US Lacrosse Launches First Stick Program

A child’s first lacrosse stick not only serves as a means to play the sport, but a symbol of life-enhancing values such as confidence, teamwork, sportsmanship and leadership that can be developed through lacrosse.

The First Stick Program pilot of US Lacrosse has been established with the assistance of generous individual donors to supply lacrosse equipment, coaches’ education and resources, and life skills training to those who would not otherwise have the chance to participate.

Inaugurated with a gift of $100,000, the First Stick Program will enlarge the equipment grant program of US Lacrosse. This fund will expand participation in the sport beyond traditional boundaries and inspire kids to play hard, dream big and act responsibly within the sport of lacrosse and the game of life.

“We welcome the opportunity to develop the First Stick Program to bring lacrosse to non-traditional and diverse communities where the cost of equipment is a barrier for participation,” said Steve Stenersen, US Lacrosse president and CEO.

The First Stick Program will underwrite the costs of coaches’ training and skill-building resources to teams that receive its equipment grants, including access to the US Lacrosse National Convention and Coaching Education Program Level 1 Online Course, US Lacrosse membership resources for coaches, including Lacrosse Magazine, and programs aimed at teaching lacrosse and its principles of hard work, community and responsibility.

The First Stick Program is inspired by the life journey and experiences of founders, Paul Meyer, Peter Gibson and Lou Delligatti, who were teammates and friends at Oceanside High School (NY). Grateful for the way sports shaped their lives in positive ways, they decided to initiate the First Stick Program to provide opportunities for young people to receive similar benefits through lacrosse.

Meyer grew up in difficult circumstances of addiction, abuse and instability. By age 15, he was living on his own, while attending Oceanside High School. At Oceanside, he was introduced to the game of lacrosse, the positive benefits of the high school athletic community, and the Martin Bernstein family, who adopted him during his junior year in high school.

Gibson, Delligatti and Meyer all played football at Oceanside under legendary head football coach Roy Kessenich, father of ESPN lacrosse announcer Quint Kessenich. Coach Roy Kessenich provided a safe, encouraging support system and reliable mentoring for the three young athletes and many others as they journeyed from adolescence to manhood.

Coach Kessenich personally took Meyer under his wing when he arrived alone at Oceanside High School, and encouraged him to join the athletic community, where he played football and lacrosse. As teammates and through athletic competition, players Gibson, Delligatti and Meyer discovered they could achieve their personal goals, and learned about commitment, character and community.

Through lacrosse, Meyer was also introduced to the Bernstein family by teammate and friend Scott Bernstein. The Bernstein family and its
Chairman’s Perspective
Michael R. Wilcox, Chair, US Lacrosse Foundation

As most of the country experiences a change in climate, this season also signals a change in leadership and structure of the US Lacrosse Foundation.

I am honored to have served on the USL Foundation Board for six years. During this time, lacrosse has seen dynamic growth in all levels of participation, and I am privileged to have been in a position dedicated to providing and attracting the resources necessary to manage the safe and responsible growth of the sport.

I am pleased to welcome Ed Calcines of Naples, Fla., as chairman-elect who will become the lead of the USL board in 2011. Ed, partner and CEO of RGM Capital, has been involved with lacrosse since he first started playing at the age of seven in Ithaca, N.Y. He went on to start four years at Princeton, culminating in the 1992 NCAA Championship, and continued with intramural leagues while attending business school at Cornell. Ed has been on the board of the Collier County Lacrosse Association, Florida Interscholastic Associates Lacrosse League and has coached youth lacrosse and hosted youth camps. Ed has also been active with the Cancer Alliance of Naples, Habitat for Humanity, Youth Haven and the American Cancer Society.

In addition, we welcome Jim Birle, J. Gordon Cooney, Jr., Doug Corrigan, Henry Kim, Dan Murray, Ed Nordberg, and Jim Soran as recent additions to the US Lacrosse Foundation Board. The addition of these enthusiastic individuals dedicated to the mission of US Lacrosse will greatly complement the existing board leadership. Made up of talented and motivated individuals with a range of personal and professional expertise and lacrosse involvement, the US Lacrosse Foundation Board leads efforts in the areas of fundraising to benefit and support the programs and activities of US Lacrosse. As we strive for the USL Foundation Board to reflect the game with representation of men and women from across the country, we seek individuals who not only demonstrate an interest in lacrosse, but also the capacity to support the sport at a financially viable level. Each is an example to attract the support of others.

Though I prepare to step down in the chairman’s capacity, I will remain loyal and committed to support the Foundation and attract others to contribute to the sport’s continued and healthy development. In the meantime, I thank all donors and members for their continued and generous support to ensure safe and active lacrosse experiences for all.

Michael R. Wilcox
Chair, US Lacrosse Foundation

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Getting Your Head Out of the Game
Sports-related concussions have made recent headlines and have been a primary area of focus for the US Lacrosse Sports Science & Safety Committee for several years. Donor support has helped US Lacrosse to fund and collaborate with researchers to better understand the mechanisms and frequency of concussion injuries in both men’s and women’s lacrosse and to support the rule adherence and coaching and officiating education can be implemented to potentially lessen the instance and severity of concussions, as well as to raise awareness of the serious nature of the injury through educational programs in a lacrosse community.

One such Sports Science & Safety Committee study has been an ongoing injury surveillance study, tracking system in Fairfax County (Va.) Public Schools, evaluating over 25,000 high school athletes over a consecutive 11-year period (2000-01 to 2010-11) to examine the incidence and relative risk of concussions in high school boys’ and girls’ intercollegiate sports.

Two certified athletic trainers at each of Fairfax County’s 25 public schools recorded all injuries and illnesses in an electronic medical record-keeping program, including time loss from participation, location of mechanism of injury, body part, nature of symptoms and return to play. The study included boys’ and girls’ lacrosse, soccer and wrestling. Girls’ sports studied were basketball, cheerleading, field hockey, lacrosse, soccer and softball.

“The study allows us to look at what’s going on at a broad level, injury rates and frequency in a particular year, and look at lacrosse in comparison with other sports,” explained Dr. Andy Lincoln, US Lacrosse Sport Science & Safety Committee member and Director of The MartinSolve Medical Sports Injury Research Center at Union Memorial Hospital in Baltimore.

The research found an increased risk of concussions across all sports over time, not limited to lacrosse or any individual sport. Football and girls’ soccer were associated with the highest concussion rates in the sports studied. The increased risk in concussion incidence may be attributed to a variety of on-the-field factors, including improved player athleticism leading to more forceful play, but also influenced by improved concussion recognition, diagnosis and documentation. The committee is currently challenged to evaluate and appropriately decipher the risk that each of these factors has as contributing injury elements.

Another Sport Science and Safety Committee study has used video analysis to identify common scenarios of concussions in high school boys and girls lacrosse games. The study followed 3,000 male and female high school lacrosse players in Fairfax County (Va.) public schools over two seasons in 2008 and 2009. Injury surveillance data was collected by certified athletic trainers using a computer-based injury management system, in conjunction with digital video documentation of all game injuries. The footage was further broken down to identify and classify incidents of concussions by several factors, such as type of contact body contact, intentional or unintentional stick contact, etc., player activity (catching, passing, shooting, loose ball, etc.), where on the face or head the injury occurred, whether or not a penalty was called, and much more.

US Lacrosse has partnered with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to produce lacrosse-specific concussion awareness fact sheets for coaches, parents and players. These resources, including a “concussion tool kit for coaches” titled Heads Up: Concussion in High School Sports, contain a variety of practical, easy-to-use printed, video and online information.

US Lacrosse is also one of 14 national governing bodies selected to provide access to a poster made by the National Football League’s (NFL) Head, Neck and Spine Medical Committee, the CDC and the NFL Players Association. The poster, available for display in locker rooms, gymnasiums and schools nationwide, hopes to let young athletes know concussions are serious and provides a list of concussion signs, symptoms and steps they should take if they think they have a concussion.

In addition, in partnership with impACT Applications, Inc. (impACT), US Lacrosse continues to promote the importance of establishing a formal Concussion Management Program for lacrosse programs that offers player baseline testing, player education, awareness, and links to local participating neurocognitive testing facilities. To access all US Lacrosse Sports Science & Safety resources, learn more about recent rule changes and participate in US lacrosse education opportunities, visit www.uslacrosse.org.

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First Sport Sentinel

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First Sport Sentinel
U.S. Women's National Team Selected

Nearly 250 athletes, plus coaches, evaluators and staff descended on the University of Maryland, Baltimore County (UMBC) campus in August for six days of drills and scrimmages designed to select the U.S. women's senior team, followed by the U.S. under-19 women's national team.

Over 80 players were evaluated before the new 36-member U.S. women's senior team was announced. In 2009, the United States captured its fifth Federation of International Lacrosse Women's World Cup championship when it defeated Australia 8-7 at the last world event in the Czech Republic. The U.S. has won either gold or silver in all seven world championships conducted since 1986. Thirteen members selected for the new team were on the 2009 U.S. World Cup championship team, including all-world selections Sarah Albrecht, Amber Falcone, Krystin Porcella, and Kendall McBrearty.

“With what we wanted to accomplish was gather 36 players that we felt made up the best group as opposed to looking at the most individual talent,” Team USA and Georgetown coach Ricky Fried said. “Who played well together, worked well and competed on a consistent basis? It was a competitive tryout, the most competitive I’ve seen in my four years here… We had some hard decisions to make, in a good way, and we feel lucky to have the group that we have for this year.”

Once the senior team was selected, more than 165 girls from 25 different states were whittled down to the 24-player roster for the 2011 U.S. W19 women’s national lacrosse team set to compete in the Federation of International Lacrosse (FIL) U19 World Championships in Hannover, Germany, August 3-13, 2011. In 2007, Team USA won the gold at the quadrangular event, beating the United Kingdom, Australia and Canada.

“We’re really excited about the talent of this group,” said Krystin Porcella, head coach of the U.S. U19 women’s national team. “The level of play - physical and mental and the athleticism of these girls was truly unbelievable all week. We can’t wait to get to work this fall putting all of the pieces together.

Who has contributed to the success of the U.S. women’s national teams?

Sarah Albrecht * M National '08
Cassie Ancarano A James Madison '13
Sarah Bellot * G North Carolina '08
Leah Brown M Duke '11
Caroline Cyyer D Duke '08
Kara Digiulian D North Carolina '11
Molly Elias M Georgia Tech '10
Andie Haik M C.W. Post '09
Kari Findlager D North Carolina '11
Kim Griffin D James Madison '03
Mia Hargrove * A Duke '11
Maggie Hauser * G Duke '11
Ashley Krueger M Georgia Tech '10
Kitty Linsell D North Carolina '07
Kristin McKeon * A North Carolina '09
Erica McVeigh * M North Carolina '08
Carly McKinnon * M Maryland '10
Amy McInwane A Johns Hopkins '12
Unsley Mandeville A North Carolina '08
Krithika Nyan D Maryland '12
Rebecca Pons D Maryland '11
Malaya Pretus C.W. Post '08
Katie Reiman A Johns Hopkins '12
Lauren Schmidt M Maryland '10
Kate Stowell D Johns Hopkins '11
Lauren Schwarmen A Johns Hopkins '08
Brooke Dalessandro M Johns Hopkins '06
Michelle Farno * A Johns Hopkins '12
Samantha Fischetti M Johns Hopkins '12
Porte Goldman A Maryland '11
Carly Gutierrez A North Carolina '09
Lisa Zimmerman M North Carolina '12

* Played on an out-of-country team during the 2009 World Cup team

Earn It: The Values of Lacrosse

Gregg Mitchell, Managing Director, US Lacrosse Foundation

Those of you who have interacted with me during my time with US Lacrosse know that I often speak about the values of the sport, including teamwork, discipline, physical fitness, courage and tradition.

I speak about these values often because I think lacrosse – when played well under the guidance of outstanding coaches and officials – is an outstanding youth-development activity.

The value of the sport in offering life-lessons became clear when I observed the slow-start of my son’s team at St. Paul’s School for Boys, a team with great promise, but which needed determination, discipline and hard work to achieve its potential.

Over an underwhelming victory early in the season, coach Tom Brocato took the boys aside and urged them to understand that their reputation as a promising squad mattered little – if at all. They had to earn it, every day in practice and on the field.

The phrase “earn it” became an informal motto for my son during his senior year and it was an idea that lived in his class as a whole, noted in the remarks of the headmaster during his commencement address.

At different times since then, I have had occasion to speak to my son about a challenging situation and I’ve told him “earn it.” Because of the life-lessons learned on the lacrosse field, I have been able to say two words and little else. “Earn it.” The message is clear and the satisfaction of achievement derived from the concerted effort of a united team, is empowering and motivational.

When thinking about the values of lacrosse, I also think about the words of Cookie Krongard, a Hall of Fame goalie, who has played at a high level for six decades. Cookie told me that being a goalie was a particular value to him.

He said, “When I have done camps or work with young goalies, I have tried to communicate some of the mental parts of being a goalie. I’ve always told them that when a ball goes by you in the goal, a point goes up on the scoreboard. If you see that point is there and there is nothing you can do about that.”

“When you rattle that ball and give it to the referee, that has got to be the end of that shot and that play. If you continue to focus on that shot, pure enough the next shot will hit you in the throat. You have to learn to overcome adversity, to put it behind you and to keep striving for the next play. That was a great life lesson for me,” he concluded.


I want to comment about another value of lacrosse that is particularly important to me. I support lacrosse because it requires its participants to strive to be and maintain physical fitness. It is a great game to the sedentary lifestyle of all too many people young people in my support of America’s first sport.

For me, it has been a special privilege to work with US Lacrosse to promote positive growth of a great sport. Only a special challenge would take me away from my role with the USL Foundation. I will be leaving my post to accept a challenge to serve as Senior Vice President for the Heinz Center for Science, Economics and the Environment. The opportunity is an outgrowth of my past work in land and wildlife conservation. I will work to find bipartisan solutions to environmental challenges based on solid science and economics.

Though I am accepting a new professional challenge, I will remain active with the Foundation as a volunteer. Thank you for the opportunity to stay for lacrosse as a professional and know that I remain steadfast in my support of America’s first sport.

First Spor t Sentinel

First Spor t Sentinel
Jackie Joyner-Kersee To Get The Convention Off To A Running Start

The US Lacrosse Convention kicked off with its annual Star and Stripes weekend featuring the U.S. men’s and women’s national senior teams, as well as the U.S. women’s U19 team. A full slate of exhibition games at Harvard University in Cambridge, Mass., and the US Lacrosse Foundation’s 19th annual Lacrosse vs. Cancer exhibition included the U.S. men’s team vs. Harvard. The US women’s team vs. Harvard, Boston College and Harvard University, as well as the U19 team against Revolution Lacrosse Club and Massachusetts Elite Club. In addition, over 100 vendors hosted instructional clinics for youth and high school players.

The event will also feature the EXPO Hall with over 160 vendors offering discounts, giveaways and contests. This year’s vendors include Champion, ESPN U, ESPN Wide World of Sports, Sports Authority to name a few.

US Lacrosse Announces Equipment Grant Awards

US Lacrosse is proud to announce the awardees of its 2010 equipment grants presented to 103 lacrosse programs and teams in 31 states, totaling nearly $260,000.

The US Lacrosse Equipment Grant Program, in its 13th year, is an annual offering of US Lacrosse. Since the inception of the Equipment Grant Program, US Lacrosse has donated equipment to over 1,000 lacrosse programs with the retail value of more than $1.8 million.

The US Lacrosse Equipment Grant Program is one of the most impactful programs that US Lacrosse offers. It directly supports the growth of lacrosse across the country, allowing more youth to have the opportunity to play the sport each year.

It is also the only program that provides grants in the form of equipment. The program is designed to provide grants-in-aid for lacrosse programs for which funds are lacking or absent. Applicants can select from a girls’ package, boys’ package, boys’ and girls’ package or a physical education package.

The physical Education Package includes 30 physical education packages, 20 boys’ packages, and 20 girls’ packages, as well as US Lacrosse Physical Education Curriculum. The physical Education Package is available to programs that have been approved by US Lacrosse for the Equipment Grant Program.

In addition to lacrosse, both youth and high school coaches and athletic directors can use the physical Education Package to meet the requirements of their physical education curriculum.

Information on the US Lacrosse Equipment Grant Program can be found on the US Lacrosse website.
At the Buzzer: Striving for Extraordinary Impact

Steve Stenersen, President and CEO of US Lacrosse

US Lacrosse is the newest national governing body in amateur sport, established in 1998 to support America’s oldest team sport. As we mature as an organization at the start of our second decade, we strive to continue to earn your trust, not only on the basis of past accomplishments, but on the strength of positive impact that grows with each year.

Unlike our companion organizations in other sports, which emphasize development of elite athletes for Olympic competition, the measure of our organization is a simple but broad metric. We want to be known for our impact — for building the sport from the ground up and supporting the game in ways that make a real difference for young players and their families.

As we focus on improving services to current members, increasing educational initiatives, promoting safety and introducing the game to new communities, we also inspire participation through our celebration of excellence through the U.S. national teams and honor the sport’s greats through Hall of Fame recognition.

I’m proud to share with you a few recent organizational initiatives, made possible by the support of members and donors:

Service – US Lacrosse provides sport-specific league and team management resources — www.us lxteams.com and US Lacrosse Playbook — to programs that support USL membership. These comprehensive online tools provide unprecedented support to league and team administrators in their efforts to communicate easily and effectively with players, coaches and parents, schedule officials and fields, manage team rosters and events, and more.

Education — The USL Coaching Education Program (CEP) is the national standard for lacrosse-specific education and certification of coaches. In addition, time-crunched coaches will also have access to Mobile Coach, a US Lacrosse-developed product that provides quick access to hundreds of drills created by our CEP, as well as the ability to access, organize and share USL videos on the fly.

Outreach — USL recently announced equipment grants to more than 100 new teams in 30 states — an increase of almost 100% over just two years ago. This is a big step in our ever-expanding efforts to ensure that the cost of equipment does not preclude participation.

The US Lacrosse First Sport Society is proud to recognize the following donors of $1,000 or more to US Lacrosse since January 2010. Thank you for all you do in support of the sport!

The US Lacrosse First Sport Sentinel
www.uslacrosse.org