

Lacrosse offers ticket to ride

Published: December 12, 2009 1:00 AM

Lacrosse is not only Canada's national sport but also offers youth an opportunity to further their education.

As the game's popularity south of the border continues to climb, the number of U.S. universities and colleges offering scholarships is also growing. But Sandra Nass of the Richmond Lacrosse Association says few players and their parents are aware of the potential—or the programs available to assist in profiling young athletes.

Parker Sahota is an example of one youth making the most of his field and box lacrosse skills and opportunities.

A Richmond under-16 field player, as well as playing box lacrosse in the spring, Sahota has earned many awards playing lacrosse including the honour of being captain for six seasons. He has also won provincial gold medals, has his credentials to referee and has been an assistant coach. He is also renowned for his face-off capabilities and was ranked third overall at the 2009 Canadian championships where he was the sole Richmond representative on the B.C. team having been selected from 163 players.

Most recently he played on the Canadian national field lacrosse team which was fourth in the 2009 finals, Sahota also plays on the Simon Fraser University/Burnaby Mountain Selects junior touring team.

The program was developed by Brent Hoskins, head coach of the SFU lacrosse program and is designed to draw together the best players from B.C. and to take them to scouting tournaments in the U.S. It involves dedicated practices for development and a firm commitment from the players regarding their education and grade achievements.

"This elite program is truly designed to develop not only the best players but also those that are motivated with their academics," says Nass.

Sahota, a Grade 11 student at R.A. McMath Secondary, has attended two tournaments in Baltimore this year and has already received four scholarship offers from universities in the U.S.

Nass expects the number of Richmond lacrosse players receiving scholarship opportunities has only begun.

"Lacrosse is affordable for most families and offers so many opportunities towards an athletic scholarship," she says. "Part of what helps our players compete with the U.S. teams is that they have ability to play lacrosse all year by participating in both the box lacrosse season and the field lacrosse season. That can provide our players with much greater practice than the U.S. teams that tend to only play field lacrosse for one season."

For more: www.richmondlacrosse.com.

BY THE NUMBERS

- The Simon Fraser University/Burnaby Mountain Selects lacrosse program has had 45 per cent of its 39 graduating players go on to play lacrosse at the college level.

- Currently 12 are playing or will be in the MCLA and four in the CUFLA. Last year there were 142 Canadians playing in the NCAA (41 from B.C.). There were 64 Canadians in Division 1 (29 from B.C.), 39 Canadians in Division II (six from B.C.), and 39 in Division III (six from B.C.).

- The number of U.S. colleges/universities offering scholarships is as follows:

—Men's Lacrosse:

NCAA Division I—56 schools with average of 12.6 per school to distribute

NCAA Division II—34 schools with average 10.8 per school to distribute

NCAA Division III—148 schools from which athletes can receive academic scholarships and grants to assist with school while playing lacrosse

NJCAA—27 schools which offer 20 per school. Athletes typically receive full ride scholarships at the Junior college level.

Women's Lacrosse:

NCAA Division I—84 schools with average of 12 per school to distribute

NCAA Division II—42 schools with average 9.9 per school to distribute

NCAA Division III—154 schools from which athletes can receive academic scholarships and grants to assist with school while playing lacrosse

NJCAA—16 schools offer 20 per school. Athletes typically receive full ride scholarships at the junior college level.

Source: Brent Hoskins, SFU/Burnaby Mountain Selects lacrosse program



Richmond's Parker Sahota has received four lacrosse scholarship opportunities from U.S. colleges.