



Kelowna Minor Lacrosse Association Coaching Coordinator's Report: 2010 Season

Dear Members,

KMLA's coaches worked to develop nearly 200 registered athletes in 2010. This number was up by roughly 30 athletes (two teams) over 2009, and was ~ 42 athletes higher than registration in 2008/2007. The **Kinsmen sponsored Learn to Play program** run during the winter, and coordinated by Randy Gale, was the primary source of these new recruits, who entered mainly in the Pee Wee and Novice divisions. A special thanks to Kinsmen, Randy and his coaching crew for delivering this exciting *free* opportunity for new players to get to know box lacrosse.

Many many thanks for the hard work, dedication and volunteer service hours of coaches Mike Degroot, Ryan Wickertt, Jarrod Walker, Brad Wightman, Rod Charlton, Kevin Brownlee, Darryl Keating, Jason Sinclair, Clint Alexander, Gerald Stanhope, Randy Gale, Mike Thorpe, Troy Koski, Kelly Cahill, Alex Blanchard, Erwin Jones, Dave Alcorn, Tom Beale, Tommy Tymchuk, Sean Hogan, Marty Woods, Scott Moore, Dan McDonald and Ron Samol (apologies if anyone is missing from this list). On behalf of KMLA, I would like to extend my sincere appreciation for your service to our athletes.

Two teams from KMLA represented the Thompson-Okanagan Zone at **BC Provincial Competition** in Delta in the PeeWee division in July (A2 and C calibre). KMLA is proud to recognize the athletes and families dedication that supported the realization of this goal, not to mention the team managers, gate operators, trainers and assistant coaches and coaches that take on a big load to execute travel arrangements and game plans for the athletes.

KMLA also hosted two successful **tournaments**: The Bill McBain PeeWee and Joel Redman Bantam tournaments. Penny Krebs and Toni Schuffels are recognized for stepping up to the plate to coordinate these tournaments. Thank-you ladies for your huge outlay of time and talents! The other behind the scenes volunteers, sponsors and contributors, of which there are many, are likewise greatly thanked for making these events a success. Several of our teams participated in and had success at away tournaments, such as the Bantam 1 team's win at the Merritt Thunder in the Valley tournament and the Kelowna Pee Wee 1's overtime win at the Wayne Goss tournament in White Rock. Congratulations to these and other teams that made the commitment to attend tournaments which are so vital to exposing the athletes to the fun of a 'road trip' and the heightened focus that comes with tournament play.

We recognize there were some scheduling challenges this season caused by the **renovations at Rutland West Arena**. Kim Taschuk is owed a great deal of thanks for her time, effort and patience in finding solutions and accommodating many requests. It is perhaps a little known fact that despite these facility shortages, relative to 2006-2009, KMLA provided a significant *increase* in pre-season practice opportunities for our athletes in 2010. This is critical to completing pre-season evaluations



and getting teams practicing together in advance of mandatory league seeding games that occur around the Easter weekend.

Our club worked hard to coordinate **standardized team evaluations** for the Novice – Midget divisions in the early spring of 2010. Not all of these evaluations ran perfectly, but they were more strongly standardized than they had been in recent years. We will be looking to build on the lessons of 2010 this coming season, strengthen our systems, and are on the lookout for neutral evaluators in 2011. If you are interested, please contact the 2011 Coaching Coordinator prior to March 2011.

The governing Commission for our league is the Thompson-Okanagan Minor Lacrosse Commission (TOMLC). TOMLC currently stipulates that the Pee Wee - Midget divisions are to be tiered. **Tiering policy in TOMLC** is a relatively new affair, and the guidelines and implementation an evolving art relative to other jurisdictions. The number one challenge is communication and expectations management at the front-end of this process. KMLA participated fully on TOMLC (especially Penny Krebs) throughout 2010 and learned a number of valuable lessons related to how *the Zone* structures tiered competition. These insights were not always delivered from TOMLC to KMLA in a timely fashion. In our participation in TOMLC, we have strongly advocated greater consistency and policy on how tiering is implemented by other clubs in the Zone. TOMLC in May of each year (not KMLA) has the responsibility and authority to approve/reject Provincial tiering designations of all of our PeeWee – Midget teams. The BCLA Operating Policy also lays out some clear guidelines, especially with respect to C calibre competition. There remain some gray areas however, and it is important to recognize that the ultimate purpose is to identify tiering levels that enable Zone 2 teams to compete at the Provincial level, not merely within TOMLC (e.g., the “first team out” might actually with the benefit of competition results be designated a “B” team Provincially by TOMLC, and is *not automatically* “A2”). These are sensitive issues which require an understanding that zones with lower lacrosse registration numbers like ours (e.g., 2 teams per division instead of 4 or more as is common in the lower mainland) must exercise some case by case judgment when applying tiering principles. This is however the job of TOMLC, not KMLA, our coaches or other team officials. If you have questions about this system, please contact the KMLA Coaching Coordinator or President.

Another challenge in 2010 was communicating BCLA **Disciplinary Guidelines** to some of our coaches and players. Several major penalties, match penalties, gross misconduct penalties trigger *automatic* suspensions that TOMLC Commissioners expect to be enforced by our Head and Assistant Coaches – not our young referees, tournament coordinators or other team officials. Commissioner rulings on such events are *supplementary* to the *automatic* consequences set out in the BCLA Minor Directorate Disciplinary Guidelines and Rule Interpretations (available on www.kelownalacrosse.ca). It also remains misunderstood that *regardless* of what a referee might say during or after a game in relation to a penalty they assessed, responsibility for suspensions is dictated by these BCLA Disciplinary Guidelines and TOMLC Commissioners – *never* by game officials (even though some of them mistakenly portend to have such powers). KMLA is committed to increasing our efforts to further add visibility on BCLA's Disciplinary Guidelines in 2011. PeeWee+ players and parents are encouraged to obtain and review the BCLA Disciplinary Guidelines and bring any questions they have to our coaches or the Coaching Coordinator. It is always an emotional scenario to receive ‘surprise news’ that a player is suspended.



A final comment about the governing Commission, TOMLC. Several Members of TOMLC at the September 25 2010 Annual General Meeting (esp. the Zone Director) made comments that BCLA wanted TOMLC to pass on to various Association coaches, team officials and parents that they are discouraged from contacting BCLA officials directly prior to giving TOMLC Commissioners or the Zone Director the opportunity to respond. Step 1 is to contact the appropriate TOMLC Commissioner, or the TOMLC Zone Director. These officials have the authority to rule on 95% of issues affecting our club that fall outside of KMLA's mandate (normally disciplinary issues, issues around referees, league play format, tiering, etc). KMLA Members are encouraged to contact a member of the BCLA Minor Directorate *only* after they have given the Zone Commission an opportunity to respond. BCLA officials receiving "issues" from Members of KMLA not on the Executive re-direct the vast majority of these matters to TOMLC or the KMLA President.

I am pleased to announce the launch and adoption by KMLA of two important initiatives aimed at supporting improvement and accountability. First is a **formal player / parent coaching evaluation survey** that was distributed to the Membership with our summer newsletter, and made available on-line at www.kelownalacrosse.ca. All 2010 Members are strongly encouraged to complete and return these important evaluations asap if they have not done so already. The second related initiative, which builds on these coaching evaluations, is a **formal coaching application procedure**. Those interested in coaching in 2011 must now obtain and complete a standard coaching application form available at www.kelownalacrosse.ca. Box lacrosse coaching applications (both Head and Assistant coaches) are due **January 21st 2011**. Completed box applications will be reviewed by the KMLA Coaching Coordinator, who will Chair the KMLA Coaches Selection Committee. This Committee will make recommendations to the KMLA Executive in February. The KMLA Executive as a whole will vote on these recommendations, with final decisions being delivered to all applicants by ~March 10th. Unfilled positions as of March 10th will be managed on an ad hoc basis at the discretion of the KMLA Coaching Coordinator. Decisions made by the Executive in regards to these applications will be final. Coaches coming to the fore after these deadlines will not be excluded from the governance of this procedure.

KMLA is very excited to announce the **renovation of Rutland Box**, a community led effort made possible by funding from Kelowna Kinsmen, coordination and planning assistance of Corinne Almas, and local player, parent volunteers. A big thank-you to all of the volunteers and those who gave up their time during peak holiday season in August to make this possible!

Thanks again to all of our dedicated coaches, team managers and bench volunteers for making it possible for our young athletes to enjoy the most dynamic and best game on two feet.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Clint Alexander". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Clint Alexander
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