

A PARENTS GUIDE TO LACROSSE

Mass Bay Youth Lacrosse is the largest youth lacrosse league in US Lacrosse. Reading, MA has the largest youth lacrosse program in the MBYLL!

Reading Youth Lacrosse U9 uses an 8x8 format for games. This is done to allow more ‘touches’ of the ball. The diagram below represents the player positioning on the field for the U9 games.



The diagram above shows the team in Red lined up in the offensive. An overly simple explanation of player movement:

- **Attack** can only run on one half of the field. They are nearest to the other goalie.
- **Defense** can only run on one half of the field. They are nearest to their goalie.
- **Midfielders** cover the whole field.

Two teams compete with 8 players on the field. Players fall into four categories:

A **Attack (2)**: Offensive-minded players who possess great stick skills that allow them to shoot with precision and fake. They use speed and agility to elude defenders. The attackman's responsibility is to score goals. The attackman generally restricts his play to the offensive end of the field.

M **Midfield (3)**: Always on the move, these players advance the ball up the field and play both offense and defense. They are fast, durable, and stick savvy. Also called “middies.” The midfielder is a key to the transition game, and is often called upon to clear the ball from defense to offense.

D **Defense (2)**: Defenders use size, speed, strength, and skill to keep attackers from scoring. The defenseman's responsibility is to defend the goal. The defenseman generally restricts his play to the defensive end of the field.

G Goalie (1): Uses lightning-fast reflexes, quick decisions, and courage to stop a barrage of high-velocity shots. The goalie directs the defense by calling for checks and relaying locations of the ball and attackers.

WHAT YOU ARE SEEING AT THESE GAMES

- **The Two Pass Rule** – This is to ensure that no one individual dominates the game. Once a team brings the ball into the other team’s zone (over the midline) they must have two pass attempts before shooting.
- **On The Field Coaching** – basically this is the lowest level of lacrosse. It is important to teach good habits. Some of the things that we have emphasized:
 - On Defense – Keep track of your opponent. Kids need to know who they are guarding and to not lose track of that individual. Play with your feet (not your stick)
 - On Attack – Move. Work to get open for a pass. Lacrosse is very much a fast paced game. (eventually)
 - Midfielders – To hustle. This is the most physically demanding position. They have to play offense and then when there is a transition, to hustle back, keep up with their opponent and play defense.

BASIC SKILLS

- Throwing the ball to a target. Accuracy is always needed, but if you are playing catch (even with a baseball glove instead of another lacrosse stick) ask your child to throw the ball to a certain location. The more accurate the player, the better.
- Catching the ball. (For obvious reasons).
- Scooping the ball. Your child should believe that the ball on the ground is ‘theirs’. Go after it; keep low, knees bent and scoop the ball.
- Cradle the ball.

ADVANCED SKILLS

- See basic skills above and repeat 😊
- Same basic skills with the “other” side
 - Throw right, catch right, throw left, catch left and switch up.
 - Cradle right and then left, with one and then two hands.

WHAT WE ARE TRYING TO EMPHASIZE

- Fun.
- Fundamentals
- Involvement: players, coaches and families
- Appreciation, respect and excitement for lacrosse
- Fun!

U9 Rules

1. Field Size for 8 v. 8 would use the approximate dimensions of 60 yards long by 35 yards wide
2. Equipment: All players would conform to current USL lacrosse equipment rules requirements (i.e. No Hockey Helmets)
3. All rules used by U-11 will be followed with the following exceptions/additions
 - a. No aggressive stick checks are allowed. Lifts checks are the preferred stick checks for all players.
 - b. A team must make two attempted passes (they do not need to be completed) in the offensive side of the field prior to being able to shoot.
 - c. If two pass attempts have occurred in the offensive end and the defensive team gains possession of the ball but does not successfully clear the ball before losing possession, the original offensive team does NOT have to attempt any additional passes prior to shooting.
 - d. Regardless of meeting the shooting criteria, AFTER every whistle, at least 1 pass must be attempted prior to shooting (example: Team A attempts their two passes in the offensive end and then takes a shot. Team A backed up the shot for possession. Even though they have attempted their two passes, they still need another pass attempt prior to shooting.)
 - e. Teams can have up to 2 coaches on the field (4 total between the two teams) with the players as long as they remain within 5 yards of side or end lines at all times. If there are two coaches, one must stay on the offensive end and one on the defensive end.
 - f. No time-served penalties. No fast breaks on penalties. Ref will explain reason for penalty to all players during stoppage, substitute offending players & change possession of ball. c
 - g. Games are played in (2) 25 minute running-timed halves with a 5 minute halftime period and are officiated by an Associate Official (AO) from the pool of certified MBYLL AO's.