



US LACROSSE COACHING EDUCATION PROGRAM

Field Cheat Sheets for Lacrosse Skills

Description

The following Field Cheat Sheets are written to give coaches allowable resources to take with them to the field and teach players. The cheat sheets apply the basic concepts you learn in the US Lacrosse Coaching Education Program.

- Skill descriptions
- IDEA teaching method
- Error detection and correction
- Progression

Skills

The following lacrosse skills have cheat sheets provided to you as a resource:

- Cradling
- Ground balls
- Dodging
- Throwing and catching
- Feeding and cutting
- Shooting
- Playing without the ball
- Picking
- Faceoffs
- Defensive stance and positioning

Situation Play

The following lacrosse situations and game development areas have cheat sheets provided to you as a resource:

- Transition Offense
- Transition Defense
- Settled Offense
- Settled Defense
- Extra Man Offense
- Man Down Defense





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Cradling Field Cheat Sheet

Overview

Cradling is using the movement of the stick to maintain possession of the ball in the stick. There are two-handed and one-handed methods of cradling.

Skill Description

- The top hand, 2 to 3 inches below bottom of the head of the stick-top hand, is responsible for controlling the motion of the stick.
- The bottom hand is relaxed on the butt end of the stick; this hand is responsible for protecting the stick.
- Hold the stick in the fingertips, with the top digit of each finger and thumb for better control and wrist action.
- Palm-in palm-out movement of the top hand is the cradling motion.
- This motion creates the centrifugal force on the stick head, which keeps the ball in pocket.

IDEA

Introduce: Explain the importance of cradling.

Demonstrate: Show the proper form of cradling.

Explain: Explain the process.

(NOW HAVE THE GROUP DO A DRILL – YOUR PICK)

Attend: Explain error detection and correction.

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 one's side nor sticking out.





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Cradling Field Cheat Sheet (*cont.*)

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

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

Progression

Stationary cradling, then running cradling, switching hands, one-handed cradling.





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Ground Ball (GB) Field Cheat Sheet

Overview

Set up drill demos that allow the players to practice the ground-ball pickup. Stop and re-focus players breaking down the steps of this skill if they have difficulty with it.

Skill Description

Points to remember when teaching the skill:

- Use a scooping-shoveling action.
- Bend body down low to ground.
- Aim stick 1 to 2 inches in front of the ball, with knees bent low.
- Keep stick parallel to the ground.
- Keep back hand low to ground.
- Go through the ball and bring the stick quickly to your face as you explode from the opponents.
- Use the body and legs to protect the butt end in the scooping process.
- After picking up the ball, always take 3 fast steps and fish hook for stick protection.
- Pick head up and look to pass the ball.

IDEA

Introduce: Explain the importance of GB pickups.

Demonstrate: Show the proper form of GB pickups.

Explain: Explain the process.

(NOW HAVE THE GROUP DO A DRILL – YOUR PICK)

Attend: Explain error detection and correction.

Error Detection and Correction

Identify common errors and corrections:

1. Back hand is too high, which pushes
2. Ball checked while player is scooping
3. Covering the ball
4. Pushing the ball down field – not picking it up

Progression

Stationary GB, then running GB, then GB pickups to a pass/shot/dodge.





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Dodging Field Cheat Sheet

Overview

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

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

Skill Description

Types of dodges to show:

- Face dodge
- Roll dodge
- Split dodge
- Change of direction
- Speed dodge (if needed)

IDEA

Introduce: Explain the importance of dodging.

Demonstrate: Show the proper form of dodging.

Explain: Explain the process.

(NOW HAVE THE GROUP DO A DRILL – YOUR PICK)

Attend: Explain error detection and correction.

Error Detection and Correction

Face Dodge Error:

The ball is dropped when performing the dodge.

Correction:

Be sure the top hand is relaxed as the player pulls across his face. Also look at the elbows to be sure they are up.





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Dodging Field Cheat Sheet (*cont.*)

Roll Dodge Error:

A defender checks the ball out of the stick.

Correction:

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

Progression

Stationary dodge, then running dodge, dodging to shot, dodging in situations.





Throwing and Catching Field Cheat Sheet

Overview

The key for catching is very basic in concept. Have them practice this with the throwing skills all at one time!

Skill Description

Throwing Points of Emphasis	Catching Points of Emphasis
Stick in “box position” (shoulder area and ear)	Give a target to the thrower
Body is perpendicular to the target by pointing your non-throwing shoulder at the target	Choke up on the stick to control the head
Throwing motion is similar to baseball and football throwing mechanics	Look the ball into your stick head
Push off back foot of the stick-side foot	Accept the pass into your stick
Step in direction of the target with the foot opposite from which stick is being held	

IDEA

Introduce: Explain the importance of GB pickups.

Demonstrate: Show the proper form of GB pickups.

Explain: Explain the process.

(NOW HAVE THE GROUP DO A DRILL – YOUR PICK)

Attend: Explain error detection and correction.

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.





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Throwing and Catching Field Cheat Sheet (*cont.*)

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 – not a white-knuckle grip on the stick.





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Feeding and Cutting Field Cheat Sheet

Overview

Feeding and cutting are not only major parts of running and offense, but also for clearing the ball.

Skill Description

Feeding = stepping away from the defender to free the hands to pass the ball.

- Feeding involves freeing one's hands in an effort to get off the feed.
- Feeders must drop-step with their feet to free up their hands.
- Hands must be high on the feed – above the head so that the ball's trajectory remains high enough for the cutter to catch.
- Cutter must keep his stick closer to the body than usual.
- Cutter must keep his eyes on the ball and look it into his stick.
- Cutter must react to the defender and take what is there.
- Cutter must make the same explosive move without the ball.
- The feeder must deliver the ball to where the cutter will be.
- The timing on the cut between the cutter and feeder is vital.

IDEA

Introduce: Explain the importance of GB pickups.

Demonstrate: Show the proper form of GB pickups.

Explain: Explain the process.

(NOW HAVE THE GROUP DO A DRILL – YOUR PICK)

Attend: Explain error detection and correction.

Error Detection and Correction

Feeder Error:

The feeder's hands are too low and the feed is at the knees of the cutter.

Feeder Correction:

Get your back elbow up and throw to the target. Be sure the player does not extend the stick toward the ball or bat at the ball as it arrives.





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Feeding and Cutting Field Cheat Sheet (cont.)

Feeder Error:

The feeder does not veer; instead, he throws the feed into the sliding defender.

Feeder Correction:

Have your feeder move with their passes and avoid sliding defenders on feeds.

Feeder Error:

The pocket is too deep in the feeder's stick and to deliver the feed accurately or quickly.

Feeder Correction:

Check sticks before the game and be sure all players can deliver passes on target.

Cutter Error:

Cutter stops to catch the feed.

Cutter Correction:

Always adjust to the ball and move toward it in the air.

Cutter Error:

Cutter reaches back and exposes the stick on the shot off the feed.

Cutter Correction:

Keep the hands in and fire through your hips.

Cutter Error:

Cutter cuts with the stick in the wrong hand.

Cutter Correction:

Move the stick to the correct hand and give a target for the feed.

Progression

Add pressure to cutters or feeders to do this in game situations.





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Shooting Field Cheat Sheet

Overview

Shooting is best taught over the top.

Skill Description

Points of emphasis:

- Hands high
- Proper position (sideways)
- Trunk twist
- Spot your shot
- Follow through to target

IDEA

Introduce: Explain the importance of shooting.

Demonstrate: Show the proper form of shooting.

Explain: Explain the process.

(NOW HAVE THE GROUP DO A DRILL – YOUR PICK)

Attend: Explain error detection and correction.

Error Detection and Correction

Error:

Shooting directly at the goalkeeper.

Correction:

Encourage players to aim toward a space in the netting; do not look and shoot at the goalkeeper. Using targets in the goal net helps.

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

Progression

Stationary shooting, then running shooting.





Playing without the Ball Cheat Sheet

Overview

Playing without the ball is the situation that players find themselves in 90% of the time on offense. It is crucial to teach your players basic offensive principles so that they know what to do when they don't have the ball.

Skill Description

Points to remember when teaching the skill:

- Without clearing out, the players on offense without the ball are impediments to the player with the ball.
- A well-timed backdoor cut rather than a simple clear out can be a deadly weapon. Timing is everything.
- It is rarely acceptable for 2 players to occupy the same space in the offense for any length of time. They can be covered by 1 defender. That is why players must learn to balance the field.
- Dodging players should drive at the cage – not the sideline.
- Dodging players must wait for teammates to clear out.

IDEA

Introduce: Explain the importance of playing without the ball.

Demonstrate: Show the proper form of playing without the ball.

Explain: Explain the process.

(NOW HAVE THE GROUP DO A DRILL – YOUR PICK)

Attend: Explain error detection and correction.

Error Detection and Correction

Error:

One player fails to understand or move in the triangle to attain balance.

Correction:

Have the arriving player point to the destination for the confused player.

Error:

The dodger dodges to the sideline rather than the pipe.

Correction:

Have the dodger circle up and come straight at the cage.

Progression

Add pressure to the players away from the ball and make them work to get open or to make something happen.





Picking Field Cheat Sheet

Overview

Picks in lacrosse are used the same way they are used in basketball. Using the body of another teammate to screen a defender allows an offensive player to run his defender into his teammate's body.

Skill Description

On ball picks:

- The teammate setting the pick faces his teammate (the person he is trying to get free) and assumes a square position to use as much of his body's surface area as possible to block the defender.
- The person setting the pick must maintain a stationary stance, or it becomes an illegal moving pick. The person for whom the pick was set drives his man directly into the picker's body. He brushes shoulders with his teammate setting the pick to prevent his defender from getting around the pick.

IDEA

Introduce: Explain the importance of picking.

Demonstrate: Show the proper form of picking.

Explain: Explain the process.

(NOW HAVE THE GROUP DO A DRILL – YOUR PICK)

Attend: Explain error detection and correction.

Error Detection and Correction

Error:

The driving offensive player does not come close enough to the pick to pick his man off.

The picking player does not roll to the opposite side after the pick.

The player does not wait for the pick to be set.

Correction:

Have players without defense run by the pick and slap five as they pass the picking player.

Progression

1-on-1 tactics, situational tactics, game planning.





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Faceoff Field Cheat Sheet

Overview

Facing off is the skill used at the start of the game, each quarter and after each score.

Skill Description

Key points of emphasis:

- Feet must be left of head of stick.
- Weight is balanced.
- Avoid bearing weight on hands; this keeps players from quickly moving the stick.

IDEA

Introduce: Explain the importance of the faceoff.

Demonstrate: Show the proper form of the faceoff.

Explain: Explain the process.

(NOW HAVE THE GROUP DO A DRILL – YOUR PICK)

Attend: Explain error detection and correction.

Error Detection and Correction

Error:

Foot inside of the head of the stick.

Weight borne on hands so that players cannot quickly move stick.

Stick not parallel to the midline.

Player on knees on faceoff.

Feet not shoulder-width apart.

Feet not at a 45% angle toward the opposing faceoff man.

Correction:

Set up in a solid position, light on hands, able to move.

Be sure to keep stick straight up and down on the face.

Do not lean into the faceoff; you will be off balance.

Progression

Add wing players on the faceoff, add LSMs, push for fast breaks.





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Defensive Stance and Checking Field Cheat Sheet

Overview

Defense is played first with the feet and proper body position. All too often players believe that defense is based on the check with the stick rather than moving their feet to take away easy lanes to the goal. Once defensive players master correct body position, balance and stick placement, they can begin to employ a set of basic checks.

Skill Description

Teach the following:

- Stance
- Body positioning
- Stick positioning
- Slap check
- Poke check
- Philosophy behind the checks

IDEA

Introduce: Explain the importance of defensive stance and checking.

Demonstrate: Show the proper form of defensive stance and checking.

Explain: Explain the process.

(NOW HAVE THE GROUP DO A DRILL – YOUR PICK)

Attend: Explain error detection and correction.

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 his feet moving at all times: before, during and after a stick check.

Progression

1-on-1 positions, slides, position at “X” and point.





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Transition Offense Field Cheat Sheet

Overview

In a transitional offensive situation or a “numbers” situation, the team who gains possession of the ball should attempt to create a numeric advantage over the defense by transitioning the ball from their defensive end to their offensive end faster than the defense can react to their movements or by beating a defender in the open field. In both situations, you have numbers.

Skill Description

Rules for Attacking in a Numbers Situation:

- When an offensive player has a numeric advantage over an opponent during a fast break, the offensive ball carrier moves the ball down the field toward his goal until a defender stops him. (The ball carrier should continue toward the goal to shoot if the defense doesn't pick him up.)
- When the ball carrier is stopped, he looks to pass to an open teammate.
- Offensive players maintain enough space between each other so that one defender cannot cover 2 offensive players at once.
- To help the ball carrier who may receive defensive pressure, offensive players without the ball free themselves from their defender.
- Offensive players must look up as they run down the field and pass the ball to any teammate who is open and in front of them in such a way as to enhance their numeric advantage. Passes are quick and accurate. A passed ball moves faster than being run on the ground and can speed up the transition and numeric advantage quickly and efficiently.
- If no immediate numeric advantage exists, pass the ball to a player who has moved directly behind the goal. In some cases, numeric advantages develop slowly, and a team may have a number advantage that arrives late. This is called a “slow” break. See the reference section of the Level 1 online course for a more detailed explanation.

IDEA

Introduce: Explain the importance of the transition offense.

Demonstrate: Show the proper form of transition offense.

Explain: Explain the process.

(NOW HAVE THE GROUP DO A DRILL – YOUR PICK)

Attend: Explain error detection and correction.





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Transition Defense Field Cheat Sheet

Overview

Help your players understand what to do in a situation when the offense has the advantage numerically in a transition down the field.

Skill Description

6 general rules for players:

- If the offensive team is on a fast break, a defender's objective is to stall for time (thereby slowing the break down) and try to cover 1 or multiple offensive players while his teammates recover to help him. The first rule is to get back in the hole (the area in front of the goal; similar to the basketball concept of getting back in the paint).
- The defender guarding the ball carrier maintains proper defensive position – he stands with his back to the goal and with an “open” stance (one foot pointing to the player with the ball and the other foot pointing to the player without the ball). This creates a triangle with the defender-ball-other offensive player.
- Defenders require good, quick footwork so that they can force the offense to make several passes, allowing time for teammates to recover and help play defense.
- If necessary, defenders give up an outside shot or a shot from a poor angle, instead of a close, in-tight shot on goal.
- If attacking players achieve a numeric advantage close to the goal, it is the defense's primary task to protect the goal by forming a tight triangle in front of the crease and forcing the offense to pass the ball or to take poor shots.
- Players trailing the fast break run back to the hole rather than directly to the ball carrier on the fast break. When they are in the hole, they pick up the open player who is most dangerous.

IDEA

Introduce: Explain the importance of the transition defense.

Demonstrate: Show the proper form of transition defense.

Explain: Explain the process.

(NOW HAVE THE GROUP DO A DRILL – YOUR PICK)

Attend: Explain error detection and correction.





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Settled Offense Field Cheat Sheet

Overview

Settled offense is players using set offensive plays or “formations” that incorporate basic offensive principles to create scoring opportunities around the goal area.

Players need to recognize that, if they are not able to exploit a numeric advantage, they must slow down the play and settle into a formation.

We use the 1-2-3 as our sample offense for teaching!

Skill Description

General 1-3-2 Offense Objectives:

- Simple offense that creates spacing for players as they move to their spots on the 2 separate triangles.
- The player with the ball dodges and continues that dodge until either he has beaten his defender in the direction he is headed or he has carried the ball to the next area of the triangle. When he gets to that area, he passes the ball to either of the adjacent players next to him.
- A simple rule is when a player makes a move to the goal, he continues that move in that direction, 1) running hard to beat his defender or 2) getting to the next area so he can pass the ball to the spot adjacent and ahead of him or curl to the outside and throw the ball back to the man moving to the spot that he just vacated.
- A player with the ball does not want to change directions back and forth trying to beat his defender, since the other 5 players must hold their place until he eventually completes his dodge and drives toward the next adjacent area.

Key Concepts for Execution:

- This is a simple offense to run and allows players to dodge and clear through, which makes it difficult for the defense to slide effectively.
- If a player dodges from up top or from directly behind the goal, the triangles should rotate clearing through and creating space for the dodger.

IDEA

Introduce: Explain the importance of the settled offense.

Demonstrate: Show the proper form of settled offense.

Explain: Explain the process.

(NOW HAVE THE GROUP DO A DRILL – YOUR PICK)

Attend: Explain error detection and correction.





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Settled Defense Field Cheat Sheet

Overview

Good team defense is based on how individual players, with direction from the goalie, support each other to prevent the opposing team from scoring. There are multiple options for playing man-to-man and zone defense. Settled Defense introduces general defensive concepts to use at all times on defense and for one man-to-man defensive option.

Skill Description

Review the following areas:

1. Basic man-to-man positioning
2. Slides (open/adjacent or hot/crease)
3. Positioning on your man and away from ball
4. Positioning on X man
5. General themes of the defense

IDEA

Introduce: Explain the importance of the settled defense.

Demonstrate: Show the proper form of settled defense.

Explain: Explain the process.

(NOW HAVE THE GROUP DO A DRILL – YOUR PICK)

Attend: Explain error detection and correction.





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EMO Field Cheat Sheet

Overview

Extra-man offense or EMO situations occur when the defense receives a penalty and one or more defenders must leave the field to serve that penalty. The offense has an advantage in numbers while the penalty is being served. EMOs are similar to power plays in hockey.

Depending on the number of penalties, there is usually at least 1 more offensive player than defensive players.

Please refer to your rule book for penalties that result in EMO situations.

Skill Description

- The offensive EMO formation can be designed to allow offensive players to cut in such a way that it forces the splitter to pick up the cutter, thus freeing an offensive player to receive the ball.
- Many EMO plays are just that – plays designed to isolate one particular player (best shooter) to receive the ball in a particular area for a shot.
- Other EMO plays are designed to allow the offense to freelance and move the ball quickly, to exploit the defense by moving the ball faster than the defense can shift, therefore giving a player a shot with limited to no defensive pressure.
- Freelance plays are best executed with 6 experienced players who have learned and mastered basic individual and team skills.
- Many experienced defensive teams key in on the EMO formation that the offense shows first; thus, extra-man plays with experienced players often also shift from one formation to another, making it difficult for the defense to react and read.
- Extra-man offenses must be used against defenses that rotate, hold their specific area (which an EMO play/player must draw the defense to rotate) or aim to shut off or deny an area.

IDEA

Introduce: Explain the importance of the EMO.

Demonstrate: Show the proper form of EMO.

Explain: Explain the process.

(NOW HAVE THE GROUP DO A DRILL – YOUR PICK)

Attend: Explain error detection and correction.





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Man Down Defense (MDD) Field Cheat Sheet

Overview

There are numerous man down defense systems to run against extra-man offenses. The simplest man down defensive system incorporates aspects of the defensive system used when a team is at full strength. The best man down defense for young and or less experience players is a 4-man rotation. The slide scheme is similar to perimeter slide scheme used in all even defenses.

Skill Description

Key concepts for the 4-man rotation:

- This formation uses the same concepts as in transition and team defense.
- Defenders should always slide so that the least dangerous player (the player farthest away from the ball) is left open.
- The defensive player farthest from the ball should be the one to “split” or cover 2 players. If either of those 2 players cuts to the ball, that defender goes with the cutter, leaving the player farthest from the ball open. The defender who goes with the cutter is still splitting 2 players: the man on the crease and the man farthest from the ball.
- As the ball rotates around the perimeter, the responsibility for splitting the 2 least dangerous offensive players changes.
- This is similar to the sliding system used in settled team defense where the man either adjacent or closest to the ball slides to cover the player with the ball. It is also similar to transition defense when there are 3-vs.-2, 4-vs.-3, or 5-vs.-4 situations.

IDEA

Introduce: Explain the importance of the MDD.

Demonstrate: Show the proper form of MDD.

Explain: Explain the process.

(NOW HAVE THE GROUP DO A DRILL – YOUR PICK)

Attend: Explain error detection and correction.

