

Pro Indoor Lacrosse returns to Philadelphia

A new professional lacrosse team is coming to Philadelphia.

Liam McKnight '18
CONTRIBUTOR

On September 12, the NLL (National Lacrosse League) held a Press Conference to announce their partnership with Comcast Spectacor and bring a team back to Philly.

After 28 seasons and six championships, the Philadelphia Wings relocated in 2014 to play at the Mohegan Sun Arena as the New England Black Wolves. But just four seasons later, Comcast President and CEO Dave Scott decided to buy the team back and bring indoor lacrosse back to the City of Brotherly Love.

The new team looks to replicate the success of the Wings of the 1980s and 1990s, but before they get underway in the 2018-2019 season, they still need one thing: a name. Fans are able to vote for the team's name, but according to uslaxmagazine.com, the Wings seem to be the frontrunner in the competition.

For some, it was hard seeing the team move in 2014. One Malvernian who was disappointed was former Wings player from 1991 to 2001 and current Malvern lacrosse head coach Mr. John McEvoy.

"It was a bummer. It was like selling the house you grew up in. It's been a part of your whole life, then it's just gone," McEvoy said.

Although it was sad, it was necessary and a smart business decision.

"It was a disappointing situation. However, the team wasn't making money and couldn't afford to stay in Philadelphia," Malvern parent and former Wings player Mr. Scott Gabrielsen said.

The Wings just weren't pulling in the fan base they did during their peak. According to McEvoy, in the late 1980s and 1990s, there would be 18,000-20,000 fans at each game.

"It was really exciting and really loud. It was just a really good time. I would chalk that success up back then right time right place," McEvoy said.

Lacrosse was new around that time, so that's why McEvoy thinks they were successful.

"People were intrigued by it, it was fun to watch it was really fast paced, aggressive, physical, and most of the guys back in that time were local," he said.

Gabrielsen, a five-time champion with the Wings, is happy the team is coming back.

"I was extremely excited when I heard the news. Really happy having played for Wings and being an alumni of the team," he said. "I'm very proud of the years I spent on the team and the friendships and bonds that were made with my fellow teammates. It's real exciting to have the team back as it validates all the blood, sweat and tears we put in."

But a question that remains is: if the Wings left Philadelphia because they couldn't bring in enough money, why did the NLL decide to bring the franchise back there for the 2018-2019 season?

Gabrielsen thinks the franchise's history is more than enough of a reason for Philly to be the location.

"There is an incredible stories history of the Philadelphia Wings. They are recognized as one of the best indoor lacrosse franchises ever and some of the best players that ever played the game played for Philadelphia," he said. "They play at the Wells Fargo Center with the Sixers and Flyers and it's a smart move from Comcast to buy them."

McEvoy looks at the team's success in the past and thinks they could replicate that if done right.

"I think they're revisiting the fact that if they can put the right product out there and they market it well, it can be successful, as seen in the past," he said.

McEvoy says the sport has grown tremendously over the past decade, especially in the Philadelphia area.

"The Philadelphia area is considered a hotbed for lacrosse. It's a hot area where there is the most condensed amount of players, but there was no pro team, so that doesn't quite make sense," he said. ♦



Athlete of the Issue: Keith Maguire '19

So far playing three years on the varsity football team, junior Keith Maguire has impacted games both offensively and defensively.

Steven O'Meara '19
PHOTO EDITOR

He has caught the eyes of college coaches throughout the country. He is focused on helping the team win the Inter-Ac this year for the 33rd time in school history. And to top it off, he was on SportsCenter's Top 10 plays after making an unbelievable catch against The Haverford School.

Junior Keith Maguire is currently a starting linebacker and wide receiver on Malvern's varsity football team. While playing for Malvern, he wears number four, and it has been his number since he first started playing.

"That was the first number I had, and I kept getting, so I stuck with it," Maguire said.

On October 28, the football team played The Haverford School at Malvern Prep. In this game, Maguire made the play of his life.

With a little under a minute left in the first half of the game, junior quarterback Drew Gunther lobbed a fade pass towards the right corner of the end zone. In a manner that could be described as "Odell Beckham like", Keith Maguire jumped up, glided back, and caught the catch with one hand, while the other hand was secured on his defender.

The next day, this catch was rated on SportsCenter Top 10 as the second best play of the day.

"It was pretty crazy," Maguire said. "I was in shock when I heard it was on there. It's just something you would never think would happen. Everyone was really proud of me. They were in shock too. It was just a weird crazy moment."

Although Maguire's best play of his career so far was on offense, he prefers playing defense more.

"I like defense better, but offense is right there. Offense is more exciting, getting the ball and scoring, but making big plays on defense is more fun," he said.

Maguire described his history with the sport.

"When I was about six, I started playing flag football, and when I was seven I started playing tackle football," Maguire said. "I just liked it. I enjoyed playing it as a kid and was pretty good at it, so it was fun to play."

His passion for football was influenced by many people, but one of the main people behind this was his father.

"My dad coached me up until high school, and he helped me a lot. He made me tougher and helped me learn some things about football to get better," Maguire said.

Over the course of his time playing for the varsity football team, Maguire has had a few mentors on the field as well. Some have been seniors who have left that have imparted wisdom of the game during Maguire's freshman year.

"When you're younger, the guys above you try to ease you in, so a lot of the seniors mentored me, but there wasn't one individual person who did



INCREDIBLE GRAB • Junior Keith Maguire is having a breakout year on the football field. On October 29 at the Haverford game, Keith made a one handed catch that ended up on SportsCenter Top 10. / S. O'Meara

it," Maguire said.

One player in the program who Maguire considers a friend and mentor is senior linebacker Cole McCabe. They both have played together for the past three years and learned a lot from each other.

"I know during freshman year, Keith used to look up to me because we were both the younger guys on the team," McCabe said. "I just tried to teach him how to be a leader and lead the defense, and just be him. He's a talented kid, I mean all he has to do is go out there and just do him."

According to McCabe, Maguire is the same guy on and off the field.

"Keith is just a great guy in general. He is a great teammate, he leads by example, and all the younger guys look up to him," McCabe said.

One player on the team who looks up to Maguire is his little brother,

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-Keith Maguire '19

sophomore Ryan Maguire, who has learned a lot from him on and off the field.

"He is a great brother, very positive and humble," Ryan said. "We work out together and just do almost everything together. He is always keeping my confidence up."

"His biggest strengths are being a leader and not focusing on the outside noise and just playing his game, doing his job," Ryan added.

So far, Keith has seven offers from various universities, including UNC, WVU, Vanderbilt, Duke, UVA, Temple, and Army.

"I'm trying to go with a scholarship, so whatever schools look at me is what I will be choosing from," he said. ♦