

FREE SOFT LACROSSE GUIDE



soft lacrosse

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Summary

The Mimico Mountaineers introduced a free soft lacrosse program for their youngest "Baby Peanut" and "Peanut" divisions in 2018. The free program for 3-year-olds and 4-year-olds resulted in a significant spike in registrations for soft lacrosse and eventually paperweight, where the club has implemented the OLA 3-on-3 Mini Game.

New in 2022: The OLA has decided to subsidize the registration and insurance fee for OLA minor clubs that want to implement free soft lacrosse programs using the Mimico model, similar to how we subsidize the "Try Lacrosse" product now, in effort to lessen the financial impact of offering the program at no cost.

What is soft lacrosse?

It all starts with scoop. Whether a child is interested in box lacrosse, field lacrosse, or women's field lacrosse in the future, soft lacrosse is a non-contact introductory program focused on fun. Soft Lacrosse allows our youngest players to develop a love for the game in a safe and fun environment as players are introduced to basic lacrosse skills through small group instruction and skill building games.

Other names for soft lacrosse

Clubs may opt to change the name of their soft lacrosse division. Some other names for this division are Peanut, Little Laxers, Junior Paperweight etc.





Player Eligibility

MR2.11(a) The Soft Lacrosse Division is a developmental box program, with no formal games and no tournaments. Players eligible will not have attained their 5th birthday prior to the first day of January in the season the players wish to participate and must also turn 3 years of age by December 31st of the season the players wish to participate.

NOTE: Players participating in a Soft Lacrosse division may participate in a non-contact paperweight division (ie. player movement is allowed between two non-contact divisions). There shall be no affiliation between Soft Lacrosse and contact paperweight divisions.

Required Equipment

- Helmet*
- Lacrosse Stick
- Running Shoes
- Lacrosse Gloves

*All helmets must be CSA approved for ice hockey or NOCSAE approved. The helmet must have a chin strap which must be properly secured on both sides and cannot be altered from the manufactured form. Face Mask must be CSA approved for ice hockey or NOCSAE approved and must be approved for helmet model that it is mounted on.

Stick Length

We recommend cutting the shaft to suit the size of the player. This is typically somewhere between 24" to 26" from the bottom of the head.



The Budget

Program budgets for this program can vary based on the assets and sponsorship available to clubs to run the program and what the club is prepared to offer at no cost. Expenses for the program include but are not necessarily limited to floor time, lacrosse sticks (if you offer a free stick with the program), t-shirts/uniform, soft lacrosse balls.

This is a sample budget for 100 players:

Item	Cost/Unit	Total
Floor time x 10 weeks x 2 hours	\$100	\$2000
Lacrosse stick x 100	\$30	\$3000
Sublimated shirt x 100	\$20	\$2000
Total Cost		\$7000
Sponsorship		-\$3000
Total Club Cost		\$4000

[Download Budget Template](#)

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numbers
↩



Fundraising

Free soft lacrosse programs provide an opportunity to fundraise and recoup costs as parents are more likely to spend additional funds saved to enhance their child's experience. One of the best ways to raise funds at this age is to introduce a club branded starter kit that introduces players and parents to being part of the club.

Start kits can include:

- A mini version of your branded equipment bags
- T-shirt featuring a club logo, motto, or mascot
- Club branded shorts and socks
- A pair of tickets to your junior club's home opener

Volunteers

It takes a village. Volunteers are an essential part of a successful soft lacrosse program as the coaches and volunteers will likely be a family's first encounter with lacrosse and your club. Consider enlisting younger players (U11 and U13 players are typically great with this age group) and high school age volunteers who require community service hours to participate in the program. Players and parents alike want to be able to see their own children in the future of the organization and this is a great way to showcase the culture and community behind your club.



Program Planning

- Divide players into 3 to 4 groups that they will be with during their session every week. Consider having 3 to 4 different colours to help easily identify groups.
- Establish relationships between players and volunteers and enhance familiarity by assigning 1 or 2 group leaders to each group.
- Set up 3 to 4 stations and have the groups rotate through them with their group leaders.
- If you have enough volunteers, put someone in charge of running each station. This is where you want to put the more experienced coaches.
- Plan the program ahead of time and make sure to change up the stations from week to week.
- Involve everyone by encouraging parents to participate on the floor during certain activities, especially with the younger players.
- Find ways to make them feel part of the club like ending each session with a club cheer.



Breaking Down the Barriers of Participation

Breaking down barriers doesn't stop once you get them in the door. There has to be a next step. The OLA 3-on-3 Mini Game is designed to make lacrosse accessible at the entry level.

OLA 3-on-3 Mini Game

The 3-on-3 Mini Game is a non-contact introductory version of the game scaled for children. The smaller floor size dimensions reduce the playing space to increase the game pace, in an effort to maximize participation and development opportunities for all players. It allows for more touches with the ball and keeps kids moving and engaged while learning to play lacrosse. The program only requires players to wear helmets and gloves as opposed to full equipment, significantly reducing the cost of participation for parents.

The primary mission of the OLA 3-on-3 Mini Game is:

- Recruitment (of new participants to lacrosse)
- Retention (of existing participants in lacrosse)
- Physical Literacy and Skill Development (of all participants)

The desired outcomes of the OLA 3-on-3 Mini Game are:

- Generate memorable moments
- Create program for enduring friendships
- Guarantee challenges and rewards
- Ensure sense of personal achievement
- Engender feeling of belonging
- Stimulate fun and inspire confidence
- Fuel passion to play lacrosse

For more information, see the [OLA 3-on-3 Mini Game Guide](#).