

# FEDERATION OF INTL. LACROSSE D'ACCARDI CLINIC; UGANDA REPORT



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## Update on Uganda Lacrosse & D'Accardi Clinic

This report will review the progress of lacrosse in Uganda and detail the positive impact on International and Ugandan Lacrosse through the FIL D'Accardi Clinics.

# Federation of Intl. Lacrosse D'Accardi Clinic; Uganda Report

## UPDATE ON UGANDA LACROSSE & D'ACCARDI CLINIC

### MESSAGE OF GRATITUDE – MAURICE SSERUNKUMA (ULU GENERAL SEC.)

The Uganda Lacrosse Union would like to extend a message of sincere gratitude to all involved in supporting the D'Accardi International Lacrosse Clinic at Makerere University Business School in August. The clinics were combined with a lacrosse festival that culminated in our first ever Ugandan National Championship tournament. It was a moment of great pride for the pioneering men and women of Uganda Lacrosse. The D'Accardi Clinics brought a great deal of attention to lacrosse in Uganda, and enabled us to get coverage on the radio, Television and in the national newspapers. Aside from being informative and developmental in nature, the clinics served as a great marketing tool for lacrosse in Uganda. They were run in conjunction with the start of the semester for universities in Kampala and thus captured the interest of many students. In Africa, we have a saying; I AM STRONG, IF YOU ARE STRONG! We thank our friends in America for sponsoring the D'Accardi International Clinics. And in the words of my country, Weebale no no no no no (Thank you very very very very much!)

### CLINIC OVERVIEW – KEVIN DUGAN, FIL CLINICIAN, FIELDS OF GROWTH INTL

#### Clinic Staff

The generous funding provided through the D'Accardi International Clinic grant enabled us to bring together an all-star staff for our trip to Uganda. This brought incredible teachers and coaches to Uganda, but also enabled us to capitalize on the media attention garnered by having some of the lacrosse world's most recognizable names involved in the clinics. NONE OF THESE CLINICIANS WOULD HAVE BEEN ABLE TO ATTEND THE CLINICS WITH OUT THE SUPPORT OF THE D'ACCARDI GRANT!

#### **Jonathan Christmas**

Jon served as the head men's clinician. He is a knowledgeable and charismatic teacher of the game. Jon is also one of the more prominent African Americans to have played the game, which added to the compelling nature of this visit. John is a professional lacrosse player, former all-American and founder of 141 Lacrosse.

#### **Hannah Nielson**

Hannah is currently considered the top woman's lacrosse player in the world. She is a member of the Australian National Team, All-World Selection, 2X Tewaaraton Trophy Winner, Assistant Lacrosse Coach, Towson University.

#### **Ann Elliott**

Ann is currently the top assistant women's lacrosse coach at Northwestern University. Ann was part of 4 women's lacrosse titles as a player at Northwestern and 2 titles as a coach. She is a passionate teacher of the game and provided great leadership throughout the clinics.

### **Additional Clinicians**

In addition to the staff that was supported by the D'Accardi Clinic Grant, we also had several college and high school volunteers that participated in the clinics. My humble belief is that this was one of the most successful international clinics ever held. The ability, through the D'Accardi grant to bring 3 great leaders like Jonathan, Hannah and Ann to Uganda, enabled us to direct and positively impact young American players, as well as the Ugandan participants.

Additional Clinicians included:

- Chad Weidmaier, Princeton (Delbarton School)
- Kiefer Weidmaier, Providence (Morristown Beard)
- Mike Bender, U of Virginia
- Daniele Barcak, Yale University
- Tyler Steinhardt, Boys' Latin School
- Harrison Burke, St. Johns (St. Joe's Metuchen.)
- William Fletched, Newtown HS, CT
- Riley Wurtz, Newtown HS, CT
- Paddy Sheehan, Lawrenceville School, NJ
- Adam Little, Vanderbilt Club Coach
- Sarah Leder, Mt. St. Mary's
- Courtney Schneck, West Islip, Pepperdine

Through the D'Accardi clinic grant we were able to put together an excellent clinic with a great player to coach ratio.

## **Clinic Overview**

### **Pre-Trip Excitement! (Excerpt from Inside Lacrosse.)**

When people speak of the growth and expansion of lacrosse it is usually in reference to burgeoning hotbeds in Denver and California or a team from the Midwest mixing it up with the Old Guard on the East Coast. In this case, an impressive effort by the charity Fields of Growth, the Federation of International Lacrosse **(Funded by the D'Accardi Intl Clinic Grant)** and the Uganda Lacrosse Union has culminated in a historic event for the continent of Africa. On Aug. 13, Uganda will be the first African nation to host a national championship in the sport of lacrosse

Over the past few years, Fields of Growth has spread lacrosse through the country of Uganda as part of their broader initiative to bring economic and social development to the African nation. Through this time many American college lacrosse players have participated in service trips to Uganda where they have both instructed youth in the sport of lacrosse and also spearheaded societal projects, such as a health clinic and chicken rearing program, for the welfare of local inhabitants.

In preparation for the national championship tournament, many of the best lacrosse players in America are conducting camps and training sessions. Chad Wiedmaier (Princeton) and Danielle Barcak (Yale) are currently

in Uganda imparting their lacrosse knowledge and experience on the Ugandan players. Starting August 6th, they will be joined by even more instructors as FIL begins their week long developmental clinics. **With over 150 participants and 20 clinicians, the FIL D'Accardi Clinics will be the single largest Country Developmental Clinic ever hosted by the FIL. Instructors at the D'Accardi clinics will include such prominent lacrosse icons as John Christmas of Virginia national championship and MLL/LXM fame, two-time Player of the Year Hannah Nielsen (Northwestern), Northwestern assistant coach Annie Elliott and many others.**

The result of this hard work from both players and instructors will be a landmark event for Uganda and the lacrosse world as a whole. The national championship game will be held in the early evening of August 13th and followed directly by a Ugandan festival that is sure to be an unforgettable event for all involved. "Quite honestly, it is a monumental moment in the history of the game; to see such a huge clinic, followed by an organized National Championship in a Sub-Saharan African country is something I never thought I'd live to see," said Tom Hayes, Chair of International Development for the FIL. **"The FIL is grateful to the Uganda Lacrosse Union, the D'Accardi family and Fields of Growth for helping this dream become a reality."**

### Lacrosse Update # 1 – John Christmas checks in from Kampala

#### John Christmas Reports from the ground on Day 1 of the D'Accardi Clinics

I don't even know where to begin, we are just one day in and this has already been one of the most rewarding and fulfilling experiences of my life. I have to admit, I had no idea what to expect when I got off the plane in Entebbe (Uganda's only airport.) The warm welcome, Ugandan hospitality and amazing people have exceeded my expectations. The energy at our first practice was off the hook! These guys are fast, athletic and play the game 100 MPH. Their foot speed is unreal but as to be expected their skills and understanding of team concepts is still really raw.



We arrived in Entebbe late at night, after sunset and were met by Fields of Growth staff from Uganda, and a whole crew of American volunteers that have been over there for the last month running lacrosse practices in

Kampala and working in the village. They were so pumped to see us and fortunately all of our 22 checked donation bags made it over to Uganda and loading them onto the bus was quite the process. We headed to a local restaurant to unwind and celebrate Jeff Howell birthday, a very instrumental person involved with Fields of Growth. After talking with everyone it was very evident that we were all there for the same and right reasons.

Day 1 started with an early morning wake up call to run with Hannah Nielson and a few of the other volunteers. The sights and sounds that first morning were amazing – a wild mix of birds and animals making the most beautiful music you can imagine. While coaching lacrosse in Kampala, we are staying in a guest house just off of Lake Victoria. It felt great to get a run in on the rough dirt back roads off Lake Victoria. Little kids running out to greet us was a heart warmer for sure! At no time did anyone feel unsafe which made for a good start to the day.



After a nice run, I jumped into a quick, cold shower and enjoyed breakfast with the group. We had potatoes, beans, pineapple and African Tea. By far the best pineapple I've ever had. After breakfast we organized the loads and loads of donated lacrosse equipment and gear – so encouraging to see how many people are supporting this movement.

After suffering through some torturous traffic on our way into Kampala, we arrived at Makerere University Business School to see over 100 players already there, fully suited up and running line drills on their own... It was an inspiring site – full equipment lacrosse not just being played, but flourishing right in the heart of Africa. UNREAL! I hopped right in line with them and got my legs and stick going.

I served as the head men's clinician and Hannah and Ann ran the girl's training session. Dugan brought new practice gear back from the states which sent team morale through the roof from the get go. We started with stick work, moved to ground ball play and then on to 1v1's before rolling the balls out for a wild up and down scrimmage.



Their style of play is the exact opposite some recent criticisms of the lower scoring college game. The Cranes (Ugandan Mascot) run up and down the field at a furious pace, full throttle, taking the ball to the hoop every chance they get. INSANE ENTHUSIASM! Their speed stood out, but more than anything the most encouraging takeaway was their overwhelming spirit of joy and excitement these guys received from playing lacrosse... THEIR ENTHUSIASM IS INSANE! They communicate very well out on the field... These guys never shut their mouths and the chanting, banter and trash talk is non-stop. Something I have already come to love about Uganda is the culture of music and dance. People love to sing, chant and dance and the Uganda Lacrosse players are no different – they already have a whole series of chants, dances and songs that have become part of their newly formed traditions. The team spirit is amazing, and as Ann Elliot (Northwestern Assistant Coach) put it, “passion is the most difficult thing to teach and they clearly don’t lack that.”



The men’s scrimmage was a little lopsided with the red squad rolling over the white squad – The women’s game went into overtime and we all ran over to their field with the men’s players picking sides – I’ve honestly never seen so much energy at any practice in my entire life – the guys and girls on both sides were hooting,

hollering and chanting the entire overtime which ended with a huge mob scene at midfield that led to more Ugandan chanting and dancing...

Quick shout outs to Maverik Lacrosse and the Federation of International Lacrosse for supporting my trip (FIL.) The FIL has helped fund my trip, along with Hannah Nielson and Ann Elliot. The camp we are running in Uganda is officially called the D'Accardi Intl. Camp. Uganda was recognized with membership in the FIL this past spring and since that time interest in the game has spread like wildfire. This interest has been fueled by a partnership between Fields of Growth and Makerere University Business School, where the Uganda Lacrosse Union currently runs practices.

Adam Little, Assistant Men's Coach at Vanderbilt is traveling with us to help coach, while also shooting a video documentary on Fields of Growth and the Uganda Lacrosse Union. This documentary should tell a pretty powerful story. Stay tuned!



Anne Elliott and Katy Mohr Coaching The Kampala White Angels

## **National Championship Weekend – Report from Ann Elliott**

**Championship Preview – Pre Practices:** We arrived in Entebbe late last night. We would have arrived earlier but there was a 3 hour long traffic jam (and only one road from Kampala to Entebbe) so we stopped in Kampala for some food and to wait for the traffic to clear. I often think traffic in Chicago is unpredictable and horrible but I think Kampala and Entebbe might have that beat.

After a few hours of sleep, we woke up, had a nice little breakfast and headed to lacrosse practice. We had one last day before the national championship games and we had a lot to go over. I have coached a lot of different ages and levels of lacrosse but this was a different kind of challenge than I was used to. The girls we were coaching were great and wanted to be there, after all if they didn't want to be there they didn't have to show up. However, they had never seen the game of lacrosse before and even though a couple of the other volunteers had been working with them a couple weeks before we arrived they still were having trouble grasping the different concepts. We had seen the girls scrimmage on the first day we were in Kampala so I knew a little of what we were working with. The girls were super aggressive and pretty athletic but lacked the basic skills and knowledge of the game. This was all understandable since lacrosse is a totally new game to them but it created a challenge for us as coaches.

With those challenges in mind we set out on our 5 hour practice. We started with the basics and tried to break down offense and defense from 1v1 up to 7v7 for them. At around 3pm we took a break for lunch after 3 hours of laxing. I was definitely a little tired but I also knew some of the girls had been there since 8am so I couldn't be as tired as they were. After lunch we resumed practice at 4:30pm. By the end of the day we were split into our teams, the Kampala Angels and the Kampala Doves, and putting in a couple of set plays for offense. The girls actually picked up the plays quickly and it was fun to watch.

**Championship Game Day:** The National Championship day had finally arrived. We woke up early and headed to the field while it was still dark out. We had a lot to do before the games could begin but knew it was going to be a special day – The First Ever Lacrosse National Championship in Africa!! Hannah and I began the day by lining the field for the girl's game. I felt like it was winter practice at Northwestern in the indoor. We got this done and the games were ready to start. The men were up first. I was really excited to watch the men's games because we hadn't gotten a chance to see them play at all yet. The first face off was won by the red team and the attacker took the ball straight to net for a diving goal! The first ever goal was scored 15 seconds into the game. The red team went wild in celebration and there was no way you could not smile and cheer. The national championship tournament was underway with a bang!

My team was up 1-0 when the Doves got an 8 meter for a 3 seconds call, fair enough call it might have been 10 seconds. My girls lined up and when the whistle blew the Doves attacker ran in and scored. A few minutes later the Kampala Angels got the goal back and went up 2-1. That would prove to be the game winning goal and the Kampala Angels won the first women's lacrosse championship.





Winning the championship was great but one of my favorite parts of the day was the all-star games where we got to play against them. The boys were up about 6-0 when the Ugandan All Star team scored its first and only goal. The sidelines erupted and no matter what the scoreboard said it was a win for them! The girls took the field next. We were short a few players so a bunch of the Ugandan girls came back to play with us. My favorite goal of the tournament was when Hannah passed to one of the girls in the middle and she scored. It was her first goal and the most exciting for our team. It was so much fun to be out on the field and playing with them.

After the All Star games it was time for the men's national championship. The game was a close one and back and forth for a little bit. You could tell both these teams really wanted to take home the trophy. In the end Chad's team, The Kampala Panthers, won the National Championship and rushed the field. Once they were handed the trophy they continued to take laps around the field with trophy and Ugandan flag in hand. It was such a special moment for everyone involved. Pictures were taken with both the men's and women's championship teams and then one with everyone all together.

I have been lucky enough to be a part of 5 national championships with Northwestern. Obviously, at this point in the Ugandan lacrosse program there is a difference in the level and development of the national championship but at the same time there were so many similarities. The competitiveness and emotion on the field, the joy and celebration after victory, it was all so familiar and fun to share with them. There might still be a lot of work that has to be done for Uganda to participate in the World Championships but today was a celebration of all the work that has been done and how far they have come already. It was a day that will always be part of the Ugandan lacrosse history and I could not have been more excited to be a part of it.

## LOCAL AND INTERNATIONAL PRESS COVERAGE HELP RAISE AWARENESS

One of the huge benefits of the D'Accardi International Clinics were the great exposure the growth of international lacrosse received via media outlets in the USA and in Uganda. Below is an excerpt from an article in the Daily Monitor. The clinics and the National Championships garnered a TV broadcast, radio coverage and articles in the nation's top two newspapers.

### **Uganda's newest sport targets 2014 WC in Colorado**

By Andrew Mwanguhya

Posted Sunday, August 7 2011

There had been talk of a new sport in town but apart from seeking basic knowledge about it via Google, this writer had not come to terms with its entails hitherto – just like most of you.

An evening trip to Makerere University Business School (MUBS) sports grounds on a calm Saturday evening last week, however, banished some of the ignorance. But more shock. Over 50 enthusiastic Ugandan youths are buried behind monstrous helmets, with elbows, chests and shoulders guarded to the marrow. They wielded sticks in postures that would scare away even the most of hard-hearted robbers. The game? Lacrosse.

Lacrosse is a predominantly American sport formed as early as the 12th century by Red Indians. But the name Lacrosse came about after French missionaries developed interest in the then primitive sport and began following and playing it with utmost dedication.

The game is played between two teams, with each side fielding 10 players – a goalkeeper, three defenders, three midfielders and three strikers. Each player carries a stick with a firm grip to enable tight handling. This

stick has a basket-like net that allows players to collect the ball – the size of a tennis ball - to pass and to shoot at goal.

### **Lacrosse birth**

Team members must strive to maneuver through the opponents' territory – enduring checks on your stick and hands to force you drop the ball - until they reach the goalkeeper and score. Side with most goals wins the match. But how did the sport come into the country, anyway?

“An American Lacrosse coach from Notre Dame College and a director of an NGO, Fields of Growth, Kevin Dugan, came to Uganda and mulled over the idea of introducing the sport,” said Uganda Lacrosse Union (USL) general secretary Maurice Sserunkuma. The union was formed to ease operations, according to Sserunkuma. And they wouldn't have got a better ambassador for chairperson than Davis Kamoga, a bronze medallist at the 1996 Summer Olympics in Atlanta, Georgia.

### **Making history**

“That's how we came to MUBS. Here we were welcomed and the administration took on our proposal immediately and the recruitment drive started.” Sserunkuma added: “We have since recruited players, most of them University students here. We decided to take it to colleges first, we shall spread from there. “From here we are going to Muk, Ndejje, UCU...and others.”

On the day for our visit to their training at Mubs, the team, who they call the Cranes, were being instructed by American coaches and players. Michael Bender, who played high school lacrosse in the US and now volunteers for Fields of Work, did the most of coaching and refereeing.

Chad Wiedmaier, 21, and his brother Kiefer, 23, the former - a defender at Princeton University, New Jersey, and the latter - a midfielder at Providence College, played with the Ugandans.

History was made when the Federation of International Lacrosse (FIL) recognized Uganda as the 1<sup>st</sup> country in Africa to have associate membership. The clinic sponsored by the FIL D'Accard International Clinic Grant at MUBS will culminate in the national championships on August 13, the first in Africa, intended to have a sense of which talent holds a future and to create awareness about the sport.

The dream the ULU are carrying for now is to participate in the 2014 World Championships in Denver, Colorado.

“It's my dream, it's everyone's dream here to go to the World Championships,” said current Uganda team skipper Ibrahim Makanda.

The two-month old clinic that has trainings every Monday, Wednesday and Saturday evenings at Mubs grounds has already unearthed four teams – Panthers, Oneonta, Strykers and Warriors.

These will compete against each other on the championships day. Thereafter, a select Ugandan side will face off with an American outfit in an exhibition match to provide a thrilling finale to Uganda's newest sport championships.

