



## Nepean Knights Minor Lacrosse Association

Executive Meeting  
Wednesday, January 17, 2024  
7:00 - 9:00 pm  
Bell Sensplex, Meeting Room  
1565 Maple Grove Road (Kanata)



**Present:** Jill Balcom, Al Brown, Jo-Anne Green, Derek Herfst, Phil Kiazzyk, Mark Lange, Tyler McDonald, Cheryl Scott, Sheldon Spears, Erin Petruska, Jessica White, Jon Zywicki, Nicole Zywicki, Jeff Zywicki

**Absent:** Phil Kiazzyk, Dan Leduc



**Welcome and Call to Order** – Al (initiated), Sheldon (seconded)

### 1. **Call to Order, Land Acknowledgement & Opening Remarks (President and Vice President)** (Al & Jon)

- This past weekend, Al attended all three winter lax sessions, and noted they were not only successful, they were well run and the little ones appeared to be having lots of fun. Thank you to Mark, Jill, Jessican and everyone who helped organize or came to help.
- Shout out to Colby Demora! He was recently drafted to Brampton Jr A.

### 2. **New Board (Review, Setting the Tone, Expectations & Knights Emails)** (Al & Jon)

- This is the largest board for NKMLA as the board has been typically smaller in numbers (significantly). The board is heading in a positive direction with all the recent hard work and improvements, it's all setting us up for more success while also lessening the load on each of the board members.
- Reminder to all members; we are all volunteers. Please always keep a respectful tone and collaborative approach at all times. We should always work together to come to a compromise or solution.
- There will be a learning curve. Many questions will be asked of you, please be patient, this is how we share information on how things have been done, and should be done moving forward. It is how new members will learn, as well as how experienced members share their knowledge. Questions and open communication among us will aid in the roles & responsibilities clarifications, but also ensure nothing is being forgotten, and things are done in the correct manner.
- Roles & Responsibilities
  - There are many tasks or roles that aren't necessarily documented or clarified in our new Roles & Responsibilities documentation, but we need to focus on sharing the work so we don't burn out. We have a larger group so we need to disseminate the tasks, and share the knowledge. This will take some mentoring and coaching but in time, with communication we can do it and it will overall lessen the burden of unnecessarily large workloads for all members.
  - Each board member should take time to go through the roles & responsibilities located in our policy document to see what your roles' primary responsibilities are. If you note there are other tasks you do, or you should be doing, that are missing please make a note of it in the document. Additionally, there may be work that you do that may need to be shifted to another person who is better placed to take it on. Please keep an open mind regarding it as we are in a state of flux as we sort out the defined roles and responsibilities and actual work tasks we all do.
  - Jess, Jon and Al met recently to discuss the roles & responsibilities of each member to try to untangle the overlap of roles. A key term used was "filling other people's buckets" to ensure everyone's buckets were as equal as possible so no one person is carrying a significantly larger load.

- The documentation we have recently created and made available is huge to our progress forward as an association. Historically we had minimal documentation, and it was not necessarily current, versus present, we now have the shared drive, designated folders, association email accounts, and better quality (and up to date) documentation.
- Resolutions - Effective immediately, a resolution is required **any time** we vote on an item. Resolutions are documents that record the decision(s) made by the board members regarding decisions and/or actions the association will take moving forward. It does add a step to our meetings, but it's a necessary task.
- Emails
  - Role based emails are now required of all board members. You must use the association role based email address for any/all correspondence that is related to your role for the NKMLA. These emails will be shared on our website, and will allow our membership to locate and contact the appropriate people if required. **There are no exceptions, role based emails are mandatory.** The role based email addresses ensure succession planning is fluid when there is changeover in the board membership, while also maintaining historical information that is available to the next person in the position.
  - Knights email etiquette - Be timely on your emails, a 24-48 hour turnaround for all responses is the expectation. If you can not reply within that time frame (i.e. on vacation, sick etc.), turn on the notification function so all those corresponding to you will know there is a delay, and what the turnaround time will be.
  - Migration of old and new role based emails is possible for a timeframe. Jessica will share a document that will provide instructions on how you may merge email addresses for a time frame. There will be a set time limit as to when the old email addresses will be accessible so please move all your folders/history to the new account before it ends. Within 30 days the old email addresses will be shut down, however, they will be redirected in the backend to the new email accounts (so you will still get emails if someone uses the old address).
  - We will not be using the title "At large" in the email addresses for board members. Each At Large person has a focus, so the title of this role/focus is what will be used in the email address so all members can identify and easily locate board members.
- Meetings
  - All regular executive meetings will be held monthly, in person unless special circumstances occur. An agenda of dates will be set so the board has the date in advance and can plan accordingly (with at least a month's notice prior to each meeting). Our next meeting is scheduled for February 21<sup>st</sup>.
  - Ad hoc Meetings may be held virtually as they may need to be arranged on short notice, so due to scheduling and timing virtual may be most effective. For all virtual meetings please turn on your cameras, as this allows for better communication.
- Resolution of the board of directors was unanimously approved (2024/01/17). Resolution signed and filed with RoD.

### 3. NKMLA Compliance Update (Al & Jessica)

- We are compliant for the 2024 season, and as of October 2024, we are also ONCA compliance.
- Compliance documentation is due annually during the December holiday season. A huge shout out thank you to Jessica who has been doing this the past few years, it is always a lot of work, and if not filed in time can result in a significant fine. This year we finalized paperwork and Jess was able to file it in time! Moving forward this task needs to be identified and placed under someone's roles and responsibilities so it's a planned task. This item is not hard (consists of obtaining appropriate defined documentation and submitting by a particular date), and with planning should be a fairly straightforward task once it's known.
- Shared Google Calendar – Sheldon suggested one, shared Google calendar be created and all board members provided access, so everyone can not only access it to view important dates/tasks, but each person can also input/share important dates and tasks so there are no surprises, and work can be shared when necessary (and does not land all on one person).

#### 4. Board Paperwork (Documents for legal filings, Values & Ethics, VSC) (Nicole)

- Paper copies of required paperwork are available (side table at meeting). Please complete all the required paperwork that was sent to you by Jessican and Nicole (last few days).
- Those of you on the list for VSC, the association volunteer letter is also available, please ensure you get this done, the process is fairly easy now then it has been in the past. All VSC forms must be sent to Jessica and Erin as soon as possible.

#### 5. Finalize Board Roles & Responsibilities (including Formation of Sub-committees) (Nicole)

- The roles & responsibilities document was shared and updated in October but is not yet final. Please review it in detail for next month's meeting as it will be discussed.
- Review the draft list of sub-committees, as well as those currently proposed for membership and update accordingly if you feel people are missing, or if additional sub-committees you feel are required.
- We will need to ensure the creation of certain committees are up and functioning as they are required.
- Ensure you are listed on the sub-committee related to your role (i.e. make sure Sheldon is on the communications sub-committee).
- Release committee
  - As per the OLA rule, members may not request a release after March 2<sup>nd</sup>.
  - Members must be registered with their home association before making a release request. NKMLA release can not be requested until Feb 15<sup>th</sup>. Reminder for the release committee, you can only speak to what information is provided on the paper (nothing outside of that) however the release requestor may expand upon it if they like. Released members can not register with a new association until they have been released. When this sub-committee is formed, a virtual meeting will be held to talk through the process so the committee is unified in the process.

#### 6. Draft Budget (Nicole)

- Budget increase proposed 15%
  - A draft budget was sent by Nicole to all members which was updated using last season's financials, rolled forward. To avoid a deficit situation, account for inflation and the increase in operating expenses a 15% increase in membership fee is proposed. Many factors were taken into consideration when examined including, inflation, the increasing City of Ottawa costs, comparisons to other association fees and this amount is what works for this season.
  - An increase in fees is unavoidable, and we can not continue to run the way we have historically. We need to ensure we have appropriate funds in our account to cover not only our seasonal cost requirements (i.e. tournaments, equipment replacement etc.) but we need funds available for unplanned events and/or emergencies. We had a buffer pre-COVID, but we had to use it during the pandemic and it deflated our accounts, we need to build that buffer back up.
  - In comparison with other association team fees: Kitchener-Waterloo and Mimico both range from \$350-\$400. We can't compare to Gloucester because not only is our programming different, but they receive grant money annually which impacts their team fees. We have reached out to them, and made them aware of our pending increase.
  - Registration fees last season (2023) was \$350 for house league and \$375 for competitive. The increase for this season (2024) is proposed to be \$400 for house league and \$425 for competitive.
  - End of year goal is a reserve of 20K in the account, with a cash flow of 50K each season. We should always be sitting at a positive, and not under \$1,000. We need to ensure our cash flow, and emergency flow are constant, as well as to ensure our rotational plan for equipment replacement is functional.
  - Proposal to proceed with the current budget (15% increase) but continue to look for cost savings, and revenue building over this season. Having another year to observe and examine it will help us better determine increases and how the money is spent.

- CLA increase to consider
  - As of this season (2024) the Canada Lacrosse Association fee is increasing and will be applicable to all membership (house and competitive). For the 2024 season it will be \$12, with another increase planned in 2025 to \$15. Previously, this fee was only applicable to competitive teams, who paid 2\$ (pre-pandemic) and \$4 (post-pandemic) up to the present date. We need to be transparent so members can see the breakdown of why fees are increasing and where the money is going. This is something to add to the agenda for the communications committee (create and share an explanation of the breakdown regarding increase of fees). This isn't something we've done previously, but is likely something we should consider doing going forward to ensure transparency and to explain up front why there are increases. At some point, when we have time/resources we may want to consider doing an in-depth analysis on how much we charge each group/level to determine rates themselves. At the moment all members pay the same registration fees (house and competitive).
- Grants
  - We have applied to the Trillium and Jumpstart grants, but have been denied for both. With our recent updates we may be in a better position to apply now that we're up to date on our documentation. This is another item to add to the communication sub-committee agenda (exploring the idea of locating a grant writer or similar person who can help with a successful application). We should, however, continue to apply for grants annually.
- Team fees
  - In comparison Kitchener–Waterloo's team fees go up to \$600. Registration and team fees have been historically similar in our approach. To note team fees do not impact the association (just the team). we can not raise our registration fees too high or it will drive people away.
  - The non-parent coach cost is significant to the association and should be explored further. We could consider a resolution for head coaches that non-parent coach costs must be covered by team fees (and not the association).
  - Should we consider setting a cap on team fees so should a team go over it, it goes to the association (and does not remain with the team)?
- Try Out Fee
  - We currently charge \$20 as a tryout fee, which is fairly low in cost, we need to consider raising this. One option is to set it by level of try out (for example \$75 to try out for a team 1, \$50 for a team 2 etc. If we have a square on site, we can charge them in person as they show up (we would need a tap however). There are logistics to consider but this is something to examine.
- Equipment Requirements
  - We are currently using a five year replacement plan for jerseys. House league is currently fine for the next five years, but the competitive jerseys need to be replaced asap, as many are in really bad condition. There has been some consideration on outgoing costs and reduction, but part of this 15% increase proposed is jersey purchase. This is another item to include as part of our communications plan related to price increase.
  - Cost of jerseys are approximately \$60/per jersey. Some associations are charging for the jerseys in registration fees and the players keep them at the end of the season (i.e. Gloucester house league keeps theirs). Is this a consideration for us as well?
- House vs Competitive (Increase considerations)
  - House league vs competitive have always been charged the same amount in registration fees. Will they both be subject to this price increase (both \$400)? Should we adjust rates accordingly (house vs competitive, girls vs boys program, and/or by level (i.e. U5/7 vs U15). If we adjust rates accordingly for certain programs,(i.e. house/girls) can we make the cost up elsewhere? If we consider raising the tryout fee would this offset costs somewhere to avoid raising house registration fee? If we plan to increase the house fees, we need to improve the program so it correlates.

- There are differences in the two programs, but also similarities. Last year we had approximately 220 registered at house, and 284 registered for competitive.
- Offset cost options can also be considered, however historically, this has not been an area of success for us. Suggestions include; running a 50/50 at tryouts, golf tournaments, and someone to sponsor the jerseys. We will continue to explore.
- In the past we charged a different amount per level. For example it ranged from \$110 to \$250 with U5/7 and U22 at the lower rate, while U9 to U17 were higher rates. Should this be considered?
- For the past two years the U5 program has been free (we did not charge them), and the U7 program was only \$50. If we charge U5 and 7 \$375 we would need to commit more to those programs.
- Historically, the KNMLA has tried to keep the cost significantly lower than hockey so families had a financial break, while participating and enjoying lacrosse (the season is half that of hockey so the cost was generally half in comparison), however this may need to change as the cost of running the programs are increasing. We may want to examine ways to offset registration fees (i.e. two or three major events per year to fundraise).
- Growing lacrosse is important and should continue to be a focus (particularly at bantam level). Product is what grows the game (i.e. great house league). Other considerations to note, 3v3 may help improve the house league program, as well as avoidance of games scheduled on weekends (to note to scheduler).
- Conclusion
  - Overall the board agreed to pass the proposed budget for the 15% increase in registration fee (see resolution section), however how the increase will be applied continues to be explored. The agreed goal is to maintain the house league registration at \$350, with competitive registration confirmed to raise to \$400 for 2024. Consideration to raise the try out fees, as well as the increase in registration fee charged to U5/7 will be determined in hopes this will help offset the house league freeze on registration.
- Resolution – Proposed budget, with 15% increase was unanimously approved (2024/01/17). Resolution signed and filed with RoD.

#### 7. Winter Lacrosse Update (Mark)

- Thank you Mark, Al had a great time! The players that came out (i.e. Cam York, Hunter Gibbens) were all super engaged and the kids loved them!
- 106 registered and we made 8K.
- Thank you to Jess and Jill for all their help and team effort
- There were 11 volunteers registered this year which worked really well.

#### 8. Come Try Lacrosse (Jeff)

- Confirmed that Beckwith is booked on Feb 17, from 10-1. Jeff is unavailable this date so we will need people to help run this day.
- Even will need to be advertised as much as possible, maybe even use a QR code
- At the session we should have registration information available, and/or set up for parents to register on site while they are there.
- OCSB option for floor time was difficult to locate available weekends. There are weeknights available.
- Ideally scheduling the Come Try Lacrosse event(s) prior to the early bird timeframe so it entices people to join. We will need to establish a method of identifying who registered and showed up for Come Try Lacrosse so if they reach out after the fact, requesting the discount, we can confirm attendance.
- Cut off for the event is mid-March, right before March break (this allows time for equipment purchases, planning etc. by families).

#### 9. Setting 2024 Rates (Nicole & Jessica)

- Discussed in depth in item 6.
- Resolution - Proposed resolution to increase registration fee revenue at %15 in the budget for 2024, along with specific adjustment of level amounts specifically. Review to be conducted of all house league and

competitive levels to determine specific amount allotment/percentage distribution. Resolution was unanimously approved (2024/01/17). Resolution signed and filed with RoD.

#### **10. Preparations for Competitive Tryouts (Derek)**

- Last year tryout preparation was challenging in regards to procuring suitable practice jerseys for tryouts. Practice jerseys are increasingly in bad condition, they are not always returned, and there are storage issues, as well as sizing. This needs to be considered.
- It's important that during tryouts, all the players have matching pinnies (color and branding), it looks professional and organized (not as important at practices).
- At the moment, we may not be able to swing all one color of pinnies for this years try out.
- At hockey, practice jerseys are part of tryouts (they keep them) . Is this something we want to consider as well? Similar to field lax (pinny given at tryouts, becomes their practice pinny for their team etc.)
- Derek has reached out to Steve and Rob for reversible pricing for pinnies with printing and received estimates for \$30/piney. Suggestion was made to also try Safety House (previously was \$18)?
- Instead of reversible pinny, consideration is the use of single color pinnies, Derek will follow up on this quote.
- Another option is to hand out pinnies instead of t-shirts at tryouts. The cost for a pinny (vs t-shirt) needs to be covered in registration fee increase. We need to be mindful of what we just voted on.
- Instead of handing out t-shirts at tryouts, what if we use this as a fundraising tool? We could make t-shirts available for purchase, not just at competitive tryouts, but for house league as well.
- Old practice jerseys – we have a large number of jerseys, with team names (not NKMLA) of teams that don't exist anymore, and our storage at Bell is full.
  - Should we consider getting rid of these practice jerseys?
  - Can we use them for U9/11s? (Yes but they vary in color/team names)
  - Can we offer them to teams and say they don't need to be returned.
- Old competitive jerseys – we also have many of these in storage that we should consider trying to offload to free up space.
  - Can we sell them?

#### **11. House League Sort-Outs (Preparations, Coach Selections, Season Planning, Hybrid Teams, Friend Requests) (Jill)**

- We need to improve, and need more time to answer questions about the game.
- All the house league issues should be moved to a sub-committee focused on growing the house league program, we need to do more on TikTok, snap chat etc. and market the sport to the younger parents.
- We also need house league families to help feed into the social media platforms (they need to send Sheldon pictures and information on successes/interesting items so they can be posted on socials and shared.
- Consideration to reach out to colleges/universities for volunteers who are going to school for marketing to help use their experience/expertise to grow the game more.
- Need to make a decision on hybrid. If the skill level of kids is improving, we need to take that into consideration. There were complaints regarding injuries (house/competitive). Maybe there needs to be a conversation with parents regarding expectations (being a team player). It may be a selling point to say they are playing against their friends, it's an incentive and exciting to play. Conversation with parents to encourage players to be a team player.
- Make it a “community team” – ie Kanata, practices are in that area, if not enough players, they join the next closest local team, if that works, then you can approach hockey teams (for example to offer a whole team to come play for 8 weeks). It introduces the sport. They do this for basketball in Kanata and its successful. You don't have to worry about friend requests (they are all on the same team already).
- Geography is an issue for some people, so community teams may be the option that would work and encourage more kids to play, they get to play with friends, they are learning with their friends, and split home/away games. We could lean on Jr B to get players to come work with the house league teams and coaches. They can train coaches, and help teach the game. They can volunteer at the arena closest to them so they don't have to travel and it's more convenient.

- The U17 volunteer program was a huge success last year and could feed into this.
- The “Community Team” option will be moved to a sub-committee so it can be discussed more in depth. Jill to reach out to those who can help create what she is envisioning.
- To include at the sub-committee – avoiding scheduling house league games on weekends.

## 12. Other

- Tournaments
  - Knights tourney A/B – 8 teams, however it is still unknown how the OLA plans to do this new tournament process. They promised it was going to open on the 19<sup>th</sup> of January, however there still has been nothing communicated yet. More to come.
  - U13, U15, U17 - the OLA will dictate where they think we need to be for tournaments. Unknown how to appeal if we don't agree. It may be a preference order we provide and they go from there. More to come.
  - We provided the list for 13 team 1 tournaments and the OLA will take that information, and determine where everyone goes.
  - If this actually gets released on Friday the 19<sup>th</sup>, Mark and Al will discuss. To note, girls should remain the same.
- Coach selections
  - Schedule to be determined, but it is open until the end of the month.
  - Selection committee consists of; Jake Asperetti, Jeff, Al, Mark and Jessica. Jo-Anne will interview the girls' candidates in parallel. Jon will also be in attendance to observe and view the process.
  - Family relationships – any type of family relationships should be taken into consideration and avoidance made to be part of the selection of that team as well as coaching.
- Scheduler
  - We do not have a scheduler at the moment, but we do need to find one asap.
  - Social messaging to go out asap by Sheldon.
  - Please, think on this and identify any potential candidates.
  - We need one ASAP. We need messaging out asap.
- Time Keeper Scheduler
  - We also do not have a timekeeper scheduler.
  - This position is great for a student, its fairly easy and it's a paid position
  - Jason Bosomworth will provide mentoring via Phil if required. Once we have it from Caleb, we'll file it on our Google Drive so its accessible moving forward.
- Coaching clinic
  - Al has made the request to host it here and is waiting for a reply.
- Winterlude
  - Lacrosse Canada wants to do something at Winterlude. If we can brand something, we can provide volunteers. If we agree we can let them know. This may be a great opportunity to show presence in the community.
- Axeman/ masters & Floor time
  - Up to this season, we continue to rent floor for others. If something should happen during those floor times (such as an injury) we would be held financially responsible as all responsibility falls on the permit holder (which is us).
  - We can no longer assume this huge risk. These groups no longer need us to help with this task and as much as we want to support our fellow teams, we need to protect our association.

- No other association does this. Although we have a legacy and tradition with these teams, we did it initially to help as they got on their feet, however it was never meant to be a permanent arrangement.
  - Is the use of waivers an option? There are legalities to consider as well as enforcement. Its unnecessary when they can simply book their own floor times and then eliminate any risk to our association.
  - By going through us, they have been using our rates. This is unfortunate but they can always discuss with the facilities to negotiate a good rate. We will need to ensure they are aware of this, and perhaps update them on our rates so they can use them to negotiate their own.
  - Is there an option to ensure Axeman/Masters get first right of refusal if we cancel any of our floor time?
  - Jon and Al will discuss the situation with these groups and let them know that we would love to help but we can no longer continue to help in this particular facet (we are happy to help in other ways and are always open to that).
- Additions for next agenda
    - Sheldon - Discuss the consideration of placing a limit to how much an individual team can fundraise (so anything above it goes to the association). To consider using a similar sponsorship policy like Ringette does (Nicole has a document that can be used as reference).
    - Mark – Consideration on implementation of a blackout week, similarly to the hockey black out weeks, which can be set at the start of the season and allow families to plan vacations or other.
    - Jo-Anne – Further discuss a policy surrounding members of the same household on the bench/part of the coaching team. Do we have a policy? Do we need a policy? There may be situations where it's necessary (i.e. girls league, and the need for a female trainer on the bench). Is a policy required? Or should the situation be handled on a case by case basis? Is the option of using a non-related parent representative an option if there are spouses/partners/relatives on the bench (for situations like complaints)?

**13. Move to adjourn the meeting:** Al (initiated), Derek (seconded)

**14. Signed Resolutions:**



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