

Cricket at Lynda Lane

By Akhil Shah

Driving by Lynda Lane one often sees people in uniforms playing a sport wherein one team is running behind a white ball trying to "bowl out" the opposition while conceding the least amount of runs.

In a nutshell that was a short description of the game of cricket, which has grown considerably on a league scale in Ottawa, and has been played since the early 1900's.

Formed in 1920, the Ottawa Valley Cricket Council (OVCC) provided cricket lovers of all ethnicities a chance to play at a competitive level. The council has continued to grow since its inauguration and now encompasses 10 actively participating teams, with the latest addition becoming a member just this year. Besides the two grounds at Lynda Lane, the game is also played at Rideau Hall and Barrhaven, with the former having a full-fledged pavilion for players to use. While members of OVCC play on all grounds, each team is assigned a home ground on which they practice during the week to prepare for the matches over the weekend.

The grounds at Rideau Hall are the oldest of the five grounds in Ottawa, and are home to four of the teams playing in OVCC. Lynda Lane grounds are relatively new compared with the grounds at Rideau Hall, which date back to late 1800's, and are also shared amongst four other teams. While cricket at the Lynda Lane grounds has been played for more than 20 years, the area has seen cricket since early 1970's, with games being played near the Hillcrest High School. However, the grounds near Hillcrest have not been used since the new ones were developed at Lynda Lane.

Currently, the playing members range anywhere from 200 to 250 people, a significant growth from just 2005, when it might have just been more than 100. Through advertisements and referrals, cricket has continued to grow in Ottawa, resulting in the emergence of new teams, as the cricket fraternity has grown from 8 teams in 2005 to 10 in 2013, with additions in 2010 and 2013.

To be a member of OVCC, a team is required to have sufficient playing members and be financially stable, while having a sound constitution.

One such team to participate is the New Edinburgh Cricket Club (NECC) or the "Burghs," which currently has more than 25 playing members in addition to some associate members. As one of the older cricket clubs, Burghs has been a part of OVCC since the 1930's and its membership is mainly drawn from the Commonwealth of Nations. The club has also been successful in attracting Canadian players, one of whom now represents Canada at an international level in women's cricket.

Besides being competitive on the field, Burghs have also been a leader of the field by raising awareness of the sport and also raising funds for various charities. Volunteering in "The Community Cup," Burghs introduces cricket to new immigrants who are not only seeking to play competitive sports but also to socialize, an activity equally important to the club. The club has also been successful in raising almost \$25,000 for charities such as The Canadian Cancer Society and The School Breakfast Program, through its marquee annual Rawle Williams Memorial Game, a public event where old members play a shortened version of the game against the new members.

For those interested in learning and knowing more about the club or taking part in the memorial game, please visit www.burghscricket.com or contact the author to find out more information, akhilshah83@gmail.com

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