



COACHES EDUCATION PROGRAM

Guidelines to designing an effective workout and practice:

- i. Intensity, quality, and timing of overall workout/practice are factors that affect learning differently at different age levels. Keep these factors in mind when developing and planning your practices.
- ii. The overall structure of your daily practice plan should begin with individual skills, progress to group skills, then team concepts half-field, and finish with team concepts full-field.
- iii. Hold a pre-practice meeting so players can be informed of format and intensity of workout/practice.
- iv. Workouts should have variety but also continuity. For example, every practice should include warm up, half-field team concepts, full-field team concepts, scrimmage or game situations, in that order. The drills should vary each practice.
- v. For new coaches planning practice, it is a good idea to divide practice up by time slots or put time limits on drills and games.
 1. This will help you structure and organize your practice.
 2. This will help you to determine the attention span of your players and how long it will take you to get through teaching skills, drills and games.
- vi. Be flexible! Be prepared to amend practice! Not every drill or game will be perfect or go as planned; be realistic and keep your expectations for practice small.
 1. Before practice, create a "perfect practice plan" - one that includes everything you would like to do that day if players are paying attention and learning quickly, playing well, and if the weather is cooperating.
 2. Balance game situations and drills; balance new drills, skills, strategies, and games with the familiar ones.
- vii. However, try not to over-plan or try too hard to create the "perfect practice." Create a "bare minimum practice plan" one that includes the most important skills, drills, or team strategies you would like to get through that day.
- viii. Depending on how practice is going that day, you can decide which practice plan to follow, or what might fall in between the perfect plan and the bear minimum plan. It is rare that a practice ever goes exactly according to plan; if it does reward you players by letting them out early, or letting them play a favorite game at the end of practice!
- ix. Keep as many players as possible active and move onto new drills while your players are still engaged. There is the potential for players to get bored and lose focus if a drill continues too long. When the players are still excited and motivated in a drill or game, switch to the next drill so their enthusiasm continues with this next drill or game.
- x. Bring lots of balls to practice! You can waste precious practice time if players have to chase and pick up balls around the field.
- xi. Be sure to have a physical and psychological warm-up: get bodies moving by having them take a lap around the field, perform agilities, or play a game. Be sure to have each player stretch thoroughly. Specific warm-up drills, agilities, and stretching exercises for your Coach's Binder can be accessed from the Reference section.
- xii. Vary the flow and "intensity" of practice so that players are not exhausted after 35 minutes of practice. A simple water break may be enough.
- xiii. Get feedback about workout/practice. You will be able to read your players' body language and determine whether the practice, drills, and games are creating a positive experience. It also doesn't hurt to ask your players what they like and don't like.
- xiv. Have a closure meeting - after practice, ask the players what they learned in practice and what they want to improve upon.





xv. Make sure you have a "Plan B" for inclement weather or other situations that might disrupt practice.

1. Additional information for effective communication with players and teaching lacrosse skills and strategies:

To fulfill the commitment of making lacrosse a positive experience for all who participate, US Lacrosse is partnered with the Positive Coaching Alliance (PCA) of Stanford, CA. Together, we are "transforming youth sports so sports can transform youth." PCA offers coaches practical and effective tools to help athletes perform at their best while developing skills to excel in life

The following is a glimpse of what PCA offers to help coaches and parents become effective positive coaches. US Lacrosse highly recommends participation in a PCA double goal coach workshop to learn more about strategies for effective communication with players and strategies for teaching lacrosse skills and strategies. For more information please visit their website at www.positivecoach.org or email: pca@positivecoach.org.

1. For PCA Coaches:

- Double Goal Coach mental model – Youth sport coaches need a new mental model to define their job. PCA gets away from the "win at all costs" mental model by implementing Double Goal Coach Mental Model. Some might call this a Youth Sports Coach Job Description
- Coach training workshops – PCA offers three different dynamic workshops for coaches including the Double Goal Coach workshop, Double Goal Coach 2: Culture, practices and games, and Coaching the Mental Game.
- Coaching tools – including parent letter, parent pledge, positive charting, coaching scripts, coaching guidelines for honoring the game, the positive coach's bookshelf.

2. For PCA parents:

- The Second Goal – Parent Model – PCA encourages coaches to be "Double – Goal Coaches, and we encourage parents to focus on the second goal alone (teaching children life lessons through sports)
- Sports Parents Training Workshops – PCA offers a dynamic sports parents workshop to educate parents about positive coaching and the important role they play as a parent.
- Sports Parent Tools – Learn more about the tools PCA has created for parents to use before, during and after games and practices with their children and their children's coaches.

For more information please visit their website at www.positivecoach.org

