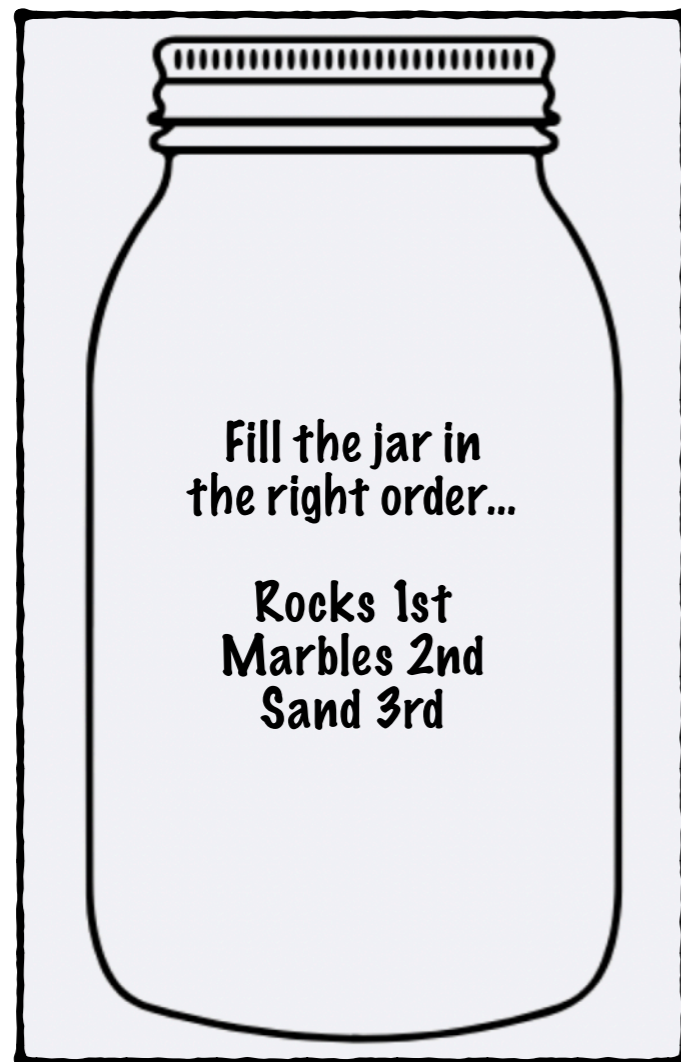


PETOSKEY LACROSSE

**PLAYER
DEVELOPMENT
PHILOSOPHY**

PRIORITIES



ROCKS (For success in life)

1. Self Image
2. Attitude
3. Habits/Goals
4. Leadership



MARBLES (For success in lacrosse)

1. FUNdamentals (stick skills)
2. Speed/Athleticism
3. Game IQ
4. Discipline



SAND (Our Daily Non-Negotiable's)

1. Curiosity
2. Adaptability
3. Responsibility
4. Effort

PHILOSOPHY

The Game is the Best Teacher

We primarily teach skills and concepts through **Small-Sided Games** based on a coaching methodology called **Ecological Dynamics**. Research shows this is a more fun, efficient, and effective way to develop high-IQ players compared to running traditional drills.

How does it work?

Think about how a kid learns to ride a bike. You don't give them a 20-minute lecture on the physics of balance or make them practice pedaling while sitting on a chair. You put them on the bike, give them a push, and their brain figures out how to stay upright by reacting to the ground and the tilt of the handle-bars.

That's Ecological Dynamics: Learning by *doing* the real thing.

Why Games Beat Drills

Traditional drills (standing in a line, running to a cone, and shooting on an empty net) are like practicing "Guitar Hero" and expecting it to make you a rock star. It looks cool, but it doesn't translate to a live stage.

- **Decision-Making:** In a drill, the "solution" is told to the player by the coach. In a game, the player has to *find* the solution while a defender is trying to take the ball away.
- **More Touches:** In a 3v3 game, players touch the ball and make a "pass or shoot" decision every few seconds. In a full-field drill, they might wait five minutes for one 10-second rep.
- **Game IQ:** We don't want robots who can run a perfect pattern. We want "gamers" who can read the field, see an opening, and react before the defense adjusts.
- **Play to Strengths:** By letting the kids find their own way, they discover what they're best at. They develop a "toolbox" of moves that fit their body type, speed, and skill level.

The "Messy" Factor

Parents and players should expect practice to look a bit "messy." Because we are constantly challenging players with new constraints, they will make mistakes. **This is where the most growth happens.** We aren't looking for a perfect drill; we are looking for a player who can solve a broken play in the 4th quarter.

PRINCIPLES

Principles Over Plays

We run a **principles-based offense and defense** because it develops adaptable, intelligent, creative players who can problem solve in chaos, which is what lacrosse (and often life) is.

Over 70% of all goals are scored in unsettled situations (chaos); preparing for that reality, is how we “Moneyball” lacrosse.

Offensive Principles: Confuse Slides, Exploit Advantages

1. **Deception:** Manipulate the defense with fakes, hesitations, and off-ball movement (make them “see you or see the ball”).
2. **Give Space to Good Matchups:** Recognize advantages, create conditions to exploit them.
3. **Double 2-Man Game:** Always have on-ball and off-ball 2-man games in action. This creates constant slide confusion.
4. **Great Shots over Good Shots:** Value every possession. Attack from X or the wings. High quality shots only!
5. **Flip the Field:** Constantly switch the point of attack from one side of the field to the other to keep the defense from getting settled.

Defensive Principles: Play the Percentages

1. **Over-Communicate:** Be loud. Talk before the problem. Silence is a gap in the defense. Combat Deception with Communication.
2. **Protect Inside-Out:** Get to “The Hole” and defend from the crease-out with sticks in passing lanes. Eliminate high quality shots first.
3. **Shorten Slides:** Reduce the time the offense has to think.
4. **Smart Approach Angles:** Take away what the offense wants by dictating where they go.
5. **Footwork Before Checks:** Win the footwork battle first, checks are secondary.

6U | 8U | 10U

Discovery & Joy

The goal is for players to **discover a love for lacrosse** that fuels future development.

Meeting kids where they are:

At these ages, we design practice for what kids want (instead of what adults want) to make sure they leave the field with a smile.

For example, most 6U and 8U kids haven't developed the hand/eye coordination to consistently catch the ball. That's ok, kids at that age don't want to pass, they just want to score goals. So we design games where they score a lot of goals and leave with a smile.

Discovery & Joy Graduation Checklist

- **The Joy Factor:** Does the player leave the field with a smile?
- **Offense:** Do they understand that looking one way and moving the other helps them get open?
- **Defense:** Can the player stay between their opponent and the goal without being told?
- **Defense:** Do they try to cut off an opponent with their footwork rather than chase them while swinging their stick?
- **Leadership:** Does the player celebrate when a teammate makes a good pass or a hard-work play?

Primary Competition Formats:

- **6U:** 1v1 + a coach goalie
- **8U:** 2v2, 3v3, or 4v4 constraint-led games
- **10U:** 4v4 or 7v7 with attack, middies, defense (no long sticks), goalie

12U | 14U

Development & Connection

As kids grow, they start to find joy in "the connection"—the feeling of a perfect 2-man play or a defensive stop by sliding to help a teammate.

Tool for development:

- **Players Academy:** Every player gets a 1-year membership with their registration. On this app, pro players provide practice plans for players that want to improve on their own outside of practice. Players can also submit videos of themselves working on a specific skill for direct feedback from pro players.

Development & Connection Graduation Checklist

- **The Joy Factor:** Does the player enjoy the "chess match" of the game? Are they starting to appreciate a great assist as much as a goal?
- **2-Man Connection:** Does the player naturally look to "partner up" using a pick or a mirror to solve a tough defender?
- **Winning the Angle:** Can they use their feet to "steer" an opponent away from the goal?
- **Flipping the Field:** Do they recognize when to move the ball to the "weak side" to catch the defense sleeping?
- **Meeting the Challenge:** When a game gets "messy" or difficult, does the player stay engaged and try to find a new solution?

Primary Competition Formats:

- 2v2, 3v3, or 4v4 constraint-led games
- 7v7 scrimmages
- 10v10

JV | Varsity

Performance & Mastery

At this level, joy comes from "Flow" —the feeling of a team moving as one. Mastery of the craft becomes the primary driver.

Tools for development:

- **Players Academy:** Every player gets a 1-year membership with their registration. On this app, pro players provide practice plans for players that want to improve on their own outside of practice. Players can also submit videos of themselves working on a specific skill for direct feedback from pro players.
- **Janssen Sports Leadership Academy:** Online training program for captains and coaches to help them develop the skills needed to inspire and lead their team.

Performance & Mastery Graduation Checklist

- **The Joy Factor:** Does the player find satisfaction in the "process" of improvement? Do they lead the energy of the team during difficult practices?
- **Manipulation:** Does the player use deception to "pull the strings" of the defense, creating open lanes for teammates?
- **Strategic IQ:** Can the player identify the "Advantage" and either exploit it or give their teammate the space to do so?
- **Defensive Unity:** Does the player lead the "Crease-Out" communication, making sure the entire unit is locked in?
- **Ownership:** Does the player take pride in "self-organizing" —adjusting their playing style to beat the opponent in front of them?

Primary Competition Formats:

- 2v2, 3v3, or 4v4 constraint-led games
- 7v7 scrimmages
- 10v10

OFFSEASON

Don't Quit Other Sports

We do not want year-round lacrosse players. To become a high-level player, you need to be a high-level *athlete* first.

- **Avoid Burnout:** We want you hungry and excited when the spring season arrives, not exhausted.
- **Injury Prevention:** Repetitive motions from one sport lead to overuse injuries. Playing basketball, soccer, or football builds different muscle groups and makes you more resilient.
- **The Multi-Sport Edge:** Basketball teaches 2-man game, football teaches footwork; soccer teaches field vision. We want athletes who bring those "outside" skills to our team.

What should players do?

Hit the wall, practice your "deception" fakes in the backyard or during pickup games, and get comfortable with both hands.

These things don't require you to quit other sports. You can do them getting out once or twice a week with friends.

How to Expand Your Skill Set

Sharpen Your Tools (Individual Skill Work)

During the season, our practices are about the "we" — the chemistry and the game plan. We don't spend hours on individual skills.

- **Players Academy App:** To help you practice on your own or with friends, every player (12U & up) receives a membership. This is your 24/7 coach. Use the instruction from pro players to up your game.
- **Play a Different Position:** It will make you better by understanding what is difficult for the player lining up across from you.
- **The Goal:** If you show up in the spring with the ability to handle the ball with confidence, we can jump into more complex game concepts.

The Power of Pickup

We are huge fans of "Backyard Ball." Grab a few friends, find a patch of grass, and play.

- **3v3, Flex 6, or Sixes:** These formats are the gold standard for skill development. Fewer players on the field means more touches.
- **No Coaches, No Pressure:** Use pickup games to try that no-look pass or new dodge without the pressure of a scoreboard or coaches watching. This is where "Game IQ" and creativity are born.
- **Learn to Lead:** Organize meetups to play and work on earning the respect of teammates while helping them improve.