

# ***The Winning Edge: A Seven Point Plan***

***by Coach Ted Garber***



Over the past 29 years I have had the unique opportunity to have been able to be a head lacrosse coach at the Secondary School level (Avon Old Farms), Division I Collegiate level of lacrosse (University of New Hampshire and University of Massachusetts) and at the Professional Level (Major League Lacrosse). I have frequently been asked what it has been like in terms of working with and coaching all of the teams and players at the various levels.

While each level of play is unique

in its own way, essentially, the most important factors of becoming a top caliber player and team remained the same at every level. I would like to share them with you in order for the aspiring lacrosse player(s) to be able to realize his goals and dreams as he undertakes the challenges and opportunities of the great game of lacrosse.

First and foremost, if you want to have the opportunity for success, then you have to have a "Plan" to get there. It starts with a method to develop your potential as a lacrosse player. In order to do this, you must understand that lacrosse is a team sport and that it is a lot easier and more fun to play with a team effort than as a bunch of individuals. The "Plan" is based on seven points and it is up to you to decide to use it or not.

## **1) Physical Conditioning**

Of all of the top lacrosse players that I have coached at any level, they all have been "in shape", which allowed them to undertake the rigors of playing lacrosse for an entire game while at their maximum level. The game is more fun to play when you are in shape. This includes a weight training regimen, along with an emphasis on running, good eating habits and rest.

## **2) Developing O & D Skills**

Offensive and defensive skills, both with and without the ball, should be practiced on a consistent basis. This includes the Individual fundamentals of dodging, shooting, passing, catching, agility and defensive techniques. Additionally, team fundamentals such as "reading the movement of the defense" and "sliding and filling" to name a few.

## **3) Scrimmage**

Playing with a friend 1-v-1, or a group of friends 2-v-2, 3-v-3 and 4-v-4. No matter what the format, go hard in any of these situations.

## **4) Freedom of Style**

Style is one of the greatest parts of the game for all players to be able to develop as part of their game. All of the great players have it. This does not mean that you do anything that you want without regard to team goals. It means you can develop your own unique (fundamentally sound) techniques based on things that you do well for the good of the team.

## **5) Discipline**

Discipline is the most misunderstood word in sports. Having a coach yell at you is not what discipline should be about. Instead, it is about doing what you are suppose to do at the time that you are suppose to do it. And, there are two types of discipline. Individual Discipline—you are responsible for you. You become tough minded so you do not make "costly errors" created by having an illegal stick, arguing with the officials, retaliating towards an opponent, responding to taunting fans. The other kind is Team Discipline—based upon your obligation to the team, you need to understand your role as defined by the coach and fulfill it to the best of your ability for the good of the team. Remember, during the course of a lacrosse game there is a lot of individual effort within team play and you are part of a group that has one ball to play with. Be accountable to your coaches and teammates for your play.

## **6) No Lip Service**

Do not tell the team what you are going to do or what you used to do. You are judged and evaluated by what you do within the team context.

## **7) Attitude**

Your attitude is part of the discipline factor. It is virtually impossible to be or become an outstanding player in any team sport without making sacrifices, taking the time to learn and execute the skills, abiding by team rules, getting along with coaches and teammates and functioning as part of a team, rather than as an individual.



I hope that what I have shared with you will help you become a better and more successful lacrosse player. It is important to remember two things of importance as you undertake the Seven Point Plan. The will to prepare is not as important as actually doing so; and most of the time it is not the team with all of the best players that has the most success, rather it is the team with the players that play the best together.

Good luck and Check Sticks,

Coach Ted Garber

*Coach Garber is the Athletic Director and Head Coach at Avon Old Farms School in Connecticut. He has over 200 career wins and has coached in the MLL, at UNH and was named NCAA Coach of the Year while at UMass. He is also a Scouting Coordinator for Lax Scout.*