



FALL 2026
WEEK 1

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THE MIDTOWN REPORT

THE OFFICIAL WEEKLY PUBLICATION OF MIDTOWN RALEIGH LACROSSE

MRL OPENS ITS FIRST FALL SEASON



MRL players and coaches gather after the program's opening Saturday session.

OPENING WEEK

A FIRST LOOK AT THE PROGRAM, AND A CLEAR PATH FORWARD

Midtown Raleigh Lacrosse opened its first fall season last week with approximately 40 players taking the field. Six coaches led Wednesday's first practice as players met the staff, received their pinnies and settled into their groups.

Wednesday gave the staff a useful baseline. By Saturday, ten coaches, smaller groups and smoother transitions created more direct instruction and more repetitions for every player.

Players worked on cradling, ground balls, passing and proper shooting form through relays, Sharks and Minnows, small-group competitions and larger team games. Beginners were eager to learn, and opening week gave MRL plenty to build on before Week 2 begins Wednesday.

COACH ETHAN'S NOTEBOOK

WATCHING MRL BECOME REAL



Coach Ethan directs players during opening week.

Before our first practice began, I stopped for a moment and watched everything happening around me. Parents were setting up their chairs. Players were putting on their equipment and walking over to receive their pinnies. I had a huge smile on my face because I was watching something happen that I never imagined I would have the opportunity to build.

I have coached lacrosse before, but always within someone else's program. They were someone else's balls, goals and logo. I was helping carry out someone else's vision.

This time, it was Midtown Raleigh Lacrosse.

Seeing our players and coaches together on the field was surreal. More importantly, it made the opportunity in front of us feel real. We have the chance to build something that teaches the game while making a positive difference in the lives of players and families throughout Raleigh.

Some of our beginners reminded me of myself when I first started playing. They arrived with a random assortment of equipment, learned how to hold a stick and tried skills that felt completely unfamiliar. They did not become discouraged. They were happy to be there and eager to learn.

That is what I want MRL to protect as it grows.

I want players to arrive excited to see their teammates and ready to learn. I want them to leave practice thinking about the skill they almost completed, then go home and find a wall or a goal so they can keep working until they get it.

When I talk about building a lacrosse community, that is what I mean. I want MRL to become a place where children fall in love with the game the same way I did at their age.

Thank you to every parent who trusted us with their child and every coach who gave his time to help us begin. If we build this the right way, MRL can positively affect the lives of players across the Raleigh area for years to come.

Coach Ethan
Founder & Director

ON THE FIELD



Players listen during a Saturday group instruction period.

WHAT WE WORKED ON

Opening week centered on cradling, ground balls, passing and proper shooting form. Players applied those fundamentals through relays, small-group competitions, Sharks and Minnows, and larger team games.

WHY IT MATTERS

Cradling will remain a major point of emphasis across every age group. Players cannot move confidently, protect their sticks or make effective plays until they become comfortable carrying the ball under control.

HOW THE GROUPS DIFFER

Younger players receive more direct coaching and simplified drills built around movement, repetition and fun competition. Older players continue developing the fundamentals while applying them through more advanced drills and specific game situations.

WHAT COMES NEXT

Week 2 will feature more efficient transitions, a wider variety of drills and more repetitions for each player. Coaches will continue reinforcing cradling while helping players use their developing skills under greater pressure.

WEDNESDAY EMPHASIS

Cradle with control, protect the stick and stay comfortable while moving. Strong habits come before speed.

THE DEVELOPMENT CORNER

PARENT + PLAYER STARTER ROUTINE

This 10-minute routine helps young beginners become comfortable catching, scooping and controlling the ball. Use a tennis ball or soft practice ball when possible.

1. **PARENT TOSSES** Stand a few feet apart. Gently toss the ball toward the player's stick. The player watches the ball into the pocket and gives slightly with the catch. Complete 10 tosses.
2. **ROLL AND SCOOP** Roll the ball away from the player. The player gets low, places the front foot beside the ball and scoops through it without stopping. Complete five rolls in each direction.
3. **THROW, SCOOP AND RESET** The player throws the ball against a wall. If the rebound is caught, great. If it drops, the player scoops it and resets. Complete 10 throws.
4. **CRADLE TO THE PARENT** After each catch or scoop, the player cradles toward the parent while protecting the stick, then hands or gently passes the ball back.
5. **FINISH WITH A CHALLENGE** Count how many clean catches and ground balls the player can complete in two minutes. Record the score and try to beat it later in the week.



Players compete during an opening-week small-sided drill.

COACH ETHAN'S CUE

Good technique matters more than speed. Encourage effort, celebrate small improvements and let mistakes become another repetition.

Use a safe wall away from windows, vehicles and other people.

AT-HOME GOAL

Keep the session short, positive and repeatable. Ten good minutes should leave a young player wanting to pick up the stick again tomorrow.

MIDTOWN MOMENTS



Young players attack a ground ball during a team competition.



A coach and player share a moment after practice.



MRL takes the field in navy and gold.

CAUGHT DOING IT RIGHT

COURAGE

JAMES BRAWNER

James showed real courage by stepping into the goal and taking on a new position.

LEADERSHIP

FINN KORNSTEIN

Finn led by example throughout opening week. He worked hard, had fun, maintained a positive attitude and encouraged the players around him.

EFFORT

VANN BUESCHER

Vann attacked every repetition at full speed. Whether it was a drill, competition or ground ball, his effort never changed.

THE WEEK AHEAD

WEEK 2 | ST. DAVID'S SCHOOL SATELLITE ATHLETIC FIELDS

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 16

6:00-7:30 P.M.

Cradling will be Wednesday's primary focus. Players will work on carrying the ball with control, protecting their sticks and becoming comfortable cradling while moving.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 19

9:00-10:30 A.M.

Saturday will build on Wednesday's progress before moving into shooting drills and competitions. Players will work on proper technique and applying their skills at game speed.

PARENT BULLETIN

WEAR YOUR MRL PINNIE

Players should wear their MRL reversible pinnie to every practice.

ARRIVE WITH COMPLETE EQUIPMENT

Please make sure players arrive with all required equipment, including their stick, mouthguard, protective cup and water bottle.

LITTLE-GROUP WRANGLERS NEEDED

We are looking for parent volunteers to help organize and move our youngest players between drills. No lacrosse experience is required. If you can help, please contact Coach Ethan.

AROUND MRL

MRL GIRLS YOUTH SESSIONS

EIGHT SUNDAYS | SEPTEMBER 20-NOVEMBER 8 | 4:00-5:00 P.M.

ST. DAVID'S SCHOOL

MRL is launching an eight-week introductory girls lacrosse series. The sessions will introduce young players to the game through fundamentals, movement and age-appropriate competition.



The MRL crest makes its opening-week debut.

HELP US SPREAD THE WORD

Please share the girls youth sessions with families whose daughters may be interested in trying lacrosse. Every introduction helps us create more opportunities for young players in Raleigh. We greatly appreciate your support.

LEARN. COMPETE. BELONG.

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