

5th/6th Grade Clinician: Kim Wenger

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Kim graduated from Great Valley High School in 2008. She then went on to continue her lacrosse career at Duke University where she graduated in 2012. Throughout high school and college, she coached camps, clinics, and gave individual lessons. Now out of school, Kim is a financial advisor with 1847Financial and is heavily active in the lacrosse community. Her hope is to pass along her passion for lacrosse through coaching and mentoring youth players. She focuses on the fundamentals of the game, while trying to add a fresh perspective based off recent experiences.

Current Involvement:

Great Valley High School

Varsity Coach

Envy Lacrosse

Overview

Fundamentals

Fundamentals like catching, throwing, stick handling, groundballs, and body position are so important. Trying to mix up fun and creative drills focusing on the basics will only help each player to develop faster at higher levels.

Answering why

When setting up drills or giving feedback to young players, the why behind your message helps it stick for most players. It will also help that skill translate all over the field rather than only situational - the same goes when answering questions. Examples, video, diagrams and demos are also effective. Each player has her own learning and communication style, so mix up the techniques you use and encourage feedback at appropriate times.

Instill communication

Get your players talking effectively from day one. Have a common language with your teams so that everyone understands the 'phases' being called onto the field. Most coaches have their favorite one-liners.

Discipline

Working on discipline in all forms will help a player stay disciplined on the field. Things like prompt starting time, specific practice attire, and consistent coaching messages can go a long way when asking a player to be disciplined with their body position on defense or with their risk taking on attack. It will also help players to move on after making a field error (which we all do).

Make drills competitive

When drills are competitive, players tend to be more engaged and start working together better. It also helps make them comfortable with high-pressure situations in a low-pressure environment.

One to the next

Quicker, focused practices are better than 30-40 minute long drills. Again, the players stay more engaged and it helps to practice game sense and space understanding when they play in numerous drills and situations.

Set Goals

Have the girls set individual daily practice goals, game goals, and team goals. Also have them set season goals for themselves and the team and make sure to go back to them often. Goal setting and visualization are intangibles that can help a player stay on track to getting better.

Have an agenda

This helps to stay on track and work toward a coach's practice or season goal. Sometimes sharing the agenda at the beginning of practice helps the girls focus and keep them in the moment rather than always wondering, "what's next and when are we finished."

Typical Practice Plan

Dynamic Warm-up

A lap in twos as a team to warm up. Line stretching: Knee Hugs, Quad Pulls, Frankenstein, RDLs, Side Lung, Front Lung/Bottoms Up, Figure Four, Rain Dance – 10 yards. Movement: Karaoke, Defensive Slides, High Skips, Long Skips – 30 yards. Buildup sprints – 30 yards. Explosive steps – 10 yard sprints, from knee.

Stick work

Individual ball handling for sweet spot, wrist strength, and confidence. 10 R/L flips low. 10 R/L flips high. R/L Figure 8s. R/L Rotational cradle, big pulls, ground to ground, upside down cradle. Flips in, out, and around legs. Stick Trick of the day or week. Creative time to do something cool with the ball in stick.

Catching and Throwing.

Exaggerated form. Arms up and back away from body. Elbows up. Kiss shoulder and have bottom hand back by ear. Lead throwing motion by driving elbow forward. Follow through across body to opposite back pocket. Have the girls Do anything they can to catch every ball. See wall ball, partner passing, and social for more passing drills.

50/50 Situations

Focusing on ground ball technique, first step, body position/boxing out, going for the ball and running through the play. Talk about choking up, communication, and discourage empty stick checks.

Attack

Working on using the whole body to fake, power and finesse shooting, picks, both setting and using. When setting a pick have them cut down and come back so they are angled under the defender and emphasize the roll and being an option. Talk about getting the stick free and away from a defender. Work on fundamental dodges and changing speed and direction. Again, make sure the communication is a priority. Work on spacing and staying wide.

Defense

Fundamental positioning and stick placement. Teach body and butt positioning, how to hold the stick, keeping arms out and eyes low.

ABCs of on ball defense – Approach, Breakdown, Contain, Dictate. Work on closing the space, not getting beat on first move, and keeping the attacker one way.

Slides – having the girls slide laterally and beat to the spot.

Double teams – having them stay in them until they get the ball or the play is broken.

Team Defense – shell drill and being in a good V position, hedging toward ball. Flipping as the ball moves and recognizing slides and double opportunities.

Defensive Transition

All slides are lateral or from recovery. Never slide low to high! Middies and high d – have them recover to the crease and come back up to find the most dangerous girl some no one sneaks under them. Communication is so important and a key component here should be the goalie.

Attack Transition

Most beneficial fundamental for attack is to use the whole field. Spread the defense and make their slides as long as possible. As soon as one defender can mark two girls through the midfield, the attack's advantage is slowed. On a clear – having patterns that are replicable and simple helps to keep spacing and helps the goalie to know where to look for her outlets.

Game Like and Live Play

Ending on a fast pass, competitive, live type of drill or small-sided game is something most players look forward to ending on. It is a great time to implement what they have been working on that day and is a good way to get some conditioning in besides just running.

Drills and Additional Ideas

Wall Ball

One handed R/L with one cradle, with a face cradle, quick sticks. R/L little hands with 2 fakes.

Partner Passing

Low passes below the waist, add in tricky stuff. Normal passing, feet moving and doing everything to catch every ball. R/L/Opposite/Switches,/highballs/gbs.

Long Passes.

Social

One ended shuttle – focus on stick protection (shoulder, shoulder, stick) and pivots at the end (keeping weight inside toward the direction they are switching to). Run through the catches, catch and get rid after one cradle. Adding in a defender.

50/50

draws, 1v1 to and from, 2v2 to goal, 3v3 to goal, one handed high balls, 1v1v1 to double team. No stick box out drill. Keep-away in the circle

Attack

Holding sticks back for power shooting and passing. Crease fakes. Cuts up and back with little hands, fakes, and shot.

Shooting (for the goalie): 5 spot shooting, some low to low, two lane dodges, and one center gb into a shot.

Shooting (for attackers): box passing into a shot, lane shooting, crease dodge and shot, shooting shuttle to work on upper body rotation.

Defense

Positioning and sliding boxes – mirroring and stepping up into the space, 5 by 5 mirroring, 5 by 15 progression, double teams. Footwork with cones and sticks.

Double teaming – progressing from the above drill by adding a second defender out on an angle. As the attacker moves downfield, the defenders are talking to funnel the attacker and turn her back, closing hips and stepping up, focused on body position and slowing down the ball before looking for an aggressive turnover. Move the drill into the 8 meter. Push slides from 2 away and work on shutting off adjacent to deter fast point passing.

Transition Drills

Clearing drills. Spot passing all the way up field.

Simulated clears. Having designated lines and then playing to goal with different patterns

Recovery Drill: keep away between the 30s. On the turnover, d rushes back to the goal line and back up to find an attacker and play team d. Attackers are going to goal.

Neutral Mid – 4v4 in the attacking and defensive ends, play to 50 – full field, one midfielder is the transition player. Clears cannot go out to her. She plays the man up on each side, 5v4.

Live Drills

- 5v4: assign attack and d players and set them up as 3v2 at the center and 2v2 low. Start with a 50/50 ball. Work on lateral slides and playing two.
- 3v2 coming in. D working on slides and playing two/being big. A working on using different levels and quick passes to get a clean shot on cage.
- Live Draws: play out 3-4 passes after take a draw and collecting the possession. Then back to center again.
- 3v3: use half the 8m to play 3v3 on one side and then switch to the other side. D is working on slides and awareness. Attack is working on movement, working together, and stickwork – both sides of the cage.
- 5v5 keep away in the circle – using a small space to work of stickwork and defensive awareness/slides.
- Box Drill: 4 attackers and every 3rd pass, d adds in another until it is 4v4. Work on going to body and being big on D. Attack is working on going to the open space, thinking a pass ahead, protection, and throwing fakes.
- 4v3 stationary box to goal. 4 attackers and 3 defenders in the arch. D is working of slides and communication – No Diagonal slides. Attack is working on thinking a pass ahead, throwing fakes, and taking smart shots.
- Scramble drill where attackers are passing on the perimeter and D is in the eight. On the whistle, they break and have to find a girl, get organized and stop the attack from scoring.
- Recovery: play keep away between the 50 and 30. On the turnover, have the defensive team run down to the endline before marking up so they get used to getting lowest on the field then picking up most dangerous player first.
- Double team drill: 30 and in starting from a gb and immediate double team working to move the ball and see the open 2v1 on the backside.
- Live full field clears
- 5 v 5 forcing each spot to challenge in order to start the set.
- Live 5 v 5
- Live 7 v 7
- Live 8m: attack working on a quick start and getting in to the center of the cage. D working on crashing hard and low to a body.