

Guilford Youth Lacrosse Association Program Description and Guidelines

Overview

The Guilford Youth Lacrosse Association (GYLA) Program provides an instructional/skills-based developmental approach to teaching lacrosse skills to girls and boys in grades Kindergarten through 8th grade. Please visit the Guilford Youth Lacrosse Association website for an in-depth description of grade-specific program details.

Mission Statement

Across the full span of grade-level participation (K - 8), the GYLA Program is committed to creating a lacrosse learning environment that will be fun, while at the same time building a child's self-confidence and self-motivation to help each child reach her/his potential as a lacrosse player. We are committed to teaching and modeling coaching behavior that fosters **respect** among and between players, learning the value of **determination**, while building a commitment to teamwork and fair play.

How and What We Will Do To Fulfill Our Mission Statement?

- The GYLA Program is designed and committed to teaching all players from Kindergarten through 8th grade the mastery of the skills of the game. We recognize that every child is unique, including the rate at which each player reaches developmental milestones, both physically and emotionally. To this end, as a player proceeds through each respective grade-level participation in a progressive manner, skills taught at an earlier level will be built upon and will facilitate the development of skills to be learned and mastered at a later level.
- Each GYLA Coach and his or her assistants have a "game plan" for each practice where specific skills will be taught utilizing drills and exercises, and then use these skills relative to specific positions and placement on the field. As players progress in their skill development, the level of difficulty increases. In all cases, this teaching occurs in a supportive/fun environment and at a pace that the coaches will attempt to tailor to each player's skill, learning curve, athleticism, and style. Our goal is to ensure that each player experiences success, thereby building self-confidence, while at the same time challenging the player to develop new skills.
- We strongly believe in structured and organized practices that allow our coaches to be constantly observing and evaluating a player's progress, his or her strengths and areas where further improvement is needed. This ongoing "on-the-field" evaluation process allows our coaches to improve each player's skills and build a cohesive team, while recognizing that a team is composed of individual players with different skill and mastery levels.

Program Description and Guidelines By Grade Level Designation

Kindergarten Boys (Little Cubs)

Kindergarten Girls (Little Cubs)

1st - 2nd Grade Boys (Bantam)

2nd Grade Girls (Bantam)

- Players are grouped according to their enrolled school grade.
- Focus will be on developing and improving stick skills - catching, throwing, scooping, and shooting. Players will be taught to grasp the concepts of positions and placement on the field.
- In addition, there will be a focus on one-on-one play, dodging, defending and moving the ball in transition
- Practice is scheduled at the discretion of the coaches, but typically takes place 1-3 times per week.

3rd-4th Grade Boys (Lightning)

3rd-4th Grade Girls (Lightning)

- Players are grouped according to their enrolled school grade.
- Focus will be on developing and improving stick skills: catching, throwing, scooping, and shooting. Players will also be taught to grasp the concepts of positions and placement on the field.
- Focus on one-on-one play, dodging, defending and moving the ball in transition. Small field 8 v 8 games may evolve and could transition to 10 v 10 as appropriate.
- Two weekly (M-F) practices and 1-2 weekend games on Saturday. Players are encouraged to attend both weekly practices, but we understand there will be occasional conflicts.
- Ad hoc, selected games vs. other towns, home and away– at discretion of the coaches. All players will be invited to play in games vs. other towns (there is no formal CONNY league play in these grades).

5th-6th Grade Boys (Junior)

5th-6th Grade Girls (Junior)

7th-8th Grade Boys (Senior)

7th-8th Grade Girls (Senior)

- At these levels, in addition to selected home games in Guilford, all players are expected to travel to other towns for CONNY games.
- At these levels, the commitment to enrollment will be as follows:

- All players are expected to make lacrosse their Number One priority sport during the entire course of the season.
- We expect and encourage all our athletes to play other sports during the rest of the year, as it both increases athletic development and, more importantly, adds to players' enthusiasm for all the sports they play.
- Players not adhering to this commitment are subject to potential consequences, including reduced playing time or potential removal from the team, based on the coaches' discretion.
- Roster sizes will vary based on the number of registrants per grade.
- The structure and number of teams per grade will be based on each grade's registration numbers.
- 2-3 team practices during the week and up to 2-3 games per weekend.
- If a player misses the practice immediately preceding a game, he or she may not start in the game at the coaches' discretion.
- Play to Develop – at these levels of play, our athletes have mastered many of the skills required to play competitively. Hence, winning has become a higher priority, but still remains second to having fun and developing good long term skills.
- Playing time is based on coaches' discretion, taking into consideration each player's current level of skill development, attitude, effort, sportsmanship, and "coachability." In all cases, every effort will be made to allocate playing time fairly. Although playing time will ultimately be the coaches' decision, the GYLA philosophy is that each player will receive an appropriate share of time, with player development overriding consideration of wins and losses. This may not always be reflected on a game by game basis, but will be reflected over the course of an entire season.

What Is The Purpose of Utilizing Player Evaluations?

The GYLA Program is committed to helping each lacrosse player develop to his or her full potential while having fun. Since the term "potential" may vary from player to player for any number of reasons, i.e., interest, motivation, confidence, athleticism, etc., we feel it is very important to get to know each player's strengths and areas where we see room for improvement. This assessment will always be done in a supportive manner, with a keen emphasis on how we should use a player's strengths to foster development in areas in need of further improvement.

At these levels (Grades 5-8), we feel it is beneficial to perform player evaluations and to seek input from external lacrosse coaches beyond our Guilford coaches. Having another set of eyes of skilled and knowledgeable coaches in evaluating the current skill level of our players is extremely helpful in better understanding what else we should be doing and teaching our players to assist them in their growth and development as lacrosse players.

We are very fortunate to have many resources to draw upon, including the coaching staffs of local colleges and universities. Therefore, because these evaluations are independent and our GYLA coaches do not participate in evaluating our own players, they provide an excellent perspective and allow our GYLA coaches to customize their teaching priorities to address each player's needs.

Specific Details and Guidelines for Grades 5-8 Evaluations

Format

- Depending on registration numbers, players will be separated by grade.
- Each session will consist of Warm Ups, Drills, unbalanced Offense and Defense, and Scrimmages.
- Numbered pinnies will be provided.

CRITERIA FOR EVALUATION

The following player criteria are recommended by USA Lacrosse for evaluations. Players are NOT expected to be experts or completely proficient at these skills. Evaluations are used to determine player STRENGTHS and NEEDS for the upcoming season.

CATCHING

- Hand near top of stick when catching
- Moving feet towards the pass when catching
- Catching while walking, jogging, or running towards a passer
- Over the shoulder catching while walking, jogging, or running away from a passer
- Catching with defensive pressure
- Switches hands to catch on correct side of body
- Ability to adjust to pass

CRADLING

- Constant movement/rotation of the stick when ball is in the pocket
- Correct hand positioning (top hand on neck of shaft, bottom hand on bottom third of stick)
- Stick should be held in the fingertips with top digit of each finger and thumb for better control & wrist action
- The stick should be at shoulder height and vertical
- Top hand holding stick in position about chest high near the armpit (this is called the "box position")

PASSING

- Pull with the bottom hand while simultaneously pushing with the top hand
 - Snap the top-hand wrist over so the head of the stick ends up pointing at the target
- Accurate passing (in the “box” or a pass within the target of the receiver's stick head)
- Switch hands and curls back to return ball to passer
- Throwing while moving
- Throwing around defender(s)

GROUND BALLS

- Hand near top of stick to get low on scooping
- Head over the ball when scooping
- Runs thru the ball
- Does not shy away if other players are around ball
Scoops with both hands

INDIVIDUAL Offense/Defense

- Dodging and Shooting Ability
- Stick Protection
- Good defensive positioning
- Field awareness
- Uses appropriate check
- Drawing and dumping
- Picks/Slips

TEAM Offense/Defense

- Understands TEAM concept
- Moves without the ball to support teammates
- On defense, keeps eyes on ball and player being covered
- Slides/Bumps to support team defense
- Communication
- Double team (when and how)