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Development Report – 2008 to 2009

As I am new to the sport of Lacrosse I looked at the current structure from a fresh perspective. There are some areas to address in the future. Currently there is no player pathway to go from being introduced Pop Lacrosse as a 10 year old to playing as a Senior International player. There also seemed to be a detachment between the men and women of Lacrosse.

Aberdeen

This year's regional tournament was successfully run at the Beach Leisure centre in Aberdeen. In the past it has not been able to run due to poor numbers but due to the hard work of Rebecca Lovie in promoting the sport 4 teams entered the U11 and 5 entered the Open competition. Kingswell School had a fantastic tournament, with one team winning the U11 and one as runner up in the Open. Aberdeen Lacrosse Club also showed their ability as they were the runner up and winners of the U11 and Open competition, respectively. Both teams qualified for the Scottish Pop Lacrosse Championships but only Aberdeen was able to accept.

I also set up a meeting between Gavin Ingram, Aberdeen Uni men's captain and Rebecca Lovie, this meeting was to bridge the void between the men and women's game, introduce new people to the development of Lacrosse in Aberdeen with the view to starting junior teams in the area for kids 14-18. This development looks promising with the Granit City Gladiators looking to re-enter the Men's league next year. Also Rebecca Lovie has managed to secure the use of a facility for Lacrosse in a great area of Aberdeen that should increase the exposure of the club.

Dumfries and Galloway

This region requested the most coaching from Lacrosse Scotland compared to any other region. Pop Lacrosse is very big in this area and their Regional tournament was very well run by Rosemary Dickie. The results were as follows:

U11: 1st Cargenbridge, 2nd Lochmaben, 3rd Collin

Open: 1st Lochmaben, 2nd St Teresas, 3rd Cargenbridge

The top 2 teams qualified for the Scottish Pop Lacrosse Championships.

We have also organized a Lacrosse Fun day for the region as well as the Douglas Knox tournament. This area is steeped in tradition of Lacrosse but it needs careful planning to retain the players playing and progress them to Field Lacrosse.

Edinburgh

The regional tournament was run at Cargilfield School, unfortunately numbers were low as only 4 teams entered the U11 and 2 the Open tournament. The results were as follows:

U11: 1st James Gillespies, 2nd Juniper Green, 3rd St Georgies A, 4th St Georgies B

Open: 1st Juniper Green A, 2nd Juniper Green B

The top 2 teams qualified for the Scottish Pop Lacrosse Championships but only James Gillespies in the U11 age group and Juniper Green Open chose to enter. Edinburgh currently has 3 senior teams playing Lacrosse but has some of the lowest Pop Lacrosse numbers; this is a key development area for the future to keep players into the sport by building junior programmes for those 3 teams.

Fife

Unfortunately 2 of the more successful schools have put on hold their Lacrosse programme; this is due to teacher changes at the school. Hopefully Maisondieu and Pitreavie will return in 2009-2010. This affected the participation numbers of the regional tournament but all the kids involved enjoyed an exciting and high spirited competition. The U11 competition actually ended with all 3 teams tied on points and the goal difference was the only way to separate the teams. The results were as follows:

U11: 1st Donibristle A, 2nd Donibristle B, 3rd Pittencrieff

Open: 1st Pittencrieff A, 2nd Pittencrieff B, Joint 3rd St Margarets/Park Road

The top 2 teams qualified to the Scottish Pop Lacrosse Championships, due to Kingswell not able to attend for the U11 age group their place was offered to Pittencrieff and they accepted.

With 5 of the schools all within about 5 miles of each other this is a great opportunity for a club to start and bring all those kids together and build on their skills.

Stirling

The Stirling tournament was the highest attended tournament of all the regions with 9 schools entering in the U11 and 7 for the Open competition. This is the result of the amazing work done by Amanda McKie in these schools. Lacrosse is so popular in this cluster of schools that the local high school, Balfron High, actually contacted me about starting a club because their pupils were so keen to keep playing. This is a high priority area for development. The results of the Regional Tournament are as follows:

U11: 1st Killearn, 2nd Drymen, 3rd Strathblane

Open: 1st Drymen, 2nd Strathblane, and 3rd Balfron

The top 2 teams qualified for the Scottish Pop Lacrosse Championships.

The development of the club in Balfron High has been going well, a number of Stirling Uni players have offered to help coach at the school and the attendance at the after school club has grown every week.

Scottish Pop Lacrosse Championships

Sunday 26th of April saw the 2009 Scottish Pop Lacrosse Championships held at Meadowbank Stadium, Edinburgh. Qualifying teams from the 5 regional tournaments, Aberdeen, Dumfries & Galloway, Edinburgh, Fife and Stirling, participated in the largest and most exciting tournament to date. The tournament is split into 2 age groups, Under 11 and Open. After the round robin stage of the tournament results seemed to be going to form with Donibristle A (Fife) and Lochmaben (Dumfries & Galloway) sitting atop the Under 11s standings. Lochmaben were the defending champions but everything changed as the teams progressed to the knockout stage. James Gillespies (Edinburgh) after finishing the group stage in 5th position knocked out Aberdeen Lacrosse Club in round 1, then a rematch with Lochmaben was scheduled. Lochmaben jumped out to an early 6-2 lead, James Gillespies turned the game upside down with a shock 9-6 victory and sent themselves through to the semi-finals. From then on anything could happen in the tournament. The bronze medal

place was narrowly won by Donibristle A 8-6 over James Gillespies. The real excitement was to follow. The Final was one of the closest fought games we have ever seen. Killlearn (Stirling) and Donibristle B could not be separated in regulation time having tied 8-8. Under tournament rules it goes to sudden death. After winning the throw up, Donibristle B made 1 quick pass and shot into goal to become the 2009 Scottish Pop Lacrosse Under 11 Champions.

The Open tournament was just as exciting. Defending champions Killlearn failing to hold onto their title. Pittencrieff (Fife) showing their skill for Lacrosse had both their A and B teams qualify for the Semi-Finals. Drymen (Stirling) put an end to an all Pittencrieff final after beating them 5-2 to qualify for the final. Lochmaben lost out to Pittencriff A 7-0 but would get their revenge as they were to win the Bronze medal with a convincing 6-0 win over Pittencriff B. Drymen and Pittencriff A contested the final in what was a thrilling end to end match but ultimately resulting in Pittencriff A as the 2009 Scottish Pop Lacrosse Open Champions.

A summary of the final results:-

Under 11: 1st place – Donibristle B (Fife), 2nd place – Killlearn (Stirling), 3rd – Donibristle A (Fife)

Open: 1st place – Pittencriff A (Fife), 2nd place – Drymen (Stirling), 3rd – Lochmaben (D&G)

Donibristle B and Killlearn will now compete in the Under 11 British Pop Lacrosse Championships, and for the Open teams, both finalists are invited to play an exhibition match at the Edinburgh Festival on the 16th of August at Fettes College.

This tournament could not have happened without the great work done by St Andrews ambulance staff, Liz Mackintosh, Lorna Powell and representatives sent from Edinburgh Capital and Edinburgh Cougars. Their help was invaluable on the day.

U14 Development Day

The development day was held at Loretto School in Musselburgh. Pat Reid was a great help in organizing the coaching structure for the day and making a really successful day for all the kids involved. This day could be used to grow the sport for the local clubs if their junior players are able to make themselves available for it during school time.

Pop to Field Coaching Day

To help bridge the gap between Pop Lacrosse and Field Lacrosse we are arranged a Pop to Field Coaching day for Saturday 4th of July. Stirling University has been a great help in organizing this and booking their ground. We are currently still looking for coaches and staff to help out on the day so if you are interested drop me an email at development@lacrossescotland.com. I hope that if this day is successful it will grow into a summer coaching camp in 2010. There have been several emails from parents and players looking for player development camps in Scotland.

Club Structure

I feel that Lacrosse has a great advantage over many other sports in that it has 2 disciplines – Men and Mixed. Unfortunately few teams seem to have adopted having both in their club. There would be a great benefit for having both teams in one club structure and making a sociable community based club. Hopefully this will be a development in the future as the sport grows.

Also I have produced a club start up guide, this can be used by exciting clubs who do not have a constitution or bank account, and both of these are required when applying for funding and giving the sport of Lacrosse a more professional appearance.

Future Developments

I feel that a new development plan needs to be made. We have to fix the gap between Pop Lacrosse and Uni/Club Lacrosse. Initially building the bridge backwards from the Clubs using their members or university players to start 14-18 year old junior teams. The plan is to have 1 game played between 2 14-18 year old boys' teams and 1 game played between 2 14-18 year old girls teams. We can then use this model as a basis for developing the sport in the regions of highest population and highest current participation.

Also models of Participation pathways need to be developed so that we have a clear path of how we are going to identify and coach elite players within the sport. This model should allow participants to enter at any point and still receive the same opportunities as everyone else.

A coaching association is essential to the success of the participation model. All clubs should be coach lead. A coaching pathway to develop our own coaches using the resources we currently have should also be introduced. The coaching qualification should also be brought in line with current work done by English Lacrosse as they work towards UKCC qualification status.

Thanks

I have only been in the position for 5 months but I could not have done the work had it not been for the great help by Jen Cairns, Caroline McCosh, Pat Reid, Jennifer Davidson, Rebecca Lovie, Rosemary Dickie, and Amanda McKie. I apologise if I have left anyone off. I appreciate your help and continued help in the future at this exciting time for Lacrosse in Scotland.

Andrew Mackintosh
National Development Officer