

Key Points

“No other states in the west are sanctioning lacrosse.”

Untrue – Lacrosse is a sanctioned sport in Colorado and California. Oregon boys lacrosse is in the process of getting lacrosse sanctioned and anticipate sanctioning by 2011.

“There aren’t enough trained coaches available to coach lacrosse.”

Untrue – Though all sports struggle with qualified coaching, the lacrosse community is very active in recruiting and training lacrosse coaches. US Lacrosse continues to sponsor both Level I and Level II coaching clinics in the state on an annual basis. The majority of the coaches in the WHSBLA are at minimum Level I trained and certified by the WHSBLA.

“Lacrosse is a fringe support and won’t last.”

Untrue – Lacrosse has been played in North America for at least 500 years and is America’s only true native sport. The sport’s 30 years in Washington have shown strong and steady growth since the first game was played in the 1970’s. Lacrosse is governed by US Lacrosse and is affiliated with the Positive Coaches Alliance, NFHS and the NCAA.

“There are no college opportunities for lacrosse players from Washington.”

Untrue – Not only does the state have several collegiate lacrosse teams (PNCLL members UW, WSU, Western, Central, Whitman, UPS, PLU, Gonzaga) many former WHSBLA players are on rosters at NCAA Division I and III schools throughout the nation.

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“Who does lacrosse answer to? Who is their governing body?”

The umbrella organization for lacrosse is US Lacrosse. This body provides insurance, education, promotion, national conventions and truly connects the entire lacrosse community in the US. US Lacrosse works closely with the Positive Coaching Alliance, NFHS, NCAA, and the Sports Science and Safety Committee.

“Why should I support lacrosse?”

Lacrosse is more than a game, it’s a way of life. Lacrosse is known for its collegiality, sportsmanship, and most importantly, the academic and social development of young people. Lacrosse is a positive place for kids that all schools should support.



Washington High School Boys Lacrosse Association

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Why isn’t boys lacrosse a WIAA sanctioned sport?



A guide for parents, coaches, fans and officials for talking to schools about supporting boys lacrosse as a WIAA sanctioned sport.

Rationale for WIAA Sanctioning

Since 2006, the WHSBLA board has surveyed its membership regarding many issues. The results from the last two surveys shows overwhelming support for boys lacrosse becoming a WIAA sanctioned sport. The WHSBLA board has formed a sub-committee to apply to the WIAA to add boys lacrosse as a sanctioned sport. The Washington Schoolgirls Lacrosse Association is also applying to the WIAA for sanctioning.

WIAA sanctioning is a long process and will require the efforts of all people involved in boys lacrosse. The key to our effort is a grassroots push amongst the lacrosse community to get our message out to school administrators and athletic directors who will ultimately decide our fate. Without the support of these school officials, sanctioning lacrosse will be very difficult.

This brochure is intended to educate lacrosse supporters and those needing convincing. Please encourage anyone who wants lacrosse sanctioned to educate school officials about the benefits of sanctioning. Use the talking points to get the conversation started and to educate people about lacrosse.

Boys lacrosse has been played in Washington for over 30 years. For the 2009 season, 42 high schools will be playing boys lacrosse across the state and over 100 high schools have WHSBLA players attending their school. Lacrosse continues to be one of the fastest growing sports in the state with youth lacrosse (6-14 years old) growing at a rate of over 10% per year and over 125 teams participating in 2009.

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Common Questions and Misperceptions

"Boys lacrosse costs too much."

Untrue – Unlike football, lacrosse players want to own their own equipment. There are opportunities to play lacrosse year round. A player's stick is a very personal item and each player wants their own stick. The rest of the equipment costs much less than football equipment. As well, US Lacrosse and the Washington Chapter of US Lacrosse have numerous equipment grants and insure that anyone wanting to play lacrosse can be equipped no matter their economic status.

"Lacrosse is way too violent and dangerous."

Untrue – The NCAA compiles injury statistics every year and mens lacrosse is consistently found to be safer than football, wrestling, soccer and ice hockey. A study out of Johns Hopkins University rates the level of injury in boys lacrosse very similarly to the NCAA findings.

"We don't have field space for lacrosse or lines for the field."

Untrue – Lacrosse is played on the same field as football or soccer and needs very few additional lines. These lines can be easily chalked on a grass field or taped on a synthetic field. The 2009 boys championship game will be played on Memorial Stadium's field turf on May 30th, 2009. Also, lacrosse needs only two 6'x6' goals that are portable and easily moved on and off a field.

"We can't afford the insurance for lacrosse."

Untrue – All teams in the WHSBLA are self insured either through a player's membership in US Lacrosse or a private insurer specializing in sports. Membership in US Lacrosse is only \$35 and one of the many benefits of membership is full secondary insurance.

"Lacrosse is an elitist sport."

Untrue – The lacrosse community in Washington is a diverse community with public and private school teams ranging from inner-city Seattle to rural areas. The last 14 Division I championships have been won by public school programs.

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"We don't have trained officials for lacrosse."

Untrue – The Washington Lacrosse Officials Association (WALOA) is a fully sanctioned officiating body who contracts with the WHSBLA to officiate all middle and high school games. The officials apply the National Federation of High Schools lacrosse rules and are fully insured.

"The WHSBLA does a great job of running lacrosse, why would WIAA want to take this over?"

By being a member of WIAA, boys lacrosse players will have more opportunities. These opportunities include school recognition, newspaper coverage, scholarships through school association, and pride in playing for your school. Also, with lacrosse's rapid and continual growth in the state, this is an opportunity for the WIAA and member schools to have an influence on the future of lacrosse. In the next few years, lacrosse could go the way of club soccer where the best players don't play for their school but choose to play for their club soccer team.

"Even with all you've said, lacrosse will still cost my school too much money."

Untrue – The 42 teams in the WHSBLA are all either partially or fully self funded programs. All WHSBLA teams operate under an AD, ASB program or team board of directors. Teams have booster clubs, fund raising organizations, and/or other means to cover the costs of fields, transportation, coaching stipends, officials, uniforms and equipment. Adding lacrosse will not have a significant impact on a school's athletic budget.

"Lacrosse will take boys away from other spring sports."

Untrue – Take the example of Bishop Blanchet High School. Blanchet added lacrosse a few years ago and has not seen a reduction in players turning out for other sports. Lacrosse has added to the number of boys participating in spring sports which is a positive result of adding lacrosse.