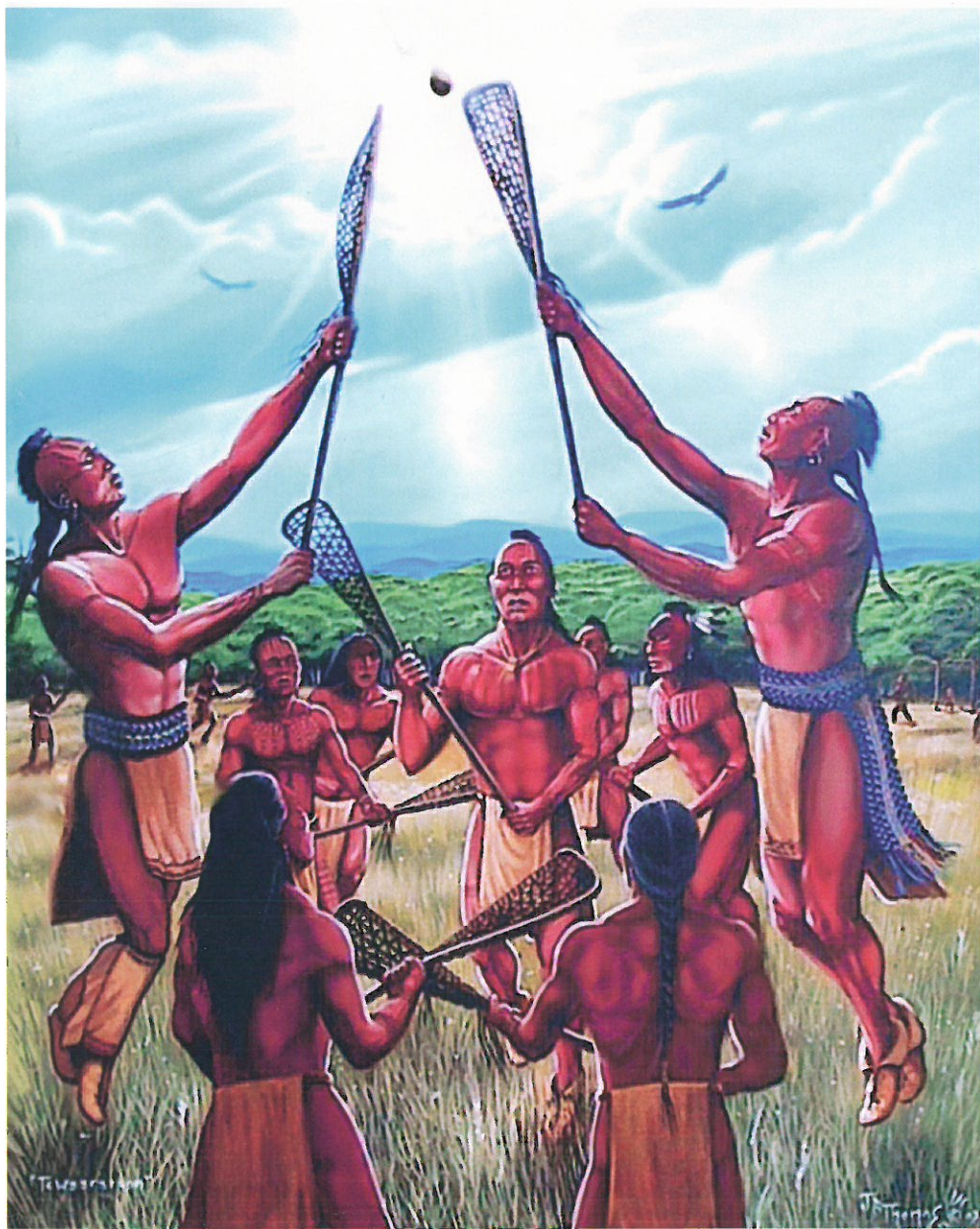


# The *Origin of Lacrosse*



Presented by:  
The Ronathahon:ni Cultural Centre





Canadian  
Lacrosse  
Association

## Information and Administration

The Canadian Lacrosse Association is recognized as the governing body responsible for all aspects of Canada's National Summer Sport. In its commitment to enhance the growth and development of the sport of lacrosse throughout Canada, the Association provides guidance, direction, and stability to its members through strong, proactive, moral and ethical leadership. The Canadian Lacrosse Association is structured to be supportive of, and responsive to the needs of its members and international partners. Through the implementation and communication of sound policies and effective management and planning, the Canadian Lacrosse Association is able to promote and deliver quality programs to all interested parties.

Our mission is to promote, develop and preserve the sport of lacrosse and its heritage as Canada's National Summer Sport by working with our partners to ensure that opportunities exist for individuals to participate and achieve excellence in lacrosse.

**Address:**

Canadian Lacrosse Association  
18 Louisa Street  
Suite 310  
Ottawa, ON  
K1R 6Y6



1975 North American Indian Travelling College Travel Troupe Fig. 1

## The Ronathahon:ni Cultural Centre

The Ronathahonni Cultural Centre, located in the Mohawk territory of Akwesasne, was founded in July of 1974 by Ernest Benedict and Mike Kanentakeron Mitchell. The centre had been instrumental in preserving and maintaining the Mohawk culture, history, and language.

The Ronathahonni Cultural Centre focuses on educating Native and non-Native people on Haudenosaunee (Iroquois) culture, lifeways, tradition, language, and history while reinforcing and revitalizing culture for the future generations.

*The Origin of Lacrosse* is intended to target Aboriginal communities in Canada and introduce them to the history and culture of the game. The project is a joint collaboration between the Ronathahonni Cultural Centre and the CLA Aboriginal Lacrosse Development Committee of the Canadian Lacrosse Association. Our goal is to educate young people in Canada about our national summer game, a game introduced by the Indigenous people of North America and still thrives today.



Fig. 2

Ronathahonni Cultural  
Centre Travel Troupe 2006



## **Assembly of First Nations Resolution of Support for Indigenous Lacrosse**

WHEREAS Parliament of Canada in 1998, passed a proclamation recognizing the game of lacrosse as Canada's national summer sport; and

WHEREAS the game of lacrosse originated from the Indigenous Nations of North America; and

WHEREAS the Indigenous Nations played lacrosse as a medicine game to heal their people, settle disputes between Nations, honour their cultural and spiritual leaders (Elders), and ultimately honour the Creator for the gift of life; and

WHEREAS the game of lacrosse has grown in popularity across the country of Canada and;

WHEREAS the game of lacrosse today has evolved into a sport enjoyed by countries and Nations all over the world; and

WHEREAS First Nations communities in Canada have not, in general, had the opportunity to access information about lacrosse or training and development opportunities provided through the community recreation programs; and

**WHEREAS** the game of lacrosse will be showcased as the only true Indigenous sport at the 2008 North American Indigenous Games (NAIG) in Cowichan, British Columbia; and

**WHEREAS** the Canadian Lacrosse Association (CLA) is working in partnership with the Aboriginal Sports Circle to allow the greatest opportunity for First Nations athletes to participate in lacrosse events at the NAIG 2008; and

**WHEREAS** the Canadian Lacrosse Association has created an Aboriginal Development Committee with the national strategy of increasing participation numbers and competitive opportunities in lacrosse for Aboriginal communities in each Province/Territories; and

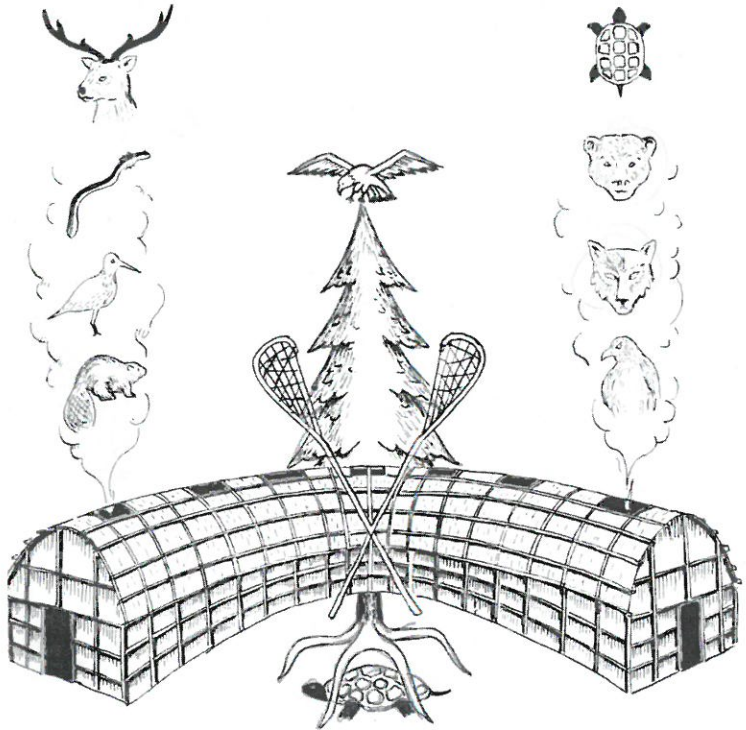
**WHEREAS** the CLA member associations throughout Canada are working on behalf of the CLA in partnership with their respective Provincial/Territorial Aboriginal sports organizations to provide development and high performance opportunities for First Nations athletes, coaches, referees and volunteer leaders.

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Chiefs in Assembly support the work of the Canadian Lacrosse Association-Aboriginal Development Committee to promote the development and high performance opportunities for First Nations athletes, coaches, referees and volunteer leaders; and

**FURTHER, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Chiefs in Assembly offer their collective support to this effort as this is a great opportunity for First Nations communities to reclaim the gift of lacrosse for First Nations in Canada; and

**FINALLY BE IT RESOLVED** that the Chiefs in Assembly congratulate the Iroquois Nationals on their Gold medal performance at the 2007 World Box Lacrosse Championship

# The Native American Viewpoint of the Creator's game



*Tewa'arathon* or *Teionsikwaeks*  
is the Iroquois name for our National  
Game.

# THE HISTORY OF LACROSSE

By Michael Kanentakeron Mitchell



In Canada we have two sports officially recognized by an Act of Parliament; hockey as a winter sport, and lacrosse as a summer sport. The game of lacrosse has deep historical and cultural roots in this country. In the beginning, lacrosse was played to honor our Creator. We played to honor our Elders, and sometimes we played to settle disputes among our Nations. In other times, we played to heal our communities.

Lacrosse originated right here in North America among the various tribes and nations who played this game as a way of acknowledging the Creator's life forces and honoring the Elders and their Nations. Long before Europeans settled in the new world, aboriginal nations were playing the game of lacrosse in one form or another with few basic rules. Sometimes, an entire valley would be utilized for a Lacrosse game, and hundreds of Indigenous men would participate. When the first Europeans witnessed such an event, they thought it was a game of war between two tribes due to the enthusiasm exhibited by the players. What was really happening was that an issue or difference between the tribes was being settled through a ball and stick game which later became known as "Lacrosse". This was because the curved, netted stick reminded the Jesuits of a bishop's crozier or "acrosse."

The Iroquois called this game "Tewaarathon" or "Teionsikwaeks." The Ojibwa called this game "Baggat-away." Other tribes basically translated their game to mean ball and stick.

As more settlers arrived from Europe, they began to take notice of the game being played by the First Nations. In Canada most of the cities and towns during the



1800's could boast of their own lacrosse teams. During the 1860's a man by the name of Dr. William George Beers transformed the game of lacrosse into a modern sport with specific rules and regulations. This was followed by the establishment of a series of lacrosse organizations that grew nationally as well as internationally.

In Canada, by the middle of the 1930's, Lacrosse had been transformed from field to box lacrosse. Over the past century the game of lacrosse has been governed by the Canadian Lacrosse Association (CLA), which was mandated to establish rules of conduct for lacrosse. Lacrosse grew as a sport in U.S colleges and universities at the turn of the century following an introduction of the sport by the Iroquois community of the Six nations. Canadian and Mohawk teams played exhibition games with their American counterparts. In 1869 a Mohawk team from Kahnawake traveled to England and played the game before Queen Victoria. Stemming from this visit, the game of lacrosse was introduced to other Commonwealth countries like Australia and New Zealand.

Today lacrosse is the fastest growing sport in Canada. In every corner of the country, including the far north, people have taken a great interest in the sport.

The CLA Aboriginal Lacrosse Development Committee would like to extend an invitation to First Nations Communities to get involved in the game of lacrosse by contacting your provincial member association or the National Office of the CLA in Ottawa, Ontario. If your Community is interested in learning more about the game of lacrosse and wishes to start a lacrosse program in the area, we can help you get in touch with the right people.

# The Creator's Game

Among the Haudenosaunee it is believed that Tewaarathon (or lacrosse) was a gift from the Creator. As with most things among the Haudenosaunee, this gift had a purpose. In fact, the game of lacrosse served multiple purposes.

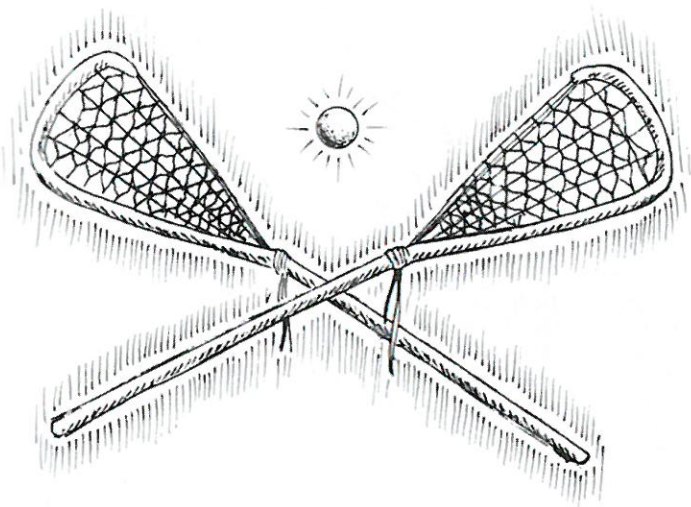
Our ancestors have been playing the game of lacrosse for centuries. This serves as a reminder to the Creator that the Haudenosaunee have not forgotten Tewaarathon. A series of visions experienced by the prophet Handsome Lake, detailed the future existence of the Haudenosaunee; how they should relate to one another as individuals, clans, and Nations, and to ensure a culture resistant to extinction. One of these visions included Tewaarathon and how it should not be forgotten or abused.

Tewaarathon was believed to be given to the Haudenosaunee by the Creator. Just as a parent watches in amusement as a small child plays, it was believed that the Creator was similarly amused while watching a game of lacrosse. As for the players, the exhilaration they felt while playing a game was superseded by the satisfaction that they gained by playing lacrosse; a game in which they could display their affection and appreciation to the Creator for presenting them with such a fine gift. In a game of such great importance there were no feelings of resentment harbored for any incidental contact, as both teams realized the sincerity of the effort.

Tewaarathon presented a means of giving thanks to the Creator for allowing an elder or medicine person to continue to share the richness of his life. It is believed that in times of sickness, the medicine people would prepare themselves and call upon the life forces of Mother Earth to assist in relieving the sickness. The right medicines would appear, be chosen, and then prepared. To improve the power of the medicines a lacrosse game would be requested.

Preceded by sacred ritual, the game would be played with the sincerest of effort. Our people believed that by demonstrating to the Creator that the gift of lacrosse had not been forgotten, the Creator would look favorably upon their efforts and assist in the recovery of the afflicted member. If the stricken member failed to recover, no one doubted the decision of the Creator.

Tewaarathon served multiple and varied purposes for the individuals and Nations. It was played to bestow honor and respect upon members of the community who had performed great deeds for the Nation, and it was also played to call the Creator's attention to the efforts of the medicine people, to give thanks, and for one's personal enjoyment and physical fitness.



# The Great Ball Game Between the Winged Birds and the Four-Legged Animals

Our Grandfathers told us many stories that would relate to lacrosse, how one is to conduct himself, and how important one can be to a lacrosse game.

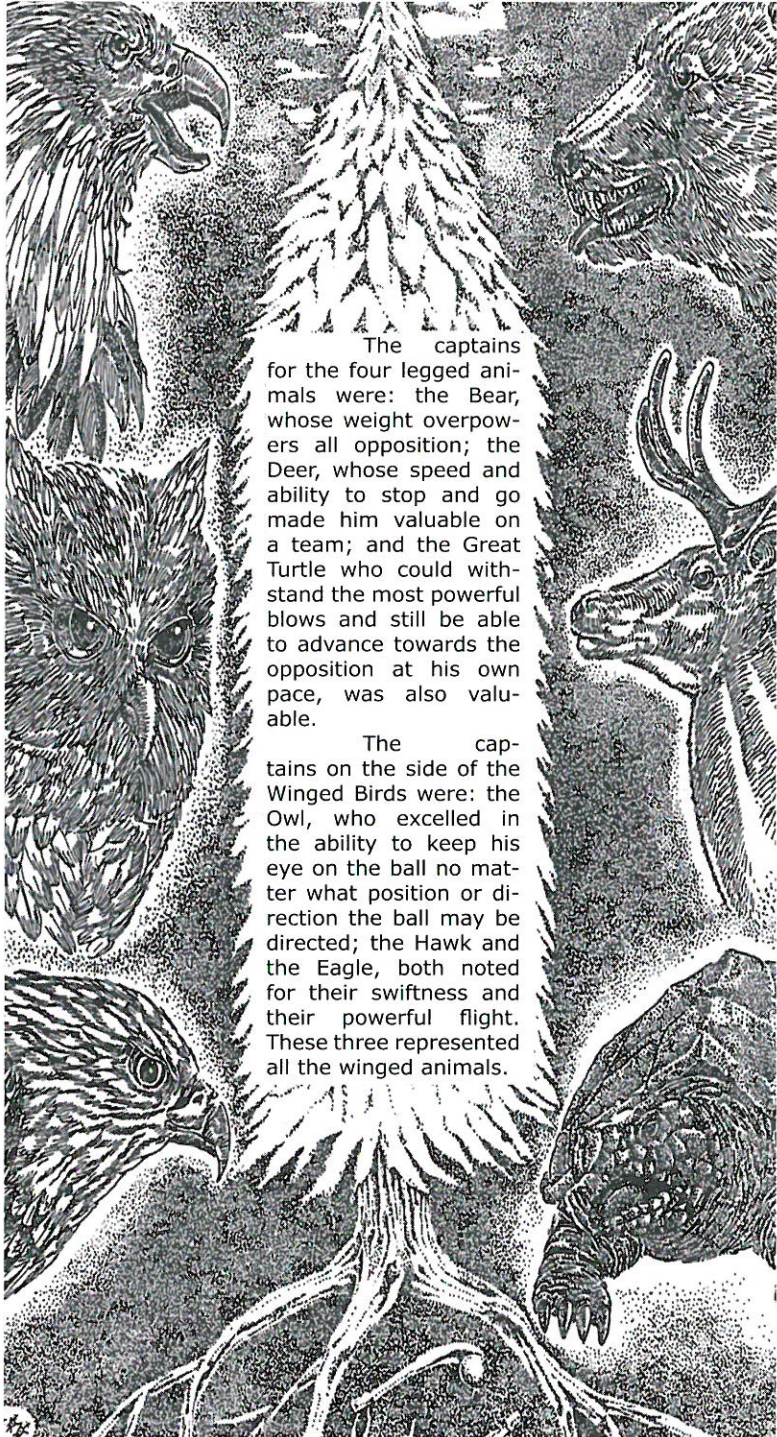


We present a short cultural story *The Great Ball Game between the Winged Birds and the Four-Legged Animals*. This is a part of our introduction as well as an invitation to First Nations communities to learn about our game of lacrosse.

We know now that all creatures, no matter how small, are important and have a contribution to make in the overall life cycle. No matter how unworthy you may feel a person is, that person may have qualities which may help you some day.



Long ago, our Grandfathers would have told this story about a great ball game that took place between the four-legged animals and the winged birds.



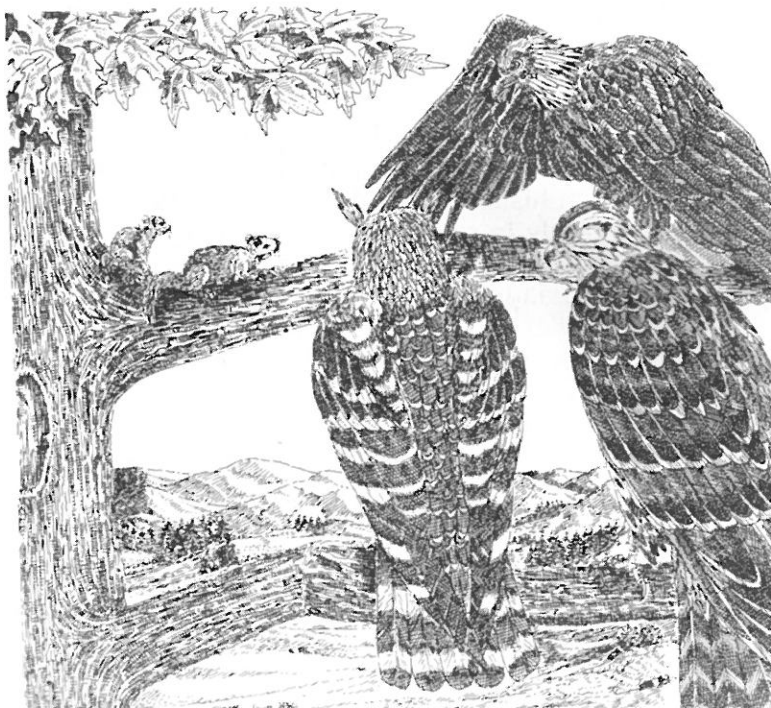
The captains for the four legged animals were: the Bear, whose weight overpowers all opposition; the Deer, whose speed and ability to stop and go made him valuable on a team; and the Great Turtle who could withstand the most powerful blows and still be able to advance towards the opposition at his own pace, was also valuable.

The captains on the side of the Winged Birds were: the Owl, who excelled in the ability to keep his eye on the ball no matter what position or direction the ball may be directed; the Hawk and the Eagle, both noted for their swiftness and their powerful flight. These three represented all the winged animals.

While the birds were preparing for the game they noticed two small creatures, hardly larger than mice, climbing up the tree on which were perched the leaders of the birds. Finally reaching the top, they humbly asked the captains to be allowed to join the game.

The eagle, seeing they were four-legged, asked them why they did not ask the animals where they properly belonged. The little creatures explained that they had done so, but had been laughed at and rejected because of their small size.

On hearing their story, the bird captains took pity on them, but wondered how they could join the birds' team if they had no wings. After some discussion, it was decided to try and make wings for the little fellows, but, how were they to do it? By happy inspiration, one bird thought of the drum which was to be used in the dance. Perhaps a corner of the drum leather could be taken from the drumhead, cut into shape and attached to the legs of one of the small animals. It was done, and thus originated the bat.





The ball was now tossed up, and the bat was told to catch it. With his skill in dodging and circling, keeping the ball constantly in motion and never allowing it to hit the ground, he convinced the birds that they had gained a most valuable ally.

The birds thought they could do the same for the other four legged creature, but to their dismay all the leather had been used in the making of the bat's wings, and there was no time to send for more. In this confusion, it was suggested that perhaps wings might be made by stretching the skin of the animal itself. So, two large birds seized him from opposite sides with their strong bills. By tugging and pulling the fur between the fore and hind feet, the task was completed and there originated the flying squirrel.



When all was ready, the game began. At the very outset, the flying squirrel caught the ball and carried it up a tree and threw it to the birds who kept it in the air for some time. Then, just before the ball was to hit the ground, the bat seized it and by dodging and doubling, kept it out of the way of even the fastest of four-legged animals, until finally, he threw it in the goal. This won the victory for the birds.





Our Grandfathers told us that when lacrosse was a pure game and was played for the enjoyment of the Great Spirit, everyone was important, no matter how big or how small or strong or weak.



Today, when we see a team play, it makes everyone who is watching want to play, but usually, only the best will be accepted onto a team and the coach will say, "No, you are too small", or "you don't run fast enough", or "you are too fat."

Our Indian lacrosse players, before a game, often asked the spirit of an animal for guidance that he may have the eyes of a hawk; that he may be as strong as a bear and as durable as a turtle. Sometimes they tied an eagle feather to their hair, or wore bear claws or a rabbit's foot.

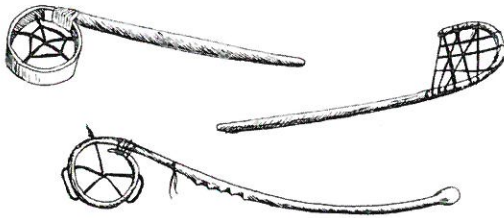


A player would ready himself mentally by saying, "I have asked the spirit of the black bear to give me his strength", and when it came time to play, he would indeed be as strong as a bear.



After the game, a player will give thanks to the animal spirits who he asked for guidance and strength.

# The History of Lacrosse



Many centuries before Europeans set foot on the North American continent, our Native people were given the gift of lacrosse from the Creator. All across the continent, our people took part in playing lacrosse, and because each group had different resources available to them, the kind of stick that was used and, consequently, the kind of game that was played, varied. The Winnebago, the Santee, and the Sioux of the Midwest, the Cherokee, and the Seminoles of the southeast, the Pomo of the west coast, and the Iroquois and Algonquins of the northeast each fashioned their own version of the Creator's game. Despite these variations the philosophy, the spirit, and the relation of lacrosse to the Creator was the same. Each tribal group held lacrosse in very high esteem.

This was the situation regarding lacrosse when the Europeans came to North America. They encountered different Indigenous Nations living across the continent who each played different versions of the game that the Creator gave to them.

In addition to the important functions of lacrosse, lacrosse was also used to settle important disputes that could not be settled through discussion. When a situation arose where two tribal groups believed that they had the correct stance on a given matter, a game of lacrosse was played by the Nation teams. The decision of who was correct was to be left up to the Creator. Whichever team won the game also won the dispute. Both sides accepted the Creator's decision without question.

# **What Lacrosse means to Indigenous People**

The game of lacrosse (Tewaarathon) has been played by Indigenous Nations for many centuries, before there was a Canada or United States, and that is something to be proud of, as the game of lacrosse originated with our people in North America.

In those days, we played the game to honor our Creator, our Elders, and to strengthen our societies and the power of our medicines. We also played the game of lacrosse to settle disputes among our Nations when it was necessary. Very little has changed throughout time as we continue to aspire to these principles.

Amongst our Nations, the game of lacrosse continues to affect our present day lives, from our youngest players who play in the tykes program and continue through to bantam, midgets, juniors, Senior 'A' and 'B' leagues, and for some players, even onto the National Lacrosse League. Many of our community public and high schools offer lacrosse programs as well. The game of Lacrosse has always been an integral part of our history and culture.

Today we see many of our Native athletes play lacrosse in NHL arenas all over North America, which brings a lot of pride to our families, communities, and Nations. This past year we witnessed our Iroquois athletes battle Canada in a hard won World Lacrosse Championship.

Lacrosse should be available to all Indigenous peoples in Canada. We would like to see as many First Nations communities as possible create lacrosse programs geared towards all age levels, or participate in the lacrosse programs presently available in their regions. The CLA Aboriginal Development Committee will be working towards that objective to ensure that our Native youth have every opportunity to play Canada's national summer sport; the game the Creator gave us, the game of lacrosse.

# The History of Lacrosse in the Squamish Nation

As told by Chief Frank Baker, North Shore, B. C.

The people of the Squamish Nation have been playing their own version of the game of lacrosse since pre-contact times. Their game was called "Tsh-Alla," and it was played on an open field with a determined number of players per side, with two stakes on each side for goal posts and a goalie to protect their net. Their shooting stick looked like a half round fishing net that they controlled by hand or by attaching a short handle, and their ball was made by an ancient rubber obtained during trade with the Mayas and Aztecs.

This was their Medicine game that their people played centuries before European contact. When the Iroquois version of the game made its way out west, it was easily adapted by the Squamish Nation, and their people carried on the Tsh-Alla game to its modified format.

The knowledge of their medicine game and ceremonies disappeared in the 1800's when many of their people wound up in residential schools operated by the Churches and Federal Government. Much of the culture and language of the Squamish people were also compromised as a result of leaving their home for long periods of time in exchange for an education.

We walk the same path as the Iroquois when it comes to the cultural and historical significance of our game, many of our people have left their mark in Lacrosse and we honor them for it. The Squamish have kept up the game of lacrosse in their community for over a century, and the people who have either played the game or helped build it can be tracked throughout the generations: Andy Paull, Henry, Dominic and Ray Baker from the 1930's , and all the Baker families through the decades to my family from the 70's to the 90's.



I owned and operated the North Shore Senior A Indians throughout the 90's. My brother Wayne was one of the star players. I also owned and operated the North Shore Senior B Indians team in the 70's, 80's, 90's, and briefly in 2001. I was involved in Senior A and B Lacrosse with the North Shore Indians teams for a "short" 34 years.

I would join with all my brothers and sisters of the Indigenous Nations to encourage all our Native youth to get involved in the game of lacrosse. It is a very important part of our culture and heritage; we should do everything we can to bring it back to our communities.



1936 North Shore Indians Lacrosse Team  
Photo courtesy North Vancouver Museum & Archives

Fig. 3

# Jay Silverheels (a.k.a Harry Smith)

Movie star, boxing champion, legendary lacrosse player; Jay Silverheels was born Harold J. Smith on June 26th, 1919, on the Grand River of the Six Nations near Brantford, Ontario. His parents were both Mohawk and he was one of eleven brothers and sisters in a large and loving family.



Fig. 4

Jay started out as an athlete before becoming an actor. Even during childhood, Silverheels was a natural in athletics including lacrosse, boxing, and wrestling. Originally named Harold J. Smith, Jay Silverheels acquired his legendary Hollywood name during his time as a lacrosse player. In 1971 he legally changed to this name for the purposes of his acting career.



Jay won two wrestling championships, and came in second, at the Golden Gloves Boxing Championship, at Madison Square Garden in New York City. He later became a prominent star player with the introduction of box lacrosse in the 1930's.

Jay Silverheels 1931

Fig. 5

Professional lacrosse was introduced in Toronto, Ontario in 1931 and Jay Silverheels, along with Scotty Martin, Cecil Van Every, the Isaac Brothers, and other Six Nations players formed the nucleus of a Toronto Tecumseh Lacrosse Team. Within the year he became the highest paid, highest scoring and greatest professional player that Toronto ever had on its roster. He later became a very important contributor to the professional league as the game of Lacrosse changed from field to box.

Jay's professional lacrosse career throughout the 1930's had him playing on every professional team to promote the introduction of box lacrosse in the International Professional Lacrosse League. In 1932, Jay, along with Judy "Punch" Garlow, and Andy Martin, headed a cast of Six Nations lacrosse players to play for the Buffalo Bison. After that season was finished they played for Atlantic City (1933-1935), where they were featured in not only professional lacrosse, but also competed against the amateur field lacrosse teams from American Colleges and Universities.

In the latter part of the 1930's a new professional lacrosse league was formed in southern California called the Western Pacific Professional Lacrosse League. It was his membership on the Western Pacific Lacrosse League that brought him to Los Angeles in 1938 where he was "discovered" by actor and comedian Joe E. Brown, who convinced Jay to pursue an acting career. The rest is history. Jay Silverheels acted in many films, but the role that made him famous was the part of "Tonto", the Native American partner of "The Lone Ranger."



Fig. 6

Jay Silverheels could not return to Six Nations as much as he would have liked to after moving to Hollywood. However his community did not forget him. Aside from the many Smith relatives still residing at Six Nations, there are still people who can remember what it was like to go to a movie in nearby Brantford and watch Silverheels on the big screen. Ross Powless, also a renowned lacrosse player, can recall have a good laugh at the sight of Harry Smith speaking Mohawk in films where the storyline probably called for "Indian" dialogue.

Silverheels was the first Native American to star in a television series and he was an accomplished athlete. Most importantly, through his work as both an actor and an athlete, he showed that it was possible for a First Nations person to accomplish many things.

Silverheels made over 30 films during his time in Hollywood, not including his eight year role as Tonto on the popular television series "The Lone Ranger". He was inducted into the Hollywood Walk of Fame in 1976 and was inducted in the Ontario Lacrosse Hall of Fame in 1997. A humble man, Harry Smith neither let fame nor his talent and skills in lacrosse deter him from staying true to his roots and heritage. Harry Smith was a positive role model for his community in both sports and acting, proving that, despite the negative stereotypes and stigmas created about Aboriginal people in society, anything is quite possible.

Fig. 7

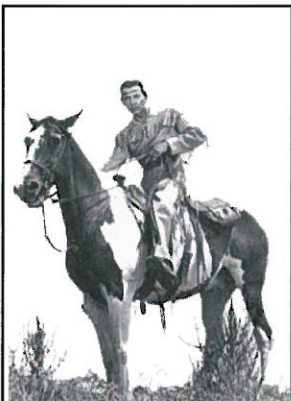


Fig. 8



# Ross Powless

## The Mighty Mohawk Lacrosse Warrior



Fig. 9

Ross Powless

Ross Powless was born September 29th, 1926 in Six Nations of the Grand River, near Brantford, Ontario. Remembered as a legendary lacrosse player and storyteller, Ross was a natural athlete from his early childhood. He didn't start playing lacrosse until the age of 12, but despite his late start, he became rather skilled and spent countless hours practicing.

During his prime playing years he assisted his team, the Peterborough Timbermen, in capturing four consecutive Mann cups from 1951 to 1954. He was also a winner of the Tom Longboat Award twice, which is presented annually to the top native athlete in Canada. Ross began playing Senior 'A' lacrosse in 1950. Prior to that he played for Detroit and for Brantford where he was the only Aboriginal player on the team. He played for Peterborough from 1951-1954 and in 1955, he played in Victoria, British Columbia where he won the Mike Kelley award for MVP in the Mann Cup

Long after Ross's playing days he turned to coaching. He coached six of his sons on the winning Ontario First Nations team that won the national title in 1974. His long list of achievements in lacrosse include a Canada Senior B championship coaching the Brantford Warriors in 1968 and the Can-Am Lacrosse League title in 1969 with the Rochester Chiefs. Ross Powless was a legendary player and builder of lacrosse, devoting many years to the sport. He is also a member of both the Ontario and Canadian Lacrosse halls of fame.

All of Ross's sons played lacrosse and excelled in many other sports, such as hockey and basketball. His daughters also had skills in the game of lacrosse, although

there were no organized league for girls at the time. They would play catch, practice their own skills, and rough-house with each other.

Since the family was so big, 14 children in all, there were always more than enough siblings to round up for a good game of pick-up. Family meant everything to Ross, and he stressed the importance of being involved in sports and getting along with other people.

Ross was a driving force in bringing in lacrosse and hockey leagues for the youth in Six Nations. He spent some time as president of the Six Nations Hockey league in the 1960's, and both the lacrosse and hockey leagues have continued to flourish and produce many stars over the years. In 1997 Ross received the volunteer service award of the Ontario Municipal Recreation Association for his many years of service to his community, being involved in the council, recreation committee and sports.

Ross was known as a wonderful and entertaining storyteller, who could keep his audiences captivated for many hours. Ross was a formidable and undeniable driving force behind the success of lacrosse, a legendary lacrosse player whose main focuses in life were his family and serving his community. He is best known, and fondly remembered by those who knew him well for his humor and kindness. His favorite phrase was "Seksha'tiiohak", May you stay a beautiful human being, and Ross Powless was surely a wonderful, strong, and beautiful human being.



Fig. 10

Ross Powless

## Gaylord Powless The Magnificent Mohawk

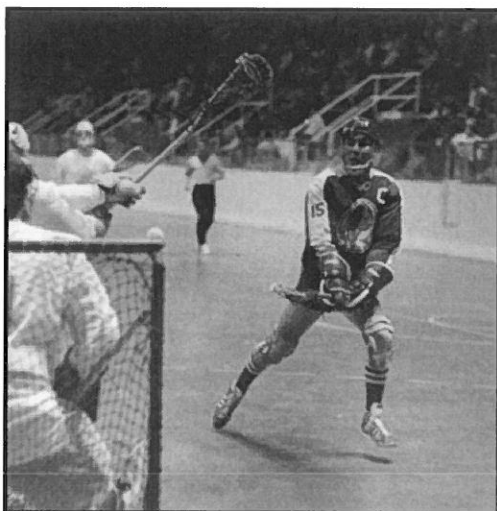


Fig. 11

Someone once said that after watching Gaylord Powless play for the first time, *"You just knew what he was put on this earth for; to play lacrosse."*

Gaylord Powless was born December 1, 1946 on the Six Nations Reservation near Brantford, Ontario. It has been said that Gaylord was born a natural lacrosse player, taking to the game early in his childhood. He was seen carrying a lacrosse stick from the moment he started walking, and by the time he was a teenager, it was obvious that he was more advanced in the game of lacrosse than children his own age and older.

His father, Ross, was a legend in lacrosse already, and Gaylord quickly took to following in his footsteps. He learned the game from his father and both became legends in their eras. They are the only father-son duo in Canada's Lacrosse Hall of Fame. Gaylord is noted not only for being a fine lacrosse player, but also as the master of face-offs. It has been said that he was so skilled in the game, that while most players would take a month or so to break in a new stick, Gaylord could take one right off the rack and immediately play with it.

Gaylord played lacrosse in an era when obstacles were a part of his daily life and activities. He had many hurdles to overcome; including dealing with racist slurs from the fans and the opponents, being compared to his legendary father, and dealing with back and knee injuries.



Fig. 12

Five members of the Powless family played for the Six Nations team coached by their father, Ross.

Pictured left to right: Harry, Gary, Darryl, Ross, Gaylord, Greg and Richard Powless

Once called the "Magnificent Mohawk", his opponents discovered that Gaylord had a temper and that if provoked, could cause him to retaliate and take penalties and often, his actions earned him ejection from games. His father, Ross, threatened to force Gaylord to quit the game he loved if he couldn't shape up and learn to keep his temper, on and off the floor. The strategy worked, and Gaylord soon learned control.

In 1964 legendary lacrosse coach Jim Bishop persuaded young Gaylord to play Junior 'A' Lacrosse for the Oshawa Green Gaels. He became one of Oshawa's star players as he helped the Gaels win the Minto Cup all four years he was a member of the team, between 1964 and 1967. Gaylord excelled in lacrosse and won many awards and trophies including two scoring titles, the Jim McCornaghy Memorial Cup as the most valuable player twice, and the Ken Ross Trophy for ability and sportsmanship in Junior 'A' lacrosse.

In 1964, he also received the Tom Longboat award as Canada's outstanding Native athlete. Throughout his Junior 'A' years he accumulated 710 points in 110 Junior games. In 1967, Gaylord was named first team all-star forward in



the Nations Lacrosse Association when he played professional lacrosse in 1968. In 1969 Gaylord played for Rochester of the North American League which was coached by his father, Ross.

Gaylord, one of the greatest athletes to ever play the game of lacrosse, was an ambassador for lacrosse in the same way Wayne Gretzky is associated with hockey. Gaylord even taught former NHL star Gordie Howe to play lacrosse. He invested a great deal of time and effort into the national promotion of lacrosse. Gaylord felt that lacrosse was a sport with a lot of passion and promise, and he has seen many promising leagues start and then disappointingly fold shortly after. Anytime a conversation ensues about the greatest players of lacrosse, Gaylord and Ross Powless will most definitely be mentioned in that conversation.



Ross and Gaylord Powless

Formidable presences in the game of lacrosse, exceptional players endowed with skills that were given to them by the Creator, they made the game of lacrosse exciting. They were Mohawks dominating a game that had been given to the Iroquois many years before, but had been adopted and changed by non-natives. They narrowed the gap between Native players and the non-Natives who had commandeered it.

## Judy "Punch" Garlow



Fig. 14

*"Our managing coach was there and he seen me, and he said 'oh boy, you're doing good. Next time we practice I want you in there practicing', I said 'I don't care'. So they put me in as the goalie after that."*

Judy "Punch" Garlow can remember the days when Jay Silverheels was known simply as Harry Smith. Those were the days when Garlow and Smith wore the same lacrosse team jersey and called each other friend. In 1932, Garlow played his first professional game of lacrosse in Atlantic City, New Jersey alongside Harry Smith and many other talented players from Six Nations. The team went undefeated at the Atlantic City's world championship lacrosse games.

Punch began playing lacrosse at the age of ten on the Six Nations Reserve, located on the Grand River near Brantford, Ontario. The first team he played for was the SS#8 school team in 1919. Punch's interest in the sport grew during the years he played for the school team. He particularly enjoyed getting to play on the same team as his friend Harry Smith.

Punch Garlow was not a goalie in the early days of his career however. In 1928 Punch was playing forward for the Toronto Tecumsehs. Punch recalls how he ended up defending the net: *"When I went to work in Buffalo (New York), they had heard that I was a pretty good player, so they asked me to join their team. So I went to join*

*the Buffalo Bowmens. I was playing out in the field. But one time our goalie, who was from Cattaraugus, never showed up. So I jumped in the goalie's hat and grabbed the goalie's stick and I played his position. Our managing coach was there and he seen me, and he said 'oh boy, you're doing good. Next time we practice I want you in there practicing', I said 'I don't care'. So they put me in as the goalie after that."*

Another factor that helped Garlow to secure his place on the team as a goalie was the credibility of the alternate goalie. On an away game in Cattaraugus, the alternate goalie, whose hometown was Cattaraugus, appeared to be letting an unusually high number of goals in. Garlow recounts, *"Our manager was thinking that this goalie (the alternate), was letting them in because he was from Cattaraugus. So he sent him off and he says, 'Judy you put them pads on and get in there.' So I put them pads on and I got in there and played against Cattaraugus and beat them. So I've been playing goalie ever since."*

Punch Garlow's philosophy on how to play lacrosse demonstrates why he was such a success during his lacrosse career: *"We were all good players. The way our team was, we never praised each other above any other. We were like family. When we played, we were all good. We wouldn't say 'You're no good, and he's no good'. We kept together you see, every one of us was good. Even when someone on our team scores a goal, we said WE scored a goal. I never scored a goal in my life. When I said WE scored a goal. I mean our whole team scored."* This positive, cooperative attitude could explain how the team managed to pull together even during the bleakest times.

The team endured a challenge when on an away game in Toronto. The entire team could not fit into one car, so they divided into two vehicles and set off from Buffalo for Toronto, with some time to spare before the start of the game. Punch's car arrived in time, however the car carrying the rest of the team did not show. Punch soon received a phone call from the other half of his team, letting him know that their car had broken down and they were in the process of getting it repaired. The manager of the Toronto team, noticing that Buffalo was short a few players (meaning they would have to play without sub

stitutes and one man short), and not wanting to refund the spectator's money, asked Buffalo if they would mind playing anyway. Buffalo agreed. "So we went in and boy we got beat" Punch recounts, "First fifteen minutes, boy I never saw so many balls in my life!" Eventually, the Buffalo Bowmen regained the rest of their team. They went in to the second period with the attitude that they had won against Toronto in the past, and they could certainly do it again. Garlow recalls giving the team a very spirited pep talk that fired them up enough to bring the game to a tie. After playing 10 minutes of overtime, the Buffalo Bowmen won the championship and returned home to a celebration feast.

Judy Garlow soon became quite popular and in 1945 was asked to play for the Vancouver team. He left the Buffalo Bowmen and went to Vancouver for a short time. The experience was unfortunately not a good one for Punch. Representatives for the Vancouver team promised him a job, a residence, and thirty-five dollars a week when he was first asked to play for them. Upon his arrival in Vancouver, he soon discovered that there was no job awaiting him, nor did they have the thirty-five dollar stipend to give him. Furthermore, if he wished to return home, he would have to come up with the money on his own. Punch stayed in Vancouver for two months. He left once he and his friend found a job picking berries in Seattle. Eventually he made his way home, with a deeper sense of caution as a result of the experience.

Punch retired from lacrosse in 1945 at the age of 36. He decided to pass on his knowledge of the game to others and went on to train younger players. He became responsible for tending to the injuries of players. He guided the Brantford Warriors to the 1968 Canadian Senior "B" Championship. Later Punch trained the Six Nations Braves in 1972.

Punch Garlow was a significant member of the Iroquois Lacrosse community. His team, the Buffalo Bowmen, was the first professional Indigenous team. Winning the 1932 World Lacrosse Championship provided confirmation of the team's talent. It also implied that the skills needed to play lacrosse had not died away within the First Nation population. Nor had the adaptation of

lacrosse into a professional sport by the non-natives, diminished the ability of First Nations men playing with no protective gear. Punch Garlow, as one fan recounts, used to play the old way with *"no mask, no shin pads and no throat guard. Looked like a leopard sometimes, with all them black and blue bruises on him."*

Fig. 15



Approaching his 90th birthday in 2003, Judy "Punch" Garlow often recalls stories of his playing days during family visits at the Elder's Residence in Oshweken.

He is pictured here with his Granddaughter.

Punch's voice fills with pride when asked about his old friend Harry Smith, and how he acquired the name "Silverheels". The boys, on the lacrosse team, had just received new white running shoes as a gift for playing particularly well in one tournament. The next time they played, according to Punch:

*"All you could see where those shoes moving up and down. So we were going to call him 'Whiteheels', but it didn't seem right, him being Mohawk. So I said, "Silverheels". The name stuck."*

When Harry went back to Six Nations years later, after he had made his career in Hollywood, Ross Powless witnessed the reunion of Harry and Punch:

*"Harry Smith seen Judy Punch at a distance and Judy Punch seen him too. Harry got such a big smile on his face and he came running and gave Judy Punch such a big hug it almost brought tears to Old Punch."*

Fig. 16



Judy "Punch" Garlow and the 1932 Atlantic City Americans lacrosse Team

*Back Row: L-R*

Cecil VanEvery, Harry Smith, Wade Isaacs, Herman Miller ( *Trainer*), Bill Stevens (*Referee*), James Ludwig (*Manager*), Beef Smith, Dave Groat, Clinton Jacks

*Front Row:*

Les Martin, Boots Martin, Donald Smith, Judy "Punch" Garlow, Henry Groat, Sid Smith, Scotty Martin, W.H.Stephens (*Trainer*)

## John "Tewaennasen" White



Fig. 17

John White was born in 1873, and was raised in Akwesasne, Ontario. John played lacrosse during the period when field lacrosse was first transitioning to box lacrosse. During this period, Akwesasne emerged as a dominant force in Indigenous lacrosse. Akwesasne produced many superb lacrosse players but perhaps the greatest of them all was John White, whose achievements in lacrosse span the North American continent.

John played lacrosse in just about every place that lacrosse could be played. Over time he was recognized by many as the greatest lacrosse player of all time in Akwesasne. Lacrosse became John's livelihood; he would leave Akwesasne in the summer to play lacrosse and he would return to the reserve with money for the winter. His lacrosse exploits are recorded throughout North America, from Maryland to British Columbia.

Although he was unable to help the Akwesasne teams because he was travelling for a good part of the season, his brothers, Peter, Matty, and Louis, all played in Akwesasne. When John returned home, he would actively participate on any team that asked him to do so. John's cousin, Louis White, was a legend as well, having remained an active lacrosse player well into his late sixties.

Lacrosse in Akwesasne, during the time that John and Louis played, consisted of play among the teams of Cornwall Island, Snye, and St. Regis. These teams would also participate in exhibition lacrosse games with surrounding communities during annual fairs and events.

John White passed away in 1951, but he left behind a great legacy of lacrosse in Akwesasne. In 1972, Frederick A. Kail, designed and sculpted 'The Iroquois Award', in memory of John "Tewaennasen" White. The award was donated by The Ensign C. Markland Kelly Jr. Memorial Foundation to Hero's Incorporated for presentation to the annual winner of the Hero's Invitational Lacrosse Tournament.



Fig. 18

The Iroquois Award: In memory of John "Tewaennasen" White



## Oren Lyons Jr.

*"When you talk about lacrosse, you talk about the lifeblood of the Six Nations. The game is ingrained into our culture and our system and our lives."*- Oren Lyons Jr.

Oren Lyons was born in the 1930's, and was raised in the traditional culture and practices of the Iroquois on the Onondaga Reservation in Central New York State. As a young child he watched his father, Oren Lyons Sr., who was also an accomplished Iroquois lacrosse player. Young Oren Jr. learned much of his lacrosse and goal keeping skills from his father. They evolved over the years and contributed to his success when playing for Syracuse University during his attendance in the 50's.



Fig. 19

Oren was only 17 years old when he first played against legendary Akwesasne lacrosse player, Angus Thomas. Thomas had previously been banished from playing lacrosse, due to accidentally killing another player with his hard lacrosse shot many years earlier. Oren played in nets during this time, and had heard of Thomas's legendary shot. He remembers standing in the net; Thomas wound up and fired an underhand shot that slammed into Lyons, knocking him backwards. Despite Lyons wearing two baseball catchers' chest-protectors, he still received three broken ribs, but walked away with *"his manhood and the makings of a legendary goalie."*

During Oren's post-secondary years, he played lacrosse for the Syracuse University (SU) Orangemen. He was an excellent, skilled player, who made honorable mention All-American in 1956 during his first year of study at Syracuse. In 1957 and 1958 he helped to

Co-Captain the Orangemen and was 3rd team All-American in both years. Oren also won the Syracuse University Laurie Cox Award and the Orange Key Award in 1957. In 1958, his graduating year, he remained undefeated in nets during his final lacrosse season at Syracuse. Although Oren maintained commitment to his Syracuse team, one spring day the Orangemen traveled to Onondaga to challenge the Iroquois team. Lyons, naturally, played for his fellow Iroquois against his Syracuse teammates, and helped the Iroquois win by playing in goal.

*"There was no way I was going to play against my own race. My teammates understood, but that day showed that the Indians were just as good as anyone else. I believe the same is true today. Nothing has changed."*  
Oren Lyons Jr.

Fig. 20



Oren Lyons with the Iroquois Lacrosse Team

Upon graduation from the Syracuse University College of Fine Arts in 1958, Oren moved to New York City, and worked many years as a successful commercial artist before eventually becoming the Art and Planning Director for the Norcross Greeting Cards Company, where he was responsible for directing over 200 artists.

His lacrosse career did not end upon his completion of his post-secondary education at Syracuse University. For many years, he played for the New York Lacrosse Club and the New Jersey Lacrosse club before returning home to Onondaga in the 1970's, where he started playing for his home team, the Onondaga Athletic Club.

Oren is noted for both his lacrosse skills and his achievements in advocating for First Nations issues and the Iroquois Nationals Lacrosse Squad. In 1988 Oren was inducted into the Syracuse University Sports Hall of fame, and due to his contributions to lacrosse, received the Howdy Myers Man of the Year Award and the Syracuse Letterman of Distinction Award. Oren was elected into the Lacrosse National Hall of Fame in the United States in 1993. Always humble, Oren is quoted as saying during his induction:

*"This is the big one. It's not just another award. It's an important landmark in my life. But really, this is an important day for all Indians. You see, I have to keep this honor in its perspective. I'm only going to be one of two Indians in the Hall of Fame. And I can tell you without a doubt that there have been many Indians who were much better players than I ever was. I accept this award on behalf of them."*

Oren was instrumental in the creation and recognition of the Iroquois Nationals lacrosse team, which was originally formed in 1983. The Iroquois Nationals team was not recognized or sanctioned to play in the World Games, due to the 1880's banning of First Nations players from participating in competitive lacrosse for alleged professionalism, accusing the Iroquois lacrosse players of playing for money. Lyons advocated on behalf of the Iroquois Confederacy and the Iroquois Nationals lacrosse squad to be recognized in the World Amateur Lacrosse League for the Quadrennial World Games. It was in 1983 that the team was invited to play an exhibition game at the National Lacrosse Championships in Baltimore, Maryland. They were defeated by the Canadian National team, but this loss propelled the Iroquois into taking action to be recognized on the international lacrosse circuit. The Iroquois were the inventors of Lacrosse, a game given to them by the Creator. They wanted to recapture the title of being the best lacrosse players in the world, lacrosse was their cultural symbol of sovereignty. Gaining entrance into the International Lacrosse Federation (ILF) was a hurdle. The demands were great, and at times seemed unattainable. As if proof that they could organize and host successful competitions were not enough, the Iroquois Nationals were barred

from participating in the ILF World Games that were held in Toronto, Canada in 1987. Finally, after many years of persistence, the Iroquois were accepted as a sovereign nation by the ILF in 1987.

*"It represents not only our re-entry into the international games, but the continuity of our people and a look into our future. Lacrosse is the lifeblood of the Iroquois. Now, our young people have something to aim at."*- Oren Lyons Jr.

There were many obstacles the Iroquois had to overcome before actually playing in the ILF World Games. First the Iroquois wanted to maintain their sovereignty, proving that they were separate from Canada and the United States, so they used their Haudenosaunee issued passports for international travel, even though there was plenty of pressure from the Canadian and US governments to use their passports and would have made travel for the team much simpler. They firmly believed that using their Haudenosaunee passports was their inherent right. Every time the team travelled they had to gain clearance and approval on their predetermined destination before even departing. Even though this was time consuming and difficult, the Iroquois Nationals lacrosse team stood firm on their insistence of being recognized as a sovereign nation.

*"Lacrosse is the lifeblood of our people. So the Nationals are really an extension of ourselves. It's nothing extraordinary, this team, though the effort to get here has been. That's been quite extraordinary."*

- Oren Lyons Jr.

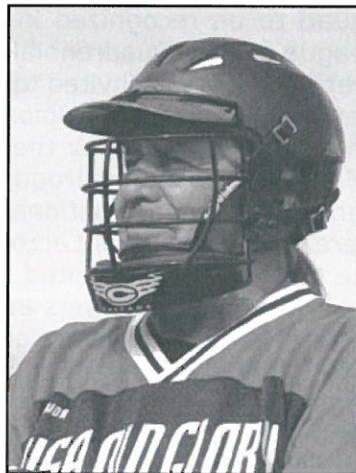


Fig. 21

Today Lyons is a Faithkeeper of the Turtle Clan of the Six Nations of the Iroquois Confederacy and a leading advocate of American Indian causes. He remains the honorary chairman of the Iroquois Nationals lacrosse team and is still involved in his community, advocating for his people and their rights, internationally and locally. Over the years he has been involved in the creation of human rights groups dedicated to his First Nations people, and due to his dedication and commitment, has won many awards. He has helped to establish the Working Group on Indigenous populations at the United Nations, and has also participated in the Indigenous Peoples conference and the International Forum supported by the United Nations Human Rights commission for over 15 years. In 1990 he was awarded the Ellis Island Congressional Medal of Honor, and helped to negotiate in the Oka stand-off, between the Canadian and Quebec Government against the Mohawks of Kanesahtake. A year later, in 1991, he organized a delegation from the Iroquois Confederacy to attend the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in South America, and was also the subject of a one hour documentary that was done by the PBS television station which was broadcast nationwide. As an advocate for American Indian causes, he is constantly in demand as a lecturer and participant in both national and international forums. He was awarded the honorary Doctor of Laws Degree from Syracuse University, and he has directed the Native American Studies program as a Professor of American Studies at SUNY Buffalo. Oren is also world renowned author, co-authoring a book in 1992 with John Mohawk, titled *"Exiled in the Land of the Free: Democracy, the Iroquois and the Constitution"*, that was based on Lyons belief that the emerging American colonies used the model of the Iroquois Confederacy as the basis for the democracy of the United States.

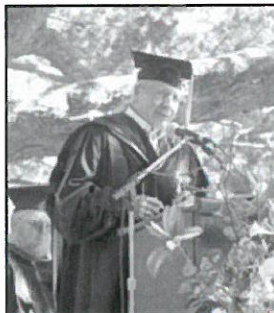


Fig. 22

Oren Lyons is a humble hero, not one to boast or brag about his accomplishments and achievements, and he has many. He is a role model to his First Nations people, showing that despite all odds First Nations people can defy society's stigmas and stereotypes. He walked into the net as a boy, a legend in the making, and three broken ribs later, he walked out a man. He is now legendary through the path he has taken, his reactions to issues regarding his First Nations people, and the actions he has taken to overcome the obstacles that have arisen throughout his short but certainly eventful life.

*"There are two times of the year that stirs the blood. In the fall, for the hunt, and now for lacrosse."- Oren Lyons Jr.*

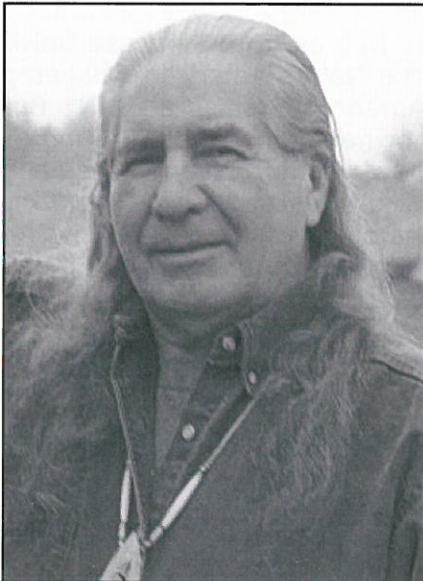


Fig. 23

# The Iroquois Nationals: Indigenous Talent on the International Stage

Oren Lyons, founding member and current chairman of the Iroquois Nationals, remembers when he was first informed that his team had been accepted as a member of the International Lacrosse Federation (ILF): *"It was in the fall, and I received a phone call at 3am telling me the news. In 1986 the ILF gave us a hard time, denying us recognition. But finally in 1987, they decided to accept us as members."* The Iroquois Nationals formed in 1983 and are currently, as noted proudly on their website, the "only Indigenous Nation worldwide participating in international sports competition." Considering that both current versions of lacrosse (field and box) most closely resemble the game as played for centuries by Iroquois People, it may seem shocking that an Iroquoian team was not immediately accepted. In the 1870's there were many professional Indigenous teams, whose more athletic style of play often beat out the more organization-centered style of non-Native teams. In 1880 however, Native teams were banned from competing at the international level because they had accepted money in order to cover their travel expenses. This ban was enforced up until the 1987, when the ILF informed Oren Lyons that his team could play.

The ILF consists of 12 member nations: Canada, United States, Australia, Czech Republic, Germany, Sweden, England, Wales, Japan, South Korea, and the Iroquois. The ILF has in the past, focused solely on men's senior and under-19 field lacrosse, but is currently implementing a men's box lacrosse championship game as well. The OLF member nations host games every four years, in different home countries each time. It is interesting to note that the player pools from which each team can choose their players is quite varied in size from nation to nation. For instance, the player pool for the United States is approximately 300,000, while Australia and England have only 10,000 players each to choose from.

However, if Size has anything to do with winning, then logically the Iroquois Nationals should come out last at every championship, which has happened only once.

Choosing from a player pool of less than 90 athletes, the Iroquois Nationals senior team has steadily moved up the ranks and in 1998 they came in fourth place out of 11. Lyons explains the game when they came in last: *"It was the first game we played, in 1990, as an ILF member team. We weren't prepared and needed more conditioning."* The four years following, must have involved incredible conditioning efforts for the team moved up six places, to win fifth place in 1994.

The size of the United States player pool is most definitely one of the reasons why the US has gone undefeated in 23 years of play. The United States is by far the leading nation when it comes to lacrosse. The game is played primarily in the mid-Atlantic and Eastern states, where prep schools and ivy-league universities have adopted the game as one of their trademarks. Members of the elite lacrosse fraternity often end up employed in investment and bond-brokering firms in nice eastern cities and particularly on Wall Street. As Darren Lowe, a former Team U.S.A attackman told the New Yorker, *"There's definitely a fraternity of lacrosse guys available who will help you get jobs on Wall Street. I would say that lacrosse and crew are the two biggest sports networks on the Street."* Lacrosse's popularity among the wealthier Americans has at least one major benefit for Indigenous players: the game being picked up by numerous influential schools. With several universities offering scholarships to talented young lacrosse players, the chance of escaping the often poverty-stricken reservation life is a most valuable opportunity.

*"A world-class lacrosse player"*, Oren Lyons comments, *"is not only well conditioned, but also naturally strong and big"*. Lyons knows from experience what it takes to succeed in the game. Early on in his lacrosse career, while goaltending he took a shot in the chest so hard that it broke three of his ribs. It was during a game against the Akwesasne Mohawks, and Lyons was playing for the Onondaga Athletic Club, and as a 19 year old, he had yet to encounter the really tough guys, the 'legends' yet. Angus Thomas, was much older than Lyons at this time, and had been suspended previously for killing another player with his powerful shot. As Lyons recounted to the Buffalo News: *"The ball just flattened out and I could hear it sizzling. Instead of catching it with my stick, it was coming right at me, so*



*I just stuck my chest out. I had two baseball chest protectors on and other pretty solid padding underneath that... it was like getting hit in the chest with a baseball bat. I'd never taken a shot like that, before or after, not that hard."*

Lyons, undeterred by physical injury, went on to play for his university team, the Syracuse Orangemen. This team however played field lacrosse, a game regarded as less violent than box lacrosse. Box lacrosse players have more freedom to play as roughly as in the original game. Although Lyons still prefers the challenge of the box game because it is faster and rougher than the field game, his experience as a field player earned him a spot, in 1959, in the Lacrosse Hall of Fame. Located in Baltimore, the Hall of Fame had inducted only one other Native American before Lyons in 1936. He is quick to point out however, that it was not due to a lack of quality players that the Hall had inducted only two Native Americans. It was because of the small number of Native Americans who attended university back then, and *"If you didn't go to the Ivy's or Academies, and you didn't play field lacrosse, it just wasn't done."* The number of First Nations people playing field lacrosse today is still quite low. Lyons feels this is due to the fact that young players are more attracted to the box game, the game that was eagerly picked up by the Iroquois shortly after they were banned from the ILF competition.

The process of being recognized as a member nation of the ILF was not an easy task for the Iroquois. Given the colonial history of North America, being recognized as a nation at all is in itself, a great accomplishment. Five hundred years ago, upon their arrival, the newcomers to Native North America began a systemic undermining of the status of Indian nations as nations. Today, the Iroquois and other First Nations still maintain that although Canada and the US, do not fully recognize them as sovereign nations (although most treaties prove that at one point both countries did), they still are, and have never relinquished the right to be considered as such. Struggling to overcome the many obstacles, particularly the undermining of the First Nations as 'nations', that have arisen over the past 500 years and being accepted to compete at the international level is a success in itself for First Nations athletes.

Although the team name suggests that the team

members are all Iroquois, there have been a few members from the Choctaw, Cree, and Cherokee nations as well. However, when the team goes into competition, they go under the Iroquois flag, and stand to their own national anthem. The Grand Council of the Haudenosaunee at Onondaga sanctioned the team in 1987, enabling them to officially play for the Six Nations. As a team sanctioned by the Grand Council, they do not accept any financial support offered from the government or gaming operations. The Iroquois Confederacy provides most of the money required, with additional help from private and corporate sponsorship and fundraising. The traditional values and philosophy of the Haudenosaunee are respected and upheld by the Iroquois Nationals. Oren Lyons views casinos as a threat to the Confederacy, as he explained to the New Yorker, *"With casino's, instead of tradition- which makes you strong, people only care about money- which makes you weak."*

One of the main goals of the Iroquois Nationals is to "encourage understanding through promotion of the sport of lacrosse." The Nationals maintain a sleek website with information mainly focused on explaining the unique situation of the team and of the Six Nations. Lyons hoped to go even further with his goal of promoting understanding, while at the same time providing a viable alternative to the 'casino solution' for curing lack of economic development opportunity on reserves. With his idea of building a theme park on Onondaga territory, Lyons sought to showcase the heritage of the Haudenosaunee and to "teach democracy on our terms." By finding alternate ways to economically support the community, a foundation is built that can provide positive strength to future generations.

The spiritual aspect of the game is not stressed for Iroquois players at the international level. According to Lyons, it is up to the players to look after the spiritual aspect of playing lacrosse, and fortunately many of them still have that opportunity. The secular character of the game is still nurtured and protected, especially at Onondaga, where Oren Lyons has participated in six medicine games during his life. Lyons, university professor, Faith-keeper of the Turtle clan, and a member of the Onondaga Council of Chiefs, points out:

*"That's what lacrosse was first produced for, the medicine game. It's a game that anyone, in any of the Nations, can call to have....and when they have a game, of course it goes back to the old rules where you play one house (clan) against the other house, and that's when you'll find the son playing against the father, because the mother's a different clan...so it's quite a surprise to the youngsters when they look across the way and their father's on the other team."*

The importance, to Iroquois people, of supporting the future generations is evident in the Iroquois Nationals program itself. Self-esteem is fostered through the recognition that the Nationals have received as the only all-Indigenous internationally competing team. Young people are made aware that it is possible to achieve success by doing their best and taking pride in their identities as Haudenosaunee people. Lyons is proud to point out the numerous success stories of present and former Iroquois National players. For example, Marshall Abrams, from Onondaga, played for the Iroquois Nationals U-19 team, and was subsequently recruited by Syracuse University where he was eventually designated best defense man in the country. Many other players have been recruited by universities as well. The experience of playing for the Nationals has inspired countless players to become better athletes.



Fig. 24

In 1990 due to Lyons' determination, the Iroquois Nationals lacrosse team was finally sanctioned and recognized for participation in the World Games. Since that time, the Nationals have proven that they are deserving of a spot in the World League.

*"In these times when all the elements seem to be going the other way, it's important to have a symbol for young people. And it's important for young people to be able to perform for their nation, to show their abilities and their skills. These are proud youth, and fierce. Fierce Iroquois, playing again. You know, among the kids on the res, everyone wants to be a National."*- Oren Lyons Jr.

## A Message from The CLA Aboriginal Lacrosse Development Committee

The game of lacrosse (Tewaarathon) has been played by Indigenous Nations for many centuries, before there was a Canada or United States, and that is something to be proud of as the game of Lacrosse originated with our people in North America.

In those times we played the game to honor our Creator, our Elders, and strengthen our societies and medicines. We also played our game to settle disputes among our Nations when it was necessary. Very little has changed through time as we continue to aspire to those principles.

For many of our Nation communities, the game of lacrosse continues to affect our modern day lives, from the youngest players who play in the minor system, to the midget, junior, Senior (B) and Senior (A) leagues. Many of our communities and schools run lacrosse programs as well. The game of lacrosse has always been an integral part of our history and culture. If your community wants to participate in a lacrosse program, contact your regional member association of the Canadian Lacrosse Association.

The game of Lacrosse should be available to all Indigenous peoples in Canada. We would like to see as many First Nations communities at all age levels participate in Lacrosse programs that are available in their regions. The CLA Aboriginal Development Committee will be working toward that objective and ensuring that our Native youth have every opportunity to play our game of lacrosse in every region across this country.

On behalf of the Aboriginal Development Committee,

I remain yours truly,

Mike Kanentakeron Mitchell

## **Interested in playing lacrosse in your community?**

*The Canadian Lacrosse Association can help.*

Lacrosse is our national summer sport. It is a great way to get involved in sports, build self esteem, make new friends, learn how to work as a team, develop leadership skills, and most importantly: have fun.

If you have a group interested in learning more about playing Canada's national summer game, we'll send some of our expertly trained coaches to your area to get you started. We'll even bring the equipment for you to borrow. All you need is access to an arena or school gymnasium.

### ***CLA Member Associations***

#### **Alberta Lacrosse Association**

Percy Page Centre, 3rd Floor  
11759 Groat Road Edmonton, AB T5M 3K6  
Phone: 780-422-0030  
ala\_lax@telus.net  
www.albertalacrosse.com

#### **British Columbia Lacrosse Association**

7382 Winston Street  
Burnaby, BC V5A 2G9  
Phone: (604) 421-9755  
info@bclacrosse.com  
www.bclacrosse.com

#### **Lacrosse Nova Scotia Society**

106-104 Greenvillage Lane  
Dartmouth, NS B2Y 4V4  
Phone: (902) 266-0677  
info.lacrossens@gmail.com  
http://lacrossens.ca

#### **Iroquois Lacrosse Association**

117 Eagles Point Circle  
Liverpool, NY, USA  
13088  
Phone: (315) 715-4414  
merank44@hotmail.com  
www.iroquoisnationals.com

**CANAM Lacrosse**

7050 Meadville Road  
Bason, NY 14013  
Phone: (716) 542-4600  
ada4turtles@aol.com  
<http://can-amlacrosse.com>

**Lacrosse New Brunswick**

850 Old Black River Road  
Saint John, NB, E2J 4T3  
Phone: (506) 632-9188  
davehigdon@rogers.com  
<http://cla-nb.pointstreaksites.com>

**Manitoba Lacrosse Association**

145 Pacific Avenue  
Winnipeg, MB R3C 2Z6  
Phone: (204) 925-5684  
lacrosse@sportmanitoba.ca  
<http://manitobalacrosse.mb.ca>

**Saskatchewan Lacrosse Association**

2205 Victoria Avenue  
Regina, SK S4P 0S4  
Phone: (306) 780-9216  
lacrosse@sasktel.net  
[www.sasklacrosse.net](http://www.sasklacrosse.net)

**Ontario Lacrosse Association**

3 Concorde Gate, Suite 306  
Toronto, ON M3C 3N7  
Phone: (416) 426-7066  
stan@ontariolacrosse.com  
[www.ontariolacrosse.com](http://www.ontariolacrosse.com)

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