

STICKS & STONES



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Canadian Lacrosse Association Announces New International Initiative

By Neil Stevens, Team Canada media

Dean French has been named National Team Chair in a re-vamped approach by the Canadian Lacrosse Association to better organize its international presence.

Stewart Begg, CLA Vice-President for International Competition, says the new initiative represents an exciting opportunity to enhance the development of national teams.

"We believe that a strong national team program is critical to the development and promotion of our sport nationally and abroad," says Begg, a resident of Fort Saskatchewan, Alta. "We want to ensure that we have a strong and experienced leadership team to carry our national team programs forward for the best success."

French was the Executive Director of Canada's world men's field team that won silver in Manchester, England last summer and has the same role with the Canadian men's team for the world indoor tourna-

ment in Prague, May 21-28. A native of Lakefield, Ont., French is a Toronto businessman who coaches high school lacrosse at St. Michael's College School.

"We have been fortunate to benefit from Dean's experience, passion, connections and leadership," says Begg. "He will continue to bring these assets to the national team programs as national team chair."

David Huntley will be Director of Men's Field National Teams. The native of Toronto, who coached the men's field team in Manchester, has lived and worked in the Baltimore region since his NCAA playing days.

Joanne Stanga will continue as Director of Women's Field National Teams. Stanga, from Orillia, is IT project manager at Magna International in Aurora, Ont.

Huntley and Stanga both played for Canada.

"Dave brings a wealth of experience and we are excited that he will fill the role of national team director for men's field," says Begg. "Joanne has led our teams on the women's field side and we are delighted that she will be continuing in this capacity."

Said Huntley: "I am thrilled to be working with Dean and Stew again and excited to work alongside Joanne for the first time. My first order of business is to get our staff in place for the 2012 Under-19 championship so they can put our best possible team on the field in Finland."

All are volunteer positions. Previously, vying groups would participate in a bid process to manage national teams on a temporary basis.

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2012 U19 Men's Field National Team Applications Being Accepted!

The CLA is now accepting player, coach and support staff applications for the 2012 U19 Men's Field National Team. Deadline for coach and support staff applications is **March 7th** and deadline for player applications is **March 25th, 2011**.

Visit www.lacrosse.ca for all application information.

Introducing CLA Women's Field Sector Chair, Marisa DiBari

How long have you been involved in lacrosse and in what capacity (i.e. player, coach, administrator and/or official)?

I started in 1996 as a goalie for York University. After university I returned to coach at York University for a few years and began to officiate as well. During the summers I played for the Sr. Oshawa Lady Blue Knights as well. I became OWL Director of Officiating 3 years ago and this year became the CLA Women's Field Sector Chair. In 2007, I was awarded my L3 (National) for Officiating and have travelled to the US to officiate as well.

What do you hope to achieve during your term in your current position?

I hope that I can help to assist in growing and developing women's field lacrosse not only in the provinces that already have strong lacrosse programs, but to also help develop those provinces that would like to grow. I would like to provide more training and development opportunities to coaches, players and officials.

What do you envision for the future of lacrosse?

In my ideal world, each province would have a women's field lacrosse program and we would have a National Championship again. I see the future of women's field lacrosse growing stronger in the years to come. It's also important to continue to have Canada send some of our best coaches, players and officials to compete on the international stage.

What do you like to do in your spare time?

In my spare time, I like to travel, play soccer and softball and spend time with my friends, family and my goddaughter, Mya.

What is a favourite quote or saying that you follow in life?

"It's not whether you get knocked down. It's whether you get up." - Vince Lombardi

Local Heroes: Fundy Lacrosse Association

By Dave Higdon, Lacrosse New Brunswick

The Canadian lacrosse landscape is dotted with incredibly successful minor associations. Take Whitby for example. A city that can only be classified as small as far as Ontario cities go. Their lacrosse community, however, is anything but small. A mere 48 years old, this group has grown from a small fledgling group, to the largest of its kind in our country. How does this happen? I am not sure what all the factors are that contribute to such success, but I am absolutely certain that one such factor is a key group of volunteers.

If you peel back the covers of every lacrosse association in Canada, I am willing to bet you will find this one constant characteristic - the existence of an often small, but incredibly dedicated and passionate group of volunteers. This is certainly the case of the Fundy Lacrosse Association in Saint John, New Brunswick.

In late 2000 and early 2001, New Brunswick's most fanatical lacrosse enthusiast, Dave Arseneault, reinvigorated by television broadcasts of the NLL, set out on a mission to re-establish lacrosse in his home town of Saint John. Dave began by reaching out to other lacrosse addicts in the area. This group began to take form and when the dust settled he had brought together a small, but dedicated, group of five individuals: Dave Arseneault, Bruce Logan, Mike Fox, Tim Hunt and Dave Higdon. Each of these guys had played lacrosse as kids and young men. They came together as stewards of the game with a common goal - to provide local children with the opportunity to experience the "fastest game on two feet".

Their objective for year one - have 100 kids registered to play lacrosse. When the smoke cleared on the first night of their inaugural registration, they were looking at over 500 completed registration forms. Once the shock wore off, the question was raised - "What do we do now?" Without hesitation, the answer came from Bruce Logan - "We step up." And step up they did. The group of five set out to recruit and train coaches, referees, timekeepers and administrators. The recruitment campaign went very well but did not quite turn up the number of volunteers that a league of this size required. The solution was simple - each of the original five wore ten hats. They coached multiple teams, refereed endless hours of games, answered phone queries from parents and performed banking and other administrative activities. All this was not only done without complaint, but with smiles from ear to ear. You see, these guys were so overjoyed to see the love of their life being enjoyed by hundreds of smiling youth, it did not seem like work. It seemed more like a calling.

Ten seasons later these five guys still hear, and answer, the call. They coach, referee, perform multiple administrative roles, and most importantly, are the biggest supporters of the game. Pop into a rink in Saint John some day between April and July and you are sure to run into one of these patrons of the game, or at the very least the legacy of their efforts on the smiling faces of Saint John's youth.

Do you have a great story about lacrosse in your province or community you'd like to share?

Send it to sticksandstones@lacrosse.ca.



Coaches Corner: Changing Standards in Lacrosse

By CLA Coaching Sector Chair, James Gow

As a coach, if you were asked which is more important: Playing to win, playing to compete, playing to have fun, or playing by the rules? What would your answer be?

Your answer as a coach might vary depending on the circumstances – but most children playing in the school-yard know the right answer. At least they can quickly figure it out given the chance. Referees already know the right answer.

Following the rules of the game, along with policy standards associated with the game, is inherent to the success of any interactive game. If rules and standards are not followed, abided by, or complied with, then the outcome is a game mired in confusion and chaos.

Children clearly express themselves by shouting “That’s not fair!” or “That’s cheating!” or perhaps something worse if they perceive the rules are not being followed.

Formally or informally (through administrative needs or the issues raised by the evolution in the skills of the game), either internally or externally (to proactively better the game or as mandated by Sport Canada / meet legal requirements), rules and standards are constantly developed and revised to ensure a successful play experience. It is vital to avoid the potential chaos of not playing by the recognized rules or standards.

There have been many events in lacrosse, and other sports as well, that have ended in chaos or utter confusion simply because existing rules or standards were not adhered to. These usually make the TV highlight reels, YouTube, or are talked about excessively within the local communities involved, or within the team environment itself.

Coaches need to continually strive to understand the rules and standards of their game to match the example set by our children. Ideally rules and standards should change in a proactive manner – but often they are established in a reactive way once someone circumvents the existing rules or standards.

The following are a few select examples of rules and standards, relevant to lacrosse, that have evolved or changed over time. Some evolved a very long time ago and some are more recent.

Circa 1962, Punch Imlach, a successful coach of the NHL’s Toronto Maple Leafs, sent out invitation to training camp letters that demonstrated an expectation that reporting players not be more than 7 lbs over weight, be able to do 20 push-ups, 20 sit-ups and 30 knee bends. No mention was made of aerobic fitness. At the same camp, players balked at having to do any off-ice fitness training. *STANDARDS CHANGE*

Circa 1967, minor lacrosse players, meaning novice, peewee and bantam, complained about having to wear helmets for the first time. Previously there was no rule requiring helmets in minor lacrosse. *STANDARDS CHANGE*

Circa 1970, smoking between periods of lacrosse games seemed to be a common experience for many ‘old-time’ senior lacrosse players. Not an accepted norm today. *STANDARDS CHANGE*

Circa 1972, both in hockey and lacrosse, there was only one penalty box, not one for each team. Interesting! *STANDARDS CHANGE*

Minimum length of box lacrosse sticks used to be 42” for bantam and above, and 36” for peewee and below. Now minimum stick lengths are 40” and 34” respectively for those age groups. Mini-tyke and tyke sticks are now allowed to be between 26” and 40”. *STANDARDS CHANGE*

Prior to 2010, in men’s field lacrosse, the head of the crosse had to measure between 4 and 10 inches inside measurement at its widest point. Starting in 2011, the rule states that the head of the crosse shall measure between 6 and 10 inches inside measurement at its widest point. *STANDARDS CHANGE*

Recently net sizes have been extended to 4’6” in senior and junior divisions of lacrosse and diminished in size to 3’x 3’ in mini-tyke and tyke lacrosse. *STANDARDS CHANGE*

Circa 2004, static stretching as an integral part of warm-ups in lacrosse, and other sports, was being steadily replaced by the active dynamic movements used today. *STANDARDS CHANGE*

Thirty years ago lacrosse teams operated with one coach. No sign of assistant coaches in old team photographs. In 2010, the Mann Cup champions, along with a majority, if not all, successful lacrosse teams operated with no less than three bench coaches and a myriad of off-floor coaches including video coaches. A new CLA rule for 2011 has limited bench personnel to a maximum of 6 certified coaches or qualified trainers. *STANDARDS CHANGE*

Minimum coaching certification standards have been established over time primarily to ensure ethically trained coaches, promote the extensive advances seen in the sciences of sport and fitness and to promote changes in technical aspects of lacrosse stimulated largely by the ‘hybridization’ between field and box in the past 3 or 4 decades. For 2011, the CLA coach sector has delineated a



Coaches Corner Continued...

revised set of Minimum Certification Requirement grids to replace the old Form 100s. These can be found on the CLA website under Coaching/Forms. *STANDARDS CHANGE*

Coach certification levels used to be referred to as Level 1, Level 2 and Level 3. For the past ten years, they have been referred to as community initiation (CMI), community development (CMD), competitive introduction (CPI) and competitive development (CPD). *STANDARDS CHANGE*

The highest lacrosse-specific coaching level prior to 2010 was competitive introduction (CPI). Now, the highest level available is competitive development (CPD). *STANDARDS CHANGE*

Coaching certification clinics used to require separate theory and technical sessions. In the past five years, the CLA has combined the theory and technical sessions, improving the learning situation and requiring much less classroom time compared with many other sports. The CLA also allows some coaching course materials to be covered by self-directed study online. *STANDARDS CHANGE*

Dependant on their own past experiences, borrowing from other teams' practices within their own region, the infrequent compilation of drill manuals and minimal access to any hardcover lacrosse coaching books, there used to be natural limits to the sharing of technical drills and information by coaches across Canada. The CLA on-line interactive drill library has changed that. *STANDARDS CHANGE*

Hydration, now a known necessity for high level athletic performance, used to be restricted to post game recovery, as it was thought it would contribute to abdominal cramping during games. At most, players were allowed to munch on orange slices between periods. *STANDARDS CHANGE*

The cost of an individual player's high tech running shoes in the 21st century might be the equivalent of an entire team's budget spent on footwear just a few years ago. *STANDARDS CHANGE*

The interpretation of contact rules have always varied from year to year and from league to league. Through recent LTAD initiatives, the CLA rulebook now has four distinct definitions for contact in box lacrosse. Body positioning only, steering, place and push and full contact cross checking rules. *STANDARDS CHANGE*

An old lacrosse coach once said "the trouble with referees is that they just don't care who wins". Acceptance of that statement implies that coaches often have biases when interpreting rules and standards applied during games. It is the ongoing role of each coach, along with the CLA, to promote the use of common rules and standards used in all the "schoolyards" across Canada. This will allow everyone involved to win, compete and have fun.

Equipment Check

By CLA Equipment Review Committee Chair, Chuck Miller

The CLA's Equipment Review Committee held their annual meeting in January 2011 to review lacrosse equipment in Canada with a new season fast approaching. A few reminders are noted here as far as lacrosse equipment in Canada:

All lacrosse balls used in Canada for CLA sanctioned events, games and practices, must be made by a manufacturer who is approved and licensed under the CLA ball endorsement and official licensee program. The approved and licensed manufacturers must have 'CLA Approved' stamped on the ball. Effective January 2012 the manufacturer must also have their logo on the lacrosse ball.

Effective January 1, 2012 all box lacrosse nets will need to be purchased from CLA Approved manufacturers who have met the net specification standards as approved by the CLA Board of Directors. Currently there are three CLA approved net manufacturers - Warrior, STX/NAMI and Riley.

Goaltenders must wear level 1, 2 or 3 in the CLA goaltender equipment standard chart. All category/division equipment must conform to the body and no exceptions for oversized equipment will be made. If a player has difficulty fitting into the appropriate sizing by category, the player can choose to have specially made equipment by an approved manufacturer but it must meet the CLA standard.

Important Dates & Deadlines...

CLA Sponsor



Deadlines:

March 1—Deadline for nominations for Lester B. Pearson Award
March 2—Transfers can begin
March 21—Policy change proposals and reports for SAGM due

Events:

Semi-Annual General Meeting: May 4th to 8th, Dartmouth, NS.
World Indoor Lacrosse Championship: May 21st to 28th, Prague, Czech Republic
Annual General Meeting: Nov 17th to 20th, Sainte Adele, QC