

## Northmen host inaugural season for women's box lacrosse

**By Brian Lockhart**

The Orangeville Northmen have expanded this season with the addition of women's box lacrosse in their organization.

While women have traditionally played field lacrosse, there has been a lot of interest in box lacrosse for women, and many centres around the province have already started programs which are becoming very successful.

The Northmen will have U15 and U17 teams on the floor this year, and they will be competing against other groups around the province.

Both teams are coached by notable local player and coach Bruce Codd, a Northmen alumni who has been a big part of initiating the women's program.

"Bruce has really been an integral part of getting this program off the ground," explained Corinne Nielsen, team manager for the U17 team. "He's part of the Northmen alumni and has been a real advocate for girl's programs, because the Northmen have never had a girl's box program. He was our main advocate for getting the girl's program up and running and reaching out to the OLA and working with the executive. It's pretty awesome that they have an experienced coach."

While girl's field lacrosse has always been popular, there was a growing interest in trying box lacrosse, which is a totally different game.

"Quite a few of the girls had their start in the Toronto program, and that program combined both field and box lacrosse," Corinne explained. "Some of them got the box experience and really enjoyed it. Other places already have women's box lacrosse. Centre Wellington has had box lacrosse for a long time. There are teams in Kitchener, Waterloo, Barrie, and Arthur, and Burlington has a great team as well. Field lacrosse is much more developed for girls and there's a lot more representation at college and university levels, but there has been a lot more interest from girls in box lacrosse."

The women's teams play the same format with the same rules as men's box lacrosse, and the hitting and all aspects of the sport are the same.

"The girls are really enjoying it," Corinne said. "We have girls that have never even played lacrosse, and we have some girls who have experience with both box and field, so there's a huge range of skills, experience, and development. It's a very special year for the Northmen since it's the first year they have offered a girl's program."