

Vermont Chapter Hosts “Box” Lacrosse Exhibitions

The Vermont Chapter of US Lacrosse hosted the Kahnawake Mohawks for the first ever “Box” Lacrosse games at the Essex Arena on Friday August 29th and Saturday August 30th.

The action was fast paced and hard hitting as the Vermont players adjusted to the physical Canadian style of play. Kahnawake completed the 2008 summer season as Quebec Lacrosse League Champions. The core of the Mohawks roster had just returned from a third place finish in the Senior “B” Presidents Cup in Edmonton Alberta. Kahnawake was lead by Captain Clay Kirby, NLL draftee Logan Kane, and Nations Cup MVP, Joe Hall.

Former University of Vermont midfielder Ripley Harrison captured the pre-game anticipation of the Vermont locker room. “I looked at Scott Edwards and realized this was not a Thursday night summer league game. This was not Vail or Lake Placid. I had not experienced this feeling since my senior year at UVM. You get pre-game jitters when it means something. We were playing for pride, respect, and to prove we could be competitive with the best of the Quebec Box League”.

On Friday 8/29, Vermont fought back from an early 5-2 deficit to even the score at 6-6 in the third period lead by Ryan Danehy (Dartmouth) and Dan Scavone (Bentley). The Mohawks indoor experience finally prevailed and Kahnawake pulled away for a 9-6 win in the first game of the series.

“I am amazed at how quickly we came together as a team and adjusted to the cross checking, 30 second shot clock, and shooting on a 4’ x 4’ goal”, said Vermont coach Jeff Culkin.

Game Two was a physical affair that ended in a 6-6 draw after regulation and saw referees Jim Manahan and Tony Evans issue 56 minutes in penalties. Jeff McLaren (Wesleyan) buried a breakaway goal fifteen seconds into overtime to put Vermont on top 7-6. Kahnawake’s Colin Diabo squeezed a shot past Vermont Goalie Pascal Nolet with 2:37 remaining in overtime to secure a 7-7 tie and avoid a major upset.

“You never know for certain what is going to happen until you step on the floor,” said Culkin. “Two weeks ago we were a bunch of recent college grads who had never even played Box Lacrosse”.

Burlington has been asked to host a franchise in the Quebec Senior Lacrosse league in 2009. “First we needed to answer two questions, #1 could we put a competitive team on the floor? Second could we attract enough fans to make it financially viable? Fortunately, the answer to both questions is a resounding “Yes”.”

The next step is for a delegation from Vermont to attend the QSL meeting in Montreal at the end of October. At that point we will be actively recruiting players and sponsorships for 2009. Contact Jeff Culkin – jculkin@symquest.com

All profits from the Box Lacrosse exhibitions will be directed to the Vermont Chapter of US Lacrosse to continue the development of boys & girls youth programs.