



US LACROSSE COACHING EDUCATION PROGRAM

Faceoffs in Boys Lacrosse

As lacrosse becomes more specialized, faceoffs are an increasingly important skill.

Teams face off at the start of 1) the game, 2) each quarter and 3) after each score. Two players are chosen to face off at the center of the field, facing each other in the direction of the goal they are attacking, with the ball placed on the midfield line between them.

A face-off player's objective is to maneuver his stick and body to gain possession of the ball by either picking it up on his own stick or directing it to the wing players running in from the sides.

Teaching the Skill: Faceoffs

A good faceoff starts with good positioning. Before the official blows the whistle on a faceoff, each player should squat into position.

Work with your face-off player to find a stance and hand position that is comfortable for him.

Start with his feet shoulder-width apart, with his right foot behind the head of his stick on the ground and his left foot offset and back. Then adjust from there.

He should also have both hands on his stick, hip-width apart and touching the ground.

His top hand should be at the very top, where the shaft and the stick head meet, but not touching the plastic of the stick head.

Some players prefer a “motorcycle” grip with both palms down on the shaft; others prefer to have their bottom hand palm down with their top hand palm up. Allow your player to develop a personal preference.

Both elbows should be as close to the ground as possible so that the player's arms are parallel to the ground.

The face-off player should crouch down, with his right foot close to his right hand, and with his right elbow inside his right knee. His left foot should be offset from his right foot, with his left elbow outside his left knee. Again, adjust as necessary.

The back of his stick should face the other player, and the shaft of his stick must be parallel to the midline without extending over it.





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The distance between the sticks is 4 inches, or the width of the face-off line.

The official will call “set,” at which point no further movement is allowed until he blows the whistle.

There are many techniques for winning faceoffs. The more advanced ones are detailed in Level 2 of the Coaching Education Program.

To start, however, equip your Level 1 player with these two maneuvers: the “clamp and rake” and the “rake.”

Teaching the Skill: Clamp and Rake

The clamp and rake is a strength move.

When the whistle blows, the player clamps down on the ball by rolling both hands forward and extending his arms straight.

At the same time, he steps with his right foot toward the top of the stick head. This will be his pivot foot.

His left, or bottom, hand remains close to the ground as the player then punches it out away from his body.

This helps the throat of his stick slide underneath the opponent’s stick head.

After a successful clamp, your player needs to keep his bottom hand low to the ground for leverage as his top hand maneuvers the ball inside the stick head.

He then pivots off his right foot and drop-steps with his left foot to box out his opponent. His body is now between the ball and his opponent.

When this position is established with the ball clamped, the face-off specialist can lift his left hand to rake the ball in one of 3 directions: between the legs behind, to the left and down the line, or out and forward.

Based on proximity, the face-off player can then either scoop the ball himself or push it in the direction of a wing man running in from the outside.





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Teaching the Skill: The Rake

The rake differs from the clamp and rake in that the rake is a speed move. It can be used to counteract a clamp or a plunge, the latter of which is a move detailed in Level 2.

The face-off player starts with the same setup and stance as a clamp and rake.

On the whistle, he quickly nudges his stick to the left and over the ball by pushing his right hand toward his opponent and pulling his left hand back toward his body. He then directs the ball down the line toward the left side.

