

Reviving the Caledon Bandits: House league lacrosse format will change to suit beginners

By Robert Belardi

Caledon Minor Bandits Lacrosse President Guy Dorval has been working on a new plan for game play, but says it probably won't happen this year due to COVID-19.

The Kitchener native moved to Bolton in 1997 with a rich background in the sport. He played all his life and, when his children joined the organization in 2007, he got back into coaching.

He was one of the many coaches to witness the rise and fall of lacrosse in the town.

The organization folded a few years and Dorval is working to revitalize not just the Caledon Minor Bandits but also the sport as a whole.

?What I'm working on now is to try and rebuild it from the ground roots,? Dorval said.

?What we're doing is we're going to start with our house league and we're going to run a three- on-three lacrosse program. There's no equipment involved except for your helmet, your gloves and a stick. There's no goalies.?

Young players who are new to the game and parents who are worried about the costs of playing will surely like to hear this approach.

The games are high scoring and will predominantly focus on learning the fundamentals without worrying about confounding aspects of the game such as how to hit.

?Once we do go back into the gyms and the arenas. We're going to try and run some free try-out clinics,? Dorval said.

He is unsure when this will start up, however, Dorval is in constant contact with the Town of Caledon. When a date is set an announcement will be made.

He understands the popularity of the sport is not as large as it once was.

As of now, Dorval has four volunteers for coaches. He's heard excellent reviews on this three-on-three program that has been sanctioned by the Ontario Lacrosse Association. A lot of clubs in Ontario have been using three-on-three as their house league. This is a cost-effective option versus purchasing full equipment for five-on-five.

?I feel if we can get enough players and bring this three-on-three in for our house league program and build it up, I feel a lot of players will fall in love with the game. Seeing how it's so similar to hockey, and to soccer and to basketball, there's so many sports it can relate to.?

Beginners will learn how to cradle the ball, how to pass and how to shoot. Dorval, plans to open free coaching clinics for parents. For house league, there's no requirement to be certified in order to be behind the bench.

Coaches will learn the sport from the rudimentary level. He plans to bring in Junior C players to help parents get acquainted. This effort will also help a player in high school complete their volunteer hours.

He plans to reach out to players in Caledon East, Bolton and Nobleton who would be interested in joining the club.

There is plenty of uncertainty as to when this will begin. The hope is to get on the ground running when the pandemic is over.

For any more information or questions about the Caledon Minor Bandits lacrosse, you can contact Dorval at guy_dorval@sympatico.ca