



US LACROSSE COACHING EDUCATION PROGRAM

Clearing Resource

Clear off a faceoff toward the defensive end

When the face-off midfielder pulls the ball between his legs toward the defensive end and gains possession, he has 3 options:

- Option A: He can scan the field for a quick clear and pass the ball to the goalie, who has stepped out of the cage to receive the ball.
- Option B: He can pass to a defender on the wing breaking out toward the sidelines, who then looks immediately up the field for a pass; or he can pass the ball to the goalie, who can use all 10 seconds to make a good clear.
- Option C: The goalie can also look to push the ball up quickly with the long stick. The face-off midfielder remains on the field either for a fast break, or more likely, a slow break.
- Communication with the wing midfielder and face-off midfielders begins with the goalie. He must tell the face-off midfielder to “go back” (pass back to goalie) or to turn “up” the field for the breaking midfielder or defensive wing.

Clearing after a quick restart of the game

Restarting the game means officials have paused the game because the offensive team has lost the ball either on a change-of-possession penalty or because a shot has gone over the end line and the defensive team is closest to where the ball went out of bounds. In these situations, the defensive team is immediately awarded possession without a horn, and the whistle is blown within 5 seconds. The player with the ball then has 2 options:

- Option A: He can attempt to push the ball up the field as quickly as possible to his offensive end, without any substitutions.
- Option B: He can redirect the ball back to the defensive end to allow for necessary substitutions. In this situation, the player with the ball must read whether his opponents will also substitute “on the fly” with his teammates or if his opponents will immediately begin a pressure ride. If the opposing team immediately begins a pressure ride, the player with the ball communicates that a pressure ride is occurring; and all players on the field break back toward the ball to assist in the transition.





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Regardless of which option the player with the ball chooses:

- A midfielder should be near the ball carrier to serve as a quick outlet pass, should the player with the ball receive pressure from a defender.
- Players from the clearing team should be ready by the substitution box for a quick exchange of clearing players coming off the field. When a defender steps off, a short-stick midfielder should step on to clear with 2 defensemen, 1 goalie, and 4 midfielders. This midfielder can be a quick outlet while the other midfielders cut to help clear the ball.
- At whichever side of the field the ball is cleared, the midfielder in the opposite corner on the restraining line is responsible for staying onside – i.e., he stays back so that only 4 players (3 field players and the goalie) are on the defensive side of the field.
- If a defenseman begins the clear and brings the ball over to the offensive end, the midfielder on that side of the field still “spreads the field” by keeping distance between himself and the defender with the ball. One of the midfielders in the middle of the field now must stay onside so the defender can continue to carry the ball over to the offensive end and to make sure offside is not called.

Tip: Use a chalkboard and walk through clearing situations to help players recognize and understand where and when a 2-on-1 exists in clearing situations. Stopping play in the middle of practice to show where the 2-on-1 develops is also encouraged.

3-4 Clear

The easiest formation for most teams to use on a settled clear is a 3-4 clear.

- This consists of 3 defensive players (the goalie and 2 long-stick defensemen on either side of the goal) deep in the defensive end.
- Also, 4 players are across the midfield line. The long-stick defenseman, who is part of the 4 players across the midfield line, can be in the corner near the substitution box. This allows the defenseman to slip off the field, and a short-stick midfielder who is perhaps more skilled at clearing to come onto the field. (The defender who came off the field should remain in the substitution box so that once the ball is cleared and settled in the offensive end, the midfielder can come off and the defenseman can go back to his defensive end.)





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- The 2 midfielders in the middle of the field, near the midfield line, set up in a stack where one is at the face-off “X” and the other is 5 yards behind him on the offensive side of the field.
- If pressure is being given to the 2 down-low defenders and the goalie down low, these 2 midfielders move up closer to the ball while maintaining an overload in the middle of the field. This is where the 2-on-1 advantage is for the clearing team.
- The 3 attackmen at the offensive end of the field should be positioned so that one is on the restraining line in the middle of the field and the other 2 are in opposite corners deep in the offensive box area.
- The ball may start low, on the side with one of the long-stick defenders, or in the middle with the goalie.
- Whoever starts with the ball should look for the open player and move the ball up the field quickly to the attackmen waiting in the offensive end.

Man Down Clear

A man down clear occurs when the man down defense team gains possession of the ball with penalty time remaining.

- The short-stick extra man defender picks up the ball to start the play.
- Three long-stick defensemen line up and spread out 15 yards apart on the sideline opposite the midfielder with the ball.
- The fourth defenseman is at the face-off “X.” This should be a second short-stick man down defender who is accustomed to playing man down defense. (In case the short-stick man down defender gets caught on the defensive end, there will be 3 long sticks and 2 short sticks; the 2 short sticks will be used to man down defense.)
- One defenseman cuts over to the offensive end (either at the face-off “X” or opposite corner) while the 2nd short-stick man down defender at the face-off “X” cuts to the ball. There now should be 2 short-stick midfielders helping each other clear the ball.
- Once the ball is over the restraining line, the defenseman on the offensive side steps back over on the defensive end, releasing one of the short-stick midfielders to go over, after the ball is over the restraining line.

