



## Coaching Philosophy

The Blackhawks program seeks to develop lacrosse players, promote selfless play and good character, and to help players find reward and enjoyment from the game. The greatest reward and enjoyment that a player can find from the game is the satisfaction that comes from expending full effort for a cause (the team) greater than one's self. We are more likely to be preparing future coaches than future college players. The lessons we teach are much more likely to be applied by our players in a traditional career environment than in an athletic arena. Therefore, while we want to help players reach their lacrosse potential, the life lessons we teach through the game are paramount. This means:

- We will teach the importance of good character on and off the field. We will demand that all players, coaches, and spectators show respect for coaches, players, opponents, officials, and spectators. We will not accept without consequence any backtalk, player criticism of teammates, inappropriate language, or other disrespectful behavior. Our coaches will model good behavior and will refrain from demeaning or disrespectful behavior (including inappropriate language) while representing the Blackhawks.
- Every player, whether a house player or a travel player, should feel like they were part of the outcome of any game or scrimmage in which they participated. This does not mean equal playing time – we want to maintain the concept of players working for playing time -- but rather meaningful playing time. As a *guideline*, a player should be on the field for a minimum of one-fourth of overall game time or the time that a 3<sup>rd</sup> line midfielder would play in a regular rotation. Playing time includes penalty time served. Exceptions to the playing time policy may be made for bad attitude, lack of full effort, or lateness to or absence from practice or game.
- We will maximize player participation in practice and scrimmages, limiting long lines in drills and anything other than brief breaks from activity.
- Out of respect for our players and parents: (a) we will start and end practices promptly at the scheduled times; (b) our coaches will not use cell phones during practice or games.
- We will employ positive coaching techniques, which includes:
  - Putting the interests of players ahead of the interests of coaches.
  - Focusing on effort rather than outcome and on learning and continuous improvement rather than comparison to others
  - Fostering an environment in which players do not fear making mistakes. A player who plays “mistake-free” is staying in his comfort zone and therefore is limiting his opportunities to improve. Therefore, we ask our coaches not to remove a player from any competition for a mistake made despite full effort.
  - Seeking to win in a competitive environment but also helping players develop positive character traits.
  - Looking for and expressing positives in players and giving truthful, specific, and corrective feedback while avoiding unwarranted praise.
- Coaches should refrain from favoring or disfavoring players based upon the school team any other club team with which the player is affiliated. Coaches should refrain from any conduct that is or appears to constitute the recruiting of players to or from any school team. Coaches should encourage players to participate in multiple sports and should stress that the “in-season” sport takes priority.