



2023 HLA ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Wednesday November 1, 2023
Mountain Arena
7:30 P.M.

Minutes

1. Welcome ~ Greg Gillis, President
Welcomed everyone and verified the attendance satisfied the requirements for a quorum.
2. Approval of Minutes of 2022 AGM ~ Motion to accept, all in favour, accepted, carried.
3. Year End Reports
 - a. President ~ Greg Gillis
 - 2023 Season – Greg discussed the 2023 Season and the challenges and success of the organization this past year. He reviewed the continued growth that we are seeing across the organization, new programs in house league, the return of baby Bengals, and another successful Super Series tournament
 - b. Vice President ~ Technical ~ Joel Firmin
 - **Scheduling**
 - This season, we mandated the use of TeamSnap Mobile App for all Bengal teams. This was a great addition to the league as it made my scheduling life much easier. Not only did it make my life easier, but it also made the live's of our coaches, managers, and parents easier by having the team's schedule and communication readily available in the palms of everyone's hands.
 - Shawna Dolman and Jen Pate needed to be recognized for all of their hard work managing the apps.
 - Now that I have two children playing rep lacrosse, as well as my busy refereeing schedule, I really do not have the time to manage the scheduling role. If someone is willing to take on the role of scheduler, I will gladly see that they have a smooth transition into their new role.
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 - **Equipment**
 - This year, I believe we only had to purchase a few items for our goalies in the U13/U15 age groups. After quickly putting the gear away in our storage locker at the end of the season, I can tell that we'll need to purchase some more rep-level gear for the younger age groups. We'll be able to tell more after a full inventory has been taken.

- Once again, used Play it Again Sports to sanitize our equipment after the season.
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- A new shot clock was also purchased during the season and we'll likely need to purchase another in 2024 as some of them are very past their prime. Replacement parts for the older models are near impossible to get so unfortunately, this forces us to purchase newer models.
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- **House League Program**
- This year, the HLA continued its focus on the rebuilding of the House League program.
- After only running a Paperweight, U9, and U11 in 2022, we were able to offer our "Next Level Development Program" for U13 and U15 age groups. Players who were unsuccessful in making a Bengal team or who had no desire to play travel lacrosse were able to stay local and develop their skills. We had several pro players drop in throughout the season to provide instruction, but the bulk of the programming was run by President Greg Gillis. From the feedback that I have heard, the program was a huge success.
- The U9 and U11 age groups grew drastically this year. After forcing Bengal players to play within the house league during the previous season, this year we did not have to do that. In fact, the U9 age group expanded to six teams, and the U11 age group had 4 full teams. This, along with the addition of the "Next Level Program" forced us to add a third rink for the first time in years.
- For the U5/U7 age group, we employed the services of U17 Bengals coach, Mike Bottosso to run the instruction on both Mondays and Wednesday nights. Mike who is an elementary school teacher by day, was the perfect person to run this age group. He made it fun and welcoming for everyone
- For the advanced players in the U7 age group, we were able to offer a modified Bengal team for the first time since Covid. 18 players were chosen to play on the team. The boys competed in exhibition games, two "Fun Days" and one invitational tournament at the Toronto Rock Athletic Centre in Oakville. This was a real eye-opener for the parents who got to see just how big the sport of lacrosse is around the province. Our U9 Bengal team will be that much better next season as a result of these boys getting that rep-level experience.

c. Registration Report ~ Lesley Boyle

Registration Totals					
BOX	2023	2022	2019	2018	
BOX U5 Soft Lacrosse	25	15			
BOX Paperweight	80	56	81	72	
BOX U9 House/Rep (formerly Tyke)	93	48	51	52	
BOX U11 Boys House/Rep (formerly Novice)	69	43	67	73	
BOX U13 Boys House/Rep (formerly Pee Wee)	56	30	82	84	*2022 - no House League program
BOX U15 Boys Rep (formerly Bantam)	46	35	48	68	*2022 - no House League program
BOX U17 Boys Rep (formerly Midget)	42	17	42	56	*2022/2023 - no House League program
BOX U22 Boys Rep (formerly Intermediate)	31	20	25	25	
TOTAL	442	264	396	430	
BOYS FIELD	2023	2022	2019	2018	
U9 Field	16	n/a	10	0	
U11 Field	15	12	17	20	
U13 Field	17	n/a	18	18	
U15 Field	21	23	16	29	
U17 Field	18	n/a*	33	21	* 2022 - 7 Registrations cancelled and transferred to Burlington
TOTAL	87	35	94	88	
GIRLS FIELD	2023	2022	2019	2018	
U9	6	10			
U11	18	26	16	13	
U13	15	17	37*	33*	*2018/2019 include house league & rep
U15	13	15	19	17	
U19	22	20	15	25	
TOTAL	74	88	50	55	
TOTAL REGISTRATIONS	603	387	540	573	
TRY BEFORE YOU BUY LACROSSE	2023	2022			
TRY Lacrosse - Women's Field	64	25			
BOX TRY Lacrosse (FREE)	333	247			*144 Paid Registration also participated in the TBYB sessions up from 97 in 2022
TOTAL	397	272			
2023					
* TBYB sessions were very successful					
*Free Stick with paid registration - tracking challenges					
*TBYB multiple duplicate attendees					
* Registrations back to Pre-Covid levels					
* Only Development program for U13/U15 - not full houseleague program					
2024					
* Try before you buy sessions were a success in 2023 and should be in 2024					
* Skill sessions currently being run at Eastwood					

d. Finance Report ~ Darcy Jackson

Hamilton Lacrosse Association	
Income Statement	
For the year ended September 30, 2023	
Revenue	2023
Registrations (All)	199,447
Tryout Fees	8,420
Fine Repayments	680
League Sponsorship/Grants	425
Skills Sessions	2,200
Super Series	31,350
Bag/Glove Repayments	3,482
Toronto Rock Promotions (Ticket Sales, Ball Toss, etc.)	10,181
Other: Misc	1,390
	\$257,575
Expenses	2023
Bank Charges (Monthly Fees, NSF's, Merch Fees)	650
OLA Fees	15,283
Field / Floor Rental Fees	41,938
Director and Officer Insurance	3,861
Promotion/Apparel	47,027
Super Series Expenses	25,501
Rep Exp: Fines, Tournament Fees, Team Reg Fees, etc	15,018
Bingo	5,940
Storage Unit Rental for Goalie Equipment	2,623
Toronto Rock Tickets	6,135
Equipment	7,017
Program and Office Supplies	9,616
Jr. B	5,086
misc	1,897
Coaches clinics, police check reimbursements, etc.	2,464
Awards	2,270
House league: (Uniforms, Pictures, Volunteer gifts, etc.)	7,351
Boys Field: (Uniforms, Pictures, League Fees, etc)	19,695
Bags/Gloves	4,625
Girls Field: (League Fees, Pictures, Uniforms, etc)	16,684
	\$240,681

e. VP Finance & Admin ~ Jen Pate

- **Team Apparel & Spirit Wear:**

For the 2023 season we saw significant improvements in supply. We moved to a new black jersey this season and all rep players have been moved to a sublimated shorts. We returned to the traditional rep fitting night this season which helped to collect orders quickly, but we still were delayed in the delivery of all goods as 2 teams were late being made and this held up orders.

We executed a spring pop up this year and will offer a Christmas event with creative coming in the next week.

Through our partnership with THQ, HLA will receive \$2000 in sponsorship for the 2023 season, and we currently have accrued \$1060 as a percentage back on apparel sales. We will wait for the Christmas sales results to get final numbers

As we look ahead to 2024, we have a number of initiatives that we are working in the apparel space:

1. Ordering of all Bengals & House League jerseys in the coming weeks to prevent any delays at season start
2. Review of the field jersey design and replacement of jersey sets- for consideration
3. Pop up shops for Christmas and early spring
4. Continuation of sublimated shorts for rep players
5. Continue with rep fitting night and addition of a spirit wear sale
6. New and innovated designs- Always something new each season!

- **Rock Partnership:**

For the 2023 season we continued our partnership with the Toronto Rock! We sadly lost Jon our sales rep but had Mav come on board to support our partnership. This season we partner with the Rock on:

- Ball toss fundraising at two Toronto Rock games

- HLA U15/U17 players pre game, U11 half time and HLA Goal for season opening first shot
- The sale of Toronto Rock tickets at a promotion price to HLA members/families for multiple games
- Toronto Rock support at Try Lacrosse sessions at First Ontario
- Rock sponsorship of a pad at Super Series
- Toronto Rock booth & shooting tunnel at Super Series

HLA was presented with several additional fundraising opportunities but limitations on volunteers required us to turn down several opportunities.

In total, Hamilton Lacrosse was able to make \$1857 from ball toss and \$3115.00 from ticket sales. These funds help to cover the costs of our Try Lacrosse sessions and our free stick program.

Looking ahead to 2024, Hamilton Lacrosse has already begun the planning process with the Rock. We will be selling tickets again this season but using a new ticket sale system that will allow people to select their seats. Prices for tickets will vary from \$35-\$40 this season depending on the game. We are working with the Toronto Rock to set ticket sales up as soon as possible. Creative is already on our website.

We have also been offered the opportunity to participate in several experiences again this year including ball toss. All of these experiences require a big lift from volunteers, and we need to grow the number of people helping to sustain this partnership. We are waiting to hear back from the Toronto Rock around what options are open and the number of ticket sales required to participate.

Our partnership with the Rock is a great opportunity to help grow the game and our association- if you can help with volunteering with any of these initiatives, please reach out!

f. Social Media Review ~ Chris Sanislo
Hamilton Lacrosse Association
2023 Social Media Report

Twitter/ X

HLA (@HLALacrosse) followers:

- October 2020 – 1,096
- October 2021 – 1,136
- October 2022 – 1,179
- October 2023 – 1,201

Summary:

- A gain of 22 followers; about half the from last year.
- Overall, this platform has taken a hit. Active users have dropped 15%.
- Sharing lacrosse resources, HLA-grad stories (NLL draftees), HLA updates, community partner messages.

Hamilton Bengals (@hamlaxjunior) followers:

- October 2020 – 888
- October 2021 – 967
- October 2022 – 1,093
- October 2023 – 1,132

Summary:

- A slight increase of 39 followers.

Facebook

HLA (@HamiltonLacrosseAssociation) followers:

- October 2020 - 496
- October 2021 – 606
- October 2022 – 680
- October 2023 -- 788

Summary:

- A solid gain of 108 new followers over the year.
- This channel is used as another means of communicating updates and programming news with our membership.
- Community Partner/ sponsor communication and support has is a secondary element of our Facebook messaging. This provides relevant info to our member families, helps solidfy our relationship with community partners/ sponsors and showcase HLA social channels to prospective partners.
- Significant cross-promotion work with the Toronto Rock – nurturing that relationship with mutually beneficial results.
- Promoted posts help promote initiatives like Try Lacrosse, Rock events, HLA Skill Development Sessions.

Hamilton Bengals (@HamiltonBengals) follows:

- October 2020 – 319
- October 2021 – 417
- October 2022 – 632
- October 2023 -- 697

Summary:

- Increase of 65 followers.
- Game day and post-game posts during the Bengals' regular generates strong engagement.

Hamilton Bengals Alumni Association
(@HamiltonBengalsAlumni)

- October 2020 – 128
- October 2021 – 145
- October 2022 -- 176
- October 2023 -- 187

Summary:

- Moderate growth of 11 new followers.
- A great opportunity to showcase alumni stories and keep former players connected.
- An engaged group that can be a fertile ground for recruiting HLA/ Jr. B Bengal volunteers.

Instagram

HLA (@hamiltonlacrosse) followers:

- October 2020 – 1,406
- October 2021 – 1,519
- October 2022 – 1,743
- October 2023 – 1,990

Summary:

- More solid gains this season with 247 people joining as followers.
- Instagram takeovers have been a resounding success. In the past, these have featured Hannah Moore as well as Michael Grace. Plenty of engagement and inspiration – showcasing life as college lacrosse players.

- g. Tournament Director/2022 Super Series ~ Jen Pate
2023 was another successful tournament year for HLA. The OLA approved the tournament to host U9-U22 aged teams again this season and all 6 divisions sold out for the tournament resulting in HLA hosting 48 teams over the July long weekend. Games were played out of two double

pad facilities, Chedoke & Morgan Firestone, with the pads running from 8am to 9pm daily.

Again this year we had the goal of running a profitable event for the association. The tournament fee increased this year to off-set increased costs for floor time and officials. We were also able to get more creative with operating expenses while still delivering a great experience for participants and officials. Hosting a tournament on a long weekend requires us to offer a great experience for official, to ensure that we are well staffed for this event.

IPads were used again this season with few growing pains as we were a pilot center last year. We were able to collect and use the association IPads and had computers set up at both arenas to allow for efficient management of team rosters. This year the OLA slightly reduced the amount of physical paperwork needing to be submitted, but our hope is that this requirement for physical backups will be removed in 2024. We have also put forward the suggestion that team rosters are not loaded as early in the season by the OLA as many manual changes were needed to game sheets

The City of Hamilton did not operate a snack bar at Morgan Firestone this year which allowed HLA to run and profit from our own snack bar. These were largely operated by students working to get hours for school. HLA was also able to work directly with local hotels to set up hotel blocks and rebates which resulted in over \$1000 in rebates for the association. One hotel has already been secured for Super Series 2024 & we are looking at securing the rest before registration starts for 2024 tournaments.

We welcomed 3 vendors to Chedoke – Rykii (team swag), JSP Photography and Fine Designs (T-Shirt vendor) . Rykii and JSP donated items/gift certificates to our raffle and Fine Designs gave us a % kickback. The raffle did not cost anything and did not generate a lot of income but what it did do was offset some of the food expense and gave kids an opportunity to get their volunteer hours. As this was our first year having vendors, we will look at implementing a kickback % from all of our vendors next year and forego the raffle.

As with any tournament we did experience some challenges this year. Although the number of on floor issues were minimal compared to previous years, we did have several challenges with fans in the stands. Most of the issues were with U9-U13 team fans and largely located at Chedoke arena, although the issues traveled to Morgan when the U9 semi finals were moved to this facility. Issues seemed to be limited to a small number of teams, several from the same association, and we will be working with the OLA to address these issues as the bookings for 2024 tournaments open. For 2024, we need to ensure that we are properly staffed with volunteers that are capable of addressing unruly fans and ensuing their removal from the facilities. We can also work to send strong and clear communications to teams in advance for the tournament that inappropriate behaviour will come with swift and strong consequences for total teams, not just the individual who causes the issues.

As with prior years, success of this tournament is largely the result of the volunteers who stepped up to help plan, set up, and run the tournament.

This event would not have been a success without the help of almost 20 volunteers who gave anywhere from 4-20 hours of their time on the long weekend- THANK YOU! As we look ahead to 2024, it is critical that we recruit new volunteers to help with this event as many current volunteers have players who will be aging out of minor in the next 2 years. We could look at requiring teams to provide 2-3 volunteers in exchange for the reduced tournament fee we have historically provided. Currently all Bengals teams pay a reduced rate to attend Super Series and I would suggest that for 2024, this is offered only to team who provide volunteers.

h. Jr B Bengals ~ Gary Gallant

The season began with some positives. The club had acquired a number of new sponsors for the season.

Once again, due to the ice situation the team had to start the season at a different arena. The team played the first four home games at Rosedale Arena before moving back to Dave Andreychuk Arena for game 5 and beyond.

The club was sent in to a slight scramble mode early when the OLA announced a suspension to our general manager and head coach for 2 years for participating in an off-season CLL event.

The initial appeal was denied but the club is hoping to have this matter resolved prior to the 2024 season.

Derek Campbell stepped up to the plate immediately and took over the head coaching duties for the club and was assisted by Jordan Gillis and newcomer Andy Boldt who was a solid addition to the staff.

Dave Colbourne came on in a GM capacity to assist and was a strong addition as well. It was a lot of change and everyone worked through it.

Circumstances also saw our Game Day Director have to leave after the first 2 games due to work commitments and this also created a void.

The season also saw 0-zilla Radio take over the music and in game hosting for the season. There was some growing pains but we look forward to them being a growing part of our game day presentations.

On the floor the team had an up and down season with a number of key injuries that caused a lot of man games lost.

The young players from our affiliates did an admirable job filling in and the club finished with a 10-9-1 record for a 6th place finish. A hard fought first round against St Catharines saw us bow out, losing the best of five series 3 games to 2.

Next season (2024) is poised to be an exciting one for our club. Lacrosse Canada has named us as the host for the 2024 Founder's Cup National Junior B Championship.

Planning is well underway and the engagement with the city and a number of services are progressing smoothly to date.

We are planning a public meeting soon to lay out the plans and the needs for the tournament, we will be soliciting volunteers and sponsors for the season and the Founder's. Crucial for us is we need to recruit a new Game Day Operations Director as well as a dedicated Social Media Manager. Chris's assistance with our social media has been outstanding but we need to bring it to the next level with a full time member of the club handling this aspect on a day to day basis, especially with the Founder's. It is a tremendous opportunity to get some publicity for both our team and our game.

i. Director Girls Field ~ Jen & Bill Moore

Hamilton Lacrosse girls' field program continues to show progress in 2023. The program grew again with participant numbers and has now recovered to pre-Covid participation. Player success continues to build both on and off the field.

The girls' field program ran a short winter clinic, a U9 house league skills program and four rep teams. It was decided in March that the house league program for older divisions be cancelled due to a lack of registration required for a complete experience. A full division house league program continues to be an important component to a complete girls field lacrosse program for Hamilton. This year, we were just too strained and had to refocus what we were offering for the number of players.

Registration numbers ended up with 72 players and 11 carded bench staff. We sadly had to refund 34 house league division players because we could not support the program. The 34 cancellations were in four age divisions from U9 to U19.

The registration numbers in 2023 held from 2020 to 2022. If we had been able to support a broader house league we were on par with 2019.

Hamilton ran a U9 house league once a week for new players to introduce them and their parents to the sport.

We also ran four rep teams in U11, U13, U15 and U19 divisions of Ontario Women's Field Lacrosse. The league opened a U9 division as well this year. We weren't able to commit a team in this division but it is encouraged for next season. It is recommended we think of making it part of the U9 house league skills programming.

For the season we utilized venues at Soccer World, Heritage Green turf and grass at Mohawk Sports Park. We also took in extra field time at Mohawk adding a second field which we hope will give the players more space to structure full field practices in future seasons.

Let's take this time to congratulate our U11 Bengals who exceeded our expectations this season under Coach Tristan Holdsworth, a Bengal alumni who is currently in NCAA division 2 at Wilmington University.

We also want highlight Coach Hannah Moore who helped the U19 Bengals turn a few eyes this season with their amazing success on the field in the OWFL A division. Hannah is also a Bengal alumni who played NCAA D 2 at Grand Valley State University.

Thank you to all past and present players who have given back to new and upcoming players, helping to grow the sport which, we all know, is now proud to be an Olympic sport in 2028.

j. Director of Boys Field ~ Brent Love

Hamilton's 2023 spring field season marked our first season since returning to play that we were successful in fielding teams in every age group from U9 through to U17. Following some indoor training and tryouts through February and March, the season got under way with our U15's once again attending the Jammer Classic during the first weekend of April and then our regular season began the following week for all age groups. The regular season had its ups and downs with some big wins and tough losses, but all of the Hamilton teams showed up to Provincials ready to play and were all competitive within their respective divisions and age groups. We had two teams win the championship for their respective age divisions, U9 and U15, and as a club, the overall results in all age groups were very encouraging and left us looking forward to another successful spring season in 2024.

Our fall field program was only able to field teams for the U9 and U15 age groups, but our numbers were good for both teams. This year was the first year that the OMFLL shortened the fall season by eliminating games on Labour Day weekend and Thanksgiving Weekend. Most of the parents seemed to be happy with the scheduling changes, so hopefully the shortened and more family friendly schedule will lead to more kids playing fall ball next year. We held

practices from late August through to mid October and wrapped up the season with Provincial Championships which were played in Orangeville in mid October. Both the U9's and the U15's earned a spot in the championship games for their age groups and represented Hamilton Lacrosse well.

This year's numbers were very encouraging, and the positive feedback that we received from numerous families leaves us confident that the 2024 season will be another great success with continued growth on and off the field.

k. Bengals Director ~ Shawna Dolman

Tryouts for the 2023 season saw larger numbers than last year, cuts were necessary in all age groups. Our U15 age group had over 40 children tryout. This year we implemented a pre-registration process for our tryouts, which helped the process be more organized & efficient.

We were able to roster 1 team for U7, U9, U11, U13, U22 and 2 teams for U15 & U17. This year we fully separated all rep teams from our house league program. All of our teams, with the exception of our #2 teams, ended up in B division at Provincials.

Finding hotel accommodations for away tournaments proved to be a bit difficult this year, as many hotels were not taking group bookings. We aimed that every team had one away tournament and at least one local tournament in addition to our Super Series tournament.

The OLA made the move to Gamesheet Inc. and all games & tournaments were scored via iPads. HLA purchased 10 new iPads this year, as Gamesheet Inc. was no longer renting them out to associations like last year. Each team manager was responsible for their team's iPad and returned to HLA at the end of the season.

A big thank you to our coaches, trainers and managers for a great season. We would not be able to do any of this without you.

M. Referee in Chief ~ Mac Abbott

- We had 16 total officials, including 8 that were in Entry Level or Level 1 that carried the bulk of the weight at the house league level. Multiple senior officials stepped up early into the year in mentorship positions for some of the younger officials.
- Joel Firmin officiated in the Jr A final.

- Rob Cowan & Tyler Flake represented Hamilton in the qualifier program
- Hoping to work with Pelham/Zone 9 in advance of the 2024 season to replicate the on-floor development program they had at the start of the year. It was utilized to provide on-floor coaching to Entry Level and L1 officials prior to being placed directly into a game situation.

1. Awards:

- **Ed Comeau House League Coach of the Year** - Courtney Whetham and Brianne Burrough
- **Butch Guthro Bengals Coach of the Year** - Duncan Brownell, Mark Davidson, and Chad Ferris
- **Bill Buckley Volunteer of the Year** - Jonathan Johnson
- **Lois Minchin Award** - Shawna Dolman
- **Dedication to Boys Field Lacrosse** - Derek Searle
- **Dedication to Girls Field Lacrosse** - Tristan Holdsworth

2. Constitutional Amendments 2023 ~ No Amendments

3. Elections for 2023 Board

Acclaimed

President – Greg Gillis

Vice President Finance & Admin – Jen Pate

Vice President Technical – Joel Firmin

Social Media Director – Chris Sanislo

Director at Large – Lesley Boyle

Director at Large – Ty Reidy

Director of Bengals Operations – Shawna Dolman

House League Director – TBD

Boys Field Director – Brent Love

Girls Field Director – Jen & Bill Moore

4. Adjournment – Motioned by Greg Gillis and seconded by Joel Firmin – carried.

Attendees: Greg Gillis, Joel Firmin, Jennifer Pate, Chris Sanislo, Shawna Dolman, Stacey Holdrick, Ty Reidy, Brent Love, Jennifer Moore, Lesley Boyle, Jim Jackson, Darcy Jackson, Gary Gallant, Emillie Michaluk, Scott Woods, John Boyle, Duncan Brownell, Beth Morrison, Michelle Wesst, Melissa Jackson, Aaron Griese, Lynn Brownell, Ashley Woods