

NLL Commissioner visits Six Nations

By Chezney Martin

SIX NATIONS – NLL Commissioner Nick Sakiewicz made his first visit to Six Nations last week to spend two days learning both culture and history.

During his time in Six Nations, Sakiewicz visited the Six Nations Council House for a meet and greet with Chief Ava Hill, and partook in tours of both the Two Turtle Art Gallery with Arnold Jacobs and the Woodland Cultural Centre in Brantford. As well, Sakiewicz enjoyed a traditional dinner and tour with Curt Styres at the Iroquois Lacrosse Arena, the spacious epicentre for both the Knighthawks and local teams.

Sakiewicz is hoping to grow the NLL in his time as commissioner and as a self proclaimed history buff, his visit to Six Nations will likely be the most eye opening.

"When I had dinner with Curt Styres, our wonderful owner of the Rochester Knighthawks, he invited me to come visit Six Nations and I immediately took him up on it," said Sakiewicz. "I love the history of the game and its traditions up there. I am really looking forward to immersing myself in that

culture and understanding where such an ancient game came from and putting my arms around it. It should be a fun day and a half. I am looking forward to meeting those fine, passionate fans up there in Six Nations," he said.

Today, the NLL has nine teams that span out across North America, but Sakiewicz is focusing on four components to grow the NLL — expansion, growing the league's digital platform, grassroots development and enhancing TV partnerships. This is hoped to help him reach "the magic number" of 16 NLL teams, with Canadian expansion remaining a priority. This expansion will also reach Edmonton, the former home of Rush before they transferred to Saskatoon during the off-season.

"I've got my eye set on getting to 16 as soon as we possibly can. Having said that, we're going to be patient. We're going to make sure we find the right owner; the right venue, and we're in a marketplace where the fans will embrace the team and make the team relevant. We can't expand for the sake of expanding. You only need to do it once to learn if expansion



Six Nations Elected Chief Ava Hill with NLL Commissioner Nick Sakiewicz and local business man and Knighthawks owner Curt Styres.

teams don't work, you actually take steps backwards," he said.

Currently, throughout the NLL there are 19 First Nations players in the league representing the Haudenosaunee, Ojibwe and numerous others. Six of them concentrate their added prowess to the Rochester Knighthawks – including Cody Jamieson, Craig Point, Sid Smith, Adam Bomberry, Quinn Powless and Angus Goodleaf.

"The Native American players who are playing in the league are spectacular. They are tremendous players," said Sakiewicz. "I am looking forward to learning about where they came from and the traditions behind

their development. I get to see them on highlight reels after each weekend. Part of my goal in visiting Six Nations is to see where those guys come from, where they grew up and what has made them as good as they are.

NLL STANDINGS

Entering Week #13 of the NLL season East

Team	W	L	GB
Buffalo	7	4	-
New England	5	4	1
Rochester	6	5	1
Georgia	4	7	3
Toronto	3	7	3.5

West Team	W	L	GB
Colorado	8	3	-
Saskatchewan	7	3	.5
Calgary	5	7	3.5
Vancouver	3	8	5

I am looking forward to seeing the environment they grew up in and what

makes them the elite athletes that they are," he said.