

# Sports

# Lacrosse



## On the Rise Again!



Port Hope Lacrosse Team - c1910

Photo courtesy of Port Hope Archives - Long Family Collection

The game of lacrosse was originated by the North American Indians and is **the oldest known athletic contest in North America**. It is highly probable that it was played as a pastime as long ago as we know polo to have been played by the Persians.

George Catlin (1796-1872), an explorer, writer and artist, tells of forty eight tribes, separated by a distance of three thousand miles, playing an early form of the present lacrosse. They called the game “*baggataway*” (meaning “*ball game*”). Catlin named it “*ball play*” and **early French colonists called it “*la crosse*”** because the sticks the players used resembled a bishop’s crozier.

Lacrosse has a long but checkered history in this area. Edwin C. Guillet (*Cobourg 1798-1948*) mentions that **by the 1890s baseball had supplanted lacrosse (and cricket) in popular appeal**. By 1934 lacrosse had died out completely with the folding of the Cobourg Intermediate Lacrosse Club.

Starting in 1968 the sport experienced a short revival under the leadership of John Lavis. The **Cobourg Minor Lacrosse Association** was formed with 136 boys ranging in age from 7 to 18.

The next year the Association expanded to include a junior team. Sponsored by Tom Behan Construction and known as the *Behan Cats*, they played in the Quinte Junior Lacrosse League. Many well known area boys starred for them, including Paul Allen, Roger Winters, Rick LaBrash and Randy McGregor.

At the end of the 1974 season the Association folded, simply due to lack of interest by Cobourg area youth. **The revival had lasted just seven years**. Another revival began in the early 2000s, but **this time lacrosse lasted barely 5 years!**

Not discouraged, supporters of the sport rallied again and in 2011 the Northumberland Minor Lacrosse Association was formed. Since then, perhaps partly due to TV coverage of the Toronto Rock, **lacrosse has quickly become one of the most popular sports in Northumberland County**. Teams play under **the scary name of “Nemesis”**.

With **450 players registered in 2015**, the NMLA fielded over 30 house league box lacrosse teams for youth aged 3-16, and 6 teams competing at the Rep level in both box and field lacrosse.

That year the **NMLA won the Arthur Poitras Award** from the Ontario Lacrosse Association. The award honours the organization that best promotes and develops the sport of lacrosse in Ontario. *Congratulations!*

In 2016 **Cobourg will have a professional lacrosse team** playing out of the Cobourg Community Centre.



Northumberland Nemesis 1

2015 Nemesis Clash Bantam Champions



Bishop's Crozier