



US LACROSSE COACHING EDUCATION PROGRAM

Holds in Boys Lacrosse

Defensive Holds

Defensive holds should be considered the last line of individual defense. Defenders use them to slow or altogether halt an offensive player's progress as he enters an area on the field that gives him a high-percentage shooting opportunity. Most often, this occurs when a ball carrier drives from behind the goal and nears the goal line extended (GLE).

Essentially, there are 2 types of commonly used holds: the **cross-forearm hold** (also called the V-hold) and the **top-hand hold**. In both instances, a defender must first get his stick "in front" of the ball carrier, square his shoulders, move into a hold position, and then wheel his hips around so as to force the offensive player to turn back.

Cross-forearm hold

The defender assumes a good defensive position with his knees bent, chest up, and weight balanced on the balls of his feet. He then "matches sticks" with the offensive player and points it straight out in front of him. Example: If the ball carrier drives to the right side of the goal, the defender puts his stick in his right hand. His bottom hand anchors the stick on his opposite hip (in this case, his stick is in his right hand and he anchors it on his left hip) and his top hand is placed on the stick approximately 18 to 24 inches ahead. His top arm is raised off of his body, allowing it to form a 90° angle with the stick and preserving a nice cushion between the stick and his chest.

The defender then digs his stick and top hand in under the offensive player's armpit. Finally, he moves his feet to "close" the offensive player's top shoulder and uses his legs to drive him out of position. If necessary, the defender can also use his top hand and stick to lift up to disturb the ball carrier as he tries to feed or shoot.

Top-hand hold

Again, the defender starts in a good defensive position. However, this time he uses the opposite hand to the ball carrier (e.g., if the ball carrier drives to the right, the defender puts the stick in his left hand) and points his stick vertically – not horizontally. He establishes contact by placing his top hand (in this example, his left) on the ball carrier's lead shoulder and his bottom hand on the ball carrier's lead hip, allowing only his gloves (not his stick) to make contact with the ball carrier. The defender then locks his arms out, establishing a cushion and preventing the offensive player from getting too close to his body. Then he moves his feet to "close" the offensive player's top shoulder and uses his legs to drive him out of position.





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Tip

It's important to realize that making a successful defensive hold is rarely the end of a play. More advanced players must also consider what to do after they have made a hold. Usually, a successful hold forces an offensive player to make an inside roll toward the goal. In this case, the defender makes a drop step (opening toward the goal) and brings his stick up into checking position. If he is patient and keeps his stick by the offensive player's top shoulder, he will be ready to check down when the offensive player pulls his stick back to feed or shoot.

Error Detection and Correction

Error:

A defender consistently gets beaten to the "top side."

Correction:

He is not getting his stick in front of the offensive player. While the defender must ultimately use his body and feet to turn a ball carrier back and drive him out of a good shooting position, his stick can be an excellent deterrent and can slow down the offensive player as the defender catches up.

Error:

When executing a top-hand hold, the referee calls a "crosse check" on a player.

Correction:

Most likely, the player has allowed his stick – not just his gloves – to make contact with the offensive player. Chances are that his stick is horizontal instead of vertical, and the defender has laid it across the offensive player's back.

Instruct your player to point his stick skyward, making contact only with his hands on the offensive player's shoulder and hip.

Error:

When executing a cross-forearm hold, a player gets called for a "hold" by the referee.

Correction:

Most likely, he has used his stick to pull the offensive player back because he has been slow to move his feet and the offensive player has "gotten a step" on him.

To avoid this, the defender needs to do a better job of moving his feet to get his body in front of the ball carrier as he nears a good-shooting area.





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Error:

A player is quite adept at the cross-forearm hold, but struggles when trying to execute the top-hand hold.

Correction:

There is no hard-and-fast rule that says one hold is better on one side of the goal than the other. If a player feels more comfortable using one type of hold, instruct him to switch hands as the offensive player moves through X, thereby allowing him to use the hold of his choice as the ball carrier nears the GLE.

