



Giving LACROSSE

FALL 2020

A PUBLICATION FOR SUPPORTERS OF THE US LACROSSE FOUNDATION

A LONG WAY FROM CENTRAL VALLEY

Steven Cottrell, a 2020 high school senior and a product of the Bakersfield Youth Lacrosse League (BYLL), will join Edgewood College this fall and is believed to be the first player from Bakersfield's program to earn a spot on a collegiate varsity team. Edgewood's NCAA Division III squad will play its inaugural season in 2021.

Andrew Zaninovich has been Cottrell's coach on the Bakersfield Rams club team for the past two years and is also president of Bakersfield Youth Lacrosse League, a US Lacrosse member league.

He founded the organization in 2015, with equipment grants from US Lacrosse helping to support the start-up. "All the resources from US Lacrosse have made a world of difference for us," Zaninovich said. "It's made my job easier." As an extension of its growth, the BYLL began adding high school teams in 2017. It currently operates two high school boys' teams and one girls'

team, which all compete in the Pacific Lacrosse League from San Luis Obispo to San Diego.

Cottrell is a prime example of the BYLL's growing appeal. As a multi-sport athlete who also played football and basketball, Cottrell didn't start playing lacrosse until his sophomore year in high school. Unfortunately, due to the pandemic's forced cancellation of the 2020 spring campaign, Cottrell has just two seasons of competition under his belt. Even with limited experience, Edgewood head coach Jeremy Napier

forward given his size and determination to get better on and off of the field.

Cottrell's rapid ascension and success now makes him a poster boy, of sorts, to further motivate other young players in the BYLL pipeline. "Steven serves as great motivation for players in our organization," Zaninovich said. "His story shows younger players that there are opportunities available through lacrosse."

As a lifelong resident of Bakersfield, Cottrell is eager to experience the new opportunities that lacrosse has brought to him. Cottrell explained, "I really didn't think I would be playing lacrosse in college, but I am looking forward to improving my game. I know that college will be a completely different environment."

It's a long way from Bakersfield, California to Madison, Wisconsin but lacrosse has made the journey a little shorter for Steven. Thanks to your support, US Lacrosse was able to provide the necessary resources to get the BYLL started, which ultimately gave Steven Cottrell the chance to pick up a stick. Your continued support will help US Lacrosse give more athletes like Steven the opportunity play lacrosse.



All of the resources from US Lacrosse have made a world of difference for us."

—Bakersfield Youth Lacrosse President

anticipates the 6-foot-6, 240-pound Cottrell will serve as an instrumental piece of the team's defense going





Thank You for Giving Lacrosse

Michael Cather | Chief Relationship Officer & Vice President

Over the last six months, our world has drastically changed. Every family, business and organization has faced one of the most challenging times of our generation, and the sport we love along with its national governing body is

no exception. What has become increasingly clear is how vital philanthropic support is to US Lacrosse in providing the resources to advance its mission. Your contributions are critical in allowing US Lacrosse to continue giving lacrosse to new players, families, coaches and communities throughout the country.

Through all the adversity, US Lacrosse continues to provide the guidance, resources and leadership needed for lacrosse

to weather these challenging times together. Now, as lacrosse is slowly coming back to regions throughout the country, athletes return to fields to learn the valuable lessons this great game has given to so many before them. Your support enables US Lacrosse to remain ready to serve them in their journey and for that we are deeply grateful.

As US Lacrosse continues evolving to meet the changing needs of our sport, we have given our donor newsletter a new name. *Giving Lacrosse* will share stories of the impact your investment in US Lacrosse is having on our sport. Now more than ever, your donations help fuel the innovation, support and leadership to ensure we continue growing our game and giving lacrosse to future generations.

On behalf of the nearly one million Americans who participate in our sport each year, thank you for *Giving Lacrosse*.

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INVESTING IN THE FUTURE OF LACROSSE

US Lacrosse has not been immune to the COVID-19 pandemic, but the national governing body continues to grow and strengthen the sport through investments as athletes return to the game. The bevy of services and resources that US Lacrosse provides to the lacrosse community is only possible with philanthropic support from donors and members.

Through the robust grant program US Lacrosse provides, we have been a leader in developing the sport into the future. In 2019 alone \$362,518 was invested in diversity and inclusion programs including the Urban Lacrosse Alliance and our Sankofa Clinic Series. In addition to those programs,

during the 2019-2020 grant cycle, 869 US Lacrosse grants were awarded totaling 2.38 million dollars.

TryLax® is one of our most popular program offerings that is funded by philanthropic support. It allows kids to discover the sport before having to invest in equipment and registration expenses. In January, Little Rock Lacrosse ran a TryLax® clinic which resulted in nearly 100 percent participants to sign up to play this year.



\$362,518

**invested in diversity
and inclusion
programs in 2019**





CANAL WINCHESTER LACROSSE

SEES GROWTH IN OHIO

Joe Malone and Victor Paini are board members for the Canal Winchester Lacrosse Association (CWLA) in Ohio. The final goal on the timeline for the development of the CWLA is to win the 2024 Ohio Capital Conference title, which governs play for public high schools across multiple counties in the suburbs around Columbus. Given the fact that Canal Winchester High School doesn't even have a varsity team yet, celebrating a championship in a few short years seems like a tall order. However, one look at the milestones that the CWLA has already achieved is enough to understand the cause for optimism.

Malone and Paini were among a small number of enthusiasts who met in 2017 that created the CWLA to provide playing opportunities for middle and high school players who played in local recreation programs. The rec program geared for students in grades 1-6, started with just 12 players in 2015. Partnership with US Lacrosse through the years brought the needed support to fuel the expansion of the rec program and the CWLA. Following the initial US Lacrosse Learn to Play clinic in 2015, a US Lacrosse First Stick Grant in 2018 provided additional equipment and resources. US Lacrosse also provided two TryLax® clinics in 2019 introducing the game to additional players, and the certification for coaches has been coordinated through the US Lacrosse Coach Development program. "We would not be where we are today without the help of US Lacrosse," said Paini. "It's been a game-changer for us."

The CWLA's growth has been staggering as the program which started with 12 kids jumped to nearly 100 in 2019. Thanks to your continued support, US Lacrosse is able to provide local organizations like the CWLA the necessary support and resources to reach their goals.



US Lacrosse Advocacy Efforts Help Lacrosse in VA

In the wake of the COVID-19 virus, Virginia High School Leagues (VHSL) executive committee had a major decision to make in regards to the resumption of sports for the upcoming school year. Three different proposed models were being considered by the committee, ranging from the complete cancellation of the sports season to adopting a condensed season plan. Following the cancellation of spring sports in 2020, models 1 and 2 could have potentially yielded the cancellation of lacrosse in Virginia for a second consecutive year, an unwelcome outcome that US Lacrosse Vice President of Lacrosse Operations Ann Kitt Carpenetti stressed in a letter to leadership. She explained, "Canceling a season for two consecutive years would have a devastating impact on the sport's development in the state and on the student-athletes who participate."

On July 27, the VHSL executive committee announced it had selected what it had deemed to be 'Model 3', which preserves all sports for the 2020-21 school year with shortened seasons. "Our US Lacrosse members and supporters did a great job taking action and having their voices heard," said Carpenetti, "We are so thankful for their advocacy and so pleased with the decision made by the VHSL's leadership." With your support, US Lacrosse continues to provide the leadership and guidance to return the sport back to the playing field.

G^{IVE} LACROSSE

create opportunities

Lacrosse can be a powerful vehicle to extend children the opportunity to be happy, healthy and successful. The US Lacrosse First Stick Program helps minimize the financial burden for families by providing equipment grants to new programs in underserved areas.

Your gift of \$25 or more will help give a child their first stick and opportunity to play. Can we count on you to sponsor a child with your gift?



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