

Caledon Bandits hit the lacrosse floor for Junior C season

By Jake Courtepatte

The Junior C Caledon Bandits are hoping to leave the memories of 2015 off the lacrosse floor, and return the franchise to the success it became accustomed to.

Until the 2014 season, the Bandits had not posted a sub-.500 record in a decade. A 5-11 season was then followed by a 4-12 season, failing to win a playoff game in the Ontario Jr. C Lacrosse League in either year. Both times, the club was swept in their best-of-three series' with the Fergus Thistles.

This year, however, shows promise. With the team's final tryout scheduled for yesterday (Wednesday) following the Citizen's press-time, the Bandits should have a handful of veteran players in the lineup, while only losing one player due to age eligibility. Returning to the head coaching position will be Jeff Sehl, with Bret MacDonald joining him behind the bench as assistant coach. Tom Brennan steps into the General Manager role.

For the first time in franchise history, home games will alternate between Tuesday nights at Mayfield Recreation Complex and Friday nights at Caledon Community Complex, with the team aiming to increase the exposure of the team and make it more accessible to the broader community.?

A number of weekly events will also be making a return this season, with each home game featuring a Bandit Minor Player of the Week, a hardest shot contest, as well as raffle draws and prizes.

Joining the Bandits in the West Division of the OJCLL are the incoming Brantford Warriors, bringing junior lacrosse back to Brantford for the first time since 2002. The Warriors purchased the franchise from the Hamilton Bengals, who took a hiatus from junior lacrosse in 2015.

The West remains intact otherwise, meaning nine teams will now battle it out in the division, with Caledon seeing the likes of Oakville, Fergus, Mimico, Halton Hills, Wilmot, Six Nations, Shelburne, and Brantford.

Fans can catch a glimpse of the OJCLL's newest member at the Bandits' first home game, hosting the Warriors May 3 at Mayfield arena. First draw is scheduled for 8 p.m., as will all home games this season.

The Bandits then hit the road for the first time May 6, visiting the Thistles.

The regular season plays out until the end of June.

Updates on the Bandits can be found weekly at www.banditslacrosse.com/jrc/



The Jr. C Caledon Bandits salute the home crowd following their elimination from OJCLL playoffs last July. The Bandits open the 2016 season in early May.