

Highlights from John Pilcher's Coaching Clinic

- Have a practice plan
 - Being prepared is vital
 - Have goals for the season, game and practice
 - Have extra drills ready in case
- Communicate with the parents
 - Have expectations for them
 - Enforce the 24-hour rule
 - Make sure you copy Tara on any confrontational or possibly confrontational correspondence. Do not engage them on your own, especially during or immediately after a game or practice
 - Always be respectful
- Talk to the referees respectfully
 - Ask them if you don't understand a call
 - Always be respectful – whether or not you agree with a call (or a non-call), do not engage in a combative conversation with them. Remember, your parents and players are watching and will feed off of your demeanor
 - If there is an ongoing issue, talk to our Referee In Chief or Tara (also a certified albeit non-practicing referee)
- Drills/practice tips
 - Defense will win the game every time – spend lots of time working on this!
 - House drills are very effective – formation and staying in the house, working against the instinct to chase the ball. Novice and up, stay in the house for the 30 seconds, keep the sticks up for the intercept. Tyke and Paperweight, this is a little harder without the 30 second clock but get in the habit of keeping formation while on defense.
 - Balloon or other targets for wall ball warm ups – make sure the hand positioning is correct, also watch for over the shoulder shots and stepping into the shot, get in front of the ball to stop it.
 - Breaking the side arm habit – have them stand beside the boards and shoot that way so they can't shoot at the side
 - Tape on the floor cutting the net in half, all players learn to stand so their stick points towards the tape (righties face the goalie's right side, lefties face his left side). Use this for house positioning and all shots on net.
 - When rolling off a defensive player, always roll opposite your stick hand

- Loose ball drills
 - Line players up on the red circle, give each one a number, place one ball in the middle of the circle. Call out a number, then all players with that number run in and try to scoop the ball first, then get it outside the circle.
 - Three players stand back to back facing out, put the ball between their backs and on “go” they must try to get the ball and take a shot on net. The two who do not gain possession become defense.
 - Two or three players lie down, coach rolls ball, players on “go” must try to get the ball and take a shot on net. The one or two without the ball become defense
- Water breaks are important – at least 3 during the practice *don’t forget the goalie!
- Keep the groups small – especially at Novice and younger, and the drills short
- NEVER be in the change room alone with a child – always have at least one other adult
- Players will respond to your mood – if you are relaxed, enjoying the game/practice and having fun, they will too. If you are angry and get upset by calls, goals or behaviour of the other team, your players will too. Your words and behaviour have a lasting impact on players – be cognizant of that every moment you are with them. By the end of the season, your team will have taken on your personality – laid back coaches will have a laid back team, indifferent coaches will have an indifferent team, aggressive coaches will have an aggressive team and a coach who is confident and happy will end up with an engaged, confident and happy team.
- There are many resources out there to help you have a successful and competitive season. There are manuals and drill cards on the website (under Box House League – Volunteers – Coaches) and many experienced coaches out there willing to come out and help at a practice or game or two.

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