

## Coach-Recommended Shafts and Heads Coach Devero, March 18, 2013

If you're going the "new route", you have to realize that "in-store" selection in the area is highly limited based on the fact that lacrosse is not a prominent sport in Columbia. If you needed a new stick quickly, the best option would be to drive to St. Louis and check out a store called "**Total Lacrosse**" in **Chesterfield Valley** (if you're not familiar with it, it's the area off Highway 40/64 after you've crossed the bridge heading into St. Louis). Coach Hurst and I were recently visiting the store and were quite impressed with their selection and pricing. The prices were on par with anything you'd see online, except for the slight mark-up that you'd expect at any retail store. However, you'd end up getting that mark-up online due to shipping and handling. It all balances out in the end.

If you have the time and don't feel like driving into St. Louis, you have a plethora of online retailers that sell quality merchandise at reasonable prices (which is subjective since lacrosse equipment is already fairly expensive). Coach Hurst actually turned me on to a website that was pretty good with their prices and have a decent clearance section. It's [www.lacrossemonkey.com](http://www.lacrossemonkey.com), but there are several different websites, and you can usually just find online coupons for nearly any retailer with a simple Google search.

Now, let's get into the costs. Depending on the quality of your equipment, you're looking at investing somewhere between \$100-350 to be perfectly honest, if you want solid equipment for our level of play. I always try to stay on the cheaper side, because I've never had the money to buy the nicest, most expensive items. You can still get a quality stick on the low end of that estimated investment cost. I also say investment because if you take care of your stick, you can get a couple seasons of play out of it. Sometimes, a website will offer a discount if you buy a new head and shaft in the same purchase order, which also helps. Lastly, I strongly recommend that all players have at least two sticks. One is your back-up/bad weather stick, then the other is your daily stick for practice and games. That way, if something happens to your regular stick, you have the other immediately rather than borrowing someone else's or scrambling for a new one. But, I can understand that this is quite expensive.

You also want to factor in the brand of equipment you use/buy. **The best and most notable brands are Brine, Warrior, & STX.** I, personally, like to stick to these brands, and have also been a bit more keen toward **Brine and Warrior**. However, Nike, Reebok, and Easton have quickly emerged within the lacrosse equipment market. I have never used any of their equipment, so I can't provide much insight on these.

For the shaft, the top of the line would be a titanium or scandium shaft because of the strength and light weight. But, for a more modest and effective shaft, a simple alloy shaft can get the job done. I have almost religiously used **Brine shafts, particularly the F15** because of its quality and price. If I was going to splurge, I would upgrade to the F22 or F55, or just get the King Ti (titanium). Each brand offers the same type of shaft (material) under different names. You won't be sacrificing much in regards to quality between the brands. I would just suggest that you avoid any shaft that has significant changes that "offer improved grip". Most of these are off the market because they just weren't that great, but they're still lingering around. I also avoid shafts that have altered surfaces for improved grips because I don't want that friction to damage the leather on my gloves.

For the head, you have a lot of differences based on slight changes made to the design of the head. I would recommend finding one with a narrower sidewall in order to have better pocket control and stability. You may also want something that flared wide toward the top for better ground balls. You'll have to browse through and check it out. I know a lot of guys use all different sort of heads. It's really a personal "feel" for heads.

The head and shaft brands do not have to be the same. All heads should fit on almost all shafts. The only thing you might need to do is get a drill bit and drill a hole into the shaft to ensure the head is all the way down on the shaft and keep it secure. This will also help prevent it from early damage or breakage. I also would get the "unstrung" head and order a stringing kit (traditional mesh, preferably, because it's more durable and easier to work with) with it. I always do this to string my own stick in order to have the pocket just where I want it and to have the stick throw how I would like it.

Should you have additional questions, please don't hesitate to ask Coach Devero.