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## Davie Broncos playing inaugural lacrosse season

BY GARY CURRERI

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

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DAVIE

The Davie Broncos began their inaugural lacrosse season in January with 90 players playing on four teams.

Pete Dunne, who set up and organized the Davie program, coaches the Broncos' Lightning team.

"The season started in January and we started clinics in October teaching kids to throw and catch," said Dunne, who played college lacrosse in Virginia and has been playing for 35 years. "It is still a love and passion of mine. I still play it. This is just guys giving back to the game that we have loved for years.

"I have been working on this for two years prepping for the league and gathering the resources," said Dunne, whose team includes players from Davie, Hollywood, Plantation, Cooper City and Tamarac. "We slowly brought them along and more and more kids would come out."

The Davie Broncos are one of 12 programs that play in the South Florida Youth Lacrosse League, which was formed in 2006 to unite all of the South Florida lacrosse programs.

The others are the Boca Jets, Broward Pirates, Delray Beach Riptide, Jupiter, Martin County Pioneers, Palm Beach Gardens Gators, Parkland Redhawks, Tavernier Panthers and Weston Warriors.

There is also the South Florida Ladies Lacrosse in Boynton Beach, which has one team composed of sixth-, seventh- and eighth-graders, and a program in Naples.

The teams in the league are broken up by grade level as follows: Bantam Boys, kindergarten through second grade; Lightning Boys, third and fourth grades; Junior Boys, fifth and sixth grades; Senior Boys, seventh and eighth grades; Bantam Girls, kindergarten through second grade; Elementary, junior girls, third through fifth grade); and Middle School, senior girls, sixth through eighth grade.

"We have four teams, K-2, 3-4, 5-6, and 7-8," Dunne said. "We tried to get girls this year, but there wasn't enough interest. We hope to have that happen in future years. We had a handful but not enough to make a team, so a few of them went over to Weston."

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The first days of clinics and practices were interesting since many of the players didn't have experience, Dunne said.

"The kids fall in love with the sport, and it is infectious," Dunne said. "The first couple of kids who came on the field could throw and catch and we were like, 'Oh my gosh, we have kids who know how to play.' It turned out that many of them did not know how to play and those were some kids who had done some summer lacrosse camps."

The South Florida Youth Lacrosse League's season runs from the first week in February until mid-May. There are no standings or scores kept, no playoffs and if there is more than one team in a program, the talent must be spread evenly among the other teams.

"One of the nice things about the league is that as the league continues to grow and there are more teams entering, the league rules are that you divide up your talent among your teams," Dunne said. "It makes it easier to compete."

"It is a nice recreational league concept where our focus isn't on winning," Dunne said. "It is on having fun and getting experience with the game and the sport and ultimately these kids will be feeding the high school programs that are blossoming all over Florida."

Dunne said the Davie program has hit its first-year goals with the lone exception of having a girls' team.

"We wanted to be able to field four boys' teams," said Dunne, who expects the program to double in size next year and also to add two girls' teams.

"They are competitive teams, and they are kids falling in love with the sport. It warms our hearts when we see those things. We have also received a lot of support from the community who have sponsored the program. The town of Davie has helped us with facilities. It has been a great experience."

"One of the main benefits is that it is a great compliment to other sports," Dunne said. "You have agility, conditioning and hand-eye coordination. There is a lot of running."

"One of the neat things about lacrosse is that it doesn't require any certain body type. You can be smaller in stature and be able to compete against a bigger opponent. Speed and stick skills become paramount. If you can throw and catch, you can immediately play as a team," Dunne said. "It is end-to-end action and very exciting game to watch and play. There is a lot of scoring and physical contact."

Dunne's son, Chris, enjoys the sport. He is a member of the Lightning team.

"I like making goals and assists," said Chris, 9, who also plays in the Davie Broncos' youth league football program. "It is a really active sport and I like to play."

Gary Curreri can be reached by e-mail at [SportsCom5@aol.com](mailto:SportsCom5@aol.com).

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