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Using Your Experience in Other Sports to Coach Lacrosse

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Guiding Concepts for Today

- Why am I coaching?
- What do I already know?
- How can I use it?
- How can my current knowledge steer me wrong?
- Overarching Principles (OAPs)
- Questions


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Why am I coaching?

- Values derived from sport.
- Characteristics of a good coach.
- What is YOUR driving force to coach?

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What do I already know?

- Teaching Techniques
- Practice Planning
- Facilitating the practice
- Communication skills
- Common Sporting Concepts
 - Body mechanics
 - Angles and spacing
 - Anticipation ...
- Specific Sports Knowledge


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Specific Sports Knowledge

• Basketball	• Soccer
• Hockey	• Football
• Water polo	• Baseball
• Wrestling	• Golf
• Crew	• Field hockey
• Rugby	• Hurling
• Fencing	• Etc.


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How can I use it?

- Lacrosse Overview
- Conditioning
- Individual Skills
- Team Skills
- Coaching Skills


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Lacrosse Overview

- Fast-paced game
- Skills-based (extremely)
 - team
 - Individual
- Offense
- Defense
- Transition
 - Clears: starting the offense
 - Rides: starting the defense
 - Face offs


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Conditioning

- Concepts from other sports
 - Still use your favorites (pushups, plyometrics, dynamic stretching ...)
 - Still have to “get there” (footwork)
- But there are differences...
 - It’s not basketball; don’t overemphasize shuffling
 - It’s not football (5’ on 30’ off); play is like hockey (1-3” intense effort)
 - Rotational strength (slugger)
 - Don’t sacrifice skill work for top notch condition


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Translation to Lacrosse: Individual Skills

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cradling • Ground balls • Dodging • Passing and catching • Shooting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Off ball play • Checks • Picks • Footwork • Face offs
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Cradling

- Concepts from other sports
 - Dribbling and protecting the ball
 - Running back switches to outside arm
 - Holding a golf club
 - Fencing: remain nimble with weapon in hand
- But there are differences...
 - Not tennis – keep stick close
 - Not hockey – must be able to switch hands
 - Account for defenders stick (reach)


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Groundballs

- Concepts from other sports
 - Baseball: Grounders...get down low (body mechanics)
 - Basketball: Rebound-Box out (MAN/ball/release)
 - Hurling: getting down low, proper stick angle
 - Pool: jab with back hand
- But there are differences...
 - Baseball: stick is extension of arm and hand
 - Baseball: must protect the ball (be ready for impact)


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Dodging

- Concepts from other sports
 - Same footwork as basketball, football
 - Get into your defender
 - Use FAKES!
 - Split dodge is similar to RB switching hands
- But there are differences...
 - Begin the dodge earlier than in basketball or football, harder to “blow by”
 - Fakes require some stick skill


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Pass and Catch

- Concepts from other sports
 - Baseball: Pitching/throwing – focus eyes
 - Football: Passing – focus eyes
 - Hockey: catching the ball/puck like an egg
- But there are differences...
 - Catching a football over the shoulder is different than lacrosse (stick protection)
 - No wind up like baseball
 - Push-pull

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Shooting

- Concepts from other sports
 - Football/Baseball: “hit the spot”
 - Football/Baseball: transfer of power
 - Golf: the swing
 - Crew: large muscle to small muscle (transfer)
 - Hockey: hide the ball/puck from goalie
 - Water polo: changing planes, off-hand shot
- But there are differences...
 - Soccer: goal is larger, angles are different

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Off ball play

- Concepts from other sports
 - Angles and space
 - Win the skirmishes, win the battle, win the war
- But there are differences...
 - Don't forget the stick
 - Instead of 2 yards you need 3
 - Once able to protect 5 square yards now able to protect 8 square yards

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Checks

- Concepts from other sports
 - Linebacker: Defense must “breakdown” (be in position when ball is caught)
 - Basketball: hands up → sticks up
 - Basketball: Wrap around steal/check, not liked in either sport – sacrifices position
 - Football: use the sideline
 - Football: hitting and body mechanics
- But there are differences...
 - Takeout check are not legal at youth level
 - Can't lower the shoulder

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Picks

- Concepts from other sports
 - Execute like basketball and water polo
 - Defend like basketball
- But there are differences...
 - Remember the stick – spacing is greater

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Footwork

- Concepts from other sports
 - Attack: point guards and running backs
 - Middies: soccer
 - Defenseman: combo of D-back and O-tackle
- But there are differences...
 - Not like basketball, don't overemphasize shuffling, spaces are too great, need lots of hip turn

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Face offs

- Concepts from other sports
 - Wrestling: getting down low, strength, agility
 - Hockey: speed
- But there are differences...
 - Hockey: hockey face-offs often faster, not physical, leverage is different


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Goaltending

- Concepts from other sports
 - Hockey: angles similar to lacrosse
 - Soccer, water polo: defending the plane-changer
 - Fencing (yes, fencing): footwork, footwork, footwork
- But there are differences...
 - Soccer: goal is larger, angles are different
 - Soccer/water polo: no behind the goal play
 - Hockey: use of body and stick is different in lacrosse

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Translation to Lacrosse: Team Skills

Lacrosse Mag. May 2010 – ‘Coach Cummings translates his basketball knowledge effortlessly...’

- Communication
- Team offense
- Team defense
- Clears (beginning the offense)
- Rides (beginning the defense)


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Communication

- Concepts from other sports
 - Basketball, water polo, hockey, soccer, field hockey
- But there are differences...
 - More important than any sport I’ve been involved with (? greater space and/or speed ?)


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Team Offense

- Concepts from other sports
 - Reduce game to 2v1
 - Basketball: beat man2man with dodges, beat zone with quick passing
 - Attack the backside of the defense
 - Fast break – want “numbers”
- But there are differences...
 - Maybe ☺
 - Check the OAPs


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Team Defense

- Concepts from other sports
 - Basketball: get to the “paint”, LAX: get to the “hole”/“slot”/“island”
 - Stop ball, force pass
 - Help D (slides)
 - Stay between man and goal while keeping eye on ball
 - Communication and help (slides) go hand in hand
 - Pick up most dangerous player first
 - Shorten slides
- But there are differences...
 - Check OAPs


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Clearing the ball

- Concepts from other sports
 - Passer/receiver
 - Spacing – don't want 2 receivers in the same place
 - Think alleys
 - One part of the game where the athlete is king'
 - Hockey – moving the puck forward
- But there are differences...
 - Don't run a "curl" in front of your own goal
 - Unlike hockey, you don't have to worry about icing or its version of offsides


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Riding

- Concepts from other sports
 - Football: 2 deep?, 3 deep? Or man2man
 - Hockey: dominate their defensive zone, pinch to the sidelines/boards
- But there are differences...
 - Make the LSM get the outlet
 - Think alleys
 - 4 seconds
 - 20 seconds (but not for youth)


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Translation to Lacrosse: Coaching Skills

- Teaching techniques
- Practice planning
- Facilitate the practice
- Communication
 - Players
 - Parents
 - Other coaches
 - Officials


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Teaching Techniques

- You know how to break down a skill and teach its component parts.
- IDEA (intro, demo, explain, attend)
- Coach the transitions (1 skill to the other)
 - Pulling guard vs. off-ball to on ball D
- Drill progression and team plan
 - D works backpedal/hip turn (A pass/catch on run)
 - D footwork vs., fast break (A speed dodge)
 - D fill box (A fast break spacing)
 - D vs. A (1v2, 2v3, 3v4 ...)


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Practice Planning

- Build from: individual → position → Team
- Cyclical intensity: low → high
- Hide your offense in your drills


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Facilitate the Practice

- Time Waste
 - Recognize wasted time within a drill
 - Minimize transition between drills


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Communication

- Players
- Parents
- Officials
- Other Coaches
- ** You are so far ahead of the player-turned coach


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Overarching Principles for Offense

- Offensive positioning and responsibilities are based on players' relationship to the ball
- Players should be in constant motion
- Move the ball
- Balance the field
- Attack the defensive player to initiate your offense
- Attack the backside of the defense

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Overarching Principle for Defense


- Players must communicate
- Defensive positioning and responsibilities are based on your relationship to the ball
- Play defense with your feet and head vs. stick and shoulders
- Play from the "inside out" (stay home)/extend and recover
- Attack bottom hand of carrier

Source: US Lacrosse Coaching Education Program, Level 2 Workbook

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Questions?

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Thanks!

Feel free to contact us with questions.

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