

Learn-to-play lacrosse coming to Nobleton

By Jake Courtepatte

The first steps are under way to implement lacrosse into the Township of King.

A 10-week learn-to-play and development program will begin in late April for ages 4-14 of all skill levels, run out of Nobleton Arena.

'I am thrilled to see Lacrosse added to King Township's roster of recreational programs,' said Councillor David Boyd. 'This is a fantastic opportunity for our young residents to learn to play Canada's national summer sport and participate locally. It's a great sport for both girls and boys to enjoy. I hope the community embraces and supports this program.'

'We're excited,' said Adam Viola, recreation coordinator for the Township of King. 'It's something new. It's something the area has needed for a long time.'

According to Viola, as it currently stands, most minor lacrosse players travel to either Caledon for the Bandits program or Newmarket for the Redbirds program to play.

'A lot of people, especially the beginners, are often thinking 'well, I don't know yet if I want to do it or not.' So we're giving them that opportunity to make that decision.'

Word of mouth was the driving force to get the project off the ground, with local residents expressing their desire for a more local program. Viola reached out to a number of lacrosse organizations in the area to get an idea of how to get started.

'I contacted the Redbirds in Newmarket, and they set me up with Next Level Lacrosse. They do learn to play programs and videos. We've partnered with them, and they have the instructors, and we're going to take care of the registration part of it.'

Next Level brings with it a staff of experienced ex and current professional lacrosse players, as well as coaches with decades of experience behind the bench. A simple search for Next Level Lacrosse in Youtube will bring up videos of drills and plays taught to the program's students.

You can also learn more about the program at www.nextlevellacrosse.ca.

Sessions will run for one hour each week, the first 30 minutes consisting of skill development while scrimmages will round out the remaining floor time.

'No matter if you're new, or experienced, there's always drills that they can teach you,' said Viola. 'It's for anybody.'

Even for those on the fence about taking up lacrosse, past history proves that the hand-eye coordination learned in lacrosse can be transferred to other sports, like hockey.

'So many great NHL players played lacrosse,' said Viola, referencing NHLers like Wayne Gretzky and John Tavares. 'It just teaches you proper hand-eye and motor skills.'

Registration is already open for the program, and can be done online on the Township of King website. Alternately, registration can be done in person at either Trisan Centre in Schomberg or at Nobleton Arena.

Fees are \$190 including a lacrosse stick, or \$160 if providing your own. Sessions run every Monday night beginning April 24.

You can also contact Adam Viola at aviola@king.ca for a registration form.