



US LACROSSE COACHING EDUCATION PROGRAM

Playing without the Ball in Boys Lacrosse

The skills referenced to this point have all involved a ball carrier.

Ninety percent of your offense consists of off-ball movement.

Therefore, it is crucial that your players know what to do when they don't have the ball.

Off-ball movement can consist of something as simple as a cut, or as complicated as a designed pick play.

Level 1 skills for off-ball movement focus on

- cutting
- creating space for players with the ball
- on-ball picks

They are the basis of more advanced plays without the ball, such as off-ball picks and posting, which are taught in the Level 2 Coaching Education Program.

Teaching the Skill: Cutting

Cutting is the movement of a player to a different area of the field while trying to lose his defender.

Cuts can allow a player to receive the ball in the open field or to get open for a potential shot.

There are 5 basic types of cuts:

- inside cut
- backside cut
- "V" cut
- flip
- clear-through

An **inside cut** is precisely what it sounds like. The cutter cuts inside of his defender, between him and the player with the ball.

A **backside cut** occurs when the player cuts behind the back of his defender. (If coming from behind the cage, this is often called a backdoor cut.)





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A “**V**” **cut** allows the player to get his hands free and create an offensive advantage. He takes 1 or 2 steps forward in one direction to force his defender that way, then quickly breaks back out in the opposite direction to receive the ball with the defender behind him.

A **flip** creates a partial screen on the on-ball defender. The cutter cuts toward the ball carrier and his defender. Then the ball carrier can flip the ball to the cutter as he moves to the outside.

In a **clear-through**, the cutter mirrors the ball carrier by cutting through the adjacent area toward which the ball carrier is headed and replacing the area from where the ball came.

Teaching the Skill: Creating Space for Players with the Ball

When a teammate is dodging or feeding a cutter, the adjacent offensive player must maintain the same distance between him and the ball carrier.

Instruct an off-ball player to do so by backpedaling or shuffling laterally.

Otherwise, he might draw his defender to the ball carrier for a double-team.

With sufficient space, the ball carrier is free to continue his progression one-on-one, or he can draw a slide from the adjacent defender, leaving the off-ball player open for a draw-and-dump goal.

Teaching the Skill: On-Ball Picks

Picks in lacrosse are used the same way they are used in basketball – an offensive player uses his body to screen a defender on one of his teammates, who can then run into free space unabated.

Picks are intended for players who are more confident in the basic cradling-throwing-catching school of lacrosse and can maintain possession of the ball.

They also need to possess good enough field awareness to fill in the positions on the field when a pick is set.

Make sure your players are of the appropriate age and skill level to execute this function.





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For an on-ball pick, the picker faces his teammate carrying the ball and assumes a square position to use as much of his body's surface area as possible to block the oncoming defender.

He must remain stationary, with both feet planted.

Otherwise, it is an illegal moving pick.

The ball carrier drives his defender directly into the picker's body, then brushes shoulders with the picker to seal the pick and prevent the defender from getting around it.

For more advanced players, this is the basis for the pick-and-roll, another basketball concept that can be very valuable in lacrosse. (See the Level 2 Coaching Education Program for details.)

