

## Objectives of a U9 thru U11 Lacrosse Practice

- **Safety**- At all times this should be our number one concern. The players must understand the importance of every piece of equipment, as well as always wear the required equipment. No players should be involved in a lacrosse activity without proper equipment (*for boys: a helmet, mouth guard, shoulder pads, arm pads, gloves, and protective cup*) and (*for Girls: mouth guard and protective goggles*). All activities should be supervised by a board designated coach that has had a criminal history and child abuse check performed and on file with the board.
- **Fun** – This age group should be focusing on helping kids to develop a love for the game. It should never seem like work to them. There are multitudes of games that can be played, that will both aid in the players development, as well as their personal satisfaction. Keep things new for the players. Doing the same stick drills every practice will result in boredom. Also, keep a quick pace on the drills 10-15 minutes at the most for any one drill. Provide a 2-3 minute drink break between drill to give the kids some time to rest as well as bond. Ask you parents to volunteer to have a pre-season, mid-season, and post season party for the kids. It does not have to be anything fancy or expensive. Just a place where the kids can get together, have a good time and not worry about the pressures of lacrosse.
- **Positive Environment** – Players should constantly be praised for any and every successes they achieve. For example, every goal should be congratulated by the coach with a handshake and “nice shot.” Even if it was not the ideal shot you want the player to take. There should never be any negativity, unless it is in direct response to a measure requiring player discipline. Any displays of sportsmanship should be positively reinforced. Bottom Line; let the kids know everything they are doing right and you will more often than not see them doing everything right. If you focus on the negative, than the kids will also dwell on the negative. This only leads to more failures. “Enthusiasm breeds enthusiasm”
- **Sportsmanship**- At no point should winning or losing ruin the traditions of the game. The game of lacrosse was built on traditions and beliefs of the Native American people. US Lacrosse uses an acronym to carry a similar message to all of its’ members. **R.O.O.T.S.**

## Respect for the...

<b>R</b> ules	<b>O</b> pponents	<b>O</b> fficials	<b>T</b> eam	<b>S</b> elf
“We refuse to bend the rules to win.”	“A worthy opponent is a gift that brings our our best.”	“We act with respect even when we disagree.”	“Our conduct does not embarrass ourselves or our teammates	“We live up to our own standards, even when others don’t.”

## Objectives of a U9 thru U11 Lacrosse Practice

- **Participation** – At this age group, the players should be participating at every practice and game. Again, you should focus on getting kids to truly love the game. If they do not play, how could they ever know what it is all about? Playing time should be divided as equally as possible between all players. Kids should be encouraged to try all positions in practice and if they are comfortable in games too. This is not a win at all costs age. The kids will not feel good about winning if they sat for the majority of the game and watched the “better” players play. A team of kids that all contributed equally but lost will be a much happier group than a team of kids that won but only 10 kids played. You will find that your team will also be more successful as more players gain valuable field experience.
  - **Skill Development**- In order for your HS program to ultimately be successful, you need to start developing good fundamental skills right from the very start. Some drills will work on more than one skill. This is a big plus when planning your practices for the most effective use of time. Communication between the players is imperative throughout the drills. All players should use the first name of their teammate when calling for the ball, helping on defense, etc...
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## Game Planning

- **Game Scheduling** – One of the best ways to keep kids involved is to have them play games. At this age, the kids are often involved in numerous activities. Therefore, one or two games a week typically on Wednesdays and Saturdays is the best practice. More than that and the kids may become fatigued or lose fundamental skills. Also, try and schedule teams that you know you can be competitive with. It is never fun to be on the losing end of a blowout game for either team involved.
  - **Blowout Games** - If you find yourself in this situation, remember is it worth running all of your best players into the ground to try and catch up? Make sure all of the kids get in. Let them try different positions and see how they do. It is a great time to teach them about overcoming adversity and playing their hardest no matter the situation. On the same token, if you are winning in this type of game, “call off the dogs.” Try not to be patronizing to your opponents, but rather work with them. Many other youth coaches would be open to discussion about how to handle this situation given the individual game circumstances. Just remember “It’s not all about winning!”
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