

Iowa - Box Lax in the Middle of Nowhere

Written by Adam Edgington
Sunday, 08 November 2009 16:40 -

First let me apologize for the considerable gap since my last blog. It is inexcusable, but I have a few excuses... Seriously though, I will try to post more frequently.

In my last blog I mentioned the Central Iowa Lacrosse Association's [box lacrosse league](#) . This past Thursday night saw the opening games of the inaugural season. I have to admit upfront that I was almost as nervous as my wedding day through both games - including when I was playing. For once it had nothing to do with my ability (or general lack thereof); rather, I was worried about the league as a whole.

You see, I just started really getting into lacrosse last October. I had watched lax on TV and stuff, but last fall was when I finally decided I wanted to learn how to play. But you already know that from [my last blog](#) . Fast forward to the end of July.

Knowing that the [Soccer House](#) , a local indoor soccer facility has the requisite boards and playing area, I followed up on a conversation I had with them earlier this year. The owner and general manager were both highly receptive to us holding an indoor lacrosse league there. With the down economy, a new source of revenue was definitely welcome and they see the potential for growth as the sport continues to expand in Des Moines. We began to make plans then because the time slots are reserved quickly.

Originally we hoped for four teams of eight players. Soon it began to look as though there were enough guys to field six teams. We added an extra hour to our reserved time just to be safe.

As summer turned into fall, registration opened up. In addition to the local adult players that we picked up over the summer, information was sent to [Iowa State University's MCLA](#) players and coaches. With 10 games from November through January at \$50 per player, we thought the deal was pretty decent. Evidently so did the players.

Although we fell short of 6 teams *this year*, we did make our original goal of 4 teams – 2 teams of 11, an ISU team with 14 guys, and a team consisting of 15

[Valley High School](#) varsity players (an additional VHS player is on an adult team). I know it seems odd that we

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have a mix of high school and adult guys, but keep in mind that lax is barely off the ground here.

Mixing the ages is not the sole departure from standard box/indoor lacrosse. We also had to eliminate cross checking, boarding, and off the ball hits. There are several reasons for this. First and foremost, not everybody is a member of US Lacrosse. Since this is a local rec league, having players register would be an additional expense on top of purchasing gear and paying the league fee. Many simply cannot or do not want to throw extra money down for a ten game season, especially in the current economy. However, I actively encourage them to register. Another major reason is the construction of the Soccer House. Instead of hockey boards that have some give, the walls are thick oak boards; the building used to be a barn/practice arena for show horses (I know, hicks in Iowa). *They hurt like hell when you hit them, let me tell you.* Of course the age difference factored into this decision as well.

Since I run the Central Iowa Lacrosse Association on no budget, we do not have proper box goals. Instead we use our 6x6 field goals. The good part about it is that the goalies get to practice pressure situations in front of their standard nets. The bad news is that one team threw up 24 goals on Thursday. To help offset this, we made another rule alteration; we allow a d-pole on the floor. Each team has the option to run a single d-pole at any time. The high ceiling of the facility makes this possible. While thought odd at first, after the first game the teams agree that it created an interesting dynamic.

Despite my nervousness, everything went fairly smoothly on the first night. Sure the facility managers got there literally right before we started. And the scoreboard did not work. But the tape for the creases went on and stayed down better than we hoped. The mismatched teams were still competitive. Nobody was injured. And most importantly, everybody had a good time.

This is week two and already there is a rematch. With one team comprised of out-of-state players attending [Drake University](#), our schedule was altered to accommodate their winter break. As a result, they have a three nights of double headers. After losing their opening game 24-9, the Drake guys get an immediate rematch with ISU. Their second game will be against my team, the Demons. Comprised of locals with different experience levels, and the high school coaches, we beat the Valley team 17-6 in our opening game. Valley gets the night off, but the full team (varsity and JV) has their final field scrimmage of the fall on Tuesday night.

In just under a month, our league's players will be at Wells Fargo Arena in downtown Des Moines to watch the Minnesota Swarm battle the Colorado Mammoth. This game marks the

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debut of professional lacrosse in Iowa. Dare I say that indoor lacrosse has arrived in Iowa?

For more regular updates about lacrosse in Iowa, visit [Central Iowa Lacrosse & Sports Ramblings](#)