



The Gamber Lax Junior “A” boys state champions. Back Row (L-R) Coach John Pusateri, Jake Irrgang, Christian Etchison, Jansen Pusateri, Collin Stewart, Jayden Hull, Noah Baugher, Zach Urban, Justin Hulse, Reid Stewart, Logan Covey, Andrew Burns, Bubba Love, Dalton Gladden, and coach Kevin Stewart. Kneeling: Chase Buckwalter, Will Budzynski, and Ethan Frantz. Seated: Matt Brown, Conner Covey, and Evan Hock. (Submitted Photo)

Gamber Lax Junior “A” club makes history

This spring lacrosse season began with many questions, but in the end the Gamber Lax Junior “A” boys lacrosse team left no doubt as to who was the best travel team in the state.

With the impact of club lacrosse reaching deep into the travel program, there was concern at the beginning of the season that the Maryland Youth Lacrosse Association wouldn’t be able to field enough teams to have an “A” division. The league came up with a full schedule and the magical season unfolded for the Gamber Juniors.

Coached by experienced local coaches, including Director of Gamber Lacrosse Kevin Stewart, long-time travel lacrosse coach John Pusateri, and Gerstell Academy boys coach Sean Todd, Gamber ran roughshod over their competition compiling a 13-1 overall record along the way. Their only loss came to Howard County’s Cobra squad in the regular season by a single goal. To offset the sting of the only blemish on their record, Gamber returned the favor in the MYLA semifinal game as they defeated Cobra on a last-second goal to advance to the championship game against perennial lacrosse powerhouse Kelly Post.

The MYLA Championship game matchup was as good as it gets in rec sports, pitting the only remaining undefeated team in Kelly Post against a hungry Gamber team, fresh off redemption of its only loss in a battle for the MYLA title and a trip to the state playoffs. The game didn’t live up to its billing, as Gamber came out right from the start and took a commanding lead they never relinquished en route to a 13-9 win and the MYLA championship, the first time in the Gamber Lacrosse Club’s history that a boys team won the competitive league title.

Every player on the Gamber roster is from Carroll County, and most have been playing together since cutting their teeth in the county’s Pockets programs as young as 4 years old.

Stewart said via email that it will be “sad to see such a long time comradery, friendship, and skilled

group of boys moving on throughout the state, however, these high schools will be acquiring tremendous talent.”

Coming from several area middle schools, the boys will take their game to the next level at Calvert Hall, Francis Scott Key, Franklin, Gerstell, South Carroll, Westminster, and Winters Mill high schools.

But before they move on, the Gamber Juniors had more lacrosse to play. By winning the MYLA playoff tournament, Gamber earned the right to compete in the state championship tournament, pitting the champions of five separate leagues throughout the state of Maryland to determine the state’s best.

Their reputation preceded them as their Montgomery County opponent in the first round of the playoffs failed to show for the game and Gamber was awarded the forfeit and a trip to the state semifinals.

That game proved to be the toughest challenge as Gamber defeated the Davidsonville Gators 11-5. The final was an afterthought as Gamber dominated the OBGC Juniors 17-6 to win the club’s first and only boys state title.

For his part, Stewart looks forward to filling in his much earned “spare time” by continuing on in his role as director of Gamber Lacrosse and watching his sons compete in their own high school careers.

Having taken an active role in the founding and development, Stewart said he’s “thrilled about the future of our club lacrosse team, Tradition Lacrosse, and traveling with talented boys, most of which played with Gamber, and young men from throughout the state to tournaments into the summer and future summers.”

This may be the end of the road for these Gamber Junior A boys, but the road has been paved with gold, especially in this magical 2015 spring season. Their impact will be felt for the next four years at the high school level throughout the county as they enter the competitive environment that is Carroll High School lacrosse.

Stewart can’t wait.

It is “exciting to imagine the lifelong relationships these boys have created and cannot wait to face them on the field as opponents shaking hands and playing like men,” he said.

And maybe, just maybe, there’s another state title or two in stake for these boys.

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