

West Des Moines Lacrosse Club



Club Handbook

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Welcome to the West Des Moines Lacrosse Club!

This handbook outlines the policies and expectations of the West Des Moines Lacrosse Club (WDMLAX). The club's board of directors and coaching staff believe it is important that you are properly informed of club policies and expectations so your membership in WDMLAX is a more enjoyable and rewarding experience.

The content of this handbook including club policies and member expectations may be changed or updated without notice.

Additionally, all players, coaches, volunteers, and parents of WDMLAX are encouraged to read the complete policies and procedures of any and all leagues and/or tournaments where WDMLAX may complete.

Program Philosophy

The WDMLAX program philosophy is one of developing individuals as well as successful teams. The organization believes its primary role is to develop the character of players resulting in future upstanding members of society. The WDMLAX organization understands that the life lessons taught to our players will carry far beyond the field, and that preparing them for competition entails imparting values and strategies that will impact them long beyond their playing days. The program strives to develop and improve positive citizenship among the program's participants. The team endeavors to win, but not at the expense of learning, development, and most importantly, the enjoyment of playing the game.

Participation in the WDMLAX club program is a privilege and not a right, and should provide our players a chance to grow on and off the field as well as developing life-long relationships and love for the game. Every effort will be made to support the team with the best facilities, equipment and most qualified staff available. Coaches will teach the specific skills necessary for improvement as a lacrosse player and provide guidance in the development of self-realization, good sportsmanship, cooperation, leadership, ethical behavior, and an appreciation for the importance of practice and a strong work ethic.

The following information outlines key tenets of our philosophy.

Academics – Academics are of great importance to WDMLAX. This is a school-first club program. It is expected that all players attend their classes regularly and do all required schoolwork to maintain eligibility throughout the school year. Education opens doors to the future, and needs to be a priority.

Attitude – Attitude is the more important influence in a player's success. A positive attitude will help the player succeed on and off the field. A poor attitude not only affects the player, but also those around them.

Character – Development of the individual is more important than winning. Players will be held accountable for their actions and will contribute to a positive culture. Their actions will affect their success. Good character will be demonstrated in all facets of the player's life. Players will learn to make good decisions in the development of their character.

Effort – Skill-based play through lacrosse is one of the ways that players learn that it will take effort to be successful in life. Best effort is expected at all times on and off the lacrosse field.

Respect – All players, coaches, and parents **WILL** respect each other, the rules, the officials, the opponents, and themselves. No one person is more important than another. Players will also respect their peers, teachers, school administrators, and their families.

Fundamentals – Lacrosse is a skill-based sport, and fundamentals play a vital part of the game. Fundamentals will be practiced every day during the season. Players wanting to get better and earn playing time can do so by practicing fundamentals on their own time in addition to during practice.

Player Development Approaches – The club fields several teams and while skills and techniques will be taught at all age levels, each team differs in the approach of balancing individual player development, playing time and team success.

The **Middle School and Youth programs** train players in the basic skills of lacrosse. Equal playing time among players is not guaranteed, however, the philosophy at the Middle School and Youth levels is to emphasize player development over wins. The coaching staff will attempt to keep disparity in playing time amongst team members to a minimum.

The **Junior Varsity programs** also trains players in the skills of the sport. League competition begins at this level and WDM LAX will afford as many players as possible the opportunity to participate within the league schedule so that they may achieve their fullest learning and performance levels. While equal playing time among players is not guaranteed, the philosophy at the Junior Varsity level is to emphasize player development over wins. However, there may be key times in the game when coaching strategy and player performance may trump equal playing time considerations.

The **Varsity programs** will continue to develop lacrosse players, and utilize those players who show the greatest ability in a variety of skills and represent good sportsmanship and strong work ethic. The Varsity teams are for players who have learned the basic skills well and perform them both in practice and in competition. While an effort is made to allow as many players as possible to compete, the more advanced players will receive the majority of the playing time. The Varsity teams will strive to compete at the highest levels possible in any league or tournament competition.

Team members who display leadership and/or enthusiasm, in combination with basic skill development, may enhance their opportunity to participate at both the Varsity and Junior Varsity levels of competition. Some team members may participate at both the Varsity and Junior Varsity level simultaneously, but likely to differing degrees.

Player Policies & Expectations

General Eligibility Requirements

The following represent the requirements that must be met by a player to be considered eligible to participate with WDM LAX. The WDM LAX Board of Directors shall have the right and discretion to refuse participation to any individual. Participation as a player with WDM LAX is a privilege, not a right.

All players are required to be registered with USA Lacrosse (USAL). This is accomplished as part of the club's online registration process. The only exception to this policy is a new player that has chosen the option of trying lacrosse by attending up to 2 practices before having to register with USAL and WDM LAX. Parents of such players are required to submit a completed WDM LAX Parental Consent Waiver and Release Form before the player participates in the 2-practice trial period.

All player fees must be paid in full to participate and be considered in good financial standing with WDM LAX.

A player may request a release from WDM LAX to compete with another club by submitting such request in writing to the Board of Directors. The issuance of a release by WDM LAX is at the discretion of the Board of Directors. Under no circumstances will such a release be issued unless the player has completed all financial commitments to, and is in good standing with WDM LAX at the time the release is requested.

A player may request to transfer into the WDMLAX program without moving within our boundaries. Any such request will be submitted to the Board of Directors. The Board of Directors will only approve transfers that provide evidence of extenuating circumstances. All requests to transfer require approval by the governing league as well.

WDMLAX requires that all incoming players report any outstanding financial obligations to other USAL-registered organizations. As a member of USAL, WDMLAX will not place a player on our roster until the outstanding financial obligations with any previous club or program are satisfied and the player is considered in good standing with that organization.

Players must be eligible to participate in their local school's interscholastic athletic programs. If a player becomes ineligible per their local school's requirements during the course of the lacrosse season, that player must notify WDMLAX. The player will subsequently be suspended from participation until such time they meet their school's eligibility requirements, and can provide proof from their school they are eligible.

Typically, any student moving/transferring into a new school district who has been declared ineligible under a prior district's Student Activity Conduct Code or equivalent policy will not be eligible for participation in competition until the full period of ineligibility, as identified by the prior district, has been completed.

WDMLAX will comply with all interscholastic athletics and regulatory laws including state concussion regulations and protocol.

COMMISSION OF A MISDEMEANOR

Players: (1) who are charged with or who are convicted of a misdemeanor, (2) who self-report a violation of the criminal code of Iowa or the United States, (3) who are the subject of public records identifying a specific player and describing conduct which is a violation of the criminal code of Iowa or the United States will face consequences that at a minimum follow school policy, and could be greater at the discretion of the WDMLAX up to and including dismissal from the program.

COMMISSION OF A FELONY

Players: (1) who are charged with or who are convicted of a felony, (2) who self-report a violation of the criminal code of Iowa or the United States, (3) who are the subject of public records identifying a specific player and describing conduct which is a violation of the criminal code of Iowa or the United States will face consequences that at a minimum follow school policy, and could be greater at the discretion of the WDMLAX up to and including dismissal from the program.

ALCOHOL, CONTROLLED SUBSTANCES, TOBACCO, E-CIGS, ADVANCED PERSONAL VAPORIZERS, OR MODS: Use, possession, or being under the influence of alcohol, controlled substances (other than medication prescribed for the player by the individual player's physician) tobacco, e-cigs, AVPs, or mods is strictly prohibited. Players will face consequences that at a minimum follow school policy, and could be greater at the discretion of the WDMLAX up to and including dismissal from the program.

ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES AND CONTROLLED SUBSTANCES — Selling or Distributing

The penalties outlined in this section deal with the sale and/or distribution of any substance for which distribution is controlled by law based on age or health factors. Included are alcoholic beverages, controlled substances, look alike or substitutes, or any substance represented to be an alcoholic beverage

or a controlled substance. Players will face consequences that at a minimum follow school policy, and could be greater at the discretion of the WDMLAX up to and including dismissal from the program.

SUSPENSION FROM SCHOOL: Any suspension from school will lead to an automatic doubling of the suspension from lacrosse. Example: If a student is suspended 3 days from school, they will be suspended 6 days from lacrosse activities. It is the responsibility of the player/parent to notify WDMLAX of any suspension.

EXPULSION FROM SCHOOL: Any expulsion from school will lead to automatic dismissal from the WDMLAX program for the duration of the expulsion. Upon return to school, WDMLAX will require a letter on school letterhead confirming the reinstatement of eligibility to participate in athletics in order for a player to be reinstated to the program. It is the responsibility of the player/parent to notify WDMLAX of any expulsion.

BULLYING, HAZING, HARASSMENT: WDMLAX supports only those activities which are constructive, educational, and contribute to the intellectual and personal development of the club's players. WDMLAX unequivocally opposes any situation created intentionally to produce the mental or physical discomfort, embarrassment, harassment or ridicule of its players.

Any behavior that is deemed to be hazing, bullying, or harassment, through any means, will not be tolerated. In addition, any requirements by a player or parent which compels another player or parent to participate in any activity which is against WDMLAX policy or state/federal law will be defined as hazing.

WDMLAX complies with the laws and regulations applied by the local school districts where the players attend school. As such, the club is bound by the rules and regulations of the Iowa High School Athletic Association and the Iowa Girls High School Athletic Union. Any violations will lead to a minimum of a one game suspension for the first offense. The player will be dismissed from the program for the second offense. Violation of Iowa law in regard to hazing, bullying, or harassment may result in legal criminal/civil prosecution.

LANGUAGE: Foul language is not allowed. Racist, homophobic, anti-religious, and other discriminatory language will not be tolerated.

PRACTICES & GAMES: Players are required to attend all practice sessions and games. Absences will only be excused for illnesses or extreme circumstances and must be approved by the coaching staff. Notification must be made as soon as possible before practices or games. Failure to attend practices or games without an excused absence will result in disciplinary action at the sole discretion of the coaching staff.

Players are expected to be on the field, in gear/appropriate attire, ready to go, **no later than** the start time of practices and/or games. Practices and games start promptly and anyone not ready to participate will be deemed late. Consequences for tardiness are at the discretion of the coaching staff and may include, but are not limited to, additional conditioning, requirement to carry equipment and loss of playing time. All players are expected to help the coaching staff and other club members prepare fields for play both before and after practices and games.

WDMLAX values the safety of our players. Players are prohibited from driving themselves to games or WDMLAX activities outside of the greater Des Moines/Ankeny area. Players must be transported by parents or others over the age of 25. Transportation may be provided by a sibling as long as they are

over 21 years of age. Consequences for violation of this policy may include loss of playing time, suspension, or dismissal from the program.

WDMLAX allows for only current players, WDMLAX coaches, members of the Board of Directors, team managers, and invited game-day volunteers to be on the field, including the sideline. This policy applies to all practices and games, whether home or away.

Any behavior or action deemed detrimental to the WDMLAX program will be addressed by the coaching staff and/or Discipline Committee in a fair and timely manner. The consequences will match the infraction. The infraction will be investigated to the fullest reasonable extent.

Disciplinary Appeal Procedure

Any player who believes his/her privilege to participate in WDMLAX activities has been restricted without good cause has the right to immediately appeal the decision as follows:

1. A written request stating the justification for the appeal is to be presented to the Team Manager within two days of the decision. Team Manager will forward the appeal to the Discipline Committee.
2. The Discipline Committee will review the matter and issue a decision, within three calendar days, to the player.
3. The decision of the Discipline Committee may be appealed, within two calendar days, to the Board of Directors by written request stating the justification for the appeal of the Discipline Committee decision.
4. The Board of Directors will ensure it has a quorum and convene to review the case and uphold or dismiss the action within ten calendar days.

At each level of the appeal process, the decision shall be presented in writing and shall state the facts, the evidence taken into consideration, and the reasons for such decision. The Chair of the Discipline Committee or the President of the Board of Directors shall be responsible for preparing the written decision for the body, as applicable.

When appealing a decision of the Discipline Committee, the player and the Discipline Committee Chair or their designee shall have the right to appear before the Board of Directors to present a written statement, ask questions, and to be questioned.

Coach and Volunteer Expectations

All WDMLAX coaches are required to be registered as coaches with USA Lacrosse. A coach shall not participate in any lacrosse related activity with WDMLAX until that USAL registration has been completed which includes a background check.

Failure to receive a "green light" on a background check results in automatic disqualification from USAL and WDMLAX. The club will monitor the coach registration process to assure that coaches are registered and have passed their background checks. Coaches are required to renew their USAL memberships annually and background checks every 2 years per USAL guidelines. In addition, all coaches must complete the online Abuse Prevention Systems Training offered by USAL

Club volunteers that have significant contact with players may be asked to join USAL and undergo a background check. The team manager and/or club officials will determine who requires a background check.

WDMMLAX also encourages its coaches to become certified as a coach by USAL which involves coaching development training, and to commit to continuing education to further hone their coaching skills and stay abreast of developments in the game.

Foul language is not allowed. Racist, homophobic, anti-religious, and other discriminatory language will not be tolerated.

Coaches and club volunteers must uphold and model the WDMMLAX program philosophy and the safety and protection of our players. WDMMLAX reserves the right to deny or remove any individual from a coaching or volunteer position.

Parent Expectations

WDMMLAX recognizes the important role parents play in the operation of the club and the development and success of our players. We expect parents to review this handbook, player rules and expectations, and the parent expectations below to ensure that the parents and players are fully committed to WDMMLAX prior to completing registration, forms, and making payments for participation. Here are the club's basic expectations of member parents:

- Support your son/daughter.
- Support the entire team and program.
- Support the coaching staff in a positive manner – let the coaches coach.
- Honor the time of the coaches and managers by dropping off and picking up players **on time**.
- Communicate with coaches and managers of any expected delays in dropping off/picking up your player.
- Encourage your player to practice on their own time in addition to scheduled practices.
- Encourage your player to first communicate with their coach directly about any concerns he or she may have, not through parent-coach communication.
- Do not interact with coaches and players during games, warm-ups and post-game team discussion.
- In the event you have concerns that need to be addressed with the coach, please honor the 24-hour rule following any games or practices before making contact.
- Please reply in a timely manner to club and team communications.
- Have fun and volunteer your time to help the club succeed.
- Foul language is not allowed. Racist, homophobic, anti-religious, and other discriminatory language will not be tolerated.
- **Honor the game! Display good sportsmanship at all times!**

General Policies and Expectations

Fees

WDMMLAX is a 501c3 non-profit organization and is funded by season registration fees collected to support the programs offered. The fees cover all of the club's expenses related to operating WDMMLAX and may include administration costs, league fees, tournament fees, field rental, equipment expenses, team uniforms, and coaching salaries and expenses. The Board takes seriously its responsibility to provide club members with a fair and reasonable value.

Player scholarships are available to those families struggling to cover all or a portion of club fees by contacting the club to apply. A scholarship application is required and will be reviewed in confidence by the WDMMLAX board.

Club registration fee refunds are not provided under any circumstance once a player's practice schedule starts for the season.

Sponsorships

WDMMLAX also offers sponsorship opportunities at a variety of giving levels which helps keep club fees at more affordable levels. In return for their support, our sponsors enjoy recognition on the WDMMLAX website and home game signage. Information about sponsorships is available on the club web site.

Fundraising

The club also encourages fundraising during the season as another way to offset expenses. In recent years the club has held several fundraising events and appreciates club members and their families' support of those events. Participating in fundraising activities is not required but is great appreciated.

Communication

The club expects players, parents, coaches and volunteers to stay up to date on club and team information both in season and throughout the year. WDMMLAX provides that information in variety of ways, it is the players and parents responsibility to monitor the various communication vehicles.

WDMMLAX holds a number of parent meetings prior to the spring season which all players and parents are expected to attend. WDMMLAX posts critical dates on our web site and shares information through its social media postings on Facebook and Instagram.

During the season the main communication tool is TeamSnap, a mobile app that contains individual team rosters, contact information, schedules and a messaging function. Once a player registration is complete, the invite to Team Snap is sent. High School players are invited to activate through Team Snap and invite parents to participate. Youth and Middle School parents are sent invite and may invite players to participate. The process may take 2-3 days to complete.

General questions about the club or issues for the board to consider can be sent via email to wdmlaxclub@gmail.com.

Weather Policy for Practices/Games

Cancellation or schedule change notifications will be posted to the club's TeamSnap app as soon as a determination is made. WDMMLAX may also communicate changes via our Facebook and Instagram pages when appropriate.

Position Statements

Player Safety and Protection

WDMLAX cares greatly about the safety and protection of its players. Any and all forms of physical and sexual abuse and/or misconduct are strictly prohibited. WDMLAX requires the highest standard of integrity for its members to ensure that abuse and misconduct do not occur at any level.

No member of WDMLAX may engage in behaviors that are considered ~~child~~ sexual abuse, sexual misconduct, physical abuse, or physical misconduct. Parents, coaches and volunteers must report suspicions or allegations of sexual or physical abuse of players or any youth to local or state law enforcement and child protective services.

As mentioned earlier, all club coaches, managers, and volunteers deemed to have significant contact with players are required to undergo and pass a background check based on the guidelines of USA Lacrosse.

Religious/spiritual Expression

WDMLAX recognizes the right of each player, coach, or individual to engage in personal, voluntary, private, and non-vocal religious/spiritual activity. Personal religious/spiritual activity must not interfere with the rights and beliefs of other players, coaches, or individuals; must not disrupt any pre, during, or post practice/game/or other sponsored activity; and must not interfere with the coming/going/preparation of any player, coach, or individual.

Non-Discrimination

WDMLAX does not discriminate on the basis of race, creed, color, religion, national origin, sex, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, physical or mental disability, or socioeconomic status in programs and activities.

COVID/Contagious Illnesses (new)

WDMLAX expects players, coaches, parents and volunteers to self-report COVID-19 exposures and other communicable illnesses to the club during the lacrosse season, and to take steps to quarantine until no longer contagious per CDC guidelines.

Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (new)

WDMLAX believes in and is committed to diversity, inclusion and gender equity among its players, coaches and volunteers. We want to establish and maintain an inclusive culture that fosters equitable participation and improves the learning environment for players and positive experiences for coaches and volunteers from diverse backgrounds.