



# Trampoline<sup>®</sup>

A LACROSSE PROGRAM FOR YOUNG ATHLETES

# Let's Learn!

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# F.A.Q.

## **What kind of equipment will I need for this age group?**

Each child will need a lacrosse stick and a ball. Youth sticks called “fiddlesticks” are an affordable and size appropriate version of the real thing. Some companies also make a “soft stick” which features a molded plastic net rather than the traditional mesh pocket. These sticks make holding the ball in the pocket easier, but are more expensive and provide less of an authentic lacrosse stick feel. Tennis balls are a good size and weight for youth drills and are far less dangerous than heavy lacrosse balls. Goals can be used but are not necessary as cones work well as guidelines, boundary lines, and goal markers. Children should wear tennis shoes and appropriate clothing for outdoor play. Helmets, padding, and mouth guards are necessary only if your players are playing with a real lacrosse ball.

## **Where can I find the equipment we'll need?**

Your local sporting goods store or an online sporting goods store should have everything you need, but Trampoline™ can help you gather any supplies you should want.

## **What kinds of drills or skill builders can preschoolers handle?**

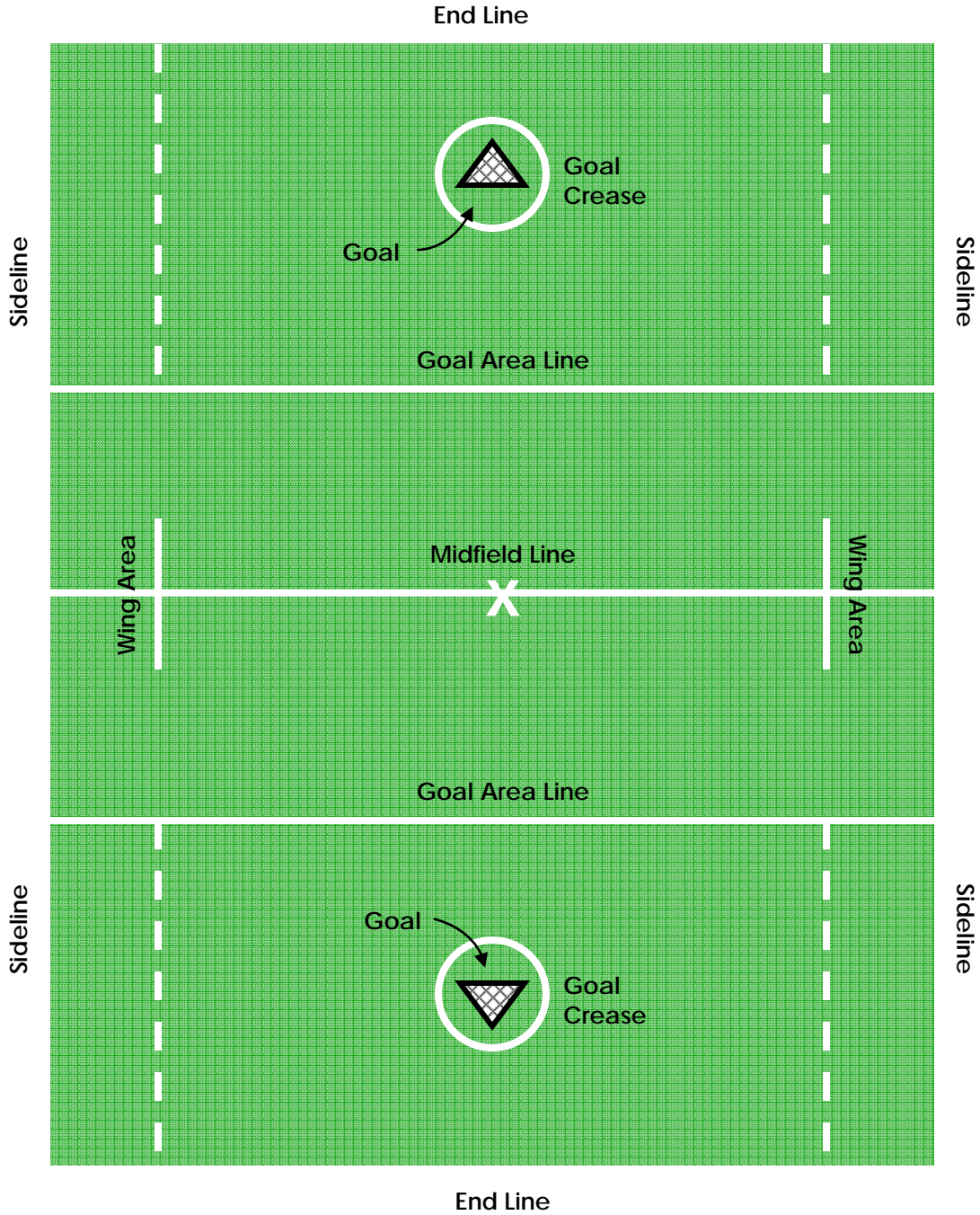
While young children of preschool age are not developmentally ready to play an official game of lacrosse, they can begin to build the skills that will eventually be instrumental in game play. These skills include physical skills like balance, coordination, ball control, and stamina; as well as the ability to follow directions, to stay focused, and to be a good team player. While your Trampoline™ Competitor program offers you plenty of age appropriate drills, we encourage you to use your imagination too. Think of a game that children like to play in their classroom. Is there a way that you can play the same game while incorporating cradling a lacrosse ball? Then by all means play it! Children love familiarity and repetition. You'll be giving them a chance to play a game they already know and love while providing an opportunity to hone their lacrosse skills.

## **Any suggestions for new coaches or teachers of soccer?**

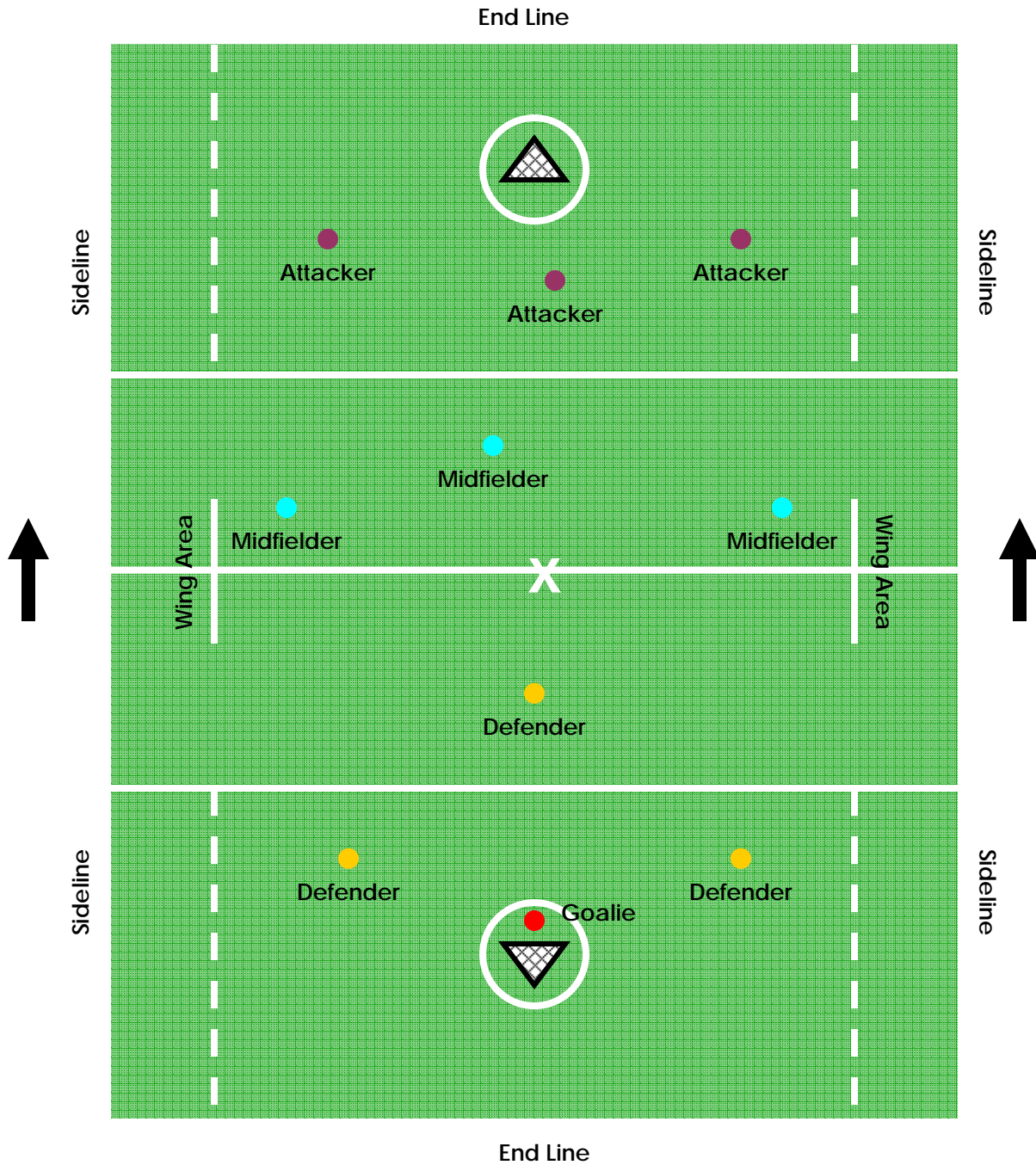
- Familiarize yourself with the rules and objectives of the game.
- Try some of the skills you'll be teaching your players before you try to teach them. Go outside and cradle a lacrosse ball. Try catching, passing, and shooting.

- Make sure every child has her own ball and stick.
- Know the developmental stage of your age group.
- Preschoolers learn best by doing, so give them plenty of time to play.
- Keep rules of games clear and simple.
- When you play a new game or try a new drill, play it first without the ball.
- Keep activities short and varied to maintain the attention of your students.
- Revisit, review and repeat. Practicing skills over and over again will lead to retention and mastery.
- Listen to your players. Do they love a particular game or drill? Play it often, using the opportunity to teach and refine specific skills in the context of the game.
- Be prepared and organized.
- Be patient.
- Be enthusiastic.

# Lacrosse Field of Play



# Lacrosse Player Positions



# Let's Learn!

## Object of the Game

Lacrosse is a game that originated long ago with Native American Indians. Every player has a stick with a net at the top of it. The players on two teams compete to move a rubber ball down the field to the other team's goal by throwing and catching a ball in the net of their stick. Only the stick can be used to catch, throw, and shoot the ball.

Each team consists of ten players – one *goalkeeper*, three *defenders*, three *midfielders* and three *attackers*. Any of these players may score a goal and all of the players work to defend their goal against shots by the opposing team. Every time a player scores a goal by shooting the ball into the other team's goal, he earns a point for his team. At the end of the game, consisting of four ten to 15-minute quarters, the team with the most points wins.

## Basic Rules of the Game

*While preschool age children will probably never actually play an official 10 v 10 game of lacrosse until they are much older, you can begin to familiarize them with some of the most basic rules of play and related vocabulary.*

- The field must be rectangular.
- Each team's goal must be equidistant from the center line of the field.
- Each team must consist of 10 players – one of whom is the goalkeeper.
- A coin toss determines on which side of the field each team will play. The team that wins the coin toss gets to choose which goal on which they will try to score.
- The game starts with a "face-off" at the **X** spot at midfield where two players (one from each team) attempt to push the ball placed on the ground by the official to a player on their team. The team then begins moving in the direction of the goal on which they will be trying to score.
- The ball is "in play" and the game is on, when the ball is moving within the boundaries (*sidelines* or *goal lines/end lines*) of the field. The ball is "out of play" when it crosses over a boundary line or when the coach, referee, or teacher stops the game.
- A goal is scored when the ball crosses over the opponent's goal line.

# Youth Lacrosse Terms

The following is an extensive list of youth lacrosse terms. While you may never have the need to present many of them, actually terminology should be taught when relevant.

**Attackers** – the three offensive players positioned in the area near the other team’s goal. These players are the main goal scorers for their team.

**Clear** – to pass the ball away from your goal.

**Cleats** – special shoes with rubber spikes on the soles that are worn in lacrosse games to help the players’ feet from sliding on the field.

**Cradling** – the back and forth motion of the stick needed to keep the ball from falling out of the net while running with it.

**Crease** - the circle surrounding each team’s goal.

**Crossbar** – the top bar of the goal.

**Defenders** – players whose job it is to keep their opponents from scoring on their goal. They are responsible for passing the ball to the *midfielders* on their team. These players are positioned closest to the goal around the *crease*, but in front of the *goalie*. In an official game of lacrosse, the defenders use longer sticks than the other players. These stick help them “poke check” the sticks of the ball carriers more easily, causing the ball carrier to drop the ball.

**Defense** – the players who do not have the ball and are attempting to keep goals from being scored.

**End Lines** - the field boundaries that run directly in front of the goals at either end of the field. Also called the *goal lines*.

**Field** – the rectangular area where lacrosse games are played.

**Foul** – when a player breaks the rules of the game. During a game, the referee will award the ball to the team that has been affected by their opponent’s foul.

**Goal** – the structure that consists of two goal posts, a crossbar and a net in

which the lacrosse ball is shot in order to score. Scoring a goal requires that the ball crosses the goal line and enters the goal below the crossbar.

**Goal Lines**– the field boundaries that run directly in front of the goals on either end of the playing field. Also called the *end lines*.

**Goalkeeper** – the player who stands directly in front of the goal, inside the goal crease, whose job it is to keep the ball from entering the goal. This is the only player who is allowed to touch the ball with his hands when inside the goal crease. He must throw and catch the ball, however, with his stick. The goalkeeper uses a special stick with a wider head to defend shots. Also called a *goalie*.

**Halftime** – the break in between the two halves of a lacrosse game.

**In bounds** – when the ball is within the boundaries (*sidelines* and *goal lines*) of the field.

**In play** – when the ball is within the boundaries of the field and the game has not been stopped by the coach or referee.

**Man-to-man** – positioning players so that the defending players on one team are paired with the offensive players on the other team. Each player is responsible for keeping his man from getting the ball.

**Midfielders** – the players who are positioned between the *attackers* and *defenders* on their team. They can play both offense and defense as needed. It is their job to receive passes from the *defenders* and pass the ball to the *attackers*. They can also take shots at the goal. Also called *Middies*.

**Offside** – a call made by the referee anytime he sees that a team that has fewer than four players on its defensive side of the field, or fewer than three players on its attacking side.

**Offense** – the players who have the ball and are attempting to score goals.

**Out of bounds** – when the ball is outside of the boundaries of the field (i.e. over the *sidelines* or *goal lines*.)

**Out of play** – when the ball is outside of the boundaries of the field (i.e. over the *sidelines* or *goal lines*) and/or the game is stopped by the coach or referee.

**Passing** – throwing the ball to a teammate.

# Essential Youth Lacrosse Skills

## Cradling

Cradling the lacrosse ball is the rocking motion necessary to keep the lacrosse ball in the pocket or net of the lacrosse stick while a player is running with the ball. It is the centrifugal force caused by the back and forth motion of the stick that holds the ball in the net. To better understand centrifugal force, imagine a bucket full of ping pong balls. Running with it will cause the balls to bounce out of the bucket. Rotate the arm in a full circle, however, quickly spinning the bucket upside down and the balls “magically” stay in. This is centrifugal force. true as a player runs with a ball cradling it in the pocket of his lacrosse stick. Without using the cradling motion, the ball will fall out of the pocket as the player moves quickly around the field. Proper cradling involves moving the stick in an arc from side to side, creating the centrifugal force necessary for holding the ball in the net.

To learn to cradle, the player must first position the stick correctly. To hold a stick properly, the player should orient the stick so that the inside of the pocket is facing inward. He should grip the stick so that the dominant hand is at the top of the stick a few inches from the spot where the head meets the pole. The other hand should be placed at the bottom or *butt* of the stick. The grip should be comfortable and elbows should be held away from the body. The legs should be bent slightly and the back should be straight.



The stick can be held and cradled both horizontally and vertically. When held horizontally, the hand at the butt of the stick should be level with the hip on the same side of the body. When held vertically, the stick should be positioned high enough so that the top hand is at shoulder-level and the bottom hand at waist height. This vertical position is called the *Triple Threat Position* because from this stance, a player is ready to cradle, catch, or throw.



The *horizontal cradle* is achieved by starting with the stick in the horizontal position and by bringing the dominant hand at the top of the stick upward to the shoulder. The wrist will naturally turn in slightly. The hand on the butt of the stick should remain mostly stationary rotating

upward at the wrist. This up and down motion of the stick is continued, creating a half circle with the head of the stick as it is cradled horizontally.

To complete the *vertical cradle*, the stick is held vertically on the same side as the dominant hand (right ear for right handers, left ear for left handers). If the player's right hand is at the top of the stick, the left arm will be crossed over the body so that the left hand is positioned by the right hip. The wrist of the top hand will be facing away from the player with the hand beside the right ear. The pocket of the stick is now facing outward toward the field. The stick is slowly pulled across the body to the left side as the wrists swing to the left. The top hand is now beside the left ear. Again, the hand at the butt of the stick remains mostly stationary with the wrist and forearm moving back and forth. This back and forth motion of the stick is continued, creating a half circle with the head of the stick as it is cradled vertically.

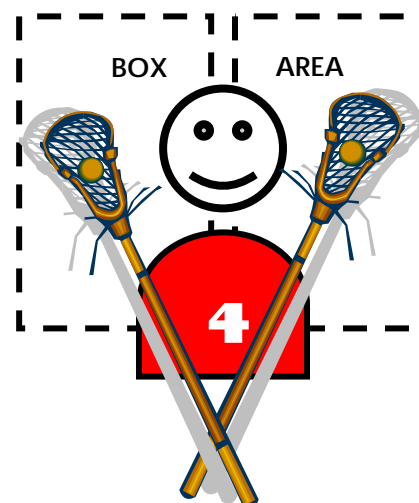


Encourage players to practice these back and forth motions over and over again until they become comfortable. Have them try running while cradling horizontally and vertically. Finally, have them add a ball to the pocket and practice cradling in place, then cradling while moving forward.

When learning to cradle, it is important to teach children to cradle with both their left and right hands. Switch the non-dominant hand to the top of the stick and the dominant hand to the butt of the stick. Provide plenty of opportunities to practice the above cradling techniques with the opposite hand as well. Cradling takes lots of practice, but work at it often and the skill will be mastered!

## Throwing / Passing

To throw or pass a lacrosse ball, a player should begin in the *Triple Threat Position* by holding the stick in the vertical position on the dominant side of the body with the dominant hand at the top of the stick by the ear – just as they would when cradling. The area around the head and shoulders where the stick is positioned is called the *Box Area*. This is where most successful throwing and catching is completed.



To prepare for the throw, the player should pull the bottom or *butt* of the stick outward in front of the hip. This will tilt the head of the stick backward behind the ear. The elbow of the top hand and the shoulder of the bottom hand should now be pointed at the target. Position the foot opposite the stick, forward slightly. Remind your players to stay focused on their target at all times.

When releasing the ball, the player should shift her weight from her back foot to her front foot. Continuing this forward motion, the player should quickly pull the butt of the stick back toward the hip, while pushing the head of the stick forward by extending the top arm. She should finish the throw by stopping the stick as the head of it is pointing directly at the target. This is called *follow through* and will ensure that the ball goes toward the target and not higher or lower. If a player follows through correctly, the stick should end up touching the underside of the forearm of the top hand. The bottom hand should touch the elbow of the top hand.



## Catching

Catching a ball is an acquired skill just like cradling and throwing. The first important step is being prepared to catch the ball by having the stick in the right position. Players should hold the stick vertically in the *Triple Threat Position* with the net facing outward, ready to receive the ball. The head of the stick will be near the ear on the side of the body where the top or dominant hand is and should be held outward slightly. The top hand can slide up to the top of the stick, where the head meets the pole, for maximum control of the stick. As soon as the ball is caught, the stick is pulled into the body as if it is being cradled.



Catching is difficult to master, but players will see results if plenty of opportunities for throwing and catching are consistently provided!

## Scooping

Plenty of balls travel along the ground in lacrosse as players use defensive techniques like *checking* to knock the ball out of their opponents' sticks. Being able to quickly scoop up a lacrosse ball from the ground is an essential skill in gaining the ball.

To properly scoop a lacrosse ball from the ground, a player must first slide the top hand up the stick to the "throat" where the head meets the pole. The bottom hand should be low on the butt of the stick. The stick should be rotated so that the pocket is facing upward toward the sky. The most important part of successfully scooping a ground ball is body position. The body (and therefore, the stick) must be as low to the ground as possible. A player should bend the legs and waist, and keep the head down. The ball should be just under the player's nose at the beginning of the scoop. The head of the lacrosse stick should be used like a shovel to get under the ball and lift it up off of the ground.



Practice scooping from a stationary position then try some scooping on the run!

# Let's Have Fun!

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# Let's Have Fun!

*As you build your lessons, be sure they contain the following components:*

1. Warming Up / Stretching
2. Skill Presentation or Review (i.e. "What skill are we practicing today?")
3. Drills & Games
4. Cool Down / Stretching
5. Rehydration / Refueling (Throughout your lesson as needed.)

## Warming Up & Stretching

### Push Ups

Instruct children to lie on their stomachs on the ground. They should put the palms of their hands flat on the ground at shoulder level, fingers spread. Tell them to keep the body stiff and tuck the toes under the feet. They should look ahead so that the chin is the part of the face closest to the ground. Instruct them to slowly push up until their arms are straight. They should pause for a second, and then slowly lower themselves to the ground again. Repeat ten times.



A fun way to get children to try more push-ups is by playing a game of "Categories" at the same time. While children are lying on their backs, name a category (e.g. Animals, Colors, Foods, Favorite Toy, etc.). As children come up, they must think of an item that fits into that category and shout it out at the top of their push-up (e.g. Bear, Red, Banana, Blocks, etc.).

### *HERE'S A BRIGHT IDEA...*



Choose a new "Team Captain" each week.  
The captain can help choose and lead warm up exercises.

## Sit Ups

Instruct children to lie on the ground on their backs. Have them bend their knees and place their feet flat on the ground. Their arms should be placed behind the head or crossed over the chest – each hand positioned on the opposite shoulder. Instruct them to slowly sit up by bringing their head and shoulders up to their knees while keeping their back straight. Once at the top of their sit up, they should slowly lower themselves back down to the ground. Repeat ten times.



A fun way to get children to try more sit-ups is by playing a game of “Categories” at the same time. While children are lying on their backs, name a category (e.g. Animals, Colors, Foods, etc.). As children come up, they must think of an item that fits into that category and shout it out at the top of the sit up (e.g. Bear, Red, Banana, etc.).

## Jumping Jacks

Have children spread out at least an arm’s length away from each other. Teach them how to do jumping jacks. Begin with arms down at the sides and feet together. Then jump, bringing arms together outstretched above the head and feet apart. Jump again, bringing the arms back down to the sides and feet together. Repeat ten times or complete jumping jacks while singing a song together.



## HERE'S A BRIGHT IDEA...



*"Desire is the most important factor in the success of any athlete."*

Willie Shoemaker (award winning jockey)

### Lunges

Teach your students how to lunge. Instruct them to stretch the right foot forward as far as they can. Bend the front leg with the thigh parallel to the ground so that it almost makes an L-shape. The front foot should be positioned directly under the knee. The back leg should be bent only slightly with the heel pressed to the ground. The torso should be straight. Come back up from the lunge to the standing position, then switch legs and lunge with the left leg forward, right leg back. Repeat five times on each side.

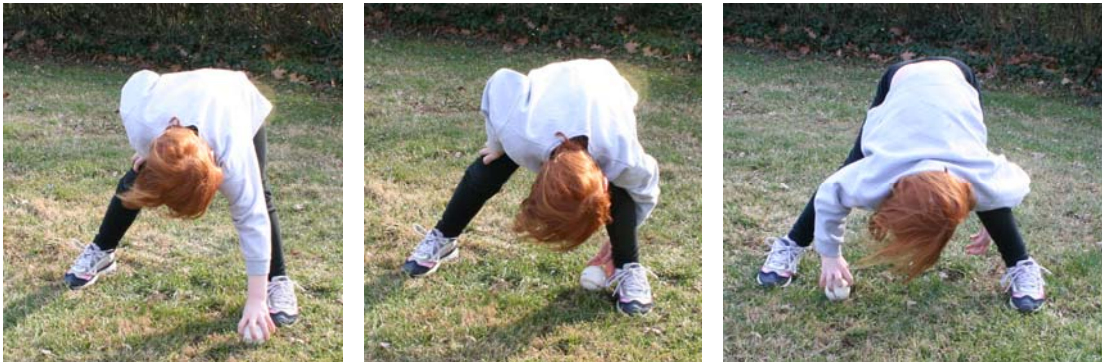


### Ankle Rotations

Children should sit on the ground, legs extended in front of them. Tell them to rotate their feet by bringing them up, out, and down. ("Pretend to draw circles in the air with your toes.") Count to ten as they rotate their feet. Then tell them to rotate toes the other direction. Count to ten again.



Instruct children to stand with their legs spread to the sides and place their basketball underneath of their bodies, midway between their legs. They should bend forward at the waist. Teach children to move the ball with their hands in



Once players have done this stretch a few times, have them change their legs by stretching one out to the front and one out to the back. Figure 8 the ball in and out of the legs again. Then, switch legs so that the opposite leg is in front. These three variations on the figure 8 stretch will stretch the muscles on the insides and backs of the legs.

## Seated Stretch

### Let's Get Ready!

- 1 ball per child

Children should sit on the ground with legs outstretched in front of them. Show them how to roll the ball on the ground down one side of the legs, around the feet, up the other side of the legs and behind the back. Repeat five or more times.



## Balance & Coordination Activities

*Many of these exercises can be used as part of your warm up routine.*

### Still As a Statue

Practice balancing by standing on one foot. Count to ten together, or sing a song or repeat a nursery rhyme. Try it again using the other foot.

### Simon Says With a Lacrosse Ball or Stick

#### Let's Get Ready!

- 1 ball or stick per child

Play Simon Says with your lacrosse equipment. Practice following directions, coordination, balance, stretching skills, and more with this game. Try directives like, "Simon says put your stick on the ground in front of you, hold your ball on your shoulder, touch your shoe with the stick, put the ball on your knee." For older groups and a greater challenge, give a combination of directives like, "Hold the ball on your head while you stand on one foot."

#### *HERE'S A BRIGHT IDEA...*



Be sure to use plenty of encouraging comments.  
Balance and coordination are tricky for young learners so using lots of positive language is essential in helping them retain their enthusiasm for the learning process.

## Tippy Toes

Line children shoulder to shoulder on the starting line. Have them run to the end line and back taking tiny steps on their tippy toes.

## Forward, Backward, Left & Right

### Let's Get Ready!

- 4 cones – 1 to mark each corner of a squared off play area (distance between cones should be approximately 20 yards x 20 yards)

Practice moving in all directions. Have children spread out - at least two arms' lengths apart - within a squared off play area. Tell them that they must listen to your instructions and run in direction you tell them. You can say "Forward", "Backward", "Left Side", or "Right Side". [As children are learning left and right, either place yourself on the side line that you wish them to run toward as you call out the direction or be sure to stand in front where they can see you and move in the direction you wish them to move.] Change directions frequently for more fun. When running, the feet and body should always remain pointed forward. A sideward run will be more like a side step or scissor slide.

## Lacrosse Stick Hop

### Let's Get Ready!

- 1 stick per child

Have children place their sticks on the ground horizontally in front of them. Have them hop back and forth over their sticks. Then, have them reposition their sticks so that they are now in front of them, vertically. Have them hop from side to side over their stick like a slalom.



## Cradling & Scooping Activities

Many of the drills in this section require a “grid” on which to play. A playing area that is 20 yards x 20 yards should be big enough. Mark the corners of your square with cones. If lines are not painted on your play area or field, show children how invisible lines are created by the four sides of the square between the cones by pacing them off together.

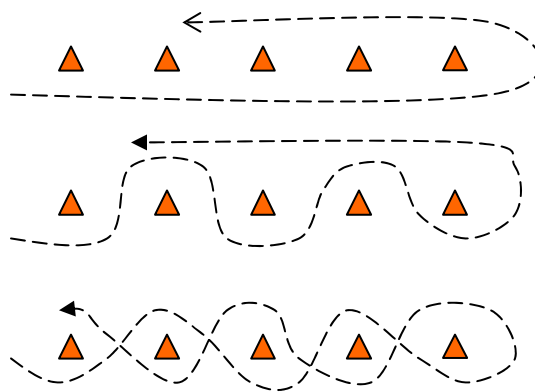
You may wish to practice many of these games *without the ball* first so that children can get the hang of the rules. These games played without a ball offer excellent ways to warm up before practicing specific skills.

### Cone Cradle

#### Let's Get Ready!

- ❑ 1 ball and 1 stick per child
- ❑ 6 or more cones

Set cones up in a straight line. Instruct players to jog around and through the cones while cradling. (See three options below.) Try it first without a ball using a horizontal cradle, then without a ball using a vertical cradle. Then, try both types of cradle with a ball. Once players have tried this drill using their dominant hand, have them switch the stick to the opposite hand and try them again.



## London Bridge Scoop

### Let's Get Ready!

- ❑ 1 ball
- ❑ 1 stick per child

Choose two children who will be “the bridge”. Have them position themselves face to face with about four feet or more between them. They should extend their lacrosse sticks out in front of themselves so that the two sticks touch and form “the bridge”. Place a ball under the bridge on the ground between the two children. Have each of the other children come forward, one at a time, and scoop up the ball under the bridge and return it to you. Remind children that they must stay low as they go under the bridge to scoop the ball. Sing “London Bridge is Falling Down” as you play if you like!

### *HERE'S A BRIGHT IDEA...*



Keep your explanations of skills simple and use plenty of imagery to help children grasp new concepts.

## Cradling Relay

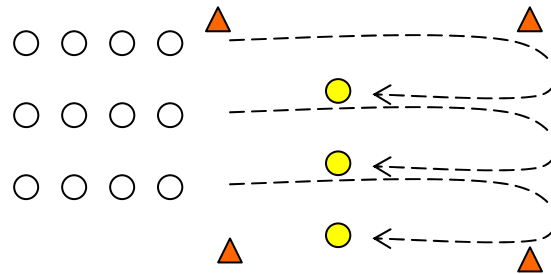
### Let's Get Ready!

- ❑ 1 ball and 1 stick per team
- ❑ 4 cones to set up in a rectangle or square marking the starting and end lines

Divide children in to two or more equal teams. Mark the starting line and end line with cones. Line teams up at the starting line. Provide the first player in each line with a stick and ball. At “go”, the first player on each team runs, cradling the ball, to the end line, turns around and cradles back. Once at the starting line, he passes the stick to the next player on his team and sits down at the end of his team’s line. The second player begins dribbling as soon as the stick is passed to her. Play continues until all players on all teams have had a chance to dribble the ball to the end line and back.

This game can be played competitively as well. The team who has all players cradle to the end and back first wins.

Play this game as you practice cradling horizontally and vertically with the left and right hands.



#### *Variations:*

- Practice scooping by playing the game as above, but having players start without a ball in their stick. Place a ball for each player midway on the field. Have them run to the ball, scoop it up, and cradle onward and back.
- This drill can later be used to practice passing as well. In this version, all players will need their own stick. Play as either version above, but when a player returns to the starting line at the end of her turn, she passes the ball to the next player in line who catches it and cradles onward.

## Musical Ground Balls

### Let's Get Ready!

- ❑ 1 ball and 1 stick per child
- ❑ 8 to 12 cones set up in a circle

Set up your cones in a large circle. Place one ball per child inside of the circle. Play music and have the children march around the outside of the circle of cones. Stop the music. When children hear the music stop they must run to the inside of the circle and scoop up a ball.

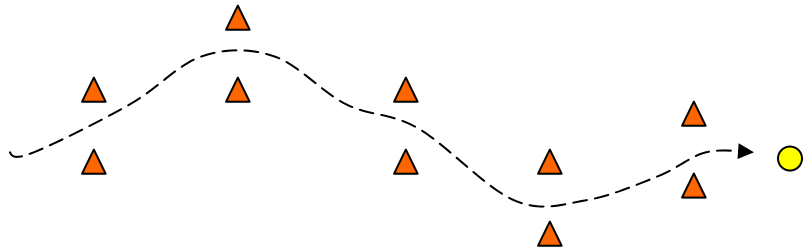
For competitive play, remove one ball each round so that the player who doesn't scoop a ball when the music stops during that round is eliminated. Let eliminated players assist with ball placement in subsequent rounds.

## Speedway Cradling

### Let's Get Ready!

- ❑ 1 ball and 1 stick per child
- ❑ 6 or more cones

Set up cones to mark a “speedway” by placing cones on the left and right sides of an imaginary path. Instruct children to cradle down the road by staying inside the cones.



*Variation:*

- **Speedway Scoop and Cradle**

Set up the speedway as you would above, but place a ball somewhere along your “road”. Players begin by running the course without the ball. When they encounter the ball in the speedway they should scoop it up and run the rest of the course cradling the ball. Children will have to run the course one at a time so that you can place a ball somewhere on the road each time.

## Follow the Leader

### Let's Get Ready!

- ❑ 1 ball and 1 stick per child
- ❑ Cones, optional

Play Follow the Leader. The coach should start as the leader. Children should line up behind the coach, each with a ball. The coach runs cradling his ball around the play area turning, stopping, and moving forward, running slowly and quickly. Children must follow the leader, doing exactly what he does. Allow each child a turn to be the leader. Cones can be placed randomly throughout the play area so that children have markers around which to run.

# Throwing & Catching Activities

## Passing in Pairs/Triangles/Squares

### Let's Get Ready!

- ❑ 1 ball per pair or 1 ball per group of 3 or 1 ball per group of 4
- ❑ One stick per child

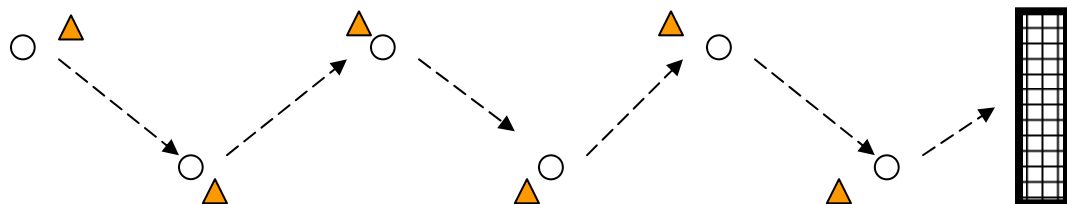
**Passing in Pairs:** Position players in two parallel lines about five feet or more apart. Instruct players to pass the ball back and forth. Challenge players to successfully pass it back and forth five times then switch to the opposite hand and try again.

**Passing in a Triangle:** Group players in threes. Position each group in a triangle shape. Instruct players to pass the ball back and forth. Challenge players to successfully pass it back and forth five times then switch to the opposite hand and try again.

**Passing in a Square:** Group players in fours. Position each group in a square shape. Instruct players to pass the ball back and forth. Challenge players to successfully pass it back and forth five times then switch to the opposite hand and try again.

### *Variation:*

- **Zig Zag Passing:** Stagger four or more players in a zig zag formation along your play area. (Use a cone to mark the place where each player should stand.) Have them pass back and forth up the line. The player positioned closest to the goal can shoot the ball into the goal. Play a few times, rotating players to positions at different cones so that each has a chance to shoot at the goal.



- For a more challenging activity or an opportunity to practice cradling and passing, group children in pairs challenge the pairs to move down the length of the field cradling and passing to each other. Pairs

should be encouraged to remain spaced apart. Have children cradle the ball three or four times then pass it to their partners.

## Circle Ball

### Let's Get Ready!

- ❑ 1 ball per group
- ❑ 1 stick per child

Form a big circle with all of your players. Challenge them not to let the ball leave the circle. Let them pass the ball back and forth around the circle. Keep count of the number of passes they can complete without the ball leaving the circle.

For an added challenge, tell players they must shout the name of person to whom they are passing before they pass the ball. This way their aim must be accurate. Remind players that the left shoulder and right elbow (for right handed players) should be pointing toward the child to whom they are passing. Remind them to follow through with the shot so that the head of the stick is pointing directly at the head of the stick to which they are throwing.

## Milk Jug Catch

### Let's Get Ready!

- ❑ 1 ball per pair
- ❑ 1 2-gallon milk jug per pair

Cut the bottom off of each milk jug. Assign one child of each pair to be the thrower and the other to be the catcher. The catcher should hold his milk jug by the handle upside down so that the large opening where the bottom used to be is facing up. Stand partners approximately four feet apart from each other and play catch. The thrower tosses the ball to the catcher who catches it in his milk jug. Play for a few minutes and then have partners reverse roles.

## Target Practice

## The Case for 3 v 3, Small Sided Games

In general, children under the age of six are too young to be involved in any structured, organized sports program that includes actual game play. They should be engaged only in activities that promote interest in the game and that offer each child plenty of opportunities to experiment with the ball in a fun learning environment.

If an opportunity to focus on specific skills that may later be used in a game setting is desired, small-sided games can be introduced as appropriate. These small sided games should engage children in three versus three to no more than six versus six “matches”. These mini-games are best for players under the age of six as they offer children the chance to experience and implement offensive and defensive techniques while giving each child plenty of time “on the ball” and a chance to try to score and/or block shots. More than three players per side will result in many children standing around with nothing to do or too many children trying to chase after the ball.

If you opt to build a mini-game into each of your practices, try to have all children engaged simultaneously in mini-games around your court or play area. Each area of play can be as small as 20 x 30 yards for each group of six.

Keep the rules simple:

- Position a goal or cones marking the goal at the end of each play area.
- Take turns playing offense and defense.
- Make sure children know which other two players are on their team. (Colored t-shirts or pinnies are helpful.)
- Remind children to try to pass to the other players on their team – giving each person a chance to dribble and shoot the ball. (You may wish to make a rule that a player must pass to a team member at least once before a goal is shot.)
- Let them know that they are all in charge of keeping the other team from scoring when they play defense. Additionally, they can all try to score goals for their team. No positions need to be specifically defined. Each child plays offense and defense as needed.
- No checking is allowed.
- When a goal is scored, possession of the ball goes to the other team.

- If a ball goes out of bounds, possession goes to the other team.
- Remind players that the coach or referee makes the final call. Any arguing with a coach or referee will result in a time out for that player.
- Take plenty of breaks for rest and water.
- If some players must sit on the sideline to wait their turn to play, remind them that they are still part of the team. Their job is to cheer on their teammates while paying attention to the game.
- Most children will want to know the final score – this is, in essence, the point of the game. Competitive games always result in having winners and losers. You can and should let curious children know how many goals were scored by both teams, while reminding them that being good winners and good losers is equally as important. Winning teams have good reason to celebrate and it's reasonable for losing teams to feel discouraged. Remind players that, regardless of their win or loss, the game playing experience should be used as an opportunity to learn from mistakes, to practice skills that need sharpening, and to continue to work together with teammates toward improving their game. Teams (and their coaches!) should always congratulate each other for a game well-played. This is the foundation of good sportsmanship.

# Let's Get to Know Each Other!

## Lacrosse Fun Facts



### Did you know that...

- Lacrosse is the oldest sport in North America?
- More than 48 North American Indian tribes in Canada and what is now the United States played a form of lacrosse hundreds of years ago? The game was often played as a way to solve conflicts.
- It is said that a game, called “Baggataway”, similar to lacrosse was played by the American Indians as a way to prepare for battle? These games often lasted for several days!
- The first lacrosse balls were made of baked clay, wood, stone, or deerskin?
- The French, who popularized the game in the 1800’s, gave lacrosse its modern name? The name came from the word “crosse”, the stick or staff that a religious man called a “bishop” would carry. The French believed that the stick used by the North American Indians resembled this staff.
- In 1867, Canada declared lacrosse its national sport?
- The first college lacrosse team was established at New York University in 1877? High schools in Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and New Jersey established teams soon after.
- The first women’s lacrosse game was played at a school in Scotland in 1890?