

Basic Defensive Strategy for Boys Lacrosse

Individual Defense:

1. Control what the offensive player can do with the ball.
2. Force the player to use his weak hand.
3. Force the player to the outside and behind the net. In other words, keep them away from high scoring places.
4. Force the player's moves to be lateral and away from the net.
5. "Breakdown" i.e., knees bent, hips forward, weight distributed on the balls of the feet, head up, stick out in front on defense.
6. When you are in the breakdown position, stay low; look to poke check. Do not step towards the man when you poke check. Do not cross your feet over!
7. As the offensive player breaks into a run, you must stay hip to hip with him. Keep your eyes on his chest, not on his feet or head. Try to cut down his angle to the net.
8. If a player is rolling back or trying to back you in, place firm pressure in the small of their back. Do not lean on them, but keep good balance!
9. When laying a body check, keep your stick and hands in tight to your body. Lead only with your shoulder.
10. When playing a man without the ball, be in a sloughed position that enables you to see both the man and the ball. Put your stick up in the passing lanes to discourage cross-field passes.
11. As the ball is passed to your man, move out quickly to play him. You should arrive just as he catches the ball. Arrive under control and breakdown with your stick out in front of you.
12. When playing a man on the crease, play between your man and the ball. Keep your stick upright so that you can check down if a pass is made.
13. Keep your head "on a swivel." See the man and see the ball.

“Team” Defense:

1. PURE HUSTLE!
2. All great teams play great defense and have great communication.
3. All seven defenders must have ownership of the defense. Defense is not a series of one-on-one confrontations.
4. Defensive pressure on the ball should be highlighted by great footwork and crisp stick checks. Defense is a healthy blend of body and stick. When in doubt, poke check!
5. Defenders adjacent to the ball must talk and anticipate back up and slide situations.
6. Defensive slides should be well timed and executed from the inside -> out. That is, picking up the opponents nearest the goal first, then those on the perimeter of the field. Never slide half way. Either go 100% or not at all. The entire defense needs to slide, so all should go or none should go.
7. The farther removed your man is from the ball, the more you should be sagged in to help your teammates in the crease.
8. Adjust your approach when playing defense on the crease; tighten up, talk, listen for “check” call from the goalie. Stay between your man and the ball. Never lose your player in the crease.
9. Avoid switching defensive match-ups. Try to fight through or slide under picks.
- 10. COMMUNICATION! The field should be alive with talk on the defensive end of the field.**