
Pioneers open play at President's Cup Sunday

Ladner heads to Nanaimo hoping the experience gained a year ago will pay dividends

[Mark Booth](#) / Delta Optimist

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National Lacrosse League veteran Brodie MacDonald will get the bulk of the work in net when the Ladner Pioneers head to Nanaimo for the 2018 President's Cup national championships, which start Sunday.

Photograph By MARK BOOTH

Ladner Pioneers are hoping their trip back east in 2017 will pay dividends when they open play Sunday at the President's Cup Senior "B" National Lacrosse Championships in Nanaimo.

Last year's appearance in Six Nations resulted in a fifth place finish but, more importantly, provided their first up-close look in 11 years of what it will take to produce a third President's Cup title in the club's rich history.

The top end of the participating teams proved to be loaded with high-end talent and Ladner was badly outscored in four straight defeats. This year's tournament should be no different and that's why GM and head coach Ross Frehlick secured the services of goaltender Brodie MacDonald and defender Pete McFetridge, both National Lacrosse League veterans, along with Eli Golbrecht from Denver of the Major Lacrosse League.

He is also taking advantage of adding three players to his roster from other West Coast Senior Lacrosse Association clubs exclusively for nationals. They are Bryan Poole, Ian Poole and Nate Henare, all among the top scorers with the Langley Warriors. Also being added is former Delta Islanders Junior "A" standout Tom Johnson who had been playing at the Senior "C" level and dressed in last week's deciding game overtime loss to Nanaimo in the WCSLA finals.

The additions mean three regular season players are not going to be eligible to play in Nanaimo, something Frehlick made clear back in training camp in April that would likely happen, but still a thankless task.

"It's something I absolute hate doing and there really is no easy way to tell the guys," said Frehlick who informed his team of the final roster after practice on Tuesday night. "For the 12 or 13 guys who played in last year's tournament, they know exactly how strong those teams are and how we have to do everything possible to put our best team on the floor to compete at that level."

"When you look at those games we lost it was by an average of nine goals so that's the difference we have to try and make up this time."

The Pioneers open the eight-team championships on Sunday morning against Quebec League champions Captial Region Axemen from Ottawa. It will then be round-robin games daily through Friday with the exception of a doubleheader on Wednesday that includes an evening tilt with WCSLA rival Nanaimo.

The top four teams will meet in the semi-finals on Saturday, Sept. 1. The national final goes at 6 p.m. on Sept. 2.