



***PARENT AND PLAYER
HANDBOOK***

Welcome

Welcome to the Warren Area Lacrosse Association (WALA) and Warren Blue Devils Lacrosse! It is our desire to deliver a high-quality lacrosse program and to foster the growth and competitiveness of lacrosse at Warren Township High School. We look forward to working with coaches, players and parents to continue to develop the next great sports tradition at Warren Township High School.

We have put together this handbook to educate both players and their parents/guardians about the game and our expectations and to provide you with the information you will need to enjoy the lacrosse experience to its fullest. We welcome your input and participation. We attempt to conduct much of our business on-line. **If you have not already done so, please provide an email address to Anne Hauser at secretary@warrenlax.org.** If email will not work as primary communication with you or your player, please advise Boys Head Coach John Vignocchi at johnvlacrosse@aol.com or Girls Head Coach Catherine Catanzaro @cctanzaro@wthsh.net

I. About Warren Area Lacrosse Association (WALA)

A. History

The Warren Area Lacrosse Association (WALA) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization formed to promote and support youth and high school lacrosse in the Warren Township area. WALA is governed by a Board of Directors. Questions or comments can be directed to any Director. Contact information for current Board members can be found at www.WarrenLAX.org.

B. Objectives

WALA's goal is to develop and foster a lacrosse program at WTHS as an emergent sport. To that end, WALA began with two boys' lacrosse teams at WTHS in 2008. 2009 will see Freshman B team and a Frosh A team being added to the already-existing Junior Varsity team for boys as well as the addition of at least one Girls team. Our goal for 2010 will be the addition of a Varsity Boys team as well as a Varsity Girls team.

The long-term goal of WALA continues to be the development of lacrosse in the Warren Township area for youth in grades 3 - 8 through clinics, camps and league play in conjunction with Lacrosse America as a feeder program to the WTHS program.

II. About Warren Blue Devils Lacrosse

Warren Blue Devils lacrosse was approved by the Warren Township Board of Education in October 2007 as an emergent sport at Warren Township High School. Emergent sport status requires WTHS Lacrosse to abide by the Illinois High School Association policies and procedures. All financial and administrative support for WTHS Lacrosse will be the sole responsibility of Warren Area Lacrosse Association.

The Boys Frosh and JV teams for the 2009 season will consist of a maximum of 30 players. Our Freshman Boys team may have more players depending upon turnout and the desire to not cut Freshmen. Girls will only have 15-18 players per team. Teams will be selected by a tryout and evaluation process that will begin at the end of February. Selection of players for each team is at the sole discretion of the Head Coaches. Coaches for all teams have been secured and are posted on www.WarrenLAX.org. All boys and girls currently enrolled at WTHS who meet the eligibility requirements as outlined in the WTHS Athletic Code of Conduct are eligible to participate.

III. Communication

A. *Team Communications*

All communications from coaches, managers, and WALA will be via e-mail and/or access to www.WarrenLAX.org. E-mail addresses for players and parents should be provided at registration. Any changes to contact information for player or parent should be communicated to your Coach, Manager AND to the WALA Secretary at secretary@warrenlax.org. Any alternative communications needs should be addressed directly to the head coach.

B. *Weather / Field Conditions*

All reports of cancellations due to inclement weather, lightening, poor field conditions, etc. will be communicated on the website: www.WarrenLAX.org. Players and parents should check the website frequently and up to one hour prior to game and practice times due to quickly changing Springtime weather conditions.

IV. Core Values

Our goal is to promote the sport of lacrosse among *student* athletes at Warren Township High School by providing a challenging, meaningful and exciting experience for our players. We believe that athletic competition plays a vital role in the development of young adults. Sportsmanship, commitment, discipline, responsibility, respect, integrity, and time management are all promoted and expected by the coaches. By providing a high level of lacrosse competition within this framework, we endeavor to make our players better members of our community.

V. Player Fees and Fundraising Requirements

A. *Player Fees*

Player fees and payment terms are outlined at the orientation meeting. The registration fees cover team equipment (goals, nets, field paint, practice balls, etc.), game officials, coaching fees, US Lacrosse membership and league fees.

B. *Fundraising Requirements*

Fundraising activities are mandatory, as they are crucial to the continued growth and sustainment of WTHS lacrosse. Player fees alone do not cover the expenses associated with fielding WTHS lacrosse teams. Players who do not meet fundraising requirements may be ineligible to participate until an equitable resolution has been reached between the Player and WALA Board of Directors. All funds raised will go directly to WALA and will be used at the discretion of the Board of Directors. Generally, funds will be used to purchase additional team equipment, training aids, etc., as well as to offset various other expenses incurred and to perpetuate the continued growth of youth and high school lacrosse in the Warren Township area.

C. *Sponsorships*

Individual and Corporate sponsorships are always welcome. Information regarding charitable donations to WALA from area businesses, family members or individual community members can be obtained from www.WarrenLAX.org.

D. *Hardships*

It is the desire of WALA to have all interested students experience lacrosse at WTHS and not be inhibited by financial restraints. At the time of registration, full payment of registration fees or payment plan commitment are expected. Financial assistance may be available for those in need by contacting the Treasurer (Treasurer@warrenlax.org). Inquiries will be held in strict confidence. All requests for financial assistance will be considered by the WALA Board of Directors on a case-by-case basis.

E. *Refunds*

There will be no automatic refund of any player participation fee. Players are selected to teams based on a good faith agreement by the player that he will abide by the WTHS Athletic Code of Conduct, IHSA Policies and Procedures, and player expectations as outlined in this handbook.

- 1) ***Suspension:*** A player who is suspended from the team for any reason, and for any length of time, will not be entitled to, or granted, a refund of participation fees. This includes players who leave for academic reasons, as well as loss of eligibility requirements as outlined in the WTHS Athletic Code of Conduct.
- 2) ***Player Move Out-of-District:*** If a player leaves the team due to his family moving out of the WTHS school district, the WALA board will review the circumstances and may grant a pro-rated refund of player participation fees. This does not constitute any guarantee of refund.
- 3) ***Injury:*** If a player leaves the team due to a season-ending injury or illness, the WALA board will review the circumstances and may grant a pro-rated refund of player participation fees. This does not constitute any guarantee of refund.
- 4) ***Other:*** If a player leaves the team for any reason except those outlined above, the player will not be entitled to, or granted, a refund of participation fees.

VI. Equipment & Uniforms

Individual equipment is the sole responsibility of the player. Each player on a Boys team must have an approved helmet, mouth guard, shoulder pads, elbow pads, gloves, stick, protective cup, athletic cleats and an approved lacrosse stick with approved butt end cap. Because high school teams are required to have matching helmets, players are required to have a white helmet (WALA recommends Cascade helmet) with black face mask and black chin straps. Each player on the Girls team must have an approved eye shield, mouth guard and stick. Gloves are optional.

Uniforms are provided by WALA. All players must sign the Uniform Contract prior to distribution.

Team equipment including goals, nets, liner, balls, scrimmage vests, timers, etc., are the property of WALA. Players are not permitted to use any team equipment for their own personal use unless approved by the head coach. Any violation could be cause for dismissal.

VII. Permission Forms, Waiver of Liability and Insurance

A. *Permission Forms*

Inasmuch as there are hazards involved with lacrosse, as with any sport, a WTHS Athletic Permission Form must be signed by a parent or guardian prior to participating in any WTHS Lacrosse activity. WTHS Athletic Permission Form may be obtained from www.WarrenLAX.org.

B. *Waiver of Liability*

A WALA Waiver of Liability and Release must be signed by both player and parent prior to participation in any WTHS Lacrosse activity.

C. *Insurance*

As with any athletic activity, there is potential for injury and, therefore, player insurance is required. The medical coverage offered as a benefit to members of US Lacrosse is a supplemental policy that covers expenses not covered by your primary medical insurance provider for injuries sustained in supervised practices or games (deductible may apply). Go to www.USLacrosse.org for detailed insurance information, claim forms, etc. A US Lacrosse membership form must be completed and signed in order to participate in any WTHS Lacrosse activities. US Lacrosse membership forms may be obtained from www.WarrenLAX.org.

VIII. Player Code of Conduct

A. *Attendance*

1. **All team members are expected to attend every practice and game.** All players have made an implicit commitment to the team. The success of the team relies upon everyone being present at all team functions.

Some absences may be excused, but require direct contact between the player and coach prior to the absence. Excused absences from practice include:

Illness

- Medical appointments
- Scholastic testing (or equivalent)
- Family emergencies

2. **Team members should anticipate the time commitment that the lacrosse season demands and will be expected to plan accordingly.** As such, the following reasons will not be considered as excused absences:

- Other extracurricular activities or clubs
- Employment
- Finishing incomplete school work

Special exceptions may be made through prior arrangement between coach and player.

3. **Penalties for unexcused absences and tardiness to practices/games:**

Specifics will be addressed at orientation meeting.

4. **All team members are expected to arrive at every practice and game on time.** Being on time includes having all clothing and gear, including mouth guards and cups (for boys), on and ready, and prepared to begin warm-up. Late arrivals must be cleared with a coach prior to the event by the player.

Team members are expected to remain at a practice/game area until dismissed by a coach.

B. Participation & Conduct

Practice clothing/equipment must be suitable for the specific demands of lacrosse and meet all specifications required by the Head Coaches. Team members are expected to bring all appropriate gear to practices and games.

1. Players will be expected to work hard at every practice and follow all directions of the coaching staff. Specific disciplinary policies and expectations will be distributed in writing to team members by each Head Coach. Additionally, all players are required to read and sign the WTHS Athletic Code.
2. **Players will exhibit exemplary sportsmanship both on and off the field. The physical or verbal abuse of other players, coaches, parents and referees will not be tolerated and will result in disciplinary action.** Players represent lacrosse both on and off the playing field and inside and outside of school.
3. Players must behave and speak in a manner appropriate to the school environment.
4. Players are responsible for collection and removal of all trash/garbage on the field at the end of each practice or game.
5. Players will be held to ALL requirements and expectations as outlined in the WTHS Athletic Code of Conduct.

C. *Playing Time*

The amount of time a player sees in a game is determined by the coach, based on the guidelines provided by the league, the athlete's participation and attendance in practice, and the competition level of play. As a guide, the following categories outline the coach's general guidelines for athlete's playing time:

Freshman & Frosh: This level of play refines the basic skills to position proficiency. Coaches will focus on game strategy, advanced team building skills, physical conditioning, and team leadership. The competition level is high, as with any high school level sport, and playing time will be based on the game situation and athlete's abilities.

Junior Varsity: Athletes at this level should have established fundamental proficiency and focus will be on position mastering. The competition level is extremely high and playing time will be based on the athlete's abilities and attitude.

IX. Grievance Procedure

Knowing when to communicate and how to communicate with your athlete's coach is a concern for almost every parent at some time during the season. WALA encourages athletes to talk to their coach when they have a problem about playing time, or if the player is unclear about the coach's expectations in practice or in competition. The appropriate attitude is for the athlete to ask the coach what they need to do to get more opportunities to play in games. Parents can best help their athlete by helping them to set goals to achieve more opportunities.

When parents have an issue that is specific to their own athlete, their issue or concern should be brought to the head coach of the team the player is on.. Parents are not allowed to go to any other coach for any reason other than the head coach of the team their athlete is on. Coaches are not obligated to discuss coaching decisions. Coaching decisions include, among other things, specific game decisions such as who played when, and who was subbed out when, etc. The amount of time any given athlete is on the field is the result of a complex determination, in that coach's opinion, of the athlete's ability, the athlete's potential, athlete's safety, the team's needs at the moment, and the team's needs in the future. The coach will not be required to defend his/her thought process or conclusions in these determinations, and it is improper for a parent to request him/her to do so. A 24-hour "cooling off" period will be enforced before any coach may be approached by a parent to discuss an issue or concern.

In addition, we instruct coaches not to discuss any athlete other than the parent's own child, or the actions of any other coach. If you, as a parent, have legitimate concerns about a coach other than your athlete's coach, or with a player other than your own, you need to address the Head Coach or the WALA Board of Directors.

Many times, issues are simply a matter of miscommunication or misunderstanding that can be resolved simply by addressing the issues with the coach as soon as a problem or concern arises. Specifically, the procedures to follow if you as a parent, or your athlete as a member of the team, have concerns about our policies or actions are, in this order:

- 1) The athlete is encouraged to speak to, or meet with, his/her coach about the matter. If the matter remains unresolved:
 - a) The parent should speak to, or meet with, the Head Coach of the athlete's team.
 - b) Parents and/or athletes are expected to contact the Head Coach to schedule a meeting. It is never appropriate to approach the coach before, during or after a practice or game.
 - c) Meetings are to be at times and locations other than games. If a parent approaches a coach during a game, the coach is to refuse to discuss any controversial matter, refer the parent to the WALA Board, and to walk away from the parent.
 - d) The recommended time for a parent and/or player to talk to a coach about a problem is at a previously arranged meeting time either before or immediately after a scheduled practice. If the matter is still unresolved:
- 2) The parent may speak to the Head Coach and/or the WALA Board and request a meeting with the coach and the Head Coach.
 - a) In certain situations, we may ask the player to attend the meeting, also.
 - b) Meetings should be previously arranged. Meetings will not be scheduled immediately before, during or after a game.
 - c) The Head Coach and/or the WALA Board will not engage in discussion about coaching strategy.

Other general policies regarding grievances with WALA are:

- 1) WALA will not tolerate hostile, aggressive confrontations between a parent and any official, coach, player, or other parent, whether the player or parent is a member of the team or not. Violation of this policy may result in the player being dismissed from the team.
- 2) It is inappropriate for a player or a parent to approach anyone other than WALA Board members or the Head Coach about a problem the player or parent is having with a coach, about objections to coaching decisions, or about disagreements with an administrative decision.

Contact information for WALA Board of Directors and Head Coaches may be obtained at www.WarrenLAX.org.