



US LACROSSE COACHING EDUCATION PROGRAM

Ground Balls in Boys Lacrosse

Ground balls are crucial in lacrosse, and the ability to secure a loose ball off the ground should be a primary focus for your Level 1 program.

More simply, it is called “scooping.”

The goal is to teach your player the proper way to approach, scoop and come off a ground ball to maximize possession, create scoring opportunities and limit the amount of time spent playing defense.

The 3 most important elements of scooping are:

- Body positioning
- Communication among teammates
- Releasing into a cradle

Teaching the Skill: Scooping

Your player approaches a ground ball with his body between the ball and his opponent.

Instruct him to “box out” an opponent in close proximity.

When your player gets within a stick’s length of the ground ball, he gets behind it with his knees; hands and back are bent low to the ground.

As he lowers his stick to scoop, his body and leg are behind it, protecting the butt end of the stick from potential trail checks.

Addressing the ball, your player brings both his top and bottom hand low enough to the ground to allow the ball to roll into his stick as part of his forward motion.

To overemphasize this point, his knuckles should graze the grass between his feet and the ball.

When the ball rolls into the pocket, your player immediately brings the stick up to his face into a cradle.

He sprints 3 steps away from his opponent and “fish hooks” away from stick side to maximize ball protection.





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As these functions are performed simultaneously, communicate among teammates: namely “ball,” “man” and “release.”

The player approaching the ground ball should yell, “I’ve got ball” or “ball” to alert his teammates he is going to scoop the ball.

Other teammates within 5 yards should screen or block out potential opponents and yell, “I’ve got man,” or “man,” keeping both hands on their stick as they do so.

When the scooper has possession, he yells “release” so teammates who were screening or blocking out opponents will break off of them and look for a pass.

This prevents an interference violation and may also create a numbers advantage.

Error Detection and Correction

Error:

The ball is pushed forward instead of being scooped.

Correction:

The player’s back (bottom) hand is too high.

He’s either not getting low enough with it, or he’s coming up too fast.

Tell him to crouch and get his bottom hand low enough to graze the grass, and to leave it down there until the ball is secure in his pocket.

Error:

The stick gets checked or is left vulnerable to a check.

Correction:

The player is not bringing his stick head to his helmet in time.

When he scoops the ball, he must go into max-protect mode – immediately bringing his stick head to his helmet and cradling to protect it.





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Error:

Players crowd around the ground ball.

Correction:

This is common for beginners.

Reinforce the elements of communication: “ball,” “man,” and “release.”

Make sure they know their roles, and explain the reasoning behind them.

