

Caledon Bandits aiming to be competitive once again as new lacrosse season nears

Written By ROBERT BELARDI

Current President and head coach of the Junior C Caledon Bandits, Mark Thompson, begins preparations for this upcoming season while reflecting on last year's team.

Statistically, it has been a whirlwind for the past two years. In 2018 the Bandits only recorded one win. Last season, the boys increased that win total to four.

'I'd like to see us end up five-hundred or better,' said Thompson, hoping to increase the win total for the third consecutive season.

He said the team was very competitive and he knew they could be. It's a tough division, with nine teams now in the mix. Orangeville and Six Nations, will introduce their teams for the first time this year.

The core of the team is expected to return and fortunately for the Bandits, that means their marquee-men Jarett Petrie and Andrew Rybka will lead the way.

Last season, both players ranked 3rd and 4th respectively for most points in the league.

Petrie tallied 20 goals and 55 assists on the year and Rybka recorded 40 goals and 32 assists.

These players have an aptitude for scoring points. Thompson explained offense isn't the problem. He knows they can score. It's defence that needs some work on the roster.

Despite the losses, majority of the games were decided by three to four goal margins. The Bandits ranked 10th in scoring, averaging 7.94 goals per game. In comparison, the boys ranked 10th in goals against, conceding 10.38.

It's all about adjusting to the structure of the game that has stemmed from the pros for the past 10 to 15 years.

'Now, there's an offence team and a defensive team. They switch off. The offensive guys are on all the time on offense and as soon as they lose the ball they come off and the defence goes on,' said Thompson.

This structure is played from Midget and up only. Younger teams will play the game traditionally, contributing on offence and tracking back on defence.

The Bandits will be looking around the local area for players. Last year, 12 players on the team were from the Caledon area.

Lacrosse pegs its recruiting system on finding majority of its players locally with the exception of non-residents. Some from Caledon, others from Brampton, Orangeville and even all the way out in New Tecumseth.

However, patience must be the virtue here. Junior A and B registrations commence prior to Junior C. The organization can still host talks with some players they would like to see return.

Anyone can hope right?

Both goaltenders Trevor Wilson and Christian Rasmussen will be trying out for Junior B. Thompson may have to prepare further for their departure, should they decide to move into the higher league.

According to the Bandit's website, players must be born between 1999 to 2003 to register. Players must also obtain a ?permission to run? form, regardless if they are a resident or non-resident of the area.

The tryout fee is \$30 dollars and the first tryout begin April 16th at Mayfield Arena. It begins at 8:00 p.m.

For the rest of the dates, please go to the website <http://caledonbanditsjrc.ca/tryouts/>

for more details.