

Vice President of Technical

Area Report

October 29th, 2024

Scheduling

This season, the city of Hamilton certainly made things very difficult for us. Communication leading up to the season has been bad in recent years, but this year was by far the worst. This made communication to the HLA membership regarding start dates rather difficult. We hope that this upcoming season will be better and we plan to reach out to them early and often so that we don't have a repeat.

This offseason, we had Beth Morrison step in and take the roll of scheduler off of my hands. I really appreciate all of her time and effort that she has put into learning this new roll.

Equipment

In preparation for the Founders Cup, the league decided to purchase two brand new sets of shot clocks from Harris Time in Oakville. This was done to ensure that the Founders tournament ran smoothly. Some of the older models are starting to break down so I think that we should continue to replace them with newer models one at a time over the next few years.

We also purchased two more portable creases and 6 inflatable goalies for our U9 Box programming where they play cross-floor games. Not every team had volunteers who would step between the pipes so the inflatable goalies provided realistic shooting targets for players.

House League Program

Once again, the HLA continued its focus on the rebuilding of the House League program.

After running our "Next Level Development Program" for U13 and U15-aged players last season, we were able to offer a 4-team U14 division this season. Players selected to play on the U13-2 Bengals team were asked to play in the House League in order to ensure that we had the numbers.

For the U5/U7 age group, we employed the services of U22 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 second year in a row. 14 players were chosen to play on the team. The boys competed in exhibition games, and two invitational tournaments this season. The first being the Rob Macdougall classic at the Toronto Rock Athletic Centre in Oakville. The second was the Pelham future stars tournament in July.

This was a real eye-opener for the parents who got to see just how big the sport of lacrosse is around the province. As a result of the successful U7 bengal program, we saw a number of them tryout for our fall Sixes programming where a few of them really excelled.

New Lacrosse Sector: Sixes

Three years ago, World Lacrosse announced that the new style of Lacrosse that would be in the 2028 Olympics would be called Sixes. Late this Summer, the OLA announced that they would be offering Sixes instead of Fall field lacrosse. The HLA entered two U9 teams and one U13 team into competition. The first year was very chaotic. The rules changed from week to week, but it didn't seem to phase the players. Overall, the players seemed to enjoy this new style of lacrosse and that's all that matters.

Yellow Helmets

The HLA executive has decided that all players who make a Bengals box team will be required to wear a yellow helmet by the 2027 season. We have been in talks with a few local stores and hope to make it easy for families to find them. Expect more information to be shared shortly on this new policy.

Joel Firmin

VP of Technical