

VIEW FROM ABOVE

Boys lacrosse team uses drone to elevate team performance



The boys varsity lacrosse head coach, Paul Limpert, launches his drone to start recording practice.

Photo by Matthew Marvar

Matthew Marvar | Staff Writer

Mason lacrosse has an eye in the sky. This year, head coach Paul Limpert took to flight a new idea. During practice, he uses a drone with an attached camera, and it goes places no camera has ever been before. According to Limpert, the angle that the camera offers is unlike anything else because it shows a top-down view of the players on the field.

“When you’re at the level where all of the players are (at), it’s like looking into a crowd,” Limpert said. “You can’t really tell if somebody has slid the way they’re supposed to slide or has covered correctly, but...(with the new camera angle), they know better about what they need to correct because they can see it in real

obvious detail.”

After he tapes the day’s practice, he uploads it to a website called Huddle.com where players can watch the video and recognize what they did well and what they didn’t do well. According to junior Martin Allen, the site offers a more convenient approach to the idea of looking back at practice—he’s able to do it on his own time.

“Coach can go through and post on it, and he can comment and add in what you should be doing,” Allen said. “It makes everything a lot easier for him, without everybody sitting down in one room and watching it together. It’s on your own—you have an account...he adds you into the group, and then you can go and watch all your videos.”

According to Limpert, the camera shows and doesn’t tell. He said that it’s a lot more convenient when the players can be shown what they’re doing wrong versus being told.

“It’s so much nicer to have these tools for kids to be able to see themselves and not have coaches yelling at them,” Limpert said. “They can yell at themselves.”

Allen said that even though the drone doesn’t put the team too far ahead, it is helpful when they can see what they’re doing through the aerial shot of the camera.

“I wouldn’t say that it puts us at a huge advantage, but I would say it gives us that extra view of what we need to be doing,” Allen said. “(The drone) gives us the overhead on how they’re sliding and

how they’re rotating versus the typical camera on the sideline.”

Because this technique is so new, players are still warming up to it, but Limpert said that he’s convinced that it will eventually make a difference in the performance of the team as he continues to use it at practice.

“I don’t know if the whole impact is felt yet, but I hope that over time they’ll get used to it and start making adjustments from that,” Limpert said. “Mostly, it’s a motivational thing for the kids. There’s no hiding from the camera. But when you’re at a low angle from the sidelines there is a lot of hiding—and it’s not as obvious to you. It keeps coaches from having to be the bad guy—just watch the film. Let the camera do the talking.”