

CREATIVE INCLUSIVE COACHING

Lacrosse Is A Game For All,
including individuals with intellectual,
developmental, physical disabilities or any diversity.

SUPPORT AND STRATEGIES TO HELP EVERY PLAYER ACHIEVE THEIR FULL POTENTIAL

WHAT does Inclusion mean for your Lacrosse Team (and why this is important for you the coach)

Inclusion is:

1. the intentional work we do to ensure that all players are welcomed and supported to be successful members of the team .
2. ensuring that all players are respected and appreciated as valuable members of the team.
3. successful when everyone involved; coaches, volunteers, parents and players work together to create an inclusive environment that allows the success for all players.
4. committing to educating and equipping coaches with the tools needed to provide the support for persons with diverse abilities to reach their fullest potential alongside their typical peers.

WHY is Inclusion important for our communities and teams?

Benefits to using inclusion practices:

1. improves community awareness and meets a civic need by providing the opportunity for ALL to belong, participate, make friends and benefit from being part of a team.
2. players with diverse abilities learn appropriate social and team participation skills which will help them have greater success in more aspects of their lives.
3. having training and development opportunities for coaches leads to high quality programming; all involved learn a new skill set which may be beneficial in work, school, and personal situation.
4. by tapping into this underserved population, you increase participation and the number of players for your team and league.



For more information or guidance on how to ensure that

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How Do We Make Inclusion Work?

TOP TEN Strategies for coaches to adapt their team practice that support players with diverse abilities and build an inclusive team culture.

1. **FACILITATE SOCIAL INTERACTIONS:** Get to know your players likes and interests and use that to facilitate connections between players. Partner up players with buddies to ensure no one is left out.
2. **FLEXIBLE THINKING:** Think outside the box and be less rigid with responses. Offer choices to help players feel more in control “would you rather ___ or ___?”
3. **SENSORY NEEDS:** Be aware that some players experience the world and stimuli around them differently than others (i.e. for noise, light, touch) Be proactive to avoid or lessen stressful sensory situations.
4. **MODIFICATIONS:** Make reasonable accommodations. Can the way someone participates be adjusted to ensure inclusion? Focus on someone’s strengths – if good at organizing have them help set up for a drill.
5. **POSITIVE SUPPORTING TECHNIQUES:** When giving direction focus on what you would like to see rather than pointing out what a player is doing “wrong”. Say “great job listening” Instead of “stop making noises ”.
6. **USE A VISUAL SCHEDULE:** People learn in different ways (visual, auditory, experiential or hands on). Make a list of practice components using pictures or icons to spells out what is coming next *see sample schedule
7. **CREATE AN EXPECTATION LIST:** “Rules” created and agreed upon with the group at the start of each practice/ game. Allow for processing time, have them repeat back each listed expectation. *see sample list
8. **TRANSITION COUNTDOWN:** A strategy that gives players a visual of the passing of time allowing them to get ready for the next activity. Having players involved helps them to learn to manage their time. *see sample too
9. **CLEAR DIRECTIONS:** Make sure to give directions with one or two steps at a time. Use “first-then” language - for example: “first cradle the ball to the cone, then shoot on the net”.
10. **PREVENTATIVE TOOLS FOR ALL:** These strategies are intended to be preventative in ensuring success for ALL players not just those with diverse abilities. Make sure not to isolate those needing inclusion supports.

These preventative strategies provide you as the coach the tools needed to build a more inclusive team culture. They are intended to help your focus to be on “How can we include” as opposed to “we can’t”.

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