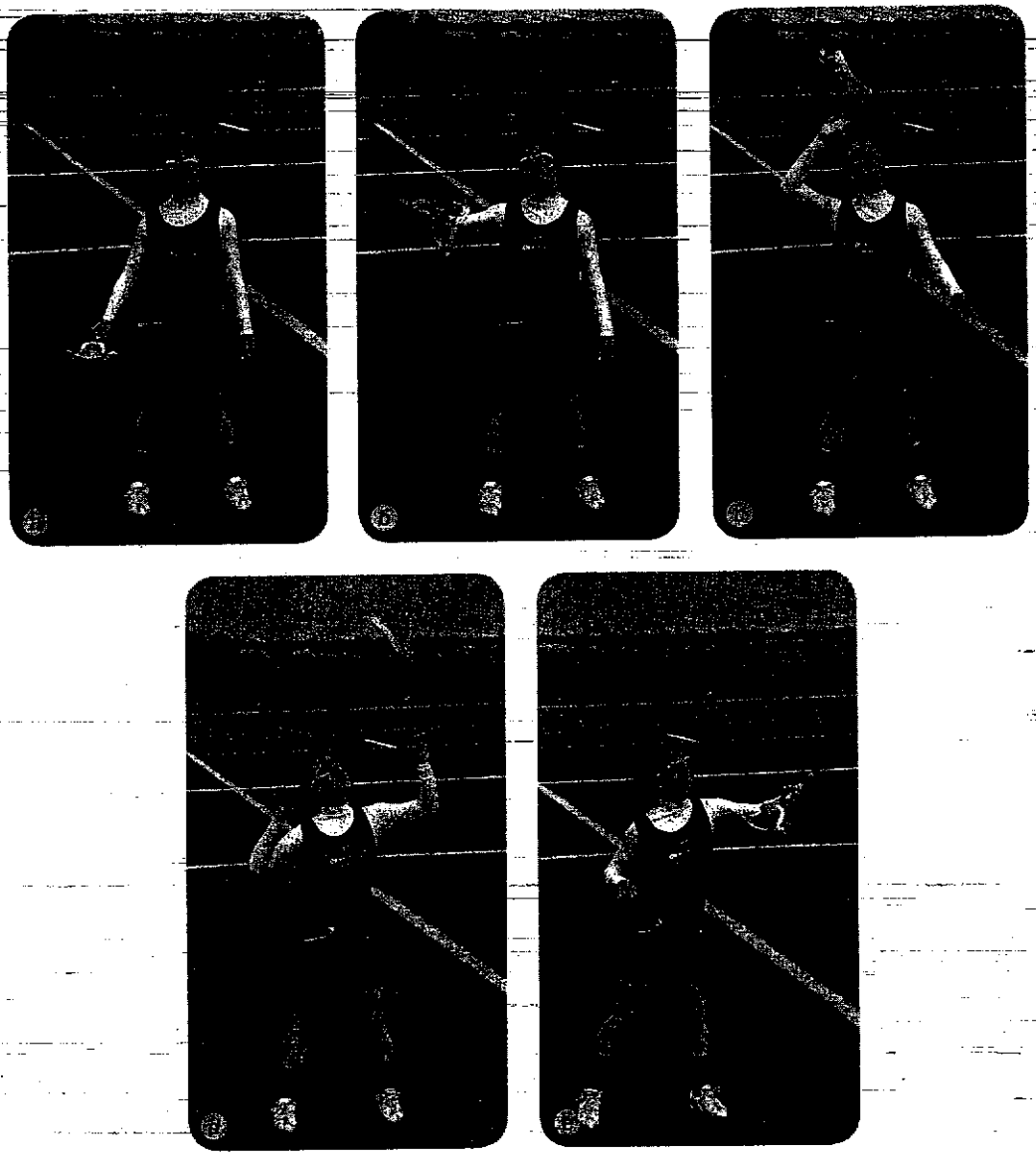
2. In one swift motion, rotate the shaft and head of your stick to the right so the head of your stick rotates to face the ground. As you turn the stick to make a downward pass, bring the stick toward your body and follow through with the head of the stick facing forward, in between your legs, from behind your back.

COACHING POINT

If a player is having trouble and too often smacks herself in the back, have her try standing on the tips of her toes just before she makes the downward motion.



Rainbow stick trick with partner.



Rainbow stick trick.

(continued)

11

Stick Tricks

Stick tricks are fun and can also be effective in increasing a player's stickwork and comfort level with her stick. Any challenging maneuver with the stick can be considered a stick trick. As with any skill or concept, the more a player practices, the better she will become. When a player is able to master a challenging stick trick, she will not only have a cool trick to show her teammates, but she will have become increasingly comfortable with her stick. As that comfort level increases, she will find her stick skills and overall game will improve. This chapter describes the steps for nine stick tricks.

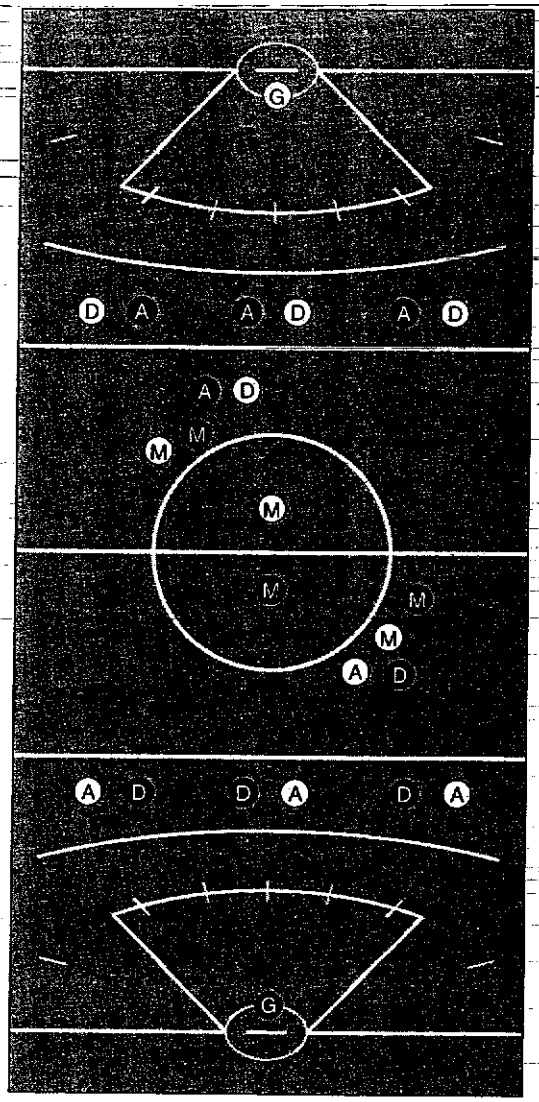


FIGURE 1.1 The lineup.

the defensive zone or defenders into the attacking zone. Although certain players may specialize as attackers or defenders, it is critical that all field players are comfortable in each of the field's three zones: defense, attack, and midfield.

Four Defenders The four defenders are the core of the defense and should understand their team's defense thoroughly. These players are the lead communicators—along with the goalie—and should also provide the most energy in the defensive zone. They will be well rested, more so than the midfielders who have just transitioned into the defense from the attacking and midfield zones.

10. With her right hand up, the player tosses the ball high on the wall so she really has to reach for it on the catch. She catches five balls with two hands on the stick (slid down to the bottom to get a good extension) and five balls with one hand on the stick (slid almost to the bottom of the stick so she still has some control). She should remember to pull the stick in quickly to her head on the catch and begin cradling.
11. With her left hand up, the player tosses the ball high on the wall so she really has to reach for it on the catch. She catches five balls with two hands on the stick (slid down to the bottom to get a good extension) and five balls with one hand on the stick (slid almost to the bottom of the stick so she still has some control). She should remember to pull the stick in quickly to her head on the catch and begin cradling.

Players should use soft hands—handling the stick with their fingertips and letting it rest lightly in the palm of their top hand. Their shoulders should be relaxed, they should turn slightly with every catch, and they should have more of a rotation on each throw. Their stance should be with feet shoulder-width apart and with one foot slightly in front of the other (left foot in front when throwing right-handed, right foot in front when throwing left-handed). When catching, players should ask for the ball in front on the side of the head and give back softly (catching it behind the ear). Their shoulders should turn when they give back with the ball to protect the stick. When throwing, the bottom hand should be out in front; they should use a push (with the top hand) and a pull (with the bottom hand) motion and remember to snap the wrist. The shoulders should rotate on the throw to give power and accuracy, and they should follow through across the body.

UMASS Wall Ball Routine
Alexis Venechanos

With all wall ball routines, make sure that you are **working both your left and right hands**. On the moving wall ball drills, be aware of your feet and if you are running through the ball.

On all throws, be aware of your **FORM**, driving your top hand down and your bottom hand across you body. For accuracy, pick a point on the wall as a target (or put a piece of tape on the wall).

- Right Hand 30x
- Left Hand 30x
- Right Hand Throw, Right Hand Catch: Switch to Left Hand Throw and Catch (30x)
  -Work on speed on the switch off the catch: **NO CRADLE IN BETWEEN CATCH AND SWITCH.**
- One-handed 30x (Right and Left sides). Variation: Make yourself jump for the ball.
- Behind the back -20x
- Around the World – 20x

FAKES

*Practice the fake routine in progression until your feel smooth in your movements (start with 15x)
-Fake strong side and throw strong
-Fake strong, bring stick to low off side pass
-Fake strong, low side fake, and then throw strong
-Fake strong, low side fake, and then throw behind the back
-Fake strong, low side fake, fake behind the back, throw strong
-MAKE UP YOUR OWN FAKE….. BE CREATIVE

ON THE MOVE

*Stand at half court or 15 yds away from the wall. Throw the ball at the wall hard and practice running into the ball 20x
-Add catching the ball and then taking a shot against the wall

*Work on catching the ball while keeping your feet moving and a quick release of the ball after the catch. **ASK FOR THE BALL IN FRONT OF YOUR BODY** where you cannot be checked.

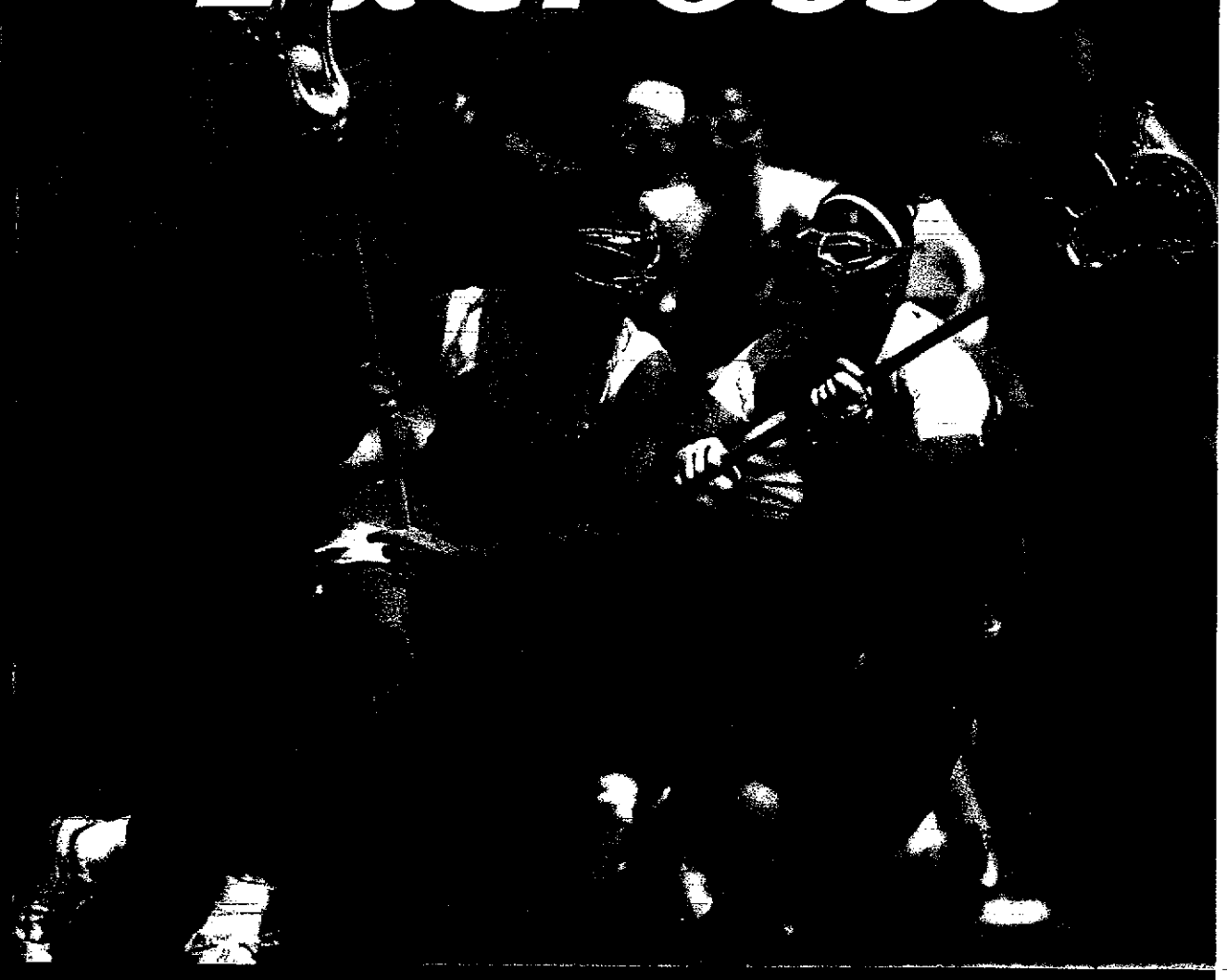
*Have the ball in your stick, cradle (keeping your stick back w/ your body between the wall and your stick). Simulate running into a double team, pulling out, and then throwing to the wall (20x). **KEEP FEET MOVING!** Add a dodge. This can also be done with partners, where partner is a plays "Dummy D", and then turns to catch the ball off the wall from your shot.

DODGES

*Practice your dodges: **START YOUR DODGES 3-5 YARDS AWAY FROM YOUR DEFENDERS!**

*When making your dodge past your defender:
1. Keep your stick **IN FRONT OF YOU;**
2. Keep your stick **MOVING;**
3. **ACCELERATE** after you make your move; and
4. Shoot the ball at a specific point on the wall.

Winning Women's Lacrosse



Kelly Amonte Hiller
with Ashley Gersuk and Ann Elliott