

**HEREFORD EXECUTIVE COUNCIL
YOUTH LACROSSE PROGRAM
ASSESSMENT & RECOMMENDATION
03/13/2003**

The Hereford Executive Council met on March 5, 2003 to discuss concerns expressed by a group of former and existing Girls Lacrosse volunteers. Attendees at the meeting included representatives of the Hereford Executive Council, Baltimore County Parks & Recreation, the Hereford Lacrosse Board, and those of the concerned group.

The responsibility of the Hereford Executive Council is to provide an objective assessment and recommendation on issues or concerns regarding any HRC program. The issues are ones that have not been resolved in direct negotiations with the program. The assessment and recommendation of this Council is final and is to be implemented by the program.

The information and research used in reaching our recommendations has been extensive. In addition to what was presented at the meeting, we collected opinions from numerous parents, volunteers and former board members or coaches. We have also had discussions with the LTRC Recreation Council and the President of the Girls MYLA board. Finally, we have also reviewed the MYLA regulations which govern the issues being addressed.

As a Council, we believe the current HRC Lacrosse program and the governing body has done an excellent job in building and supporting both the girls and boys Lacrosse program. The program has experienced considerable growth, has achieved a budget surplus, put a strong administrative structure in place, and effectively integrated both programs with only some exceptions and difficulties.

Unfortunately, it is our opinion that neither the HRC Lacrosse Board nor the concerned group of representatives has put the kid's interests first concerning the contentious issues. There appear to be selfish concerns on both sides and a lack of willingness to put personal issues aside to reach a compromise best for the kids. Our assessment of the issues is as follows:

1. There is inadequate representation and decision making of people on the women's Lacrosse board who know the game and can make autonomous decisions for the girls program. The decisions made are done universally and often biased by the decisions made for the boys program or the program in general.
2. Poor communications. There is a lack of communications across the board and down through the organization. This is particularly true regarding board meetings, decisions affecting the girls program, and general communications to volunteers or coaches.
3. Coaching selection. There is a perception that coaches are not selected based on their qualifications but that it is based on relationships and biases of board members.
4. Play up rule and keeping teams together. There are opposing sides on the merit of instituting a play-up rule and how to effectively administer it. Additionally, there is a perception that keeping teams together is the desired outcome of instituting play-ups.

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Our recommendations concerning these issues are as follows:

Board Representation and Decision Making

The current structure combining boys and girls Lacrosse having one commissioner and two separate boards should remain in place. There are no recommended changes to the current general organization of the Lacrosse program.

The boards for the boys and girls Lacrosse programs should consist of player coordinators and coaches for each program. One coach from each of the four levels must be included on the board. No individual can serve on both the boys and girls boards.

Decisions specific to each program should be made by the respective boys or girls board and not by the combined boards. If agreement cannot be reached by the board then the decision should be raised for review and approval by the commissioner. Any decisions that affect the combined boys and girls programs should be voted on by the combined board.

Board meetings should be open to all members of the organization; coaches, coordinators, directors, and team parent volunteers. Parents are not to be included at the board meetings unless authorized by the commissioner. Meetings should be held in a public facility and a schedule of board meeting dates should be issued at the start of the season. Minutes from the meeting and decisions approved should be distributed for review by all.

Player assessment policies should be decided by the boards for each program. The current player assessment procedures should be reviewed, revised and voted on by the program board. The procedures may be different for each program but should be consistent across programs as much as possible. Once developed and approved, these should be distributed to the organization and made available for review by anyone who is interested.

Communications

As indicated, all board meetings should be conducted as an open forum. Meeting minutes and decisions should be distributed to all in attendance electronically or in hard copy. Copies of these and other general communications should be made available at the HRC office. The policies and procedures for the Lacrosse program should be distributed as requested to any of the parents, volunteers and organization members.

Policies and procedures for critical aspects of the program (e.g. Player Assessments) must be documented and made available for everyone interested to review. These procedures are to be provided to all board members, coordinators, and volunteers. A change in policy should be documented and updated for distribution to this same group.

The current policy of player coordinators inviting coaches to the meetings should be clarified and communicated to both the coordinators and coaches again. Additionally, the by-laws as proposed by the commissioner should be reviewed and approved by the combined boards then distributed to everyone involved in the organization.

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Coaching Selection

The current policy and procedure for selecting coaches should be reviewed, revised and approved by the separate boards. The criteria and qualifications for coaches should be specified and documented. Separate requirements may be necessary for each program. The girl's coaches should have a demonstrated knowledge or experience coaching girl's Lacrosse. Once developed and approved, these should be distributed to the organization and made available for review by anyone who is interested.

At the beginning of the season, recruitment for coaching vacancies should be conducted by the coordinators. In addition to recruiting coaches from parents who register their children in the program, coaches should be recruited from other sources. When registration forms are distributed, a notice should be included inviting all those interested in coaching to attend the first board meeting before the start of the season.

At the meeting, candidates should fill out a form to document their interest and qualifications. All candidates should be evaluated by the separate board and final decisions on coaches should be approved by each of the separate boards, including incumbent coaches.

Play Up Policy

While the policy of playing up is provided for in the regulations of MYLA, it is not supported by them because of the concern for injury and liability. Other recreation councils have tried to institute a play up policy with either little success or great controversy. There should not be a play up policy in either the boys or girls HRC Lacrosse Programs.

This concludes the recommendations on the issues pertaining to the HRC Lacrosse Program as reviewed by the HRC Executive Council. If there are any questions please direct them to the HRC County Representative for further discussion.

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