

NEPEAN KNIGHTS JUNIOR LACROSSE CLUB 2005 AGM

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Introduction

2005 was a year of transition for lacrosse in the Ottawa area. We saw the successful inauguration of Junior "A" lacrosse with the arrival of the Ottawa Titans on the scene after four years in the planning. We saw players and volunteers previously with the Knights move over to the Titans. We saw a Knights Club with a 50% new Executive, 75% new players and 100% new coaches. This is a lot of change for one year. As with most major change, there are growing pains. While the Titans did better than most expected, the Knights and their sister team to the East, the Gloucester Griffins, did not fare as well. Both Junior B teams struggled on and off the floor all season long. Some of this was expected but not to the degree that it did. 2006 promises to be a better year all around.

Junior B Council

1. This season the League had 23 teams, one less than 2004, as Milton took a one-year leave of absence. They are expected to return in 2006.
2. The 2005 Founders' Trophy was held in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan from Aug. 23 to 28. A total of 13 teams from 6 provinces and the Iroquois Nations participated in the event. The Elora Mohawks won the gold medal, after winning silver in 2004. The 2006 Founders Cup is being held in Windsor.
3. The Junior B Council has received seven applications for expansion in 2006. Expansion could benefit the Knights as several of the applicants are from Eastern Ontario and if accepted, would mean less travel. However, there are some concerns about expansion. The League currently has 24 teams (incl Milton), the largest League in the country. During the season, there were several existing teams who were challenged both financially and competitively. Would expansion erode the available player pool, negatively affecting these teams? How long before the new teams become competitive? Will the overall League get watered down? Should we consider Junior "C"?
4. Expansion will be high on the agenda at the next Jr. B Council meeting on October 16th.
5. The League format & Schedule for 2006 will be contingent on expansion and will also be discussed at the next Council meeting.
6. The OLA - AGM is November 11th to 13th in Niagara Falls. Jr B Council will meet on Nov. 11th.

Nepean Knights

1. The team finished in 9th place and out of the playoffs in the Eastern Conference, with a regular season record of 5-15. This marked the first time the team missed the playoffs in almost 10 years.

2. 2005 had expected to be a moderate year due to the fact that many of the top players would be moving to the new Ottawa Titans Junior "A" team. It had been anticipated that the Knights would make the 1st round of the playoffs unfortunately several key players did not return from the 2004 Club leaving the team with a lot of younger, less experienced players to fill out the roster. Also, the team was regularly going with a short bench due to the shortage of players.
3. While the first year players (and Midget call-ups) did adapt to Junior lacrosse and improved throughout the course of the season, their lack of experience against the more established teams showed up on the score board.
4. In 2006, it is anticipated that several of the veteran players who did not play in 2005 will return as well as several previously graduated Midgets from 2004 who also chose not to play this season.
5. In 2005, the volunteer base was not very strong as numerous parents who were key volunteers in the past followed their kids to the Ottawa Titans organization. The Club did manage to attract a few new people but still require more volunteers to be able to properly operate in 2006 and beyond. It will be very critical for more parents to move in to the spots vacated in 2004 by several long time volunteers, particularly at the Executive level. Without the active participation of more parents, the team will not continue to exist for long.

Coaching

1. Dean Joncas took over the head coaching position in 2005. Two former Knights, Jason Lacroix and Bryden Denyes came on as assistant coaches.
2. The coaching staff had their work cut out for them as they had fewer seasoned veterans than expected and more rookies. To compound those problems, the affiliate Titans were regularly looking for call-ups as they too were short.
3. Under Dean, Bryden & Jason the young team developed well and showed signs of improvement throughout the season. They should be a much stronger team in 2006 as only a few players are going overage.
4. The complete coaching staff will be back for 2006 and graduating Knights player, Chris Parker, will also join the staff as an assistant.

Challenges for 2006

1. Recruiting and developing volunteers for vacant Executive positions.
2. Recruiting and developing volunteers for non-Executive roles, such as; Bingo workers, Skills Camp Co-ordinator, Program Co-ordinator and Volunteer Co-ordinator.
3. Rebuilding the sponsorship program successes of previous years.
4. Introducing new revenue streams to replace those from the canteen, as it is now run by a private operator.
5. Improving the affiliate arrangement with the Ottawa Titans Junior "A" Club to better develop our players and to provide the Titans with a good stream of call-ups.
6. Further assisting the minors with the development of the Intermediate program in Nepean.
7. Finding and mentoring a suitable replacement for President over the next 2 years as I plan to step down no later than the completion of the 2007 season.

Andy Mutch