OLA 3-on-3 Mini Game Implementation Guide
General LTAD Philosophy

Long-Term Athlete Development (LTAD) describes how to systematically develop sporting excellence and increase active participation in local, regional, and national sport organizations. Lacrosse, along with other Canadian sports, has a long-term athlete development model best described as an athlete-centered approach that combines skill instruction with long-term planning and an understanding of human growth and development principles. The overall goal is to enhance participation and improve performance and growth of athletes.

Key factors that guide and shape LTAD models are: training in basic physical literacy; the differences between early- and late-specialization in sports; variations in trainability by age; the time needed to develop excellence in sport and the use of periodization in training. There are seven stages in the lacrosse LTAD model: Lacrosse for Life, which range from development of fundamental movement skills to training for elite competition and the transition to lifelong physical activity. A brief description of these stages is available in our Lacrosse for Life Stages document. The Active Start / 3-on-3 Mini Game stage is the program outlined here targeted to young children at the local / introductory level of the sport.

Mission

The primary mission of the Active Start / 3-on-3 Mini Game stage is:

- Recruitment (of new participants to lacrosse)
- Retention (of existing participants in lacrosse)
- Physical Literacy and Lacrosse Skill Development (of all participants)

Philosophy of Active Start/3-on-3 Mini Game

The Active Start / 3-on-3 Mini Game is designed as an introductory version of the game scaled for children. The smaller floor size dimensions reduce the playing space to increase the game pace, in an effort to maximize participation and development opportunities for all players. Supporting documentation which outlines the program for the purpose of parent education is available to clubs.
Game Rules

1. The Mini Game playing surface is the width of a lacrosse box generally known as the offensive or defensive zones by regulation lacrosse rules. The “sideline” for each end of play are the centre zone restraining lines. Creases and nets are positioned against the sideboards facing each other and centre floor is estimated between the two goals.

2. The entire centre or neutral zone in Mini Game serves as the player’s bench or substitution area for players. Coaches organize and instruct players from this area.

3. The game format is three, ten-minute periods, no stop time. A 20-second shot clock is introduced to be governed by the regulation 30-second shot clock rules.

4. Teams are composed of nine players with three players on each line. Players participate in 2-minute shifts each period with a buzzer system in use. At the buzzer signalling the end of a shift, the player with the ball turns it over at that spot, where possession is then contested by substituting players from each team. Teams have a maximum of ten seconds to change players between line shifts.

5. Before a team can shoot on net, the offensive team must complete three successful passes. The referee will call aloud the number of successful passes during each possession. All passes must be initiated from the overhand passing position above the shoulder.

6. All loose ball situations are governed by “first to trap” rule where the referee will stop play and award possession to a player who has successfully trapped a loose ball.

7. While game scores are not recorded, goals are scored by introducing open net, target and/or shooting board challenges to the game. After each goal, the team that has been scored on initiates play from centre floor on the referee’s whistle (ball possession rules apply).

8. Should the ball go out of bounds during play, the referee will award possession to the player on either team, positioned closest to where the ball went out of play.

9. To facilitate skill development, body contact and stick-to-body contact is illegal. Only stick to stick contact is permitted.

10. All actions of players which would result in a penalty under regulation box lacrosse rules, will result in a penalty shot (instead of a time-served penalty) being awarded to the non-offending team. The player who was fouled will take the penalty shot, on the run, advancing directly toward the net from centre floor.

11. There are no goaltenders in the Mini Game format. Shooter tutors (of various sizes), shooting boards, Sniper Targets, balloons and other targets are used to challenge and develop shooting skills in Mini Game.

12. Other than exceptions noted, regulation box lacrosse rules apply to Mini Game.
Program Equipment

The Active Start / 3-on-3 Mini Game uses the following equipment specific to the Mini Game format:

- 3’ x 3’ nets
- 8’ diameter creases
- SwaxLax ball
**Player’s Equipment**

The Active Start / 3-on-3 Mini Game is designed as a non-contact, skill development, learning environment. However, for safety purposes, players are required to wear a helmet/facemask combination and protective gloves. While optional, players are not encouraged to wear full box lacrosse protective equipment.

**Officiating**

One certified referee should be introduced to officiate a 3-on-3 Mini Game at the point where the game play has progressed to require officiating.

**Recommended Implementation Model of Active Start/3-on-3 Mini Game**

To optimize the development opportunity for all participants in Active Start / 3-on-3 Mini Game, a phasing of game play and game rules is recommended. The following model is based on a 10-week schedule with 2-sessions per week, with the emphasis on progressively introducing participants to the game and game rules after they have the opportunity to acquire skills through practice sessions of skills, drills and modified games:

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<td>G</td>
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P= Practice sessions of skills, drills and modified games
G= 3-on-3 game play

All rules apply from the initial Week 4 of game play, with the following exceptions of mandatory and optional rules phased-in beginning in Week 5:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mandatory Rules</th>
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<th>Optional Rules</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 20 second shot clock</td>
<td>• 10 second line changes</td>
<td>• 1 minute shifts</td>
<td>• 12 second shot clock</td>
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<tr>
<td>• 3 pass mandate</td>
<td>• 3 step possession cap</td>
<td>• 3 second possession cap</td>
<td>• 7 second line changes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 3 second possession cap</td>
<td>• 4 pass mandate</td>
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Barriers to Success

The successful implementation of Active Start / 3-on-3 Mini Game at the club level requires more than a new philosophy and game structure. Critical to successful implementation are the following important factors:

- Association / Club Executive commitment to the program
- Advance promotion of the program
- On-going player recruitment during the program
- Great practice sessions filled with fun drills and challenges
- Awareness of lacrosse stick quality used by participants
- Maintaining the integrity of the Active Start / 3-on-3 Mini Game design
The Mini Game Practice Guideline uses a series of stations for which the athletes constantly rotate through. By using multiple stations, athletes are constantly immersed in activity, which therefore reduces waiting time and maximizes fun. With more activity and more personal instruction, athletes will improve while falling in love with lacrosse.

When creating stations, it is important that each station represents a skill or fundamental element of lacrosse. When athletes rotate through the various stations, they will be working on a variety of skills that are essential to playing the game. At the end of each practice session, the athletes will have worked on a variety of individual skills through each station.

Key considerations:

- Stations should be FUN i.e. relays, competitions, races
- Coaches should be positive - use high fives / fist bumps
- Compliment each athlete by name at each station
- Warm-up for 5-6 minutes at the beginning of each session
- Free play for 5-6 minutes at the end of each practice
- Small groups and quick rotation at each station (5-7 athletes for 5-7 minutes)
- Make sure practice environment is safe (water off-floor, bench doors shut, etc.)
- Allow for adequate amount of water breaks
- Length of session 40-45 minutes
- Player to Coach ratio 7:1
Warm-up:

Research supports that a dynamic warm-up benefits the body and keeps athletes safe. Improving physical literacy at this age is vital; try to include running, hopping, twisting, jumping, turning, stopping, starting, and balance exercises into each week’s warm-up. Examples:

- High knees / knee hugs / leg kicks
- Lunges / squats
- Hopping on one foot / hopping on other foot / hopping on both feet
- Lateral shuffles / back-pedalling
- Arm swings / leg swings

Below is a sample practice based on 18-20 players (combining 2 teams in one session). The entire group completes the warm-up together. After the warm-up, split the athletes into 3 groups or more if athletes / coaches permit. Each group would start at a station and do the specific drill / skill for approximately 5 minutes and then rotate to the next station. Each station would have a dedicated coach to instruct and guide the athletes through the station.

The plan below includes a warm-up, 6 stations, and fun time built into a 45 min block. Keep in mind that athletes at this age don’t mind repetition. Coaches can add new progressions from time to time but the emphasis should always be on fun, basic skills, and promoting a positive lacrosse experience.

**Sample Practice Plan**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Group Warm-Up</th>
<th>Group Warm-Up</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6:00 PM</td>
<td>Group Warm-Up</td>
<td>Group Warm-Up</td>
<td>Group Warm-Up</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Station 1: Drill #1</strong></td>
<td><strong>Station 2: Drill #1</strong></td>
<td><strong>Station 3: Drill #1</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:05 PM</td>
<td>Group A</td>
<td>Group B</td>
<td>Group C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:10 PM</td>
<td>Group B</td>
<td>Group C</td>
<td>Group A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:15 PM</td>
<td>Group C</td>
<td>Group A</td>
<td>Group B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:20 PM</td>
<td><strong>Water Break</strong></td>
<td><strong>Water Break</strong></td>
<td><strong>Water Break</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>6:25 PM</td>
<td><strong>Station 1: Drill #2</strong></td>
<td><strong>Station 2: Drill #2</strong></td>
<td><strong>Station 3: Drill #2</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:30 PM</td>
<td>Group A</td>
<td>Group B</td>
<td>Group C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:35 PM</td>
<td>Group B</td>
<td>Group C</td>
<td>Group A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:40 PM</td>
<td><strong>Fun Time</strong></td>
<td><strong>Fun Time</strong></td>
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Similar to the TRY LACROSSE Program, the OLA also has similar promotional resources available for the OLA 3-on-3 Mini Game Program.

Using a standard template, the OLA can drop in local club information to send back printer-ready artwork to each club looking to promote the OLA Mini Game within their own association. The Ontario Lacrosse Association will customize the look of a poster, postcard or both by using:

- Club logos
- Club website address
- Dates and locations of your OLA 3-on-3 Mini Game sessions

The posters are for local community promotion and the postcards are targeted to school classrooms as brochures (for parents and students). Turnaround for design by the OLA is three business days.

Any clubs wishing to customize OLA 3-on-3 Mini Game posters and postcards for their organization can contact Jeramie Bailey at <jeramie@ontariolacrosse.com>. Please have all the above listed resources and information available to help expedite the design time.

To help with printing requirements, we recommend the following paper and weight choices to be discussed with your printer:

- Posters (single-sided): 170gsm Silk or Gloss Art FSC 150gsm
- Postcards (double-sided): 110 lb Index 200gsm

We hope this service might be of some value to all clubs committed to the potential of the OLA 3-on-3 Mini Game Program promotions.
**PARTNER ROLES**

**DESIRED OUTCOMES**
- Generate memorable moments
- Create program for enduring friendships
- Guarantee challenges and rewards
- Ensure sense of personal achievement
- Engender feeling of belonging
- Stimulate fun and inspire confidence
- Fuel passion to play lacrosse

**CLUB ROLE**
- Secure facilities
- Invest in equipment
- Organize volunteers
- Design fun practice plans
- Brand promotion strategy with OLA
- Operate a quality program that serves as the best marketing and communication opportunity for the game

**OLA ROLE**
- LTAD execution in Ontario
- Game format design
- Develop game equipment sets
- Recommend implementation model
- Identify barriers to success
- Brand promotion strategy with clubs
Swax Lax lacrosse training balls

- Exact weight and size of game ball
- Feels real in your stick
- Great for training
- Less bounce and fewer rebounds
- Soft ball eliminates indoor damages

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