

Canadians in the NCAA 2011 – Week 1

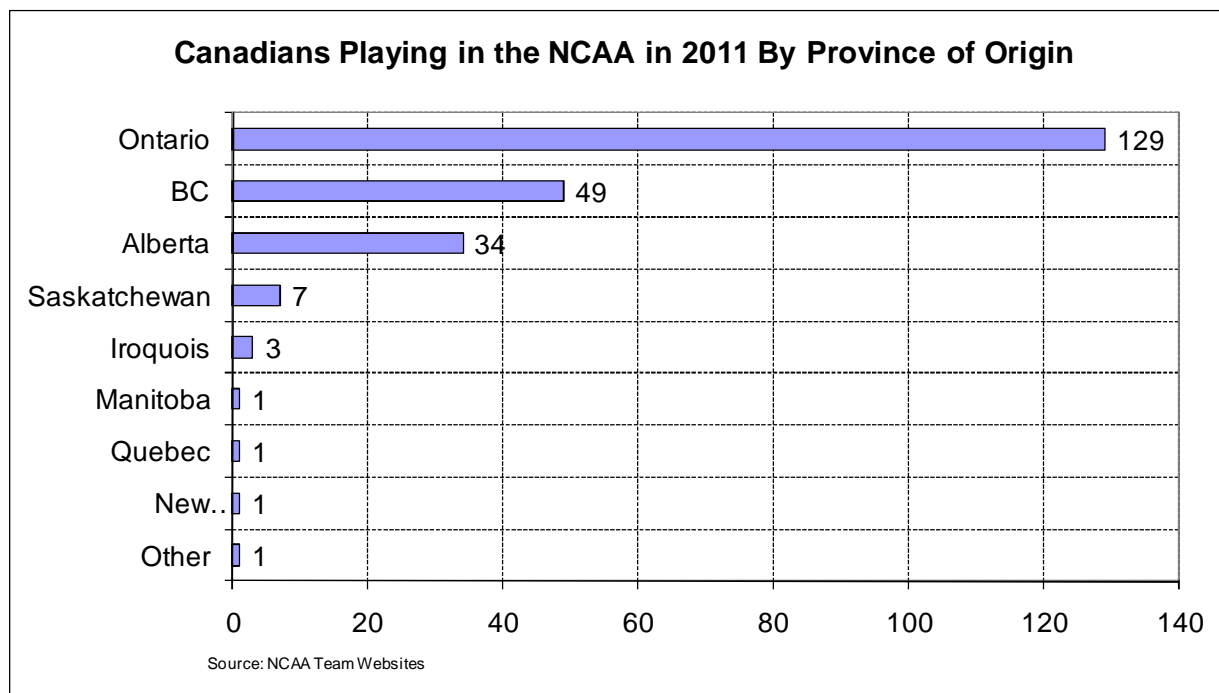
February 11, 2011 by J.P. (Jason) Donville

Its Lacrosse Season!

Ah yes, It's that time of year again - lacrosse season! Indeed, the NCAA season has already begun with Delaware renewing its tradition of playing the opening game of the NCAA lacrosse season last Saturday (they beat Detroit Mercy 13-5). For Canadian lacrosse fans, box and field lacrosse seasons are still a few months away but in the meantime we have the NLL and of course the reports of our players who have headed "south of the border" for a chance to pursue an education and their dreams of playing "big-time college lacrosse". Notwithstanding the Delaware game, the NCAA lacrosse season starts this weekend and revs up into high gear as the month of February progresses.

So how do the numbers look?

For those who have followed this column over the years, you will note that I have kept an unofficial tab on how many Canadians are playing in the NCAA. A decade ago, this number stood at less than 40 and for 2011 this number is now expected to exceed 225, a number that I will firm up when rosters are finalized in the coming weeks. That's up from the 194 players in 2010 or roughly a 16% improvement. At the Division level, the biggest jump has come in Division II where the number of Canadian's has leapt from 48 to 62, a 29% improvement. As far as provincial representation is concerned Ontario continues to provide the largest contingent of Canadian laxers playing in the US (roughly 60%). Interestingly, Alberta shows the fastest growth rate (up almost 200% over the past three years) and is rapidly catching up on British Columbia as the second best province to find field lacrosse players in Canada.



Key themes for 2011 in Division I

In this week's edition of Canadians in the NCAA I will focus my commentary strictly on Division I and to the three story-lines that I believe are of particular interest to fans of Canadian lacrosse. First, how will teams that play with a decidedly Canadian style perform in 2011? Second, which players (mainly sophomores) are likely to emerge as the new marquee players amongst the Canadians playing in the NCAA? Finally, out of the current group of Canadian rookies, which players could have the biggest impact in 2011?

Five Division I Teams with a Canadian Pedigree Are Worth Keeping an Eye On

There are 34 Division I teams with at least one Canadian on their roster but there are five teams where the Canadian contingent is large enough to influence the style of play of their respective team. These five teams are Stony Brook, Hofstra, Drexel, Denver and Robert Morris. None are expected to win the NCAA Championship but all possess the offensive fire power to generate more than a few upsets and if nothing else provide some extremely exciting highlight reel material.

Stony Brook Seawolves - Stony Brook is led by two Canadians, Kevin Crowley (New Westminster) and Jordan McBride (New Westminster) who combined for 99 goals in 2010 and made it to the NCAA final eight and an overtime loss to Virginia. Crowley and McBride are supported by Robbie Campbell (Delta), Kyle Belton (Langley), Greg Miceli (King City) and JJ Laforet (Georgetown) and this group is more than capable of playing the pick and roll, quick stick game that Canucks are renowned for. Given last year's tough loss to Virginia and the fact that Crowley and McBride are both seniors, expect to see this group play like there is no tomorrow.

Hofstra Pride - The story at Hofstra is similar to Stony Brook in that the team is loaded with Canadian talent and its two star players are seniors. These of course are Jay Card (Caledon) and Jaime Lincoln (St Catherines) who combined for 64 goals, 42 assists, 54 ground balls and 40 caused turnovers in 2010. Card and Lincoln will be supported by Adrian Sorchetti (Whitby) and Michael Burke (Caledon). Most preseason polls have Hofstra pegged to finish in the top ten in the NCAA in 2011 and if Card and Lincoln get on a hot streak, the Pride could sneak into the final four.

Drexel Dragons – Wins over Notre Dame, UMASS and Hofstra in 2010 are ample proof that Drexel can play and win over the NCAA's elite. Among last year's pleasant surprises was a rookie from Canada's west coast named Robert Church (Coquitlam) who managed to score 32 goals in his rookie season. With the arrival of freshman Ben McIntosh (Coquitlam) and a supporting cast that includes Garrett McIntosh (Coquitlam), Kyle Bergman (Toronto), Mitch De Snoo (Oshawa) and Greg Howren (Coquitlam), the Dragons now have enough players to run a box lacrosse offence! Drexel also boasts one of the best goalies in the NCAA (Mark Manos) so a combination of offensive fire power and goaltending means Drexel could really surprise this year. Some have also speculated that Church and Ben McIntosh could become the next great Canadian tandem along the lines of Crowley and McBride. The Canucks on this team are young so Drexel should get progressively better over the next three years.

Denver Pioneers – Denver only has four Canadians on their roster but they are all good. The two incumbents, Mark Matthews and Cameron Flint, combined for 59 goals while the two incoming rookies, Kurtis Green (Saanich) and Jeremy Noble (Orangeville) are both blue-chips and could crack the starting line-up as freshman. This group of players should put up really big numbers in 2011.

Robert Morris Colonials – Ok, so nobody expects Robert Morris to win the NCAA championship this year. That said, if you play a game of lacrosse against a team that boasts a line-up that includes Corbyn Tao-Brambleby (Coquitlam), Trevor Moore (Port Coquitlam), Kiel Matisz (Stony Creek), Dave Morton (Orangeville), Kyle Buchanan (Nepean) and Kevin Brownell (Burlington), and you take that group of players lightly, you are likely to regret it. Robert Morris needs to get better on defense but on the offensive side of center this team can play with any team in the NCAA.

Emerging Marquee Players in the NCAA in 2011

Ok, so everyone already knows about guys like Kevin Crowley, Jordan McBride, Adam Jones (Owen Sound), Stephen Keogh (Toronto), Trevor Moore and Jay Card. All are household names in lacrosse circles. These guys get lots of ink already so my focus here is to identify players that could be the Kevin Crowley's of their class when they reach their senior year. Here's my list of six players that are emerging from their freshman year and whom I expect will be viewed as the stars of the class of 2013.

Logan Schuss – Attack – (Ohio State/Ladner) – Schuss scored 31 goals and 25 assists as a rookie and was voted the team's offensive MVP. While Schuss may not yet be a household name it is worth noting that his rookie numbers are well ahead of the rookie numbers of most of the top Canadian scorers of the past decade. Schuss is emerging as the scoring star of the Canadian Sophomore class.

Zach Palmer – Attack – (Johns Hopkins/Oshawa) – Cracking the starting line-up of JHU as a rookie is no easy feat and Palmer followed up his field season with another strong summer of box lacrosse. In 2011, JHU has a lot to prove to the lacrosse world and Palmer, who scored 10 goals as a rookie will be an important part of that bounce-back year. Palmer has wonderful creativity around the net and a stick for the ages. Palmer should score at least 30 goals in 2011.

Cameron Mann – Midfield – (Jacksonville/Hamilton) – A gritty two way midfielder, Mann scored 17 goals and 12 assists as a freshman while also grabbing 53 ground balls and 8 caused turnovers. With Ryan Serville moving on to Delaware, Mann will really need to shine if the Dolphins are to keep moving forward in 2011 and anyone who has ever played or coached the kid thinks that Mann will do more than his part to ensure that this happens.

Jordan Houtby – LSM – (Detroit Mercy/St Catherines) – Holy Cross High School has probably produced more NCAA All-Americans than any other high school in Canada over the past 20 years so a player with Houtby's skills should not be a complete surprise. Houtby was voted defensive player of the year in 2010 at Detroit Mercy and lead all NCAA freshmen in ground balls (53) and caused turnovers (32). Indeed, in the later category he finished in 6th place in the entire NCAA in 2010. Houtby is good and will get better with age.

Jason Noble – Defense – (Cornell/Orangeville) – Noble won a starting position on the Cornell defense as a freshman and backed that performance up with strong stats that included 38 ground balls and 23 caused turnovers. While Noble is not big in stature, his footwork is superb and he has outstanding anticipation. Noble is a future Team Canada stalwart.

AJ Masson – Midfield – (Vermont/Newmarket) – Masson quietly worked his way into the Vermont line-up over the course of 2010 and by the end of the season he had scored 6 goals, 2 assists and picked up 49 ground balls. In 2011, Masson will see expanded playing time and will likely emerge as one of the top two way midfielders amongst the Canadians in the NCAA.

Rookie Watch – These Six Guys Can Play Lacrosse

Becoming a high impact rookie is subject to a number of variables with playing time being the key one. Rookies tend to struggle for playing time at ranked programs whereas a top Canadian prospect can often become a starter as a rookie at a nascent or rebuilding program. That said, talent is talent and we expect the following six rookies to have big years for their respective teams in 2011.

Mark Cockerton – Attack – (Virginia/Oshawa) – The only question mark surrounding Mark is when he will be ready to play as his shoulder is evidently still healing. Cockerton was the 2010 MVP of the Under Armour All Star game, and he was also the youngest player at the U19 World Games in 2008 where he managed to score 18 goals. Cockerton has a complete game and when he is healthy he should be the highest impact Canadian to play at Virginia since Garrett Billings.

Cody Bremner – Attack – (Cornell/Victoria) – The latest star to emerge from the Claremont lacrosse program in Victoria, Bremner scored 77 points in 19 games for New Westminster last year and was one of the leading scorers in the Minto Cup. Bremner shoots left and has great finish around the net and is already being compared to former Cornell star Sean Greenhalgh.

Jeremy Noble – Attack – (Denver/Orangeville) – If you want to know how good Noble could be you simply have to look at his brother Jason who cracked the starting line-up at Cornell as a freshman. Noble has been refining his craft at the Hill Academy so you know he has been polished, a point that is backed up by his Junior A numbers which saw him score 21 goals and 66 assists in 22 games for Orangeville in 2010. As impressive as his loose ball numbers (43) which placed him #4 in the league and suggests a superb two-way game. Statistically, Noble looks like another Kevin Crowley.

Dan Keane – Midfield – (Delaware/Elora) – Elora is a tiny little town in Southern Ontario that consistently produces some of the best lacrosse players in Canada – and Dan Keane is its latest progeny. While Keane is not big in stature, his scoring numbers are huge. In 2010, Keane scored 27 goals and 60 assists in 22 games for the Kitchener-Waterloo Kodiaks, which placed him in a seventh place tie with Jeremy Noble. Delaware has had a couple of Canadians in the past who have been known to score a few goals (John Grant Jr and Curtis Dickson come to mind) so Keane should be a good fit with the Blue Hens.

Ben McIntosh – Midfield – (Drexel/Coquitlam) – In case you haven't noticed, Drexel is quietly assembling a nice contingent of Canadian laxers that includes Robert Church, Kyle Bergman, Garrett

McIntosh, Greg Howren and Mitch de Snoo (Oshawa). Well, you can add Ben McIntosh's name to that list as well. McIntosh has superb offensive talents and plays his best lacrosse when the stakes are highest, a point that is evident to anyone who watched the last two Minto Cups.

Shayne Adams – Attack – (Detroit/St Catherines) – Shayne Adams is a superb goal scorer who will likely see ample playing time as a rookie at Detroit Mercy. In 2010, Adam's scored 32 goals and 43 assist for the St Catherines Athletics and was a key member of the Niagara Raiders Field Lacrosse Team that won the Ontario U19 Club Championship in 2009 and 2010. Adams is arguably the best pure scorer amongst 2011 rookies.

Games upcoming

As mentioned at the outset, the NCAA season starts to gear up this weekend with eight games on the slate on Saturday. For Canadians who want to watch live action, the only game that is even reasonably close to Canada is Mercer at Ohio State. Better to wait a week and go see the Denver versus Syracuse game on the 20th at the Carrier Dome. It's a double header and will be immediately followed by Air Force at Siena.

Saying Good-Bye to Coach McGetrick

The lacrosse world said good-bye this past year to Bellarmine Coach Jack McGetrick who passed away in October after a long and courageous battle with cancer. McGetrick's coaching career at Hartford and Bellarmine speak for themselves – he never coached at an NCAA powerhouse yet won more games than he lost over a long career coaching at the NCAA Division I level. Of course, wins and losses aside his former players talk in almost reverential terms of how he recruited them as boys and taught them how to become men. Jack's fan base spans the world and given his penchant for recruiting Canadians it should not surprise anyone that he has so many friends north of the border. The fact that so many of his players have since become coaches themselves probably says it all – Thanks Jack!

Final Comments – Live Your Dreams Large!

The lacrosse community in Canada is a small, tight knit community with a fierce loyalty to our players and the way we play the game. If this comes across to some as arrogance then our enthusiasm for the game has simply been misinterpreted. All of the players that you will read about in this column over the coming season are for us Canadians very real and tangible. The Canadian club system produces some fantastic rivalries but when our players cross the border, they all become "our players" and we collectively take pride in their accomplishments. Indeed, a significant number of the people who read this column have been for many years watching and in many cases coaching the players I write about each week. As such, when a player like Robert Church scores seven goals in game or a player like Jordan Houtby picks up 7 ground balls and 4 caused turnovers in a game, it validates everything that our lacrosse community back home stands for. To the roughly 225 Canadian lacrosse players who will embark upon a season that they will never forget, good luck, live your dreams large and make us all proud.

NCAA Div I - Canadian and Iroquois Players - 2011 - Preliminary

Rank	School	Player	Hometown	Year	Position
1	Albany	Matt Mackenzie	Spruce Grove	Sophomore	Midfield
2	Albany	Mike Woods	Newmarket	Sophomore	Midfield
3	Albany	Mike Miller	Ohsweken	Freshman	Midfield
4	Albany	Jon Newhouse	Oakville	Freshman	Defence
5	Bellarmino	Chad Mitchell	Calgary	Sophomore	Midfield
6	Bellarmino	Cameron Gardner	Calgary	Freshman	Midfield
7	Bellarmino	Karsen Leung	Victoria	Junior	Midfield
8	Bellarmino	Colton Clark	Nanaimo	Junior	Midfield
9	Bellarmino	Mitchell McLaren	Victoria	Sophomore	Midfield
10	Bellarmino	Jordan Wong	Victoria	Junior	Attack
11	Bellarmino	Liam Kelly	Victoria	Junior	Attack
12	Bellarmino	Dillon Ward	Orangeville	Sophomore	Goalie
13	Bellarmino	Luke Acton	Saskatoon	Attack	Attack
14	Bellarmino	Brick Wipf	Saskatoon	Junior	Defence
15	Bellarmino	Myles Jeffers	Saskatoon	Senior	Midfield
16	Binghampton	Jordan Tripp	Aurora	Freshman	Midfield
17	Bryant	Nils Thompson	Ponoka	Sophomore	Midfield
18	Bryant	Matt MacGrotty	New Westminster	Freshman	Defence
19	Bucknell	Owen Bennett	Sudbury	Sophomore	Attack
20	Canisius	Simon Giourmetakis	Edmonton	Junior	Attack
21	Canisius	DJ Giacobbo	Athabasca	Sophomore	Midfield
22	Canisius	Brandon Bortignon	Coquitlam	Junior	Attack
23	Canisius	Adam Jones	Owen Sound	Senior	Midfield
24	Canisius	Dan Coates	St Catherines	Post Grad	Defence
25	Canisius	Travis Gibbons	Owen Sound	Junior	Attack
26	Canisius	Graham Begsma	Toronto	Post Grad	Midfield
27	Canisius	Hugh Weir	Saskatoon	Sophomore	Midfield
28	Colgate	Michael Thomas	Peterborough	Sophomore	Attack
29	Cornell	Cody Bremner	Victoria	Freshman	Attack
30	Cornell	Myan Adams	Akwesasne	Sophomore	Midfield
31	Cornell	Jason Noble	Orangeville	Sophomore	Defence
32	Cornell	Mitch McMichael	Port Perry	Junior	Midfield
33	Cornell	Jonathan Thomson	Orangeville	Senior	Midfield
34	Cornell	Jake Thompson	Orangeville	Sophomore	Attack
35	Cornell	Jesse Gamble	Rockwood	Senior	Attack
36	Cornell	Dan Linter	Courtice	Freshman	Midfield
37	Delaware	Ryan Serville	Pickering	Sophomore	Attack
38	Delaware	Nick Diachenko	Courtice	Sophomore	Midfield
39	Delaware	Dan Keane	Elora	Freshman	Midfield
40	Denver	Kurtis Green	Victoria	Freshman	Midfield
41	Denver	Mark Matthews	Oshawa	Junior	Attack
42	Denver	Cam Flint	Georgetown	Sophomore	Midfield
43	Denver	Jeremy Noble	Orangeville	Freshman	Attack
44	Detroit	Jordan Houtby	St Catharines	Sophomore	LSM
45	Detroit	Joel Matthews	St Catharines	Sophomore	Midfield
46	Detroit	Shayne Adams	St Catharines	Freshman	Attack
47	Detroit	Tom Masterson	London	Freshman	Attack

48	Drexel	Robert Church	Coquitlam	Sophomore	Attack
49	Drexel	Garett McIntosh	Coquitlam	Sophomore	Midfield
50	Drexel	Ben McIntosh	Coquitlam	Freshman	Midfield
51	Drexel	Greg Howren	Coquitlam	Freshman	Midfield
52	Drexel	Kyle Bergman	Toronto	Junior	Midfield
53	Drexel	Mitch de Snoo	Oshawa	Freshman	Attack
54	Georgetown	Travis Comeau	Red Deer	Sophomore	Attack
55	Georgetown	Robert Koger	Toronto	Junior	Defence
56	Hartford	Michael Cudmore	Ashburn	Senior	Midfield
57	Hartford	Aidan Genik	Toronto	Junior	Attack
58	Hartford	Carter Bender	Caledon	Junior	Attack
59	Hartford	Kyle Goodchild	Toronto	Junior	Midfield
60	Hobart	Ethan O'Connor	Milton	Sophomore	Defence
61	Hobart	Evan Kirk	Orangeville	Senior	Goalie
62	Hobart	Conor Eustace	Newmarket	Freshman	Defence
63	Hobart	Kyle Lusted	Courtice	Freshman	Attack
64	Hobart	Jesse Rabishaw	Sharon	Freshman	Midfield
65	Hofstra	Jay Card	Caledon	Senior	Attack
66	Hofstra	Jaime Lincoln	St. Catharines	Senior	Attack
67	Hofstra	Adrian Sorichetti	Whitby	Sophomore	LSM
68	Hofstra	Michael Burke	Caledon East	Sophomore	Midfield
69	Jacksonville	Cameron Mann	Hamilton	Sophomore	Midfield
70	Jacksonville	Clark De Geer	Caledon	Sophomore	Midfield
71	Jacksonville	Jesse Noll	Caledon	Freshman	Midfield
72	Johns Hopkins	Zach Palmer	Oshawa	Sophomore	Attack
73	Johns Hopkins	Brandon Benn	Brampton	Freshman	Attack
74	Loyola	Reid Acton	Toronto	Sophomore	Defence
75	Manhattan	Levi Radbourne	Guelph	Freshman	Attack
76	Ohio State	Logan Schuss	Delta	Sophomore	Attack
77	Ohio State	Mike Pires	Saanichton	Senior	Midfield
78	Ohio State	Brock Sorenson	Peterborough	Senior	Defence
79	Penn State	Ryne Sternberg	Toronto	Freshman	Defence
80	Presbyterian	Tyler Melnyk	Calgary	Sophomore	Attack
81	Presbyterian	Matt Melnyk	Calgary	Sophomore	Attack
82	Presbyterian	Andrew Smistad	Calgary	Freshman	Midfield
83	Presbyterian	Bryden Pelletier	Nanaimo	Freshman	Attack
84	Providence	Andrew Bromley	Surrey	Junior	Midfield
85	Quinnipiac	Jake Emms	Victoria	Sophomore	Attack
86	Quinnipiac	Dylan Webster	Brampton	Freshman	Midfield
87	Robert Morris	Kyle Buchanan	Nepean	Junior	Midfield
88	Robert Morris	Trevor Moore	Port Coquitlam	Senior	Attack
89	Robert Morris	Corbyn Tao-Brambleby	Coquitlam	Senior	Attack
90	Robert Morris	Kiel Matisz	Stoney Creek	Junior	Midfield
91	Robert Morris	Kevin Brownell	Burlington	Junior	Midfield
92	Robert Morris	Kevin Neufeld	Coquitlam	Sophomore	Defence
93	Robert Morris	Richard Cambrey	Port Coquitlam	Senior	Defence
94	Robert Morris	Tyler Digby	New Westminster	Sophomore	Attack
95	Robert Morris	Jake Hayes	Calgary	Sophomore	Attack
96	Robert Morris	Mitchell Wilde	Brooklin	Sophomore	Midfield
97	Robert Morris	Dave Morton	Orangeville	Junior	Attack

98	Sacred Heart	Nick Soubry	Oakville	Sophomore	Defence
99	Sacred Heart	Eric Crepinsek	Oakville	Sophomore	Midfield
100	Sacred Heart	Mike Mawdsley	Innisfil	Freshman	Attack
101	Siena	Bryan Neufeld	Virgil/Niagra	Junior	Attack
102	Siena	Rob Hunter	Toronto	Freshman	Midfield
103	Stony Brook	Kevin Crowley	New Westminster	Senior	Midfield
104	Stony Brook	Jordan McBride	New Westminster	Senior	Attack
105	Stony Brook	Robbie Campbell	Delta	Junior	Midfield
106	Stony Brook	Kyle Belton	Langley	Junior	Attack
107	Stony Brook	Greg Miceli	King City	Junior	Defence
108	Stony Brook	JJ Laforet	Georgetown	Junior	Midfield
109	Syracuse	Ryan Burnham	Ohsweken	Freshman	Defence
110	Syracuse	Stephen Keogh	Toronto	Junior	Attack
111	UMBC	Scott Jones	Port Moody	Sophomore	Attack
112	UMBC	Nathan Klein	Coquitlam	Freshman	LSM
113	Vermont	AJ Masson	Newmarket	Sophomore	Attack
114	Virginia	Garett Ince	Oakville	Senior	Midfield
115	Virginia	Matt Cockerton	Oshawa	Sophomore	Attack
116	Virginia	Mark Cockerton	Oshawa	Freshman	Attack
117	Yale	Kirby Zdrill	Edmonton	Sophomore	Attack
118	Yale	Deron Dempster	Orangeville	Sophomore	Attack

Source: Team Websites