

Saanich Lacrosse Association
2023-2024 Annual General Meeting
President's Report

W. Scott Barillaro



Saanich Lacrosse Association – Annual General Meeting – President’s Report

Introduction

I am pleased to present my President’s Report (Report) to members for the 2023/24 year. I just completed my first year of a two-year term in the position. The purpose of the Report is to inform members of key aspects of Association activities for the past 12 months. It also enables the Association to meet its legal obligations under the Societies Act.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Andrea Leies and Sarah Bains-West for their service on the Board over the past year. We wish them all the best going forward.

The report includes three sections:

1. Division Reports
2. President’s Year One Assessment
3. The Year Ahead

Division Reports

U7 Report

The association had total registration of 17 players. There was one team which is larger than usual given some late registration after team declarations. All reports suggest the players were engaged, developed their skills, and had fun. The U7s attended the Peninsula Lacrosse Association’s (Penlax) Father’s Day Tournament in June 2024. The Association was pleased with this level of enrollment because U7 is the foundation for future teams.

Floor time in games was a challenge given the three-on-three format. The Association will consider two teams in the future provided there is sufficient registration, coaches, and floor time to support it.

U9 Report

The association had total registration of 48 players. This is this largest single cohort in Saanich Lacrosse. There were three teams of 16 players and the association did its best to accommodate friend requests, when possible, at this age group. Again, all indications were that the players were engaged, developed, and had fun. The teams attended Victoria-Esquimalt Lacrosse Association’s (VELA) Call of the Wild Tournament and Penlax’s Father’s Day Tournament in June 2024.

Floor time in games was a challenge for the same reasons outlined for U7. Association will consider creating a fourth team in the future there is sufficient registration, coaches, and floor time to support it.

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U11 Report

The Association had total registration of 33 players which split into two well-sized teams. There is currently no tiering in U11 under the Vancouver Island Lacrosse Commission (Commission). Players participated in assessments to create balanced teams based on results at the time. Both teams finished with winning records in the U11 South Island Division (Saanich 2 second place, Saanich 1 fifth place). The teams played in Juan de Fuca Lacrosse Associations (JDF) Travis Bateman Tournament.

The Association also supported a team to enter the Jack Crosby Memorial Tournament at the beginning of July. Players from both U11 teams had the opportunity to join the Crosby team and received supplemental practice time and development opportunities. The team entered the B tier and won a silver medal at the tournament.

Officiating at the U11 was a concern. This was due to two things:

- introduction of contact (place and push) and inconsistent rule interpretation
- inexperienced officials learning how to call full floor games.

I can understand how this is a challenge being a new official last year myself. The Association and its coaches sent feedback to the Commission and will work with local associations next season to support and mentor officials to address these challenges.

U13 Report

The Association had total registration of 42 players. This placed the association in the position of creating two oversized teams or releasing players (most likely to JDF). The Board opted to create combination teams with players from VELA given it did not have sufficient registration to declare a team U13 on its own. This reduced team sizes to more manageable levels and enabled more players the opportunity to play.

BCLA policies require all combination programs with three or more teams to declare at A1 and some combination of A2, B or C. The two associations opted for A1, and two B teams given there was no C tier at the start of the season.

The A1 team played in a division with JDF A1, JDF A2 and Nanaimo A2. It had a successful season finishing first in league play. A1 also attended the Pop Styles Tournament and Trevor Wingrove Tournament in late May and early June 2024.

The Association and VELA each hosted a B team.

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The Saanich-VELA B had a successful season winning a gold medal in JDF’s Rumble on the Rock and a silver medal at Pop Styles. The team also finished first in league play, won the Island Championships, and went to Provincial Championships finishing fourth.

The VELA-Saanich team struggled compared to the Saanich-based team for a variety of reasons. It is fair to say that the combination program had several unforeseen circumstances that would inform the Board’s views should it be considered in the future. That said, it met the goal of creating opportunities for more kids to play between the two associations, which was the original intent.

U15 Report

The Association had total registration of 38 players and formed two teams: A1 and B.

The A1 team participated in the Tim White Tournament and the Trevor Wingrove Memorial Tournament winning a bronze medal. It lost to a very strong JDF team in the Island Final and came close to winning the Provincials Wildcard Game against a Vancouver-Burnaby.

The B team also participated in the Tim White Tournament. It was subsequently re-tiered to C after the Commission finished tiering games. The team won the Island Championships and went to Provincials in Comox where it won a gold medal.

There were some concerns with the original declarations and tiering placements of some associations; particularly in U15B. There was a wide range of skill and experience levels at that level. I intend to work with my peers from other associations to consider declaration and tiering approaches this fall to determine whether it’s possible to mitigate these issues prior to the start of the season.

U17 Report

The Association had total registration of 34 catchment players and four releases from other associations. There were two teams: A1 and B

The A1 team competed in the West Coast Classic (winning bronze) and the Trevor Wingrove Tournament (winning a silver). It won the championship for league play, Island Championship in playdowns and represented the Island at Provincials.

The B team competed in the West Coast Classic (winning a silver medal) and Andy Woods Memorial Tournament (winning a bronze). It finished second in league play, second in Playdowns and won a Wild Card game to represent the Island at Provincials. I subsequently won a bronze a medal.

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President’s Year One Assessment

There is a wide range of emotions I went through when considering the past 12 months as I prepared the Report.

First and foremost, I am very grateful for the opportunity to work with the Saanich Lacrosse Board of Directors. These are all very dedicated people who donate their time to keep the Association going. It is a very much a “Working Board” like so many other small non-profit organizations. There is no staff so each of them must put in the time doing things in addition to exercising their governance roles. I would not be able to do my role without their support.

I am also very proud that Board, coaches and managers consisting of many new faces found a way to make the season happen for players and families. I did not really understand how much work went into the season despite sitting on the Board for several years. I understood my part of it but there was a lot more to it, especially as the President. So, the Association achieved its mission in that sense.

I also admit that we didn’t get everything right. What I will say is that the Board does its best to make decisions in the Association’s best interests. Those decisions are not always popular, but we do our best with the information we have at the time. The good news is that everyone has one more year of experience (including me) and we will hit the ground running in October once the new Board is in place. We did what we had to do in 2023/24, but I believe we can do even better in 2024/25.

There were some very difficult times during the season. I came to the position thinking about what it would take to meet our operational goals. However, I did not anticipate the complicated interpersonal challenges that would arise. I also underestimated how many of them there would be and how personal they could become. There were times where I did not think it was worth it. However, I’ve invested almost seven years and hundreds of volunteer hours in this organization. I am fully invested in its success and sustainability. I will be better prepared for this in my second year.

Looking Ahead to 2024-25

There were several things I wanted to

Several themes emerged across Island associations that we agreed to take collective action on.

over the past year that the incoming Board will need to consider.

- Update disciplinary policies for players, coaches, and parents to reflect current BCLA and Commission expectations.

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- Work with other Island associations to better coordinate season planning and share information regarding declaration decisions for competitive balance, particularly for B divisions.
- Consider the viability of current Commission season planning assumptions given ongoing limited availability of floor time.
- Review assessment process and update approach (if required) as well as communicate it to members to improve understanding.
- Review and update accounting and financial policies to strengthen accountability.
- Review communications and marketing approaches for the association to take advantage of new website capabilities.
- Recruit new Board members from younger age groups to support the long-term sustainability of the Association.

This is just a summary of some of the issues we will attempt to tackle in the coming year. There will inevitably be others that may come up or be brought to the Board’s attention.

Conclusion

I am pleased with the first year of my term overall. There were many highs, and a few lows, but the kids got to play and that is the main thing. Thanks once again to the Board and to all of the members who support the Association. We simply could not do it without you. I look forward to an even better 2024/25.

Sincerely,



W. Scott Barillaro
President
Saanich Lacrosse Association