



US Lacrosse Coaching Education Program

**Women's Level 1
Instructional Clinic
Workbook
Revisions 2008**



Explanation of this revision and how to use this insert:

The US Lacrosse Coaching Education Committee is constantly looking to be on the cutting edge of coach training. In the fall of 2007, the committee made a decision to update and enhance all of the Level 1 individual skills for women's lacrosse. Some of the changes are subtle, others more dramatic. Our goal has always been to help coaches teach players the essential skills of lacrosse, which is why these changes have been made. The game of women's lacrosse has evolved dramatically in the last four years. These enhancements have been added to reflect those changes. The Level 1 online courses will feature updated streaming video and text by mid-2008 also.

This supplement should be used in place of the printed workbook for the corresponding lessons indicated. The skills taught in the Level 1 instructional clinic are those in this revision.

US Lacrosse Women's Coaching Education Committee
Scott Biron, Women's Chair
Janine Tucker, Johns Hopkins University
Kateri Linville, University of Notre Dame

Mod II Lesson 4.1 Ground Balls

Introducing the skill

If a player drops the ball or misses a pass, the ball will end up rolling on the ground.

The team that gains control of the most ground balls will have a definite scoring advantage.

Three important points to emphasize whenever a player is going after a ground ball are:

1. Watch the ball into the stick
2. Keep moving
3. After gaining possession, look to pass the ball immediately to a teammate.

Never stand still and wait for a ground ball. Players must attack every ground ball and should be able to pick up ground balls with both their right and left hands.

The most basic ground ball pick-up is with a stationary ball.

All players should be taught to cradle immediately after possessing a ground ball and to raise the stick to a naturally protected position by the ear.

Stationary Ground Balls: Teaching the Skill

Teach players to prepare to pick up a stationary ball by

1. positioning themselves alongside of the ball,
2. bending at the hips and knees to get low,
3. positioning the stick behind the ball and almost parallel to the ground

As the right-handed player approaches the ball, she puts her right foot slightly ahead of the ball, positions her head over the ball and bends at her hips and knees to get low.

She positions the stick head behind the ball and pushes through the pick up with her bottom hand (the top hand is the guide hand - lining up the stick head with the ball, but the bottom hand does most of the work).

Accelerate the stick head under and through the ball, with the stick almost parallel to the ground, as the player moves through the pick-up.

Cradle immediately up to the ear and accelerate.

Keys to focus on are:

1. Watching the ball in to the stick
2. Moving through the ball during the pick up
3. After gaining possession, look to pass the ground ball immediately to a teammate.

Coaching Tip - Encourage players to pick up the groundball on the side of their body which allows them to protect the ball from approaching defenders.

The bottom hand is doing most of the work as it pushes through the pick up with the stick almost parallel to the ground.

Begin the cradling motion as the stick moves into the vertical position.

Teach and practice this skill using alternating hands at the top of the stick.

Error Detection and Correction

Error:

Player experiences difficulty getting the ball into the stick

Correction:

Be sure the player is along side of the ball first and bends at the hips and knees to get the stick parallel and close to the ground.

Remember – head over the ball!

Player must push her bottom hand down so she does not push, or "vacuum" the ball down the field. The stick must accelerate under the ball in order for the ball to cross into the stick head and across the throw strings.

Cradle up to the ear immediately.

Ground Ball Rolling To: Teaching the Skill

When a ground ball is rolling toward a player, she must continue running to the ball as fast as possible.

"Running through" a ground ball is an excellent habit.

As the player approaches the ball she:

- (1) extends her stick head to the ground on the side of her body (not out in front of her) so the angle of the stick is almost perpendicular to the ground.
- (2) Her top hand should be slid about a third of the way down the stick.
**Having the stick positioned almost perpendicular to the ground provides the maximum amount of surface space the stick has to offer for the ball to roll into.
**Picking the ball up on the side of her body allows the player to protect the ball from approaching defenders.
- (3) As the ball enters the stick, the player must give back with the stick toward her body so the ball does not pop out. In a quick fluid motion, bring the stick up and begin to cradle.
- (4) The player has a "soft" top hand when picking up a ground ball, and a firmer bottom hand for control. Giving with the momentum of the ball as it rolls into the stick and continuing to "run through" will ensure a smooth ground ball pick up.

Ground Ball Rolling Away: Teaching the Skill

When picking up a ground ball rolling away:

1. catch up to the ball first,
2. cut off any defenders,
3. bend at the hips and knees to get low.

An efficient player catches up with the ball first, as quickly as possible. When she is along side the ball, she bends at the knees and lowers her backside to the ground. Her dominant foot is in front of the ball; this guarantees that she is in proper position to pick it up. The player extends the stick head toward the ball, aiming just behind it. At the same time, the player's bottom hand lowers so the stick is almost parallel to the ground to effectively push through the pick up. The top hand guides the stick behind the ball, while the bottom hand pushes the stick through the pick-up. The player stays low until the ball is in her stick; standing up too soon causes the ball to pop out, giving opponents an opportunity for possession. Once the ball is in the stick:

1. start cradling while running through the pick up
2. bring the stick up to the ear to protect it from defenders.

Error Detection and Correction

Error:

Player is pushing the ball ahead of her instead of cleanly picking it up

Correction:

Players must avoid reaching out in front of themselves and bending at the waist – instead of at knees – to try to pick up a ground ball rolling away. They end up pushing the ball, thus wasting time, energy and a potential possession.

Catch up to the ball first to get along side of it, not behind it.

Bend at the hips and knees to get low enough to push through the ball.

Mod II Lesson 4.2

Cradling

Introducing the skill

Cradling is the most important of the basic skills in women's lacrosse. The purpose of a cradle is to keep the ball in the stick while the ball carrier is moving quickly up the field, or maneuvering through the defense.

Maintaining possession of the ball is critical in the game of lacrosse; possession usually depends upon an effective cradle.

Other skills such as throwing, catching, shooting and picking up the ball begin, or end, with the cradling of the ball.

With practice, it will become natural and instinctive for a player to cradle the ball when she has it in her stick.

Cradling is a subtle rocking motion with the stick head positioned up, on a slight angle, at one side of the body. The subtle rocking motion helps keep the ball in the stick.

Cradling: Teaching the Skill

The grip is all about soft hands. Beware of the death grip: squeezing so hard that the knuckles turn white. The key is a relaxed upper body, including shoulders, wrists and fingertips.

The stick rests comfortably in the top of the palm of the hand and is guided by the fingertips.

The bottom hand is the anchor; it controls the stability of the stick and is positioned in front of the belly button.

The top hand is the workhorse of the cradle. The fingertips of the top hand are most important in handling the stick. It should grip the stick about a third of the way down the handle. With the stick at an angle, the top hand is positioned near the shoulder while the bottom hand is at the belly button.

Most players hold the stick at a slight angle at the sides of their bodies; the stick head is near the ear. Encourage players to turn their upper body and use their shoulders to protect their stick – think shoulder, shoulder, stick when cradling.

If a player has no defensive pressure on her, she can carry her stick however she pleases: by her waist, for example, or holding it with one hand out in front. However, when a defender approaches, the player protects her stick by moving it to a more vertical position; the stick head will be by the side of her head.

Each player, as she matures, will develop her own stick-handling style; it's her signature.

The curling motion of the fingers and wrist of the top hand should be smooth and controlled. The top hand will cradle the stick from the ear to the nose, back and forth, using more wrist motion than elbow. Emphasize a smooth "rocking motion" so that the ball does not bounce around in the stick. Ideally, centrifugal force keeps the ball in the top half of the stick, up by the shooting strings. Keep the upper body relaxed, with the arms loose and comfortably away from the body.

A stiff, rigid cradle will lead to the ball popping out -- and lots of frustration -- as opposed to a smooth, fluid cradle, which will keep the ball in the stick.

The ear-to-nose cradle is best whenever handling the ball and allows players to pass and shoot quickly and efficiently. Remember – shoulder, shoulder, stick to protect the ball from defenders. Coaches should make sure players give both hands equal time at the top of the stick.

The "full" cradle, or ear-to-ear cradle, should be reserved for dodging through defenders.

When cradling, keep both arms loose, relaxed and away from the body, not pulled in tight. The top arm moves slightly back and forth with the rocking motion of the wrist and fingers. The bottom arm holds the stick in front of the body - in front of the belly button - and controls the base of the stick.

Encourage players to cradle in different areas around their body. This will help them get used to protecting the stick from a defender. This skill is covered more in Level 2.

Coaching Tip: Encourage players to constantly have a ball in their stick, practicing their cradle. Stickwork tricks will help develop a successful cradle.

Error Detection and Correction

Error:

Dropping the ball

Correction:

Check the elbow position of the top hand. Make sure it is neither too close to her side nor sticking out.

Check the angle of the stick to make sure the player is not turning the stick too much in the cradle so the ball is falling out.

Encourage a subtle ear-to-nose rocking motion – not a big, circular motion for the cradle.

Connecting to the game

Stickwork tricks will help develop the fingertips and help to loosen up the upper body which will lead to better stick handling and cradling.

Mod II Lesson 4.3 Catching

Introducing the skill

Catching is a skill that compliments a throw. Initially coaches often teach this skill with players stationary which can be considered the first step. It is very important to quickly advance players to catching the ball on the move and on their right and left sides.

In order for a team to advance the ball on a field in the air, a throw to a teammate must be caught. If the ball is not caught in the stick, an opponent can make a play on the loose ball.

Remind your player that, after a catch, she should immediately cradle the ball to keep it in her stick.

Catching is primarily a hand-eye coordination skill.

The ability to judge a ball in flight coming towards one's body is a skill that takes time and maturation to develop.

Often young players can master other basic skills like cradling and picking up a ground ball more easily than catching. Encourage them to hang in there and practice, practice, practice.

Coaching Tip - Catching should be active, not passive. Teach your players to always move toward the ball; not to wait for it.

Teaching the Skill

Set the feet

The player begins by facing her passing partner.

The catcher's feet should be offset about shoulder width apart. A right-handed player will have her left foot slightly in front of her right foot.

A left-handed player will have her right foot slightly in front of her left foot.

Ask for the ball

As the catcher moves toward the passer, she asks for the ball by giving a target. She holds her stick parallel to her body with her top hand slid slightly down.

The stick should be off to the side and slightly in front of her head.

The bottom hand is in front of the body with the arm across the body at waist height.

The head of the stick is slightly in front of the bottom hand to allow the player to give with the ball on the catch. This stick positioning is crucial because it allows the athlete to protect the stick from defenders around them.

The catcher does not point her stick at the passer; rather, she keeps her stick along side of her body so she can catch and immediately cradle, pass or shoot.

Watch it in

The catcher follows the ball with her eyes at all times.

She watches the ball into her stick and gives back gently with the momentum of the ball as it enters the pocket.

As the ball approaches, she does not want to move her stick toward the ball to meet it.

She slightly gives with her stick and catches behind her ear in a position to protect her stick and begin cradling right away. Avoid batting at the ball.

Run through the catch

Rotate the shoulders. As the catcher gives, she rotates her shoulders slightly toward the side she is catching on.

The giving motion with the rotation of the shoulders helps to ease the ball into the stick, protect the stick from defenders, and allow the catcher to cradle, pass or shoot right away. Think shoulder/shoulder/stick!

Teach and practice this skill with alternate hands at the top of the stick.

To build confidence in learning to catch a ball, have the throwing partner throw the ball with only her hand first and not with the stick. Begin tossing only to the side of a player's body.

Error Detection and Correction

Error:

The ball bounces out of the stick

Correction:

Check to see if the pocket of the stick is open and facing the incoming ball.

Check the timing of the give motion. Often the stick is moving too soon before the ball arrives.

Be sure the player does not extend the stick toward the ball or bat at the ball as it arrives.

Also look for the following errors:

Check the tightness in the grip of the top hand and soften it to absorb the momentum of the ball. Encourage players to have a soft-top hand and not a white-knuckle grip on the stick. Players want to use their fingertips on the stick when catching the ball.

Make sure the player gives with the ball before beginning to cradle. Scott – I re-wrote this below...see if you like it! Coaches need to help focus players on this aspect of catching the ball. There is a trend of players trying to wrap the stick around the ball when receiving it. When players do this, they often can get away with this when catching the ball in a stationary position. As a coach, you should not teach your beginner players to do this because once they begin catching the ball while running they will drop most of the balls thrown to them. The player's forward momentum combined with lack of the player giving first results in the ball popping out of the stick. The give back to the ear first is crucial, and then they begin their cradle. You can often identify players who are wrap catching by how they hold their stick when they are receiving the ball. Usually they hold their stick straight up and down (vertical) on one side of their body. They also tend to reach forward with their stick and try to wrap the stick around the ball.

There are times when advanced players are under high defensive pressure and they will only have one option to catch the ball using a wrap catch. The important term here is "advanced player". These players have acquired the necessary skills set to execute this catch under pressure.

Check to see what part of the stick is making contact with the ball.

Besides watching the ball into the stick, GIVING BACK to catch the ball is the most important habit to develop early. There is a trend of players trying to WRAP the stick around the ball in front of their bodies when they catch. This is a bad habit to form and frustrating for the player because the ball tends to fall out of the stick, or bounce off of the stick as the player wraps. Having your players focus on giving back so the stick is behind their ear, in a shoulder/shoulder/stick position is the best habit to form early because now they are in a position to cradle, pass or shoot (instead of having the stick wrapped on the other side of her body).

"Wrap catchers" tend to reach forward with their sticks right before they catch and try to snatch the ball out of the air.

Advanced players will use a wrap catch to avoid defensive pressure, to catch the ball on one side of their body away from their defender. These players have already mastered the catch and use the wrap only when necessary. Developing players must concentrate on the "give" catch.

Mod II Lesson 4.4 Throwing

Introducing the skill

The game of lacrosse is a team game, and the ability to throw the ball accurately is inherently important to advancing the ball towards the goal.

As with other ball games, like soccer and basketball, the ball travels faster in the air than run on the ground.

Throwing is the act of propelling the ball with control from a stick.

During a proper throw, the ball moves along the pocket strings and releases from the stick off of the throw strings at the top of the head.

Overhand Throw: Teaching the Skill

The overhand throw is the most elemental throw in women's lacrosse. It is very similar to throwing a baseball.

Prepare to throw by cradling the stick to the proper location which is above and behind the shoulder.

The thrower rotates her hips and shoulders so that her shoulders are perpendicular to her passing partner while reaching back with her stick (similar to when throwing a ball).

The top hand should be back and above the head (not in front of the body by the chest). If the top hand is in front of the body it will result in a push type pass that is not accurate and is often a weak pass that hits the ground before it reaches the receiver.

The thrower's arms are out and away from the body with the top hand slid about a third of the way down the stick.

The thumb of the top hand is extended up the shaft of the stick, which helps the passer to throw accurately.

The other hand (positioned in front of the body) is at the bottom of the stick; the four fingers are wrapped around the shaft with the thumb pointing up. This hand powers the pass.

The passer reaches back so that the top of her stick is behind her head and about six inches above her shoulder.

The bottom hand must stay in front of the body and at chest height.

If the bottom hand is raised higher than that, the stick will become parallel with the ground and the ball will either roll out of the stick behind the passer, or go straight up in the air on the release.

She steps forward with her opposite foot (shifting her weight from the back foot to the front), drives the bottom arm forward and then executes a push/pull motion by using her top hand and arm to push the stick forward while the bottom hand and arm pull the stick toward the body.

This motion makes the stick act like a lever and ensures direct, accurate passes.

The passer snaps her wrist through the push motion.

The follow-through of the stick should be across the body to the opposite hip, not under the armpit.

At all costs avoid just pushing with the top hand and not pulling with the bottom.

The top hand pushes but then quickly develops a snap as the ball is released from the stick.

This snap helps to add pace and speed to the pass and makes it much more accurate and direct.

As the passer steps to complete the push/pull motion, her shoulders and hips are rotating through the pass.

Her top arm should extend in the direction of the person she is passing to.

Collectively, the step forward,

- the rotation of the hips and shoulders,
- the snap of the wrist through the push/pull motion,
- and the follow through of the stick across the body are what gives the pass its power.

The accuracy of the pass depends upon the follow-through.

If the follow-through is toward the ground, the pass will go low.

If the follow-through is high, the pass will probably sail over her target.

Coaching Tip – Encourage your players to AIM their stick exactly where they want the pass to go at the release point, and then follow through across their body.

Passes are intended to be caught, and developing solid passing skills is critical. Often players try to pass the ball too hard or lob pass the ball with out a proper snap. This results in passes that cannot be caught or that are intercepted. Good passing skills lead to great feeding skills and players who develop these skills are on the road to becoming complete lacrosse players.

Teach and practice this skill with both hands on top of the stick. Players benefit the most when their coaches concentrate on developing lacrosse skills on both sides of the body.

Tip: Wall ball is a powerful exercise for players to improve their catching skills

Error Detection and Correction

Error:

The ball is thrown to the ground

Correction:

Have the players start with just the top throwing hand on the stick.

Emphasize the first motion as upward, then toward the target.

Next emphasize the snapping rotation into a snapping motion.

Be sure the bottom hand is actively pulling the end of the shaft toward the body.

If players are struggling with the basic motion, remove the stick and instruct proper foot and body movement using a hand throw of a ball.

Error:

The ball is thrown too high

Correction:

Have player point to the receiver after they snap the stick toward the target

Mod II Lesson 4.5 Shooting

Introducing the skill

Shooting is a controlled throw toward the goal cage in an attempt to score. The technique used to throw a ball and to shoot a ball is very similar. However, the intended results are vastly different.

A pass to a teammate is intended to be caught and a shot on goal is intended to get by the goalkeeper. When learning how to shoot, players build on skills they've already learned -- namely, how to pass.

Certain factors such as speed, accuracy and trajectory determine the difference between a throw and a shot. Each factor needs to be introduced and developed as changes to the basic throwing motion.

This section will instruct you on how to teach each of these factors.

Shooting is the most creative skill in lacrosse and there are endless combinations of movements and fakes that can be added to this skill.

The types of shots the attackers will use depend on where they are on the field and where the defense and goalie are positioned.

Shooters need to develop a repertoire of shots because players who have only one shot are too easily defended especially at higher competitive levels. Diversifying shooting skills and shot selection will be further developed in Level 2. But to begin, let's start by introducing the basics skills required for an effective over-hand shot.

Three critical components of shooting are power, placement and creativity.

Shooting drills need to develop all three components on an equal basis and be practiced often.

Coaching Tip - Players must be in the habit of "leading with their heads" before they shoot; the head has to turn first to find the cage and see the goalie and net before a shooter shoots.

Teaching the Skill

To increase speed (Power):

* The shooter begins by facing the goal with her feet offset and shoulder width apart.

A right-handed shooter will have her left foot in front and a left-handed shooter will have her right foot in front.

* The shooter rotates her hips so her shoulders are perpendicular to the goal as she reaches back with her stick.

Her arms should be away from her body, not in tight by her side.

Her top hand should be slid about one-third of the way down the stick while the bottom hand is at the bottom of the stick.

As the shooter pulls the stick back, her top hand should be about six inches higher than the shoulder and her bottom hand should be slightly below the shoulder.

As she rotates her hips and reaches back with her stick, she transfers her weight to her back foot.

When she begins the shooting motion she shifts her weight from her back foot to her front foot and steps toward the goal with her front foot.

Her stick is positioned behind her head, which will make the goalie lose sight of the ball for a second and have a harder time finding it when the shot is taken.

The shooter first drives the bottom hand forward while stepping toward the goal and rotating her hips toward the goal.

She then snaps the top hand forward toward the cage while pulling the bottom hand back toward her body.

The push and snap of the top hand and the pull of the bottom hand act as a lever and provide the power and accuracy for the shot.

* The shooter completes the shooting motion by following through across her body as her hips, shoulders and back foot complete their rotation.

Initially, the top arm should extend toward the spot the shooter is aiming for, assuring the accuracy of the shot.

As the shooter completes her follow-through, her bottom hand (left hand) should finish behind her left hip, with the left elbow up and away from the body.

Where the shooter completes her follow-through dictates where the shot will be placed. For a high shot, the release point of the ball will be at shoulder level. For a low or bounce shot, the release point of the ball is below shoulder level and the stick head will end up facing the ground, at the lead foot (left).

Coaching Tip - For a right-handed shooter, teach them to PUT their LEFT HAND "IN their BACK POCKET" AND FOLLOW THROUGH ACROSS their BODY. This IS VITAL FOR AN ACCURATE and CONSISTENT OVERHAND SHOT.

The momentum of putting the body behind the shot, by rotating hips and shoulders as the shooter steps into the shot will cause the shooter to step forward with the back foot and add pace and power to the shot.

To increase accuracy:

* "Lead with your head" – teach shooters to see the net, not the goalie when they are shooting. Focus on the open space around the goalie. .

* Emphasize following-through to the targeted space after the initial release. Keep two hands on the stick at all times.

* Progress from stationary shooting, to shooting on the move and, then, shooting off of a catch. Throughout the skills progression, emphasize seeing the net and following-through to the targeted space

To change trajectory:

* Emphasize following-through towards the targeted space to increase accuracy and change the level of the shot.

* Snapping the wrist quickly and completely during the overhand release will enhance shot placement by adding power to the shot.

* Progress from stationary shooting, to shooting on the move, and, then, shooting off a catch. Emphasize shot selection by setting up drills that identify where and when to release an effective shot. That is, set up drills where shooters release, or catch and release shots inside the 8 meter. Make the drills more game-like by adding a defender or sliding defender to help a shooter understand where and when she has time and space to effectively release and place her shot.

Error Detection and Correction

Error:

Missing the goal cage

Correction:

Repetitive

Prior to releasing the ball, check that the player has looked for a free space in which to shoot, safely away from a defender or teammate.

Check the shooter's follow through. Make sure she is stepping toward the cage and not at a poor angle that will throw the accuracy of her shot off.

A player must prepare her body and stick position before releasing a shot.

Error:

Shooting directly at the goalkeeper

Correction:

Encourage players to aim towards a space in the netting and not to look and shoot at the goalkeeper. Using targets in the goal net will help.

Encourage the shooter to release her shot sooner than later to have more of an angle to score.

Mod II Lesson 4.6 Dodging

Introducing the skill

The primary purpose of a dodge is to get past a defender.

This will create the time and space needed to move the ball to a teammate, shoot, or get open for a teammate by effectively eliminating a defender.

Dodging combines athleticism, stickwork and footwork.

Dodging is not about making preconceived moves but, instead, is about learning to "read" the defense and adjust in order to gain an advantage.

An offensive player's job on the field is to go to goal; this means traveling north and south on the field.

Defensive players want to push the offense off course, in an east-west direction, which forces them away from goal.

Too often, if dodges are not executed correctly, the offensive players help defenders by moving themselves east-west. A player who properly executes her dodge does not veer off her north-south course.

The main objective of a successful dodge is to get an opponent off balance, out of her defensive stance, and trailing the play.

Players can use change of speed, change of direction and quick movements of their head, shoulders and sticks to accomplish this.

Once an opponent is off balance, the ball carrier needs to get a step on her and then dodge to the *opposite* side.

When a player "sets up" her defender – when she gets a defender to bite on a move to the left – she creates an opportunity to beat the defender on her right side. Setting up a defender helps a ball carrier to predict where the defense will move, and she can react accordingly. Most attackers will want to set the defender up to commit to the attacker's non-dominant side. This will allow the attacker to play to her strength by finishing her dodge to her dominant hand which often results in a stronger, more accurate pass or shot.

Teaching the Skill

To effectively execute dodges, the attacker needs to recognize how much time and space she needs for her footwork and stick work. Newer players need lots of feedback because they are more likely to attempt a dodge too far away or too close to a defender. If they attempt to dodge too far away from the defender, they will not eliminate their opponent. If they execute the dodge, too close to the defender they may actually lose possession by checking themselves as they collide with their defender, or pull their stick into their opponent's stick.

Coaching Tip - For proper stick protection when setting up a dodge, or executing a dodge, reinforce the "shoulder, shoulder, stick" principle. Always try to protect the stick with the shoulders.

All dodges need to include a change of speed.

While dodging, the offensive player must, at some point, change her pace to set her defender up, or accelerate past her defender.

All dodges should conclude with the attacker returning to the same path that she was on (north/south) prior to dodging, effectively eliminating the defensive player by sealing her off.

The dodges covered in this lesson are the Face Dodge (or Pull Dodge) and the Roll Dodge. Several more advanced dodges (Rocker Step, Split Dodge, etc.) will be covered in Level 2, however perfecting the Face Dodge and Roll Dodge will give players a solid base to develop more advanced dodges.

The Face Dodge or Pull Dodge

The 'face dodge' or 'pull dodge' is the easiest to teach and learn. It is a dodge that can be used in the midfield as well as in settled situations.

Set up the defender

As the dodger approaches her defender, she wants to "set up" the defender by:

- making a move and/or faking a pass or shot with a slight movement of her head and stick.
- Taking a jab step to one side or the other.

Stick position

- Keep two hands on the stick with the stick positioned parallel to the body and off the right shoulder (for a right-handed player).
- Once the dodger sets the defender up, she pulls hard across her face to the opposite side keeping the stick parallel to her body and protected from the defender. Remember the shoulder, shoulder stick principle for protection.
- Keep the stick in the strong hand on the pull, and bring it back to the strong side once past the defender.

Footwork

- Jog at the defender's left shoulder to "set her up" with a jab step, fake pass or shot.
- When within a stick's length of the defender, the dodger plants her right foot (for a right-hander player), pulls her stick hard across her face protecting the stick with her shoulders and explodes past the defender's right shoulder. She can take the smallest step to the side (east-west) with her left foot in order to achieve her goal of moving up field, with a powerful next step in the north-south direction.
- As soon as the dodger gets a step ahead of the defender, she cuts off the defender by staying the north-south course on which she approached the defender, leaving the defender behind her.

Coaching Tip - Imagine that the offensive player is on a set of railroad tracks. They approach the defender, dodge off the tracks and then seal the defender off by getting back on the tracks and using a tight cradle while leading with their stick. A dodge is truly effective only when a defender is left with a view of the dodger's back.

Lead with the stick

- Once the dodger explodes past the defender, she holds her stick in front of her shoulders for protection, sensing that the defender is recovering and still a threat. She keeps her stick in front of her, in between her shoulders, until open space is gained and she can pass or shoot.

The pull dodge can be executed with the right or left hand leading the dodge. Encourage players to practice this skill with their dominant hand and then their non-dominant hand.

Roll Dodge:

The roll dodge is mainly used in settled situations.

Players can roll dodge to the left or right, depending on field position and whether they are right or left handed.

As with all dodges, the dodger wants to "set up" the defender by faking a move, fake pass or shot with a jab step, or a slight movement of her head, shoulders or stick.

This will often cause defenders to raise their stick and straighten up, taking them out of their defensive stance.

Stick position

The dodger keeps two hands on the stick as she approaches the defender with the stick positioned parallel to the body and off the right shoulder (for a right-handed player). Remember shoulder/shoulder/stick to protect the ball.

Footwork

On the approach (for a right-handed dodger), the dodger moves to the defender's left shoulder to "set her up" with a jab step, fake pass or shot.

When the dodger is within a stick's length of the defender, she plants her left foot (for a right-hander player) in front of and in between the defenders feet.

The planted left foot is the pivot foot and the right foot moves.

The dodger rolls to her right swinging her back foot around the defender.

As the dodger rolls to her right, she keeps her back to the defender and her stick in between her shoulders.

The right foot will now be to the side and slightly behind the defender as the roll is complete and the dodger explodes forward with their left foot while cutting off the defender with her body.

Lead with your stick

As the dodger explodes past the defender, she keeps her stick in front of her shoulders and protected.

The stick remains in front until open space is gained and she can pass or shoot.

Error Detection and Correction

Error:

The ball is dropped when performing the Face Dodge.

Correction:

Be sure the top hand is relaxed as the player pulls across her face.

Check that both arms are moving together when the stick is pulled to the opposite side of the body.

Error:

The ball is checked out of the stick by a defender.

Correction:

During a roll dodge, make sure that the player steps around and not just beside her opponent.

Make sure the body is between the defender and the stick at all times to maximize stick protection.

Make sure the player accelerates after the dodge and seals off her opponent leading with her stick.

Mod II Lesson 4.7 Individual Defense: Blocking

Introducing the skill

Blocking is rarely given its due in organized practices; however, it is an invaluable defensive skill. It requires anticipation, good timing and hand-eye coordination on the defender's part.

Dominant defenders – those who stand out from the rest -- make it a point to consistently attempt to block at every practice and in every game; gaining and maintaining possession of the ball is always on their minds.

The defensive players who are proactive instead of reactive – those who embrace learning and practicing these particular skills – tend to separate themselves and make important impacts on the outcomes of games.

Blocking teaching the skill

The defender is positioned slightly to the side of the ball carrier when blocking a pass or shot to avoid being hit with the ball or the follow through.

She mirrors the ball-carrier's stick with her own – with either one or two hands on her stick, depending on the height required. As the ball carrier releases the pass or shot, the defender extends her stick vertically by sliding the stick through the top hand to meet the ball as it leaves the stick, blocking the pass or shot. The timing of the stick extension is critical and coincides with anticipating when the ball carrier will pass.

Don't be tempted to angle the stick too far forward toward the defender. Keep it straight up and down and mirroring the attackers stick. Too much of an angle cuts down on the timing of the block and can get the defender off balance allowing the attacker to gain an advantage.

Once the ball is blocked, the defender must step in front of her opponent, between her and the ball, and pick up the ground ball.

Error Detection and Correction

Error

Defender swings and miss times the block

Correction

Focus on mirroring the attackers stick, go straight up with the stick and do not swing.

Mod II Lesson 4.8

Individual Defense: Defensive Stance and Stick Positioning (replaces lesson 4.8 Forcing the Ball Carrier)

Introducing the skill

Individual defense is the basis for all other team defensive concepts.

When a team is not in possession of the ball, they are on defense and every player on the team must have a strong understanding of individual defensive concepts. In the modern game of lacrosse, every player on the field is playing defense when their team is not in possession of the ball.

Defenders want to take something away from the ball carrier, such as a strong pass, a lane to the middle of the field, or a good angle from which to shoot. The main job of a defender is to "contain" an offensive player by keeping her in between her shoulders. Having a strong defensive stance and solid defensive positioning allows a defender to contain her opponent and force her to an area she chooses. *Containing is far more important than checking.*

Teaching the skill

Defensive Stance

A strong defensive stance is the cornerstone to effective defensive positioning and the cornerstone to "containing" an attack player. A defender needs to:

- Maintain her "center" with balanced body weight: her knees are slightly bent and her butt is tucked in, similar to being in a sitting position.
- Maintain her balance by keeping her feet and hips under her shoulders.
- The defender's arm position is summed up by "arms away, elbows locked."
- Short steps, not long strides, ensure balance and quick change of direction.
- Footwork is the key to success for all defenders.

Coaching Tip - To maintain a strong defensive stance and prevent being faked out and thrown off balance, a defender needs to focus on her opponent's mid-section: her belly button. Not her head shoulders or stick.

Stick Position

The stick is an extension of the defender. She needs to keep it under control and use it wisely. Stick position is important in maintaining a strong defensive stance:

- The stick should be straight up and down, or slightly off to the left or right, at 10 o'clock or 2 o'clock.
- Avoid the "shopping cart" defense, where the stick is at hip level and parallel to the ground – like you were pushing a shopping cart.
- Defenders need to pay attention to the angles of their sticks: They can't be thrust too far forward or pulled too far back.
- Defenders grip their sticks with their top hands about two-thirds of the way down the shaft and with a firm bottom hand at the bottom. A defender's balance and speed can be adversely affected by a grip that's spread out rather than compact. The top hand is the guide and the bottom, the control.
- On ball defenders should always have two hands on the stick.

- Off ball defenders should have their bottom hand on the stick and have the stick up in the passing lane. Good defenders are always looking to knock down a pass that has been thrown poorly and gain control of the ball.

Coaching Tip – To demonstrate how important it is for a defender to keep her stick up, and to instill good habits in your players, make a rule at practice that everyone has to keep their stick up:

- When the coach is talking to the team
- In line waiting to get into a drill
- While standing on the sideline, etc.

Maintaining Balance

Keeping an opponent in between your shoulders depends on your being able to move your feet with quick, short steps, and keeping your feet and hips underneath the shoulders as you move. This, along with keeping the top hand slid two-thirds of the way down the stick and arms away and elbows locked puts you in a strong defensive stance. As a defender, you're entitled to that space between your chest and stick: guard that

space because that's how you are able to control the attack player. If a defender bends her elbows and hugs her stick -- "breaks her arms" -- and loses that space in between her chest and stick, she's less able to control the attacker and more vulnerable to getting beat.

Coaching Tip - What happens if your player "breaks her arms"? Encourage her to back herself up with her feet as opposed to pushing out with her arms. This strategy re-establishes a strong defensive stance that will not result in a foul.

Take Something Away

With their defensive stance, defenders want to "take something away" from the attackers. Teach your defenders to:

- Not concede a path to the goal.
- "Step up" with either their left or right foot as the attacker challenges to dictate to the attacker where the defender wants her to go.
- Avoid opening up their hips and allowing the attacker to drive to the cage.
- Avoid backing up toward the goalkeeper.
- The on-ball defender must be listening for her teammates to tell her where the help is and must also listen for her goalie's directions.

Defenders are responsible for "marking" or "guarding" offensive players. Defenders' primary objective is to control offensive players and keep them from scoring -- but not at any cost. The focus needs to be on body-to-body contact (for example, using a forearm or knuckles to control an offensive player) and not stick-to-body contact. It is a major foul if a player initiates stick-to-body or body-to-stick contact.

A defender is entitled to her space: If she's able to lock onto her attacker and, using controlled body-to-body contact, dictate where that attacker can go, then she's playing solid, under-control defense. She is guiding the attack player with her body: with her feet, her defensive positioning, and forearm or knuckles. If defenders weren't able or allowed to touch opponents, then attackers would drive down the field unimpeded and go to goal at will.

However, coaches, players and officials all need to take responsibility to make sure players are focusing on body-to-body defense instead of stick-to-body.

Defenders can position themselves on ball-carriers' strong sides and force them to pass or shoot with their weaker hands. Through well-executed individual defensive positioning, defenders can influence the movements of an offensive player with the ball by forcing her:

- into a double-team
- to take a poor angle shot
- to her non-dominant side
-

When running with the ball-carrier in the midfield or in transition:

- The defender positions herself to the side of the ball-carrier, on the ball-carrier's hip; shoulders almost square to the ball-carrier.
- The defender's arms are away from her body with elbows locked (keeping space between the chest and stick); the top-hand is slid two-thirds of the way down the stick, and the stick is straight up and down, ready to pass or block a shot, or to make contact using knuckles or forearm.
- The defender's feet are traveling in the same direction as the attacker's.
- If a defender gets beat, encourage her to recover by catching up to where her opponent is going first and then re-establishing good body position. Avoid checking or swinging while recovering.

Error Detection and Correction

Error

Defender is repeatedly getting beat defensively.

Correction

Check the defender's footwork - larger steps and strides will throw the defender off-balance and result in her getting beat. Encourage your players to take small, quick steps when playing defense.

Error

Defender gets beat and ends up chasing the attacker and often swinging wildly with a check

Correction

Have defender practice maintaining good defensive positioning using proper footwork and without a stick. Teach them not to open up their hips and to take away space.

Mod II Lesson 4.9

Individual Defense: Crease Defense

Introducing the skill

A player who is defending an opponent behind the goal line extended is called a crease defender. There are certain rules she must be aware of, including violating shooting space and the 3 second violation. A defender may not step into the crease or have any part of her stick or body in the crease.

See your rule book for more on these violations. All players must know what is safe and legal defensive positioning by the goal cage.

A defender may follow her player behind the goal line extended; however, for younger age levels it is not recommended for crease defenders to follow their opponent behind the goal. All too often, a defender playing the ball behind gets beat and this results in the attacker rolling the crease undefended.

Crease Defense: Teaching the Skill

Crease defenders must be able to:

- (1) Mark a player behind the cage who does NOT have the ball
- (2) Mark a player behind the cage who has the ball and is looking to FEED.
- (3) Mark a player behind the cage who has the ball and is looking to DODGE.

When marking a player behind the cage who does NOT have the ball, the crease defender must be aware of her opponent's movement behind the goal and must MIRROR her opponent's position in front of the cage.

Her stick is always UP and in the passing lane.

**While mirroring her opponent behind the cage, the crease defender must be aware of the shooting space violation.

Smart attack players will try to get a crease defender caught on one side of the crease and try to beat them to the other side.

As the player behind moves to cut, the crease defender meets her outside of the 8-meter and looks to take her cut away, and prevent her from catching a pass.

As an off-ball defender, the crease defender marking a player behind who does not have the ball can also look to slide, at an angle (to avoid shooting space) to double-team the ball carrier.

She is always ready to chase a loose ball or a missed shot behind the cage.

When defending a player behind the cage with the ball who is looking to FEED, the crease defender wants to keep the ball carrier in between her shoulders, keep her stick UP in the passing lane and watch the eyes of the ball carrier to anticipate a pass.

If a pass is completed over the cage, she should turn to see where the pass goes to make sure she is not standing in the shooting lane of the receiver who may shoot. If she is, she will incur a shooting space violation.

Tip: Demonstrate where the shooting lane is on the field by using a string which is attached to the goal cage posts and to the shooter's stick or waist. This will give players an idea of the shooter's "lane" to the cage that they must stay out of.

When defending a feeder from behind the goal line extended, the crease defender must mirror her movements from one side of the goal to the other, with her stick UP and be prepared for the ball-carrier to dodge.

When defending a player behind the cage with the ball who is looking to DODGE – the crease defender meets her opponent at the goal line extended, on the balls of the feet, feet about shoulder length apart, in a sitting position with an upright, active stick...arms away and elbows locked.

She gives the attacker about two feet between her and the crease to entice her to dodge to the inside. If the attacker tries to dodge to the inside, the crease defender steps toward the crease and forces the ball carrier into the crease, or draws the charge.

Remember to stay balanced and take small steps. Attackers are always trying to throw their defenders off balance - especially with head, shoulder and stick fakes. Don't fall for them – concentrate on the hips.

The objective of the crease defender is to not let her opponent get to the middle of the field. Keep her outside of the 8-meter by making contact with her at the goal line extended with your fore-arms or knuckles, stepping on a 45-degree angle up field, and driving her away from the 8 meter using legs and core strength. Use the 8-meter line as a guide – step up along the 8-meter line without opening the hips or allowing the attacker to step inside of the 8-meter line.

A defender's stick is up at all times, ready to block a feed or a shot. A shopping-cart defense (with a stick at the waist) is not allowed. The attacker will shoot over a defender who doesn't keep her stick up. Take quick, small steps to keep an opponent in between the shoulders and contain her. Stay balanced. Balance separates good defenders from great defenders.

Making contact with the knuckles or forearm is critical. Lock the elbows and keep arms away from the body (so there is space to recover if need be), while keeping the stick up. Opponents will apply pressure physically as they try to get to the middle of the cage. It's the defender's job to hold her ground and, with her elbows locked, drive the attacker up and out, using her legs and core strength. Focus on her hips, not her head, shoulder or stick. Keep the feet moving with short, quick steps, stay balanced, keeping the attacker in between the shoulders and listening for the double-team.

Error Detection and Correction

Error:

Defender is called for shooting lane violation

Correction:

Often defenders are so focused on their player; they are unaware of where the ball is around the goal. Teach players to see both the ball and their opponent. Suggest a sideways stance at an angle between the ball and their girl to enable better vision.

Error:

Defender allows the ball carrier into the 8 meter arc

Correction:

Observe if the defender is opening up her hips instead of stepping up the 8-meter line. Encourage the defender to keep her hips facing the sideline while stepping up the 8-meter line.

Mod II Lesson 4.10 Individual Defense: Stick Checking

US Lacrosse addresses stick checking and rules for safe play in the Official Rules for Girls' Youth Lacrosse.

These rules, written and endorsed by US Lacrosse and its Youth Council, indicate that players below the seventh grade level (Levels B and C) should not stick check. Modified checking, "checking the stick only if it is below shoulder level; the check must be made in a downward direction and away from the body," is allowed in Level A.

These rules have been introduced with safety as a consideration of utmost importance. Umpires and coaches should strictly enforce this rule, never allowing checks near a player's head or face.

Stick checking is a potentially dangerous skill to introduce to young players who are still developing their motor and stick handling skills:

- In their attempt to make stick-to-stick contact, stick-to-body contact could occur, which is both dangerous and illegal.
- For Level A youth rules and higher levels of play, stick checking should only be introduced after proper defensive body positioning is taught and mastered.
- The player must understand that in order to check safely and within the rules of the game, her feet, body and stick must be in good position before a stick check can be attempted. Checking is the last defensive skill that should be taught.
- For the safety of the players, the importance of control at all times when checking must be stressed and no leniency should be tolerated.

The Skill

When checking, the defender's main objective is to dislodge the ball from an opponent's stick. Essentially, the stick check is a snapping motion. The defender snaps her stick down to make contact with her opponent's stick and then quickly snaps her stick back to release. The wrists – not the arms – are most important in executing an effective check. Wrists, YES. Arms, NO.

All checking motions must be controlled both before and after attempted contact to be deemed legal.

Note that stick-to-stick contact is not necessarily a violation of the no-checking/modified-checking rule. A defender who is holding her stick in good defensive position may force the attack player to cradle into her stick causing contact. This is not considered a stick check, as the attack player initiated the contact, not the defender.

As a defensive strategy, checking must be taught precisely and practiced carefully. Too many sloppy swipes and dangerous swings attempt to pass for checks because coaches and players are satisfied with poor technique. Women's lacrosse is best served by short, precise check-and-releases, by a push/pull, snapping motion with no backswing or follow-through.

Teaching the Skill

Key details:

- Grip and positioning of hands

- “Snap” Motion – work the wrists, NOT the arms remember players are checking, not swinging their stick.

Soften the grip by allowing the fingertips to control the check. The top hand controls the motion and the bottom hand serves as the base. The bottom hand is placed at the very end of the stick, resting the butt on the top of the inside of the little finger. The thumb is extended so it is pointing up the stick shaft. The remaining fingers are curled around the pole.

The top hand is no higher than two-thirds of the way down the stick. It is not right next to the bottom hand; if they are too close, you give up control. It is no higher than two-thirds of the way down because defenders do not want to limit their reach, throw themselves off-balance, or inhibit the range of motion of their top arm.

When holding the stick up, the open part of the stick head will be facing to the left, or some defenders like to keep the open stick head facing toward them while trying to connect with an opponent’s stick. With the stick head already open, defenders are able drop it immediately into a position to pick up a ground ball. This technique also gives more surface area from the stick to connect with an opponent’s stick.

Arm Position

- Arms Away
- Arms Locked

To maintain good body position, keep the arms away from the body, not in tight. There needs to be space between the chest and arms. Keep the elbows angled down and locked. Holding the arms away from the body and keeping the elbows locked are keys for maintaining balance and proper body positioning for checking.

Body Position

- Knees slightly bent
- Balanced body weight
- Sitting position with feet under the shoulders – keep feet moving
- Position either -- alongside of, and slightly in front of, your opponent, OR square to your opponent
- Maintain body position in relation to each check (avoid checking and losing body position)

The Dos and Don’t-Evers of Checking:

DO:

- Establish and Maintain Good Body Position
- Stay Balanced
- Be Patient
- Keep your feet moving
- Check with Purpose
- Check and Release with Short, Quick Strokes
- Check Under Control
- Check when you’re 90 percent sure you can come up with the ball

DON’T EVER:

- Check Toward the Head
- Check Toward the Body
- Check with a Big Swing
- Check out of Desperation
- Sacrifice Body Position for a Check
- Check and Hold your Opponent’s Stick
- Check Out of Control
- Check unless you are 90% certain you can come up with the ball

If defenders throw a check and miss their mark, they must regroup before throwing another one. The first priority, before attempting another check, is to re-establish good defensive body position and wait for another opportune moment. Patience is key to minimizing checking fouls.

Checking on Ground Ball Pick-ups

Checking fouls are all too common during ground ball pick-ups. Timing, patience and a quick release will lead to a successful check on a ground ball.

- The "down" check. This fundamental technique often results in a hold situation and draws a foul. Practice checking down and releasing quickly if you plan to use this check. Also, make sure the downward motion is not a big swipe or swing starting from above the head, but a quick precise snap starting from waist level, or lower.

After the Check

Having dislodged the ball, the first priority is to cut off your opponent's path to the ball.

Once the defender has stepped into her opponent's path, effectively putting herself in between her and the ball, she immediately slides her top hand to the top of her stick. This simple but often neglected action helps to protect the stick and the ball when it is picked up. It helps keep the stick (and the ball) between the shoulders, not exposed to your opponent. When players slide their top hands up, they tend to cradle between their shoulders and not leave their stick exposed.

Error Detection and Correction

Error:

- Commitment to one large swing with the stick because body positioning was lost.

Correction:

- Maintain proper body position while attempting a check.
- Check that the defender is keeping her feet moving at all times before, during and after a stick check.
- Check that the defender does not step toward the ball carrier just before an attempted check.
- Teach patience before attempting a stick check against an opponent that is cradling on the run.

Mod III Lesson 1.2 8-Meter Shots and 12-Meter Free Positions

Introducing the skill

A free position shot in women's lacrosse is similar to a foul shot in basketball. A free position shot is awarded to an offensive player when a defender commits a major foul (three-seconds, shooting space, etc.) inside the eight-meter arc.

The offensive player is placed eight-meters from the goal on one of the seven hash marks that are evenly placed around the eight-meter arc: the one that is closest to where the foul occurred.

Any players inside the arc must clear out of the arc at the closest point and be at least four meters from the fouled player.

The player who committed the foul is positioned on the twelve-meter fan directly behind the player with the ball. On the official's whistle to re-start play, the offensive player tries to score while the defensive players try to gain good defensive position to prevent or block the shot.

*** Coaches, consider this!* The defender who committed the foul and is placed four meters behind the player with the ball can be a secret weapon. Instead of encouraging this player to check from behind on the shot, encourage her to break out, up-field. Now, in the event of a save, the goalie has an immediate outlet up-field in a position to start a fast break. If the shooter misses the cage, or there's a rebound, the defender who breaks up-field needs to get back in on defense.

The offense needs a player committed to backing up the cage on an eight-meter shot. A missed shot can present another opportunity to score if your team can gain possession.

Coaches' teaching cues

When the offensive player is positioned on the hash mark, encourage her to assess her offensive options:

1. Are defenders on either side of her, or is one side freed up for her to move into that space?
2. Is there an open teammate on the crease ready for a feed and can she communicate with her?
3. Is there an open teammate anywhere on the 8-meter with a better opportunity to score?
4. The ball carrier needs to assess her strength and energy levels. Midfielders might find themselves exhausted after running the field, and the best decision for them would be to not force the 8-meter shot, but rather to maintain possession by pulling the ball out and allowing the offense to work for a good scoring opportunity.

Teaching the skill

1. Assume a "ready position" to explode to the cage or shoot as soon as the whistle blows.
2. Can lead with either the right or left foot.
3. Whichever foot is on the hash, the opposite foot is back for balance, the knees are bent and the player leans slightly forward on the balls of her feet ready to explode to the cage.
4. Feet are not pointing directly at the cage, but are positioned at an angle that will allow the shooter to cut off defenders and free up her stick side.

Take It In

The main offensive option on the eight-meter is to "take it in" – to release a shot a bit closer to the cage than the hash mark. Taking the ball in, even for just a couple steps, makes for a higher-percentage shot.

- Burst into the eight-meter arc at enough of an angle to cut off one defender while drifting away from the defender on the stick side.

- Have a quick release to avoid defensive pressure. Take between two-and-a-half to three steps inside the eight-meter and release the shot.
- Shooting low is very effective.

The Outside Shot

A well-placed outside bounce shot might catch a goalie by surprise.

- Assume a ready position on the eight-meter with shoulders turned to the sideline and stick back to shoot.
- On the whistle, the shooter takes one shuffle step inside the eight-meter at an angle away from the defender on her stick side and then releases. She rotates her hips, shoulders and arms, while snapping through the shot with her wrist.
- Both bounce shots and risers are effective.

Eight shooting tips for the 8-meter

1. Release the shot sooner rather than later.
2. In-tight-high does not work. Only shoot high if you have faked the goalie in the opposite direction.
3. Faking high and shooting low works.
4. Shooting at the goalie's feet does not work.
5. Looking at where you are shooting does not work: Keep your head and eyes up.
6. Always check around the 8-meter to see if there is an open teammate to pass the ball to who may have a better shot.
7. Assess whether defenders have taken your shot away and if it would be best to back out and maintain possession rather than force the shot.
8. Always cut off one defender as you "take it in." Look to move the goalkeeper before shooting!

Defending 8 Meter Shots:

The defender who committed the foul, or the defender closest to where the foul occurred when the whistle is blown is placed 4 meters (on the 12-meter fan) behind the attacker who is taking the 8 meter shot.

Keys to share with your defenders for defending 8 meter shots:

- The stick -
 - Place both hands at the bottom of the stick.
 - Hold the stick up, perpendicular to the ground, but not inside the 8-meter arc.
- Get in position - Begin in a position that will allow a defender to move towards her attacker, similar to a sprinter's start with your dominant foot back.
- Forward angle - When the whistle blows, the defender should step into the 8 meter arc on a forward angle. She should look to block the shot, not check the stick.

- Ground Balls - A defender should be ready to pick up any loose balls either dropped or blocked from the shooter.
- Shots - All defenders should be prepared for a shot that misses the goal or is deflected off of the goalkeeper.

12-Meter Free Positions

A free position from the 12-meter fan is taken when the defensive team commits a minor foul within the critical scoring area.

The defensive player who committed the foul is placed on the 8-meter arc facing the player with the ball, who is positioned on the 12-meter fan.

When the whistle blows, all players can move; however the ball must be played by a different player before it can be shot. This is called an "indirect" free position.

Mod III Lesson 2 Double Teams

Introducing the skill

One of the most effective forms of defense is a double team. Double teams create a lot of confusion for attackers and if done correctly can result in an easy turnover. As players learn how and when to double team they begin to increase their lacrosse game sense which is important to overall player development.

Teaching the skill

Defenders should be introduced to double teaming in various locations on the field. The simplest spot is in the critical scoring area. However, double teams can occur in the midfield or off a goalkeeper clear.

In settled defense, never allow an offensive player to dodge to the cage without a double team. The purpose of a double team is to gain possession of the ball. The on-ball defender steps up to one side of the ball carrier at an angle and drives her toward another defender who is calling, "Bring her, bring her," or "Double, double." The second defender will step up to the other side of the ball carrier at an angle, which "closes" the double team.

The defenders' position themselves as if they are making a "V" with their feet and trapping the ball carrier between them. It is critical for defenders to be on either side of the ball carrier, always remaining on the side they started on, so as not to cut each other off. Each defender has a specific responsibility when she's in a double team. One defender *holds* solid body position while the other defender tries to stick check and dislodge the ball. Throughout the double-team, the defenders are communicating: "I've got hold...I'm holding," and "I've got check...I'm checking." The pressure alone may force the attack player to drop the ball, make a bad pass, or hang her stick enough for a solid stick check. The defenders on the double team stay with the double team until they gain possession or the attack player passes the ball. Once the ball is passed, one defender must stay on the opponent while the other defender "re-sets" back into the settled defensive system looking for the open player. Her defensive teammates should be telling her where the open player is; most likely she's on the *back side*, or side of the field opposite the ball.

Keys to double-teaming:

- Defenders must communicate with each other
- On ball defender must dictate where the attacker is going
- On ball defender must not open her hips up and get beat by a dodge, timing is crucial
- Defenders must hold the double until they gain control of the ball or a pass is made
- Defenders sticks must be up in the passing lanes
- If an attacker passes the ball the double teaming defender must reset and find the open attacker.

Re-setting is covered in the CEP Level 2 women's online course.

Error Detection and Correction

Error

Attacker runs through the double team

Correction

Defenders do not form a tight "V" with their feet, allow the defenders to practice forming the "V" and adjusting the double team as the attacker moves

Error

Attacker backs out of double and either passes or re-attacks

Correction

Defenders are not sticking with the double. Have the defenders follow the attacker as they pull out keeping a strong double and having their sticks up