



# US LACROSSE COACHING EDUCATION PROGRAM

## Checking in Boys Lacrosse

Checking should be the last element of defense that is taught.

Proper body positioning and footwork come first, then holds, and finally checking.

Checks come in different forms, which we will detail here.

There are stick checks and body checks.

The primary goal of a check is to reduce an offensive player's stick-handling ability.

The secondary goal is to dislodge the ball.

For now, teach these checks with a short stick, so you can keep emphasizing the importance of positioning and footwork in setting the framework.

Then, in Level 2, advance to long poles. This allows a defender more reaction time and space.

### Teaching the Skill: Checking

For any stick check, the player should:

- check with the greatest surface area of his stick head
- keep his stick upfield on the same side of the opponent's stick
- check the opponent's lower hand when he has two hands on his stick
- keep his body and stick in proper, ready position
- maintain his footwork with feet shoulder-width apart
- keep the stick 4 to 6 inches from his opponent's stick to maintain control but still exert a forceful check

### Teaching the Skill: Poke Check

The poke check is the most fundamental stick check in the game.

Think of a pool player shooting a pool cue when teaching the poke check – the bottom hand is stationary; the top hand pushes the stick as it slides through the bottom hand.





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As the defender moves with his opponent, he should keep his feet parallel to each other and square to the opponent.

His pokes should be succinct and repetitive, targeting the opponent's bottom hand if he's driving two-handed, or the exposed part of the shaft if he's protecting one-handed.

## **Teaching the Skill: Slap Check**

A slap check is more forceful and calculated than a poke check.

Both hands remain stationary on the stick, with the defender using a quick chopping motion on the opponent's stick or glove.

Whereas pokes normally are executed directly in front of the body, the slap check comes down on an angle, starting 4 to 6 inches away from the opponent's stick or glove.

Any check thrown beyond this distance constitutes a slash, which warrants a penalty.

Emphasize control to your young player – no one likes a hacker.

Slap checks are most successful when issued in succession.

## **Teaching the Skill: Check on Crease Player or Cutter**

The crease is a high-percentage area for the offense and the destination of most feeds.

A good defenseman enforces the crease closely.

When guarding a player near the crease or a cutter receiving a feed on the crease, the defender should try to check down or push the top hand of the offensive player.

He should keep his stick perpendicular to the ground as he drives the opponent's stick downward, and then follow through with his shoulder as he pushes his man away from the crease.





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## Teaching the Skill: Body Check

Within legal limits, the body check can be one of the most exciting aspects of lacrosse.

A body check is most useful on the crease and in loose-ball situations.

Holds and stick checks are higher percentage, but a body check allows the defender to enforce his field position.

First and foremost, teach your defender never to lead with his head.

Not only is it dangerous, but also it compromises his balance.

As with any check, make sure your defender's feet are set shoulder-width apart, his knees are bent and his shoulders are square to the opponent.

To avoid a high check and to gain leverage, tell the defender to bend his knees and drop his shoulders as he makes contact with his opponent.

His stick should be perpendicular to the ground.

Then, he can drive himself in the direction he wants, with power generated from his legs.

The defender has the best chance of dislodging the ball if he follows through with his hands.

When he makes contact, his hands should be close together on the stick: no more than 4 to 6 inches apart. Anything more constitutes a crosse check.

A crosse check is an illegal, two-handed maneuver in which the checker makes contact with his opponent's body with the exposed part of the shaft between his two hands.

Your player should have his hands close enough together so that only his gloves make contact with the opponent on a body check.

