



CPRA ACPL

GENDER EQUITY IN RECREATIONAL SPORT

Success Story

Lacrosse Nova Scotia Connects Female Players to Female Coaches

S EVEN YEAR-OLD BRIELLE BOYLAN HAD never played lacrosse before – but she wanted to give it a try and have some fun with her friends.

Now, she has quite a few female role models in the sports world.

Thanks to funding from the CPRA's Gender Equity in Recreational Sport, which is funded in part by the Government of Canada (Sport Canada), Brielle was one of 45 girls who learned how to play lacrosse from experienced female coaches.

“I learned to play with my friends from other girls who play lacrosse,” said Brielle. “I liked that it was just girls for the coaches and the players.”



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Drew Batchilder, Program Coach, With Participants



“Seeing women in sport clearly increases female participation. My daughter wants to play because she was able to see other girls as role models!”

Taylor, Mother to Brielle Boylan

From March 6 to April 3, 2020, Lacrosse Nova Scotia’s Valley Female Try Lacrosse program welcomed youth aged eight to 17 in the Annapolis Valley, to play lacrosse under the leadership of female coaches for five weeks. Lacrosse Nova Scotia partnered with the Town of Berwick and the County of Kings Community Recreation to deliver the program, where players could participate for free.

“Before this project, there was a lack of programming for girls in this region,” said Donna Goguen, executive director of Lacrosse Nova Scotia. “We appreciated having this funding because it provided a first step in removing that barrier, and trying a program idea that worked even better than we planned.”

The program was unique because it also provided a learning opportunity for coaches and mentors.

Drew Batchilder, 21, was one of the program’s coaches and felt it was important for new female players to have female role models in the sport.

“This experience gave me the chance to provide these girls with an opportunity that I never had: to have female coaches from the moment they first pick up a stick. I think it’s important that girls have female coaches from the very start,” said Drew. “By being a female coach, I am an example of the fact that girls can play lacrosse and be knowledgeable about it, as well as bring a different perspective than my male counterparts.”

She added that the program also allowed her to work with a group of coaches who she otherwise wouldn’t have had the chance to meet.

“I learned a lot from them,” she said. “Since all the coaches had different backgrounds in the sport, we were able to use our experiences to engage with the girls and teach skills in new and different ways. By having such a varied group of coaches, the girls were able to see the opportunities that lacrosse can give them, if they decide to continue with the sport.

Donna hopes to keep the program going – perhaps in other areas of the province – and hopes this project will help achieve Lacrosse Nova Scotia’s goal of gender equity within five years.

She saw first-hand the personal impact the sport had on players and coaches.

“The participants had fun and that was clear by the smiles on their faces, and the number who attended every week,” Donna said.

Drew agreed that the program was a huge success.

“With this program in particular, by being in a part of the province where there are only a handful of girls and women involved in the sport, I think it helped to show the girls that this sport isn’t only for boys,” she said.

Brielle’s mother, Taylor, is currently coaching with her local club, and said she was grateful for the opportunity this program offered in the Annapolis Valley.

“Seeing women in sport clearly increases female participation,” said Taylor. “My daughter wants to play because she was able to see other girls as role models!” 🍁