

Dear 3-4 Lacrosse Families,

Since 2018, our club has grown significantly, and we could not be happier with the amount of support and dedication our players and families have given us. We are truly grateful.

Over the years, we have had the discussion of what philosophy we should take as a program. Should we follow a travel team type format where the teams are leveled according to ability, or should we evenly split the teams for more of a recreation atmosphere? Over the last 5+ years, we followed the latter of the two and it has run its course. Now that we have 150+ members just on the boys side, we have outgrown the recreation model and we are now shifting to a travel team philosophy.

First, there will be an in-house league where the coaches split the whole team into 4 equal groups. Once a week, these teams will play each other and compete for an intersquad championship at the end of the season. This way, the novice players will get to play with the experienced players to help improve their skills.

Second, if there is an opportunity to play in a championship bracket-type of tournament, the teams will be leveled. The advanced team will compete in the bracket-type tournament, and the developing team will play in a round robin jamboree with teams of equal ability. This will enable all players to get the most out of their experience. If we are not going to a championship bracket tournament, then the teams will be split evenly.

The important aspect of this is that we will still have opportunities for everybody to play, but we will put them in situations that best suit them. To start with, you will have the option at signup to choose the **Competitive Program** or the **Recreational Program**. This will give you the choice if you want to put your child into the evaluation portion of the Competitive Program's model. If you feel that the Recreation Program's non-tryout model is better suited for your son, then choose that model. This also will help the coaches with the evaluation process. We also understand that this can be stressful for kids, so having good conversation with your son before and after the selections have been made will result in a growth mindset. There are a lot of lessons and character building opportunities to learn from this.

During our first two practices in the spring, the coaches will evaluate and level players according to the three A's... Attitude, Aptitude and Attendance. The three A's are defined below with character traits that include but are not limited to the descriptions that follow...

1. **Attitude** - coachability, being a great listener, being a good teammate, persevering through challenges and respecting the coaches. This includes playing different positions without complaint to help the team succeed.
2. **Aptitude** - this is skill and knowledge of sports in general, such as confidence in catching and throwing, overall understanding of lacrosse such as playing defense, offense and lacrosse verbiage. Showing hustle and heart when playing and understanding what they are doing on the field. Top players put in a lot of time on their own, practicing for practice.
3. **Attendance** - attending practices even when it is inconvenient. Attending off season workouts. Being members of other summer clubs or box lacrosse opportunities that are available to further improve skill and knowledge. Lacrosse is a priority for this player, they are not missing practice for other sports.

After the first two practices, the coaches will take their evaluations and develop a depth chart of players and order them according to ability. This list is not carved in stone and will change as the players progress and develop. The kids will practice together at the same time and location so the coaches can continually evaluate, and adjust the depth chart as needed.

Thank you and we look forward to the spring season!

Columbia Lacrosse Club Board of Directors