

Erik Pelton

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To: Erik Pelton
Subject: 10 Man Ride | Matchups & Waiver Wire Pickups

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Joe Keegan
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Welcome to the 10-Man Ride.

We've pulled the goalie to cover the entire field. Each week, we'll use 10 bullet points to catch you up to speed on the Premier Lacrosse League.

1. Group play matchups announced

Quick reminder of how the tournament works: Every team plays four games during group play. Then teams are seeded from 1-to-7 for a single-elimination tournament. The top seed gets a bye. These are the matchups (although not necessarily the order of the schedule) for group play:

- **Archers:** Atlas, Chrome, Waterdogs, Whipsnakes
- **Atlas:** Archers, Redwoods, Waterdogs, Whipsnakes
- **Chaos:** Chrome, Redwoods, Waterdogs, Whipsnakes
- **Chrome:** Archers, Chaos, Redwoods, Waterdogs
- **Redwoods:** Atlas, Chaos, Chrome, Whipsnakes
- **Waterdogs:** Archers, Atlas, Chaos, Chrome
- **Whipsnakes:** Archers, Atlas, Chaos, Redwoods

There's no easy draw. Reminder: Atlas tied for a playoff spot, Chrome played six one-possession games yet finished in last place, and the Waterdogs have a much stronger roster than expected for an expansion team. All seven teams have a shot at the top seed

2. Waterdogs will match up against the three worst fast break defenses

Waterdogs head coach Andy Copelan was able to see the impact of PLL's rules before building his roster. The league has a quicker shot clock (52 seconds), a shorter field (100 yards), and a closer two-point arc (15 yards) than any form of field lacrosse. The game is faster than ever. To optimize for an uptempo game, Copelan targeted two-way midfielders: Zach Carrier, Drew Snider, Danny Eipp, Ryan Conrad, and Kyle McClancy.

"I really don't want to be a team that just subs all game," Copelan [told me earlier this spring](#). "And then before you know it, you spend 30% of the game subbing and 70% of the game trying to score a goal. I think we can sub less and hopefully be more productive."

That style of play wins in this league – and it presents some problems for the teams on the Waterdogs schedule. The Atlas (16.6 points allowed per fast break possession), Chrome (15.2), and Chaos (11.3) had the three worst transition defenses by nearly every measure. Again, there are no easy schedules, but the Waterdogs have some stylistic advantages if those three teams don't clean up their transition defense.

3. Blaze Riorden's outlets

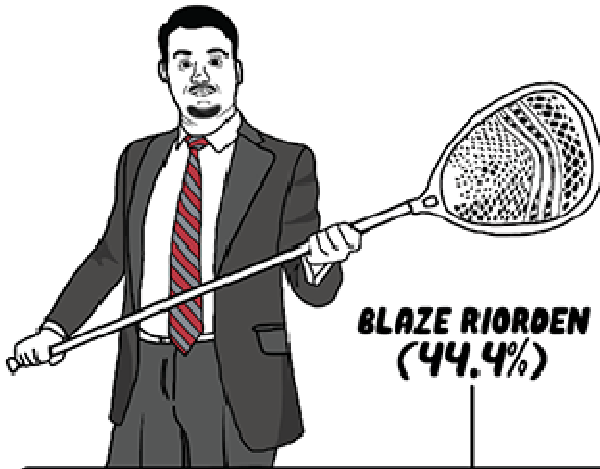
Blaze Riorden made more clean saves (43.9% of his saves, league average = 34.1%) than any goalie in the league. Clean saves jumpstart transition. They're easy to outlet, creating a quicker first step from defense-to-offense. But one of the qualities that makes Blaze so special is that he is able to outlet messy saves better than anyone.

The Chaos fast break offense shot nearly as well after Blaze's messy saves (43.8%) as it did after his clean saves (44.4%). Both numbers are insane considering this context: league-wide fast break shooting percentage following clean saves is 34.2%; following messy saves, it's only 27.2%. Blaze's ability to throw outlets from his knees, [find players across midfield \(!!!\)](#), and [hit SSDMs in stride](#) created offense for Chaos.

A minor cause for concern: Blaze's favorite target, Kyle McClancy, is now on the Waterdogs. Blaze and McClancy's chemistry dates back to their days at UAlbany. There's an immense level of trust there; Blaze barely needed to

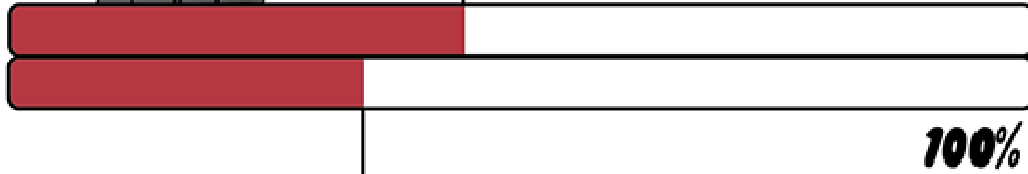
glance in McClancy's direction before lofting an outlet pass to him. I wouldn't worry too much – Blaze has shown faith outletting to anyone and everyone.

BLAZE AND THE BREAK



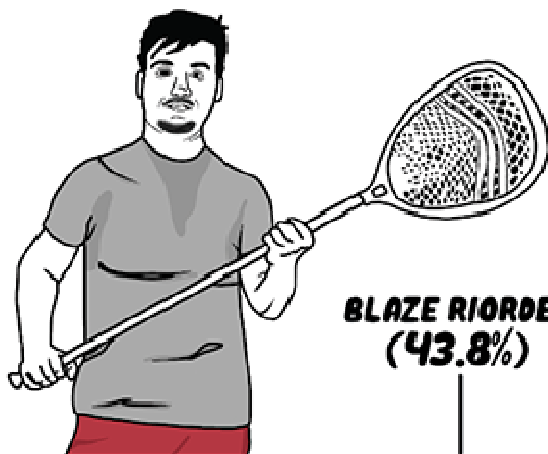
BLAZE RIORDEN
(44.4%)

CHAOS
FAST BREAKS
FOLLOWING
CLEAN
SAVES



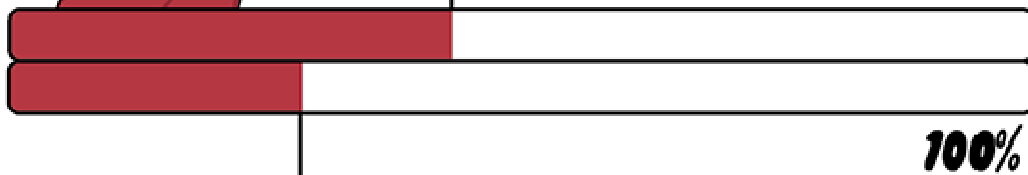
LEAGUE AVERAGE
(34.2%)

100%



BLAZE RIORDEN
(43.8%)

CHAOS
FAST BREAKS
FOLLOWING
MESSY
SAVES



LEAGUE AVERAGE
(27.2%)

100%

4. Bunk Bed Bros > Banana Boat Crew

Adam Ghitelman, Marcus Holman, and Will Manny – all currently coaching at Utah – hosted some of their Archers teammates this week for bonding, boating, lifting, golfing, 3x lacrosse, and more. Grant Ament, Curtis Corley, Mike Simon, Ian MacKay, and Eli Gobrecht took the trip and acclimated to the altitude.

Players around the league have had to get creative with their workouts. [Lacrosse Magazine's Nelson Rice](#) covers all of the different routines, from pushing trucks to homemade bench press setups to Peloton rides to sand dune races.

5. Waiver wire pickups

The waiver wire closed on Tuesday. All players picked up on the waiver wire must be added to the 22-man roster that travels to Utah. These players have punched their tickets to the tournament:

- Josh Currier (M) to Archers
- Jeremy Thompson (M) to Atlas
- Hunter Forbes (FO) to Chrome
- Jacob Pulver (D) to Chrome
- Sam Duggan (M) to Chrome
- Jesse King (M) to Chrome
- Brendan Kavanagh (A) to Chrome
- Eli Salama (D) to Chrome
- Jake Withers (FO) to Waterdogs

Phew. That's a lot to digest. Currier (yes, Zach's brother) could replace Ben McIntosh (now on the Waterdogs) as Tom Schreiber's primary pick-and-roll partner. Thompson gives Atlas short-stick defensive midfield depth after losing Steven DeNapoli to the Waterdogs. Withers gives the Waterdogs another option at the faceoff stripe. And the Chrome....

6. Extreme Makeover: Chrome Edition

Head coach Tim Soudan made a huge splash on the waiver wire with six pickups: Hunter Forbes, Jacob Pulver, Sam Duggan, Jesse King, Brendan Kavanagh, and Eli Salama.

Here's why: veterans Joel White, Matt Danowski, Ryan Flanagan, Mike

Manley, and Mike O'Neil aren't able to make the trip. Those five (plus Simon Mathias) have been placed on the excused inactive list..

Soudan went with some familiar faces. He has coached King, a stud lefty playmaker out of The Ohio State University by way of British Columbia. Goalie John Galloway coached Forbes at Jacksonville. Pulver (Cornell), Duggan (also Cornell), and Salama (RIT) played their college ball in Soudan's backyard. Kavanagh's brother (Matt) plays for the Redwoods.

Suddenly, this roster looks very different. Chrome will miss those veteran voices. I will miss watching All-Film Team LSM Joel White denying passing lanes and snagging one-handed nuggets. But blending some returning players seeking to avenge an underwhelming 2019 season with these newcomers proving they belong in PLL will make a competitive squad.

7. Josh Currier: The Pick-and-roll Partner That Was Promised

When the Waterdogs drafted Ben McIntosh, the Archers' offense was left with one big question: Who will be Tom Schreiber's primary pick-and-roll partner in 2020?

McIntosh was one of Schreiber's favorite targets, finishing six goals on 16 shots from Schreiber. Only Will Manny (6-for-15 on passes from Schreiber) and Marcus Holman (5-for-17) came close to those numbers.

Ideally, Schreiber's picker would be both (1) a righty and (2) covered by a short-stick. Holman fits the former. Ryan Ambler and Ian MacKay fit the latter. Davey Emala fits both; he only dressed twice in 2019, but could thrive playing off Schreiber.

Currier can play off Schreiber or operate the pick-and-roll himself. He has speed – plus a reputation for going airborne around the crease.

8. 22-man Roster Predictions

Inside Lacrosse's Kyle Devitte and Chris Rosenthal predicted each team's 22-man rosters in monster two-part article: [Part I](#) and [Part II](#).

(Sidenote: KD is leading the league in nicknames for the Waterdogs already with two – aquapups and submerged canines – and he's showing no signs of slowing down.)

A couple notes to consider:

- We've learned some of the 22-man rosters since these articles were written. All nine players claimed off waivers must make their team's respective rosters.
- Expect teams to carry two faceoff specialist. [Greg Gurenlian says that this format – similar to the world games – is too grueling for one man.](#)

One faceoff man who might be asked to run solo...

9. Wild Stat of the Week

Per [Jake Watts](#), Joe Nardella went 4-for-4 from the faceoff stripe in OT. He also scooped all four groundballs. Nardella might be the scrappiest and most skilled faceoff specialist in the league; Stephen "Bones" Kelly (Archers) makes a strong case for both titles, too. Stay tuned for more faceoff stats.

10. Jack Concannon vs. doorstep shots

Jack Concannon protects the rim like Dikembe Mutombo, or should I say like Dikembe Mutombo would protect the rim if he had a trampoline like in Slamball. The Atlas keeper [denied 51.8% of shots from five yards and in.](#)

Phrased differently: Shooters shot 37.0% from within five yards when Jack Concannon was in cage.

37.0%. Woof. Shots from inside five yards should be layups. League average shooting percentage from that range is 45.7%.



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Thanks for reading!

Spread the word, give me feedback on Twitter ([@joekeegs](#)), and I'll talk to you next week!



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