

Waterford Youth Lacrosse Association (WYLA)

Youth Safety Policy

WYLA is committed to providing a safe and secure environment in which youth players can engage in the sport of lacrosse. WYLA considers a safe environment one that is also free from potentially harassing and inappropriate behavior by adults. In support of this objective, WYLA will take the following specific actions to protect its youth lacrosse players from abuse or maltreatment, and to provide for the safety of each youth participant.

Selection of Adult Volunteers

WYLA recognizes that adult volunteers play a critical role in the success of our organization, and also recognize the potential impact each adult volunteer can have on the lives of our youth lacrosse players.

WYLA is committed to excluding adult volunteers who have a history of inappropriate behavior or who are considered unfit to work with children. In support of this commitment, WYLA requires that each Board member, and any adult serving in a coaching capacity, pass a background screening check prior to their having any direct contact with youth participants. This criminal screening check will be conducted through US Lacrosse and will be repeated every two years in the event that an adult continues to be an active volunteer with WYLA.

Consistent with providing an environment free from abuse or maltreatment, WYLA supports the principles outlined by the Positive Coaching Alliance (PCA).

WYLA reserves the right to remove any adult volunteer from the program for any reason.

Physical Safety of Youth Players

❖ Player Injuries

WYLA adult volunteers will strive to provide an environment where the potential of injury to youth players is minimized. WYLA adult volunteers will use their best judgment to provide for the physical safety of their youth players. The following actions will be taken in support of this objective:

1. **First Aid** - Each team will be issued a First Aid kit. The coaching staff will strive to ensure that a First Aid kit is available for each practice and game. Coaches are encouraged to obtain First Aid Training.
2. **Lightning and Thunder** – the following guideline applies to practices and games, both home and away:
 - a) If you can hear thunder, then lightning is close enough to strike. **If you can see**

it or hear it, coaches are advised to clear it!

- b) WYLA recommends that participants seek immediate shelter (for example, a designated severe weather shelter (if there is one nearby), an enclosed building, otherwise in automobiles). Do not stay in open, unprotected areas.
- c) **Games should not be restarted for at least 30 minutes** after the last lightning strike is seen or roll of thunder is heard.

3. Concussions – WYLA recognizes the potential danger and long-term health consequences of this often difficult to diagnose form of injury.

- a. WYLA coaches are encouraged to read “*Heads Up: Concussion in Youth Sports, A Fact Sheet for Coaches*” or similar document.
- b. A coach will use his/her best judgment to determine whether a youth player may have experienced a possible concussion, and will abide by the following guidelines:
 - i. When, during a practice or game, a Player is suspected of having a concussion the Coach will remove the Player from the session and will not allow the player to return to play for the remainder of the session. The Coach will keep the Player out even if the Player insists, "I'm OK now, Coach"
 - ii. Any Player who receives an impact to the head while not wearing a helmet will be removed from play for the remainder of that session.
 - iii. The Coach will inform the Player's Parent or guardian of the Player's injury as soon as possible. Ideally, the Parent will be notified immediately.
 - iv. Players for whom a coach suspects a possible concussion will not be allowed to participate in practices or games without a note from a health care professional confirming that the player is symptom-free and is OK to return to play.

4. US Lacrosse Youth Rules – Lacrosse is a physical game. US Lacrosse has established specific rules for safety, including checking by age group. WYLA coaches are expected to reinforce and abide by these rules, both in practices and in games. In the event that an opposing team is playing in a manner that is deemed to be in violation of US Lacrosse rules, or is deemed to be unsafe to WYLA players, WYLA coaches are encouraged to address the issue of unsafe play with both the referees and with the opposing team. WYLA coaches are expected to take whatever actions are appropriate, up to and including forfeiting the game, in order to ensure the safety of our youth players.