

Magnolia United Lacrosse Association



FAIR PLAYING TIME POLICY

MAG-U's Fair Playing Time Philosophy

MAG-U intends that every player, regardless of ability, will get approximately the same amount of playing time relative to other players over the course of the season subject to attitude, effort, and training participation. Skill is not in that formula. Substitutions will be made to ensure adequate minutes are realized without consideration to match outcome. MAG-U is a player development centered program applying the principles of the Positive Coaching Alliance. As such, MAG-U coaches do not ask their teams to win; they demand that every individual competes – giving best effort for team results.

Playing time also depends on the position that one plays in a given game. For example, it is typical for a team to have 3 or 4 “lines” of midfielders that are rotated throughout the game every few minutes because of their need to run far and fast. When 4 lines of middies are rotated, each line plays roughly $\frac{1}{4}$ of the game. On the other hand, the attackmen and defensemen positions have comparatively fewer numbers and rotate individually because they typically run less distance than middies. If a team is rotating 5 or 6 defensemen or attackmen, those players will play approximately $\frac{1}{2}$ - $\frac{3}{4}$ of the game each. If there is only one goalie, that goalie will play 100% of the game. If there are two goalies, each keeper should play half of the game, either by alternating games or by splitting each game. While MAG-U intends for every player to play multiple positions during the season, the position choices for each player will reflect where the coaches believe each player will find greatest success on the field either now or in the future.

Even if a given player is the most awesome attackman/goalie/middie/defenseman, they will not spend all their time in that position. It is developmentally damaging at this age and does not prepare players for next year when another coach needs them to play another position.

There are special situations when a penalty occurs where our “extra man offense” or “man down defense” plays. If there are high number of penalties in a game, those units may play more in one game than another, and may replace a player who was just substituted into the game.

There are only a few permitted times during the game when coaches can substitute (for example, after a goal, during time outs and when the ball goes out of bounds). It is impossible to predict when these instances will occur, so it may be that some players have a longer “shift” than others during a game.

While it is the coach’s goal to play each player equally in all games, it may be that some players play more in some games than in others. In those cases, the coaches will try to “make up” playing time in a later game. The coach will do his /her best to balance out playing time over the course of the season.

Restrictions on Playing Time

There are three factors that would not entitle a player to equal playing time:

1. **Discipline problems.** If a player is showing disrespect for teammates, opponents, coaches and officials and/or not following team rules during practice or games, the coach may limit the player’s game time, including suspension from a game.
2. **Lack of effort.** If a player isn’t working hard and giving 100% effort, the coach may replace him with another player during a game. Each player has immediate and direct control over his effort. The lack of effort by an individual player creates unnecessary mistakes and limits the player’s ability to learn and the coach’s ability to teach. T
3. **Attendance at practice.** There will be some correlation between practice attendance records and preferential playing time. Those players who attend every practice will get more opportunities to play “extra man offense” or “man down defense” compared with those who have less than 100% practice attendance.

Playing time communication and feedback

The coach, the player, and the player’s parent/guardians equally share the responsibility to explain and seek reasons for unequal playing time. In private, the coach should explain to the player why playing time was reduced. Upon request, the coach will provide the specific steps the player needs to take to regain equal playing time. When questioning playing time or other coaching decisions, please remember that MAG-U is volunteer run, it is not appropriate to question a coach in front of your child, and if you feel upset, it is best to cool off for a day or so prior to addressing the issue with the coach.

While we seek feedback and need issues to be resolved, we must keep our priorities straight: our goal is to enhance the experiences and life lessons for our children. Emotional conflict between a parent and coach in front of any player is not productive and completely contrary to the pledge you have made to help us “Honor the Game” of lacrosse. If you do not feel the coach is being fair or has properly resolved the issues, please bring your concerns to any member of MAG-U’s Board.