

Dear Lacrosse Parent:

At its September board meeting, the Medfield Youth Lacrosse (MYL) Board of Directors voted unanimously to move the entire boys youth lacrosse program from the Massachusetts Bay Youth Lacrosse League (MBYLL) to the Town Pride League (TPL) effective beginning with the 2010 season.

MYL has been a member of both leagues and is a charter founding member of TPL. 2010 will be our 4th year in TPL. The 3 previous seasons have gone very successfully and many of the other towns in the league are making the same move. TPL includes Beverly, Billerica, Concord-Carlisle, Dover-Sherborn, Duxbury, Hingham, Marblehead, Medfield, Needham, Norwell, Sudbury and Wellesley.

MBYLL is a fine league and served our program well. But the feeling was our program has matured to the extent that our needs could no longer be met by MBYLL and that it was time to move our program into a league with other programs that shared our view on philosophy, player development and team play.

The decision to move was based largely on the following reasons:

- **Grade-level teams:** TPL only allows grade-level teams. There will no longer be U11, U13, or U15 teams. Teams will be organized by individual grades: 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th, and 8th. So 3rd graders will be playing 3rd graders and 8th graders playing 8th graders. No young 7th grader will be going up against an older (and much bigger and more mature) 8th grader anymore. This is a significant difference in allowing for player development within your own age group and levels the playing field for all boys.
- **Shared philosophy:** As founders of the league with several of the other towns, we share a view on how lacrosse should be played with an emphasis on skill and ball movement as well as a focus on player development and raising the level of play in Eastern Massachusetts. The emphasis is playing the game with the right intent instead of focusing on doing whatever it takes just to win a game. MYL will also have more input and control of league decisions and policy.
- **Higher competition level:** All TPL programs are integrated with their town's high school program so learning and development is shared within and among towns in an effort to raise the level of play in EMass. The opportunity to play against many of the other top lacrosse programs/towns in the state will only help our kids get better. Each and every game will be a challenge and learning opportunity.

Here is how the TPL offerings will be organized.

1st and 2nd grade: Clinic

No changes to the clinic at this age level. The program will remain the same as previous years on Sundays.

3rd and 4th grade: Small Ball

In TPL, 3rd and 4th grade teams will play small ball (7v7) only. Small Ball is played on a smaller field (approximately 60 x 35 yards) as opposed to the regulation size fields played on previously (110 x 60 yards). Team rosters will be 10-12 players each comprised of equally weighted teams. Games will be played on Sunday. There will be 2 practices per week.

The rationale for moving to Small Ball play at this level:

- Smaller field size is more appropriate for the size of the player's legs and lungs.
- The regulation field is simply too big for 3rd and 4th graders. Too much time is spent getting from one end of the field to the other and less time playing with the ball in their stick.
- Diminishes the advantage of the best athlete dominating the game by going coast to coast.
- Promotes catching and throwing and movement...not wind sprints without the ball
- Players are closer together so passes are shorter, which promotes easier catches, which facilitates more quality play and enjoyment.
- More scoring by more players...makes the game enjoyable and more interesting to learn.
- Smaller rosters will provide more opportunities to be on the field and thereby get the quality game touches that help develop their skills and confidence
- Promotes more ball movement and more touches by every player b/c there are fewer players and smaller space to play in...thereby focusing in on developing stick skills and finding space
- Efficient on field space – you can play three games at a time cross ways on one full field

5th Grade: Balanced teams

TPL plays with balanced teams at the 5th grade level. 5th grade will play on regulation fields and will be evenly weighted teams. These games will be played on Saturdays. There will be 2 practices per week.

6th-8th Grade: A & B teams

TPL plays with A & B teams at the 6-8th grade level. Last year we had an A & B team at the 7th grade level. This year TPL is requiring B teams at each grade level.

There will be a tryout for placement on A and B teams...but ***there is room and a spot for everyone***. No one will be turned away.

The A & B team structure creates opportunities for players at similar skill levels to play with and against each other. One of the fundamental principles of TPL is that developing a B team program is the key to player development and creating depth in town programs. TPL recognizes that boys mature at different rates through middle school and does not want to discourage boys from playing lacrosse just because the player is developing his skill set at a different speed through out middle school.

By playing with and against players of equal ability it allows a B-level player to get experience touching the ball and making plays without deferring to or relying on a more advanced player to make the plays.

In some instances, a “composite” B team might be necessary where there aren't enough kids in one grade to make up 2 separate teams. This is a team made up of some A team players and the B team players.

Games will be played on Saturdays. This provides flexibility to play in tournaments that are typically held on Sundays in the spring. There will be 2 practices per week.

We hope this provides you a good overview of the changes to the Medfield Youth Lacrosse boys offering in 2010. We're excited about the move to TPL and believe it will be an improvement for the benefit of all the boys in our program. The change to TPL does not, in any way, alter the philosophy of MYL and continues the commitment of providing all boys who want to participate in the lacrosse program an opportunity to play, develop, and learn about the game.

