

**Vashon Lacrosse Club**  
**Players & Parents Handbook**



# Vashon Lacrosse Club Handbook

## Mission Statement

The mission of the Vashon Lacrosse Club (VLC) is to promote the game of lacrosse by providing a safe and fun opportunity for the players, and emphasizing the importance of good sportsmanship, fitness and teamwork. VLC believes that athletic competition plays a vital role in the development of young adults. Concepts of fair play, sportsmanship, commitment, discipline, responsibility, respect, integrity, and time management are all promoted and expected. By promoting these principles through a high level of lacrosse competition, VLC endeavors to inspire our players to become the best that they can be both on the field and as members of our community while providing each player with important tools for success in their future.

## Overview of Lacrosse

Native Indian tribes played lacrosse throughout most of North America, for nearly a thousand years. The strongest, most consistent style of the game (played with a large, single wooden racket) evolved in the Eastern region of the continent, from Canada to the Cherokee tribes of the South. The sport originated as a tribal ritual, conducted for days over miles of wilderness. It eventually evolved into a form of recreation, as a way to settle tribal disputes and a means to toughen warriors for combat. When French missionaries to North America first witnessed the game at the turn of the 15th century, the curved netted stick reminded them of a 'crosier', the shepherds' cross-like staff carried by clergymen. Hence the sport was named 'la jeune de la crosier:' the game of the hooked sticks. Eventually the name evolved into 'lacrosse.' From these early beginnings, lacrosse has developed into the 'fastest game of two feet.'

In the mid-1700's French pioneers began playing the game with the Indians. They redefined aspects of the sport with set field dimensions, limited members per team, and some crude 'rules.'

In 1867, the Upper Canada College in Toronto became the first college to play a lacrosse game, losing to the Toronto Club, 3-1. By the mid-1870's the Ivy League of New England adopted the sport. In 1883, Phillips Andover of Massachusetts and Phillips Exeter of New Hampshire became the first two prep schools to take up the game.

As an amateur mainstay of East Coast colleges and prep schools, lacrosse maintained a regional reputation until after World War II. The GI Bill exposed athletes from around the country to lacrosse, and the baby boom and increased mobility of the 1950's accelerated the expansion of players and began the road to national exposure. The first on-going lacrosse teams played in Texas in 1971.

Current men's lacrosse teams consists of ten players: a goalie, three defensemen, three midfielders, and three attackmen. The object of the game is to put a five-ounce hard-rubber ball, about the size of a baseball, into the opponent's goal using a long-handled stick with a triangular pocket at the end. A regulation men's lacrosse field is 110 yards long and 60 yards wide, with the goals 80 yards apart. This allows for a lot of play 'behind the net.' As in hockey, substitutions can be made 'on the fly' and penalized

players must sit out while their team plays ‘man-down.’ Lacrosse also combines the play-making strategy of basketball, the stamina of soccer, the hand-eye coordination of baseball, and (in the boys’ game) the physical contact of rugby or football.

Lacrosse is the original, Native American pastime. As such, it has a rich history and exhibits many ritual as well as physical characteristics. The physical characteristics of the sport are compelling to a wide range of potential participants. Size is not as critical a factor in lacrosse as are speed, agility, and stamina. In lacrosse, smaller athletes with power and skill can easily out-perform their larger opponents. Hand-eye coordination and mental ‘vision’ are key aspects of lacrosse, requiring the lacrosse player to be (or become) a multi-dimensional athlete. It is a true challenge—for both coaches and players—to maintain the patience, discipline and intelligence necessary to master lacrosse fundamentals. Some of the rituals of the game include the devotion that players take to the unique challenge, style and accomplishments of mastering such a demanding physical and mental game.

Lacrosse also enjoys a strong tradition of amateurism, wherein the vast majority of participants play and support lacrosse solely for the love of the game. It has a tradition as a ‘gentleman’s sport’ taught and played with dignity for its heritage and respect for anyone who accepts the game’s complex and rewarding challenges. Furthermore, lacrosse stresses good sportsmanship by emphasizing conduct that ‘honors the game.’ The essentials of this conduct are behaviors that reflect honesty and integrity. As the game is expanding throughout the country, US Lacrosse (the game’s national governing body) has taken great efforts to enforce and maintain the game’s unique characteristics and tradition of sportsmanship. Consistency in national rules for youth and high school programs are being encouraged, as well as reinforcing the emphasis on sportsmanship.

Lacrosse rules have a unique emphasis on sportsmanship. Coaches and players are held to high standards on the field of play. For example, the slightest type of unsportsmanlike fighting is an automatic ejection from the game (and from the next scheduled game as well). Coaches must also take responsibility for the behavior of fans at all lacrosse games.

For coaches, players and fans alike, lacrosse is a completely unique form of competition in which all participants show their respect for outstanding plays and players, regardless of whose team they are on. This evolves from a focus on the joy and satisfaction of playing the game, and letting winning and losing take care of itself.

### **Guide to the Rules of Boys Lacrosse**

**The Field.** The field is 110 yards long and divided into halves by the midfield line. Each end has a 40 yard box called the restraining box, offensive zone or defensive zone. Each goal is surrounded by a circle called the crease.

**The Team.** Teams are composed of one goaltender, three defensemen, three midfielders (or “middies”) and three attackmen.

**Face-Offs.** Play begins with a face-off at the center of the midfield line. The two middies facing off kneel with the backs of their sticks together and the ball in between. At the whistle, they both try to get possession of the ball or direct it to one of their teammates. They may not kick the opponents crosse (stick). The other middies start on their wing lines and may run in once the whistle blows. The defensemen and attackmen

must stay in their restraining boxes until the referee signals that one of the teams has gotten possession of the ball.

**Offsides.** Each team must keep four players in its defensive half of the field and three players in the offensive half of its field at all times. Usually this is the goalie and three defensemen in the defensive half and three attackmen in the offensive half, but any of these players may cross over the midfield line if another player stays back. This is why you will hear the call “middie back” if one of the defensemen carries the ball over the midfield line on a clear.

**Clearing.** After the defensive team gets possession of the ball, it will try to advance the ball by running and passing it upfield to the offensive half. This is called a “clear.” There is a 10-second count for clearing the ball out of the team’s defensive zone. Once the clearing team gets the ball across midfield, there is another 10-second count to get the ball into their offensive zone. Another 10-second count starts every time the ball is subsequently brought out of the offensive zone.

**Riding.** Riding is the opposite of clear: trying to keep the other team from bringing the ball upfield.

**Special Goalie Rules.** There are many special rules in regards to the goalie and the crease. Players may not step into the crease in their offensive half of the field. Defensive players may step into the crease, but they may not carry the ball into it. You may hear the official refer to the “cylinder.” This is an imaginary cylinder formed by extending the crease line vertically. Offensive players may not interfere with the goalie, including touching his stick, at any time inside the cylinder, nor outside the cylinder if the goalie has possession of the ball and at least one foot inside the crease. On a loose ball, players may check the goalie’s stick outside the cylinder. If the goalie gets possession of the ball with at least one foot inside the crease, then he has four seconds to either run out of the crease or pass the ball. Crease violations: if the defensive team had possession, the defensive team gets the ball at midfield; if the offensive team had possession or if a loose ball, then the defensive team gets the ball even with the goalie outside the restraining box.

**Penalties.** There are two kinds of penalties: personal fouls and technical fouls. Personal fouls are the more serious in nature: slashing, tripping, illegal bodycheck, unnecessary roughness, spearing, cross-checking and so on. These usually put the offending player in the penalty box for one minute, although the official can give up to three minutes for particularly serious fouls.

Technical fouls are less serious and more procedural violations. These include offsides, delay of the game, interference, illegal offensive screening, illegal procedure, pushing and holding. Technical fouls are enforced in two ways, depending on whether the team that was fouled had possession of the ball. If the team that was fouled has possession then a technical foul is a 30 second penalty. If the ball was loose or the team committing the foul has possession, then the ball is given to the offended team and no penalty time is assessed.

**The Slow Whistle and the “Play On.”** When a penalty is committed, the official throws his flag, but doesn’t blow his whistle as long as the team that was fouled has the ball and is advancing in an effort to score. Once the ball touches the ground or is caught by a member of the other team, then the whistle is blown, play stops and the official assesses the penalty.

If there is a push, hold or procedural violation during a loose ball, the official will raise his hand and say “play on.” If the offended team picks up the ball, then the “play on” is over and the game is not stopped. If the offended team doesn't pick up the ball, then the official will blow his whistle and award the ball to the offended team.

**Checking.** Players are allowed to check the player with the ball and any player within five yards of a loose ball. There are two ways to check: with the body and with the stick. When a player uses his body to check, he cannot make contact above the shoulders, below the waist or from the rear, and he must have both hands on his own stick. No spearing (making initial contact with the helmet) is allowed.

Stick checks must be on the opponent's stick or glove. You will see lots of checks on arms and sides that are not called penalties, but the officials are looking to see if the defender had a chance of hitting the stick or glove. For example, if a player tries to check a stick, and the other player moves his stick away or spins so the check lands elsewhere, the official will take that into consideration. Checks that bonk a helmet are called a lot more closely. Players may not use the part of the stick held between the gloves to make contact with an opponent; this is cross-checking. Players may not hold an opponent with the crosse (think of “hooking” in hockey).

### **Guide to the Rules of Girls Lacrosse**

Unlike boys lacrosse which consists of 10 players: three attack, three midfielders, three defensemen and one goalie, there are eleven players for each girls team: three line attack, four midfielders, three line defense and one goalie. The rules for girl's lacrosse can be found at <http://www.wslax.org/rules.php>.

### **Goals of Vashon Lacrosse Programs**

**Grades 3/4 Program.** The 3/4 program is a competitive lacrosse group for 3rd and 4th graders. The 3/4 program will introduce players to the game and teach basic skills and having fun with the game of lacrosse.

**Grades 5/6 Boys Program.** The goal of the 5/6 program is to introduce fifth and sixth grade players to the game of lacrosse and teach its basic skills. Having fun with the game of lacrosse and getting the players excited about lacrosse and practice will be emphasized. In seasons where there are sufficient players for more than one team, players will be divided equally among teams in a manner that accomplishes teams of equal skill.

**Grades 7/8 Boys Program.** The goal of the 7/8 program is to field competitive teams in line with league expectations. The 7/8 program will prepare seventh and eighth grade players for competitive Division II high school play. Coaches recognize that players develop at different rates. Therefore there will be an emphasis on continuing to develop basic skills for newer players while introducing more advanced skills and play concepts to those players whose skills are more advanced.

The 7/8 program is a competitive league where players, parents should expect play to be reflective of a player's skill level, discipline, responsibility and commitment to lacrosse. Consistent with this, in season where there are sufficient players to field more than one team, players will be selected for each team based upon a combination of factors

including skill level, discipline, responsibility and commitment to lacrosse. Coaches will make selections based upon a combination of objective and subjective criteria to include: talent, consistency, personality, team chemistry, discipline and responsibility.

The youth boys teams are also open to girls who want to play boys lacrosse. Girls and parents should understand that boys and girls lacrosse are very different games, vastly different. Girls who play boys lacrosse and intend to switch to girls lacrosse may have difficulty making the transition. Girls are expected to wear boys gear with the exception of a cup, adhere to boys lacrosse rules and learn to use a boys stick. For the difference in boys and girls lacrosse rules, please go to [uslacrosse.org](http://uslacrosse.org).

**Playing Time.** In the 3/4 and 5/6 programs, coaches will strive to offer each player meaningful playing time. The coaches first priority is safety of the players which may alter this policy as necessary. Playing time for the 7/8 and high school programs will be determined through coaches observations and evaluations during practice and competition. No athlete is entitled playing time but rather playing time is earned by performance and conduct, and can be increased or decreased appropriately. If a player's playing time is reduced, coaches will make an effort to notify the player of the reasoning for the decision. Players are encouraged to engage coaches in discussions about their skills and playing time. Coaches will inform players in a constructive and positive manner and will keep in mind that it isn't always their poor performance but rather the improvement of a fellow teammate that may result in a chance of playing time. Coaches will encourage intra-squad competition to push the limits of each player's personal abilities and improve the overall team depth and performance.

**Play Up Requests** (playing at a grade level above the players current enrollment). All play up requests are decided by league mandate by the South Sound Lacrosse league, not the club board. As a general rule players are expected to play in their age appropriate program for social, physical and emotional development to occur at a natural and healthy growth pace with their peer groups. Play up requests must be made in writing to the VLC board representative to SSL which will make the final decision. Playups are granted only under extreme situations.

**High School Boys Program.** The goal of the high school boys program is to field a competitive Division II team built upon the fundamentals taught in the 3/4, 5/6 and 7/8 programs. A junior varsity (J.V.) team will emphasize the continued development of player skills, advanced concepts of play, and expectations regarding responsibility, discipline and commitment to the competitive game of lacrosse. Based upon demonstration of advanced skill, a firm grasp of advanced concepts of play, leadership, responsibility, discipline, commitment to the competitive game of lacrosse and good sportsmanship, the coaching staff will select players to play on a competitive Division II varsity team.

**Girls Lacrosse.** The Vashon Valkyries girls lacrosse team is called the Vashon Valkyries named after mythological warrior women. The Valkyries participate in the WSLA Junior Varsity program. Girls lacrosse differs greatly from boys lacrosse. Girls do not wear helmets or padding because hitting is not allowed. The girls game is dominated by finesse, skill and controlled stick checking and the girls only need eye gear and a stick to play. The club can provide rental gear at a small seasonal charge.

**JV High School Girls Program.** The high school age girls team plays junior varsity lacrosse with the Washington Schoolgirls Lacrosse Association. No experience is necessary. The season begins in mid-February and ends in mid-May. Primary objective is to teach skills to play an intelligent game of lacrosse exhibiting finesse, teamwork and

sportsmanship. At the end of the day, it is about having a great time. Games are on the Island as well as at other schools throughout the Puget Sound region. Practices take place Monday-Friday following school and ending at 4:45 pm. Coach Larry Dubois has been coaching with the program for several years and the team manager, Mary Kay Rauma is parent coordinator. Please direct questions to Mary Kay at marykay@rau-maassociates.com or 206-484-8784.

**Grades 6/8 Girls Program.** This year the grades 6 through 8 will practice with the HS Valkyries under head high school girls coach Larry Dubois.

**Grades 3/4/5 Girls Program.** The grades 3/4/5 program in an 8 week program teaching lacrosse fundamentals in a fun environment. This program generally meets later in the season, late March.

### **Player Parent Coach Responsibilities**

**Player Responsibilities.** It is the player's responsibility to aspire to be the best they can be. Athletes should come into the season ready to give their best mentally and physically. At the high school and middle school levels, player should participate in a winter sport or be involved in an individual fitness plan consisting of strength and conditioning, speed and footwork, abilities, and flexibility so they are in shape coming into the season. During the season players must be on time and ready for both practices and games. If practice is at 4:30, the player must be dressed with helmet and pads on and ready to go at 4:30. No exceptions. Physical presence does not mean a player is on time. Being on time and ready means being dressed and ready to go when the coach or captain blows the whistle. Family and academics will always be considered higher priorities than lacrosse. There is life outside lacrosse and playing lacrosse will not support a family when you are an adult. The player is a STUDENT ATHLETE. The player is required to BALANCE schoolwork and athletics. If a player must be absent from practice or game, it is that player's responsibility to contact his/her coach in advance to explain the reason for the absence. Unexcused absences from practice or games affect the entire team. Playing time may be adversely affected by unexcused absences.

**Parent Responsibilities.** Parents are responsible for their own conduct and for setting a good example for all children who play the game of lacrosse. Parents should conduct themselves as mature adults at all times. Honor a coach's decision to determine a player's playing time. Allow your child/player to speak directly with a coach before you discuss with any coach your child's playing time. If you are still not satisfied, call and schedule a face-to-face meeting with the specific coach. Avoid discussing a complaint about a specific game. If you must discuss a specific complaint, do not contact any coach until 24 hours after the specific game. At games, support the team, not just your son or daughter, in a positive manner. Cheering any good play (by either team) is appropriate and appreciated. Booing sets a poor example. Young people not associated with the club often attend our home games. By example and word, parents can help ensure these fans, too, display good sportsmanship. Parents with questions or concerns during the season may also contact the parent coordinator of their child's team. All parents, including parents of high school players, are responsible for ensuring that their children/players arrive at practices and games in a timely fashion, have money for ferry tickets and food when appropriate, and are picked up promptly after games and practices. All players including those in the high school programs are not permitted

to drive themselves to away games. This is not the coaches or parent coordinator's responsibility. It is your responsibility as a parent who has chosen to provide your child with the opportunity to play lacrosse.

***Coach Responsibilities.*** It is the coach's responsibility to teach the sport of lacrosse, and to give each individual participant the opportunity to be as successful as possible both on and off the field. It is understood that a coach can be a great role model for an athlete and therefore nothing less than exceptional role modeling will be accepted both on and off the field. Positive reinforcement is a coaching value that will be stressed much more than critical analysis. Practices will be designed so that they may be understood, carried out, and assessed. Goals for individuals and the team as a whole will be measurable, specific, and attainable. However, goals will also stretch the imagination and ambition of the athletes to push them to their maximum potential. Expectations and standards for the team will remain consistent for all athletes throughout the season both on and off the field.

***Parent Volunteers.*** The core of this club is based on volunteerism. The Vashon Lacrosse Club has kept annual dues and costs well below what many other Division II lacrosse clubs charge. To keep it this way, each team needs and requires adults to volunteer for numerous different tasks. These include assisting with games, field preparation and team management as well as fund raising. Do not assume that others will take care of these obligations for you. Step up and volunteer. It is fun and rewarding! Each team has an official parent coordinator. Parents are expected to contact the parent coordinator for their child's team and offer to assist with the many tasks it takes to run the program.

***Eligibility and Discipline.*** A player's eligibility to participate at any level is dependent upon their willingness to fulfill the responsibilities set out in this Handbook. Coaches in all programs have discretion to suspend or expel a player for conduct detrimental to the team and the game of lacrosse.

In addition to the responsibilities set out above that apply to all programs, eligibility to participate in the High School programs will be based upon the eligibility requirements set by the Vashon School District for participation in the school district sponsored sports or extracurricular activities. A player's eligibility to practice and/or play in a game will be determined with strict adherence to school district attendance, conduct and GPA requirements. The length of a player's suspension from the team for a violation of a school district policy will likewise be determined with adherence to school district rules. Players and parents are expected to know these rules and requirements. Ignorance of a rule or requirement will not be accepted as an excuse. These rules can be found at the following Vashon High School web sites:

<http://vashonsd.org/vhs/docs/activitiescode.pdf>

<http://vashon.org/vhs/docs/AthleticCompliance.pdf>

As a prerequisite to play, all players and their parents must sign a form acknowledging that they have read this handbook and will abide by the rules and requirements for participation in VLC programs. See page 9 of this document.

## Vashon Lacrosse Club Code of Conduct

Players, coaches, spectators and parents are to conduct themselves in a manner that “Honors the Game” and demonstrates respect for other players, coaches, officials and spectators. In becoming a member of the lacrosse community, an individual assumes certain obligations and responsibilities to the game and its participants. The essentials in this “Code of Conduct” are Honesty and Integrity. Those who conduct themselves in a manner that reflects these elements will bring credit to the game of lacrosse, themselves, their team and their organization. Through such conduct, lacrosse will continue to earn and maintain a positive image, and make its full contribution to youth sports in the United States and around the world. All VLC players become member of US Lacrosse. VLC and US Lacrosse support the following behaviors for those participating or involved in any way with VLC and US Lacrosse:

- Adhere to the essential elements of the “Code of Conduct.”
- Sportsmanship and concepts of fair play are essential to the game, and must be taught and developed both at home and on the field during practices and games.
- The emphasis on winning should never be placed above the value of good sportsmanship, concepts of fair play, or the skills of the game.
- Derogatory comments are unacceptable. Use positive reinforcement with players and adults alike. Derogatory comments once made can never be retracted.
- Derogatory comments/inappropriate language relating to any VLC coach, player, parent, coordinator, or game official in any social media form or format is unacceptable.
- The safety and welfare of the players are of primary importance.
- Coaches can have a tremendous influence on their players. Coaches shall strive to be positive role models for young people, as well as for adults.
- Officials are expected to conduct themselves as professionals and in a manner that demonstrates courtesy and fairness to all parties, while exercising their authority on the field.
- Adults involved with the game must never permit anyone to openly or maliciously criticize, badger, harass, or threaten an official.
- Both in letter and in spirit, the rules of lacrosse must be respected and adhered to by all who participate in the game. Attempts to manipulate rules in an effort to take unfair advantage of an opponent, or to teach deliberate unsportsmanlike conduct is unacceptable conduct.
- Eligibility requirements, such as age and previous level of participation, must be followed. They have been established to encourage and maximize participation, as well as promote safety.

This is to certify that I have read and understand the Vashon Lacrosse Club Handbook provided by Vashon Lacrosse Club, and I have read, understand and agree to the Code of Conduct rules provided herein, and will abide by the rules and requirements for participation in VLC programs.

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Player Name Printed

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Player Signature

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Date

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Parent or Legal Guardian Printed

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Parent or Legal Guardian Signature

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Date