

Columbia Boys' Lacrosse



Handbook

2011

Columbia Lacrosse. It's all about Respect.

This handbook is intended to provide an overview of the philosophy and goals of the Columbia Boys' Lacrosse program, and to detail what is expected of the players, coaches, and parents.

An Open Letter to Columbia Boys' Lacrosse Parents

Thank you for your sons. We promise to do our best to make them better lacrosse players and better individuals. We will return them after we have filled their heads with as much lacrosse knowledge as they can hold, and after we have extracted every ounce of lacrosse effort that they are willing to deliver.

Together, we can mold them into young men of character, the kind of people we want running this world when you and we are too old. It may not be easy, but it is important that we try. So we will.

It's a short ride, over in the blink of an eye. Ask any parent who's taken it.

But it can be a fun ride, even a great ride. So watch it. Enjoy it.

And remember it.

Sincerely,

The Columbia Boys' Lacrosse Coaching Staff

Program Levels and Teams

Columbia Boys' Lacrosse consists of three program levels and three teams. As players begin and pass through each level, they are introduced to the skills and knowledge necessary to succeed at that level and prepare them for the next. The following chart shows the characteristics associated with each level/team:

Level	Team	Players	Training
Low	Modified	7 th and 8 th graders	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Basic fundamental skills 2. Conditioning 3. Simple offensive and defensive skills
Mid	Junior Varsity	10 th and 11 th graders 9 th graders skilled enough to start*	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Basic fundamental skills advancement 2. Conditioning 3. Advanced offensive and defensive skills 4. Beginning strategy
Upper	Varsity	11 th and 12 th graders 9 th and 10 th graders skilled enough to start*	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Skill advancement 2. Conditioning 3. Advanced offensive and defensive skills 4. Advanced strategy

* Based upon the assessment of the coaching staff

Because of the growing interest in lacrosse, it is expected that the number of players trying out each season will increase. For this reason, players should understand that moving from one grade to the next does not guarantee moving to the next team, nor does it guarantee that you will even remain in the program. Working to become the best player and person you can be, on the field and off, during the season and the off-season will guarantee you the best possible chance for making a team and getting plenty of playing time.

Tryouts and Playing Time

The district has developed guidelines regarding tryouts and playing time for each of the four teams. These are detailed in the *Athletic Philosophy* section of the *Code of Conduct*, and coaches are expected to abide by them.

In addition to these guidelines, it should be noted that every player has a role on a team that may also affect his amount of playing time. For example, if a team has only one goalie, it's very likely he will play the entire game.

And finally, while lacrosse skill and knowledge increasingly impact playing time as players advance through the program, behavior (both on and off the field) and effort will affect playing time at every level.

Columbia Lacrosse: It's all about Respect.

Respect
Effort
Skills
Preparation
Enthusiasm
Character
Teamwork

Respect

“R-E-S-P-E-C-T. Find out what it means to me.”

~ *Aretha Franklin*

“Respect yourself, and others will respect you.”

~ *Confucius*

Respect. You gain it by giving it.

- Respect your coaches. Don't question their judgment. Do as they ask, without question.
- Respect your teammates. It's simple: treat them the way you'd like to be treated.
- Respect your opponent. Don't talk trash or take cheap shots. Show class in victory and defeat.
- Respect the officials. Never question or criticize a call. Always thank the officials for their time. Never forget that we can't play without them.
- Respect the game: Play hard. Play fair.
- And respect yourself. Don't use offensive language. Ignore all trash talk. Do your talking with your stick. Always play your game, with 100% effort. You may lose the game, but no one can take away your self-respect and dignity unless you let them.

Effort

“You can't always get what you want.

But if you try sometimes, you just might find you get what you need.”

~ *The Rolling Stones*

“Nothing can take the place of persistence.”

~ *Ray Kroc, Founder of McDonald's*

"It's not whether you get knocked down, it's whether you get up."

~ Vince Lombardi

Think Rudy. Never give up. Never. Ever wonder why some teams seem to dominate year after year? When you have 100 players competing for 20 slots on a team, each player knows he has to be better than 80 other guys just to sit on the bench.

Skills

"Quality is never an accident; it is always the result of intelligent effort."

~ John Ruskin

Get skills. Stick skills, physical skills, mental skills, organizational skills. Obviously, good skills mean greater ability. But good skills also translates into fewer penalties. It is important to play to the best of your ability, but also to play within your ability. Most unnecessary penalties are the result of out-of-control play. The greater your ability, the better your controlled game. Good skills. Few penalties. Coaches LOVE that.

Preparation

"The will to win is not nearly as important as the will to prepare to win."

~ Bobby Knight

"If you are nothing else, be ready."

~ Author unknown

Every moment you spend playing lacrosse as hard as you can makes you a better player. THIS is where it's at. If you are really serious about doing something to the best of your ability, then preparation is a 365 day a year effort.

Preparation Before the Season

If you hope to play lacrosse in the spring...

- YOU ARE EXPECTED TO WORK ON IMPROVING YOUR SKILLS during the off season. (And don't kid yourself here – coaches can tell who picked up their sticks and who didn't.) In the spring you will be asked what you did. Activities that are recommended include:
 - Local lacrosse leagues
 - Camps
 - Clinics
 - Tournament play
 - Weight room
 - Participation in a fall and/or winter sport
 - Daily stick skill work/wallball
- YOU MUST DEMONSTRATE PROFICIENCY at the level you expect to play. The days of showing up for tryouts and expecting to make the team because you own a stick are OVER.
- YOU MUST BE PREPARED TO MAKE A **100% COMMITMENT** to the team, and to make every effort to honor that commitment. For varsity players, this means attending EVERY tryout, EVERY practice, and EVERY game. For lower level players, exceptions are made at the discretion of the

coach. Players and parents must understand that a player's level of commitment is one of the criteria by which the coach may rank the player.

Preparation During the Season

Before practice:

- The night before your next practice, check your equipment to make sure you have everything necessary for the following day's practice. You should have at least two (2) sticks with which you are equally comfortable. Be prepared for all potential weather conditions.
- On the morning of the practice, bring your equipment to school and store it in a place designated by a coach. (Exception: If you drive and can get home and back to the field 5 minutes before practice begins without breaking any laws, you can leave your equipment home.)
- Be on the field and ready to go at least 5 minutes before practice is scheduled to start. It's not that hard!

Before a game:

- The night before your next game, check your equipment to make sure you have everything necessary for the following day's game. You should have at least two (2) sticks with which you are equally comfortable. **MAKE SURE ALL YOUR EQUIPMENT IS LEGAL!** Be prepared for all potential weather conditions.
- On the morning of the game, bring your equipment to school and store it in a place designated by a coach. Always wear your jersey to school on game days!
- If you have a home game, be on the field and ready to go 5 minutes before the pre-game warm-up is scheduled to start. If you have an away game, be on the bus at least 5 minutes before it is scheduled to depart.

On the bus:

- Put on all of your equipment except your gloves, arm pads, shoulder pads and helmet.
- Prepare mentally for the game. Review positioning and movement for your position, including all rides, clears, offensive plays and defensive alignments.
- Talk to your teammates about the game.
- Start thinking and visualizing **WHAT YOU NEED TO DO TO HELP YOUR TEAM BE SUCCESSFUL IN TODAY'S GAME.**

Upon arriving at the opposing field:

- Put on your gloves, arm pads, shoulder pads and helmet.
- Line up in double file, making sure you have ALL of your lacrosse equipment. (Personal belongings may be left on the bus if the bus driver has no objection.)
- Walk silently to the field in double file, put your equipment bag behind the visitors' bench, and assemble for the pre-game warm-up.
- Participate in the pre-game warm-up, concentrating on performing each drill to the best of your ability.

During the game:

- Be ready! Whether you're on the field or not, wherever you're supposed to be, **BE** there.

- Regularly check your equipment to make sure that it's legal. This is particularly important if it is raining, as pockets have a tendency to stretch past the legal point.

After the game:

- Keep your helmet on. Line up and shake hands with your opponents.
- Regroup for a post-game meeting with coaches.
- Take care of any equipment responsibilities you may have.
- Cross field and greet parent(s) if they are present, thank them.
- Following an away game, gather your gear, and get on the bus. Do NOT change.
- Review your game effort, individually and with your teammates, noting what you did well, and what you need to work on prior to the next game.
- If you are returning on the bus from an away game, be sure to demonstrate appropriate behavior. (Note: Some coaches may have a policy that permits you to make other arrangements for the ride home. Be sure to understand your responsibilities if you decide to take advantage of this.)

Preparation After the Season

Do NOT put your stick away. Put it where you will see it EVERY day, and PICK IT UP EVERY DAY. Cradle, scoop a few ground balls off the floor, take it outside and throw – just do something with it. There is no substitute for picking up your stick EVERY day.

Start thinking about what you will do between now and next season to become a better lacrosse player. Then do it. Keep a lacrosse journal. Write down anything you do to improve your game.

And play other sports. They'll make you a better lacrosse player. And they're fun.

Enthusiasm

"Nothing great was ever achieved without enthusiasm."

~ *Ralph Waldo Emerson*

"There's no walking on lacrosse fields."

~ *Rick "Old Man" Randall*

Enthusiasm. It's contagious. If you don't have it, go get it. And bring it everywhere. Bring it to practice. Bring it to games. Bring it to life. Yell your head off cheering, or encouraging your teammates. Always run on the field. Always run off. Make EVERYONE believe that there is NOTHING more enjoyable than what YOU'RE doing. Enthusiasm. Don't leave home without it. Ever.

Character

"I learned so much, so very much about myself in defeat. I've learned very little to nothing in victory."

~ *Floyd Patterson*

"Sports do not build character. They reveal it."

~ *John Wooden*

“How you play during a game shows only what you can do. What you do after a loss shows who you are.”

~ *Author unknown*

“The measure of who we are is what we do with what we have.”

~ *Vince Lombardi*

“Character is doing the right thing when no one is watching.”

~ *Author Unknown*

Nothing defines who YOU are more than your character: how you conduct yourself in any situation. Your life is one long series of situations, many of which will require decisions that reflect your character. The good news: the stronger your character, the easier those decisions become. The bad news: it takes time, it takes discipline, and it takes guts. So start today. From now on, every time you are presented with a choice, take a moment to think. Then, try to do the right thing. You won't always be able to. No one is. But try. And if you screw up, let it go. Then start preparing for the next time. What will you do the next time? Like when the beer appears at the party? Or when your teammate drops the perfect pass that should have led to the game-winning shot? Or when the guys you're hanging with start picking on someone, or decide that it might be fun to do a little vandalizing? What you do is who you become. Don't blow it.

Teamwork

“Less me, more we.”

~ *Author unknown*

“None of us is as good as all of us.”

~ *Japanese proverb*

“Finding good players is easy. Getting them to play as a team is another story.”

~ *Casey Stengel*

“Remember upon the conduct of each depends the fate of all.”

~ *Alexander the Great*

The sooner you “get it” – that lacrosse games are won or lost by the team and not by an individual – the better the chance the team will have at achieving its potential. Cooperate with the coach, and with each other. Every decision made on and off the field MUST be made with the best interests of the team in mind. On the practice field. On the game field. On the bench. On the bus. This means every pass, every shot, every effort - every decision. And that goes for wherever you are. At a practice or game. At a party. At school. At the mall. Make good choices based on what is best for the team. And don't make a choice that could keep you out of a game. THAT hurts the team.

Support your teammates, whether you are on the field or not. Always be thinking, “How can I best help the team RIGHT NOW?” It may be a pass, a shot, or taking a hit so a teammate can scoop a ground ball. Or it could be passing a water bottle, keeping the book, or offering words of encouragement. It could also be removing a teammate from a situation that could lead to his getting injured, or being suspended or kicked off the team. There is ALWAYS something you can do to help the team. So figure it out. Then do it.

And don't get angry or frustrated when a teammate screws up. Try to remember what it feels like to be the one who made the mistake - the one who let his teammates down - and that no one on the field feels worse than he does. Most good plays in lacrosse are the combination of the efforts of two or more

players, and you can only control your part. So lead by example: execute your part well every time, and don't worry about what happens next.

Expectations and Communication

Everyone – players, parents, and coaches alike – have expectations coming into the season as well as during the season. Often, however, expectations are unrealistic or just plain false, and lead to problems that could have been avoided with better communication.

The Columbia Boys' Lacrosse coaching staff is committed to opening and maintaining good lines of communication with players and parents. This handbook, newsletters, field instruction, and team and community meetings are among the ways the following expectations will be communicated:

Coaches are expected:

- to read this handbook.
- to conduct themselves in a professional and appropriate manner both on the field and off.
- to communicate their expectations clearly to players and parents.
- to be prepared for practices and games.
- to provide players with the knowledge and training that will allow them to advance to the next program level.
- to make every effort to adhere to the playing time guidelines as described in the *Code of Conduct*.
- to enforce the *Code of Conduct* to the letter.
- to respond respectfully and in a timely manner to questions asked respectfully (and at appropriate times – during or following a game are good examples of inappropriate times) by players or parents.

Players are expected:

- to read this handbook.
- to understand and follow the *Code of Conduct* to the letter. It WILL be enforced!
- to maintain good academic and behavioral standing in school.
- to demonstrate proper behavior EVERYWHERE, all the time. Remember, you represent your school, your community, your family and yourself.
- to treat coaches, teammates, opposing players, officials, parents, and fans with respect.
- to remember what they are shown, and to ask for clarification when they don't understand.
- to be prepared for the task at hand. (See the *Preparation* section in this handbook.)
- to attend all practices and games, unless excused by the coach. Players are expected to speak to the coach in person when requesting an excused absence unless it is physically impossible. (Varsity players are further expected to attend all spring break practices and games.)
- to return any district-loaned equipment at the end of the season in the same condition in which it was received excluding normal wear and tear. Players will not be permitted to graduate unless the equipment is returned or proper restitution (as determined by the district) is made.

Parents are expected:

- to read this handbook and see that their sons have read it..
- to read the *Code of Conduct* and discuss it with their son(s), making it clear that they are in complete agreement with it and will abide by any decisions based on a violation.
- to respect coaches, officials, players, and fans. (Note: Sitting on the same side of the field as the team benches is prohibited by the *New York State High School Athletic Association*.)
- to demonstrate appropriate behavior before, during, and after games, and to cheer and support the team in a positive manner only. We ALL represent our families, our school, and our

community, and we should take our responsibility as role models seriously if we expect our kids to behave appropriately. Always remember: kids are watching!

- to support coaching methods and respect decisions regardless of whether they agree with them.
- to refrain from publicly criticizing coaches or engaging in any discussion that might undermine the coach's authority in the eyes of a player. And we ask that parents please refrain from coaching the players during games. (We're not perfect, but we're doing our best. Please don't make our jobs more difficult.)
- to ask questions of the coach respectfully and at appropriate times. (For example, approaching a coach on the field following a loss to question the amount of a player's playing time would qualify as inappropriate.) Questions or discussions should be initiated by e-mail or a phone call. Coaches will make every effort to respond quickly, and if necessary, arrange to meet with a parent. Coaches' e-mail addresses and/or phone numbers will be made available.
- to actively participate in one or more activities that support the program. Such activities include (but are not limited to) the booster club, the lacrosse banquet, fundraising, concession stand, and activities following home games (e.g., barbecues or post-game refreshments).

Players can expect (IF they meet the expectations of their coaches):

- to be treated fairly and with respect.
- to be placed on the team on which they belong.
- playing time when it is deserved, as outlined in the *Code of Conduct*.
- to be shown what they need to do in order to improve as lacrosse players and advance to the next program level.
- to be benched because of inappropriate behavior ANYWHERE.

Parents can expect (IF they meet the expectations of the coaches):

- to be treated with respect.
- their sons to be treated with respect
- their sons to get playing time when it is deserved.
- their sons to be presented with the knowledge and the opportunity to advance to the next program level.
- to have their questions answered when they are asked respectfully and at appropriate times.

“The Demanding Dozen”

12 Things You Can Do To Force A Coach To Play You

Assuming you conduct yourself properly on the lacrosse field as well as off, a coach will find it next to impossible not to play you if you master the “Demanding Dozen.”

1. Be able to throw and catch equally well with both hands.
2. Every time you get a chance to pick up a ground ball, get it on your first attempt. Why? Because you rarely get a second chance. And the team that collects the most ground balls in a game almost always wins the game.
3. Be able to pass accurately whether you’re running full speed or standing still. Anyone can score a goal. The hard part – the most difficult play in lacrosse – is getting the ball to the shooter.
4. Always find the open man. Whether you’re clearing the ball or attacking the goal, finding the open man is critical.
5. Know where you are supposed to be every time you are on the field and what you are supposed to do every time a play, defensive alignment, ride, or clear is called. (Extra credit: Know where your teammates are supposed to be, and make sure they’re there.)
6. Always be ready, whether you’re on the field or on the sideline.
7. Never drop a pass.
8. Know when to pass and when to shoot, and do it.
9. Know when to take a right-handed shot, when to shoot left - and be able to do both.
10. Never get called for a stupid penalty.
11. Always do what the coach asks or expects, without question. And never offer an excuse.
12. Always give 100%. Never walk on a lacrosse field. Run on. Run off.

Success

Our success will not be determined by the number of games we win, by the standings, or by how far we advance in post-season play. It will be measured by how well we prepare, how well we execute, and how much effort we put forth. If we are prepared, play to the best of our ability, and leave everything we have on the field, then we will have succeeded. Anything less is unacceptable.

The Final Word

Playing high school lacrosse (or any sport, for that matter) is not a right, but a privilege. To earn a spot on a team carries with it the responsibility of representing not only yourself and your abilities, but your family, your school, and your community. You are part of a very small, exclusive band of brothers, that of Columbia Boys’ Lacrosse players. You share a bond with those who came before you, and with those who will follow. And for the rest of your lives, no one will ever be able to take this away from you. Ever. So don’t take this privilege lightly. Don’t take it for granted. And DON’T screw it up. Enjoy it. Appreciate it. Remember it. And treat it with respect.