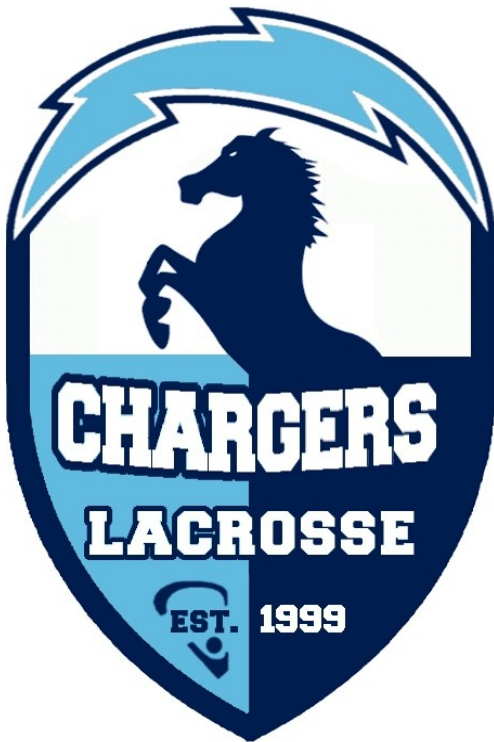


DULUTH HIGH SCHOOL LACROSSE



Independent Provider Agreement Criteria

Duluth Area High School Lacrosse

Lacrosse is the fastest growing team sport nationally and in the State of Minnesota. Nationally, high school lacrosse has grown tremendously in recent years. According to data from the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS), the number of boys' varsity programs has increased 55.0 percent over the last five years and the number of girls' varsity programs has increased 48.4 percent. Both figures are the highest total among high school sports. Overall, high school lacrosse participation has grown from 253,931 participants in 2001 to 624,593 in 2010.

Statewide, lacrosse is the fastest growing sport in Minnesota. US Lacrosse, the sports governing body nationally, has recognized Minnesota as the fastest growing state among its members. Just 10 years ago, there were 23 boys lacrosse teams in the State of Minnesota and none of them were sanctioned by the MSHSL. Today, there are 62 school sponsored lacrosse teams sanctioned by the MSHSL and another 21 club teams in the MBSLA for a total of 83 boys teams. The number of teams in the Minnesota Boys Scholastic Lacrosse Association or MBSLA (of which the Duluth Chargers are a member) is shrinking as the number of teams moving to the MSHSL from the club ranks accelerates.

On the girls side, there were 21 teams 10 years ago and now there are 63 school sponsored girls lacrosse teams in the MSHSL. On the club side, the Northcentral Schoolgirls Lacrosse Association (NSLA), of which the Duluth Nighthawks are members, continues to decline in numbers as more teams become school sponsored and move to the MSHSL. There are only 9 teams competing in the NSLA in 2013.

The Duluth area has had a club lacrosse team for 12 years and has competed statewide for the last 11 years. The Duluth Chargers is an organized, established and successful lacrosse program that has been competing in a well-established league for over a decade. The boys club was founded in Superior, WI and has since become primarily a Minnesota based team with the majority of its players coming from Duluth East High School. Both boys and girls lacrosse is open to any student in ISD 709 as well as students from other area schools that do not offer lacrosse in their district.

Prior to 2007 all lacrosse teams in the State of Minnesota were club teams. In 2007, when lacrosse was elevated to sanctioned MSHSL status, most teams that were in existence then moved to the MSHSL. For whatever reason, Duluth lacrosse has remained a club sport at the high school level while most other teams have moved on to sanctioned status with the MSHSL. **After years of growth and established success, we are now seeking to elevate lacrosse in our Duluth High Schools to sanctioned MSHSL status.**

The boys team has grown tremendously over the years and has had a 7/8 grade team for the last several years along with a 5/6 grade team that began play in 2012. In 2013, the Chargers will add a 3rd and 4th grade level team. The MBSLA has moved from a grade based format to an age based format so this years youth teams will compete at the U15, U13 and U11 levels. Last years Varsity and JV rosters included 47 players. 67% of those players were from the Duluth School District. Last year's 5/6 and 7/8 teams combined, which included 52 players, saw 64% of its players come from the Duluth School District.

The girls lacrosse team had 40 players from grade 7 through grade 12. The majority of these players also came from the Duluth School District. Girls in the younger age levels are allowed to play on boys lacrosse teams, including the Chargers U11 and U13 teams and also in the Duluth YMCA youth lacrosse league.

The boys lacrosse club is very close to reaching a number that will require it to split into two teams to accommodate all of the players. Based on the player numbers described above, numbers are at a point where Duluth School District based Varsity and JV teams could be supported. Again, looking at the numbers on the team from 5th grade to 12th, it appears that the other schools that are part of the club will have the numbers to stand on their own as a team as early as 2014. It would be at this time that it would make sense for the high school age levels to split, form two teams, and the Duluth School District to seek school sponsorship to participate in the MSHSL.

Community Support

Lacrosse is a fast paced sport that is fun to play and to watch. The way the sport combines elements of four other major American sports – basketball, football, hockey, and soccer – has also resonated with players and spectators. Lacrosse will provide another important opportunity for young adults to participate on a team, learn life lessons and stay active in the Spring. With 10 players on the field for each team and subs needed regularly to keep players fresh, the opportunities for active participation and student involvement are there. Lacrosse players come in all shapes and sizes, and smaller, quicker players can be as successful as larger players. Lacrosse is also an excellent sport to participate in to maintain fitness for other sports.

One of the goals of our lacrosse program is to be as inclusive as possible. No players are cut from the team. When lacrosse becomes a school sponsored sport, and if cuts are necessary at the Varsity level, the Chargers Lacrosse Club intends to offer a club lacrosse program at the high school level that would allow everyone to play lacrosse. There are several high school programs in the State that offer both a school sponsored Varsity team and a club lacrosse team.

The Chargers also provide scholarships to players that cannot afford the player fees. Lacrosse can be an expensive sport with gear to purchase as well as the player fee required to support the program. We want everyone to be able to play lacrosse regardless of their economic status. The Chargers Lacrosse Club works hard to acquire grants and fundraise for scholarships that allow anyone to play lacrosse if they want to.

Youth lacrosse is growing in the Duluth area and the foundation of a solid feeder program for area high schools is in place. The Duluth Area YMCA has offered a strong and growing youth lacrosse program for area kids in grades 3 through 8. This coming summer will be the 5th year of the youth lacrosse program. With a strong relationship with the UMD Bulldogs mens lacrosse program, the Y youth lacrosse program is in good hands. UMD players and coaches work with the youth and coach their teams. Duluth has an advantage over other youth and high school lacrosse programs due to our proximity and relationship with the top collegiate lacrosse program in the State of Minnesota. The relationship we have with the University of Minnesota – Duluth will continue to provide our program and area high school teams with excellent coaches.

Last summer, the North Coast Jaxx, the first northern based select travel lacrosse team was also formed. This team will provide something for young area lacrosse players to aspire to and also provide high level coaching and competition. Numbers of youth participating in the spring and summer lacrosse programs

are anticipated to grow and the feeder system for our area high schools will continue to strengthen as well.

Time Requirement

Duluth will field a Varsity, 2 Junior Varsity, and U15, U13 and U11 teams in the Spring of 2013. At the high school level, we anticipate approximately 60 kids participating between 9th through 12th grade, with approximately 65% of these kids coming from the Duluth School District.

The Duluth Varsity boys will play a 13 game schedule plus playoffs and a tournament in Grand Rapids. The Junior Varsity squads will play 17 games between the two teams, plus playoffs and the Grand Rapids tournament. More games are being scheduled for the JV squads as well. Practice will be approximately 2 hours per night, at least 4 days per week starting March 11 and extending until early June depending on how far the team goes in playoffs.

The girls team will also practice at least 4 days per week for 1.5 to 2 hours and play a schedule that includes at least 10 games. **Including practice and game times for three high school boys teams, in addition to the girls team, Duluth lacrosse will exceed the 150 hour time requirement criteria.**

Varsity Letter Requirements for Lacrosse

To be eligible for a Varsity lacrosse letter, a player must:

1. Play in at least **50%** of scheduled Varsity games. "Play" in that sentence means that they must be in the game for more than one shift.
2. Attend all practices and games unless excused by the coach. This means that the coach needs to be contacted (preferably by e-mail or text) prior to the practice, the sooner the better.
3. Honor the game by exhibiting a positive attitude, good sportsmanship, commitment and effort toward team goals.
4. Participate in team fundraising.
5. Return all assigned equipment.
6. If a player does not finish the season for medical reasons, the coaches will determine if a letter should be awarded.
7. The coaches reserve the right to withhold letters from players who display conduct and attitudes detrimental to the team, regardless of participation.
8. All lettering decisions are at the discretion of the coaching staff and athletic department.
9. Players who begin the season on JV can receive Varsity letters if they are moved up during the season. Moving players up will be based on the Coach's discretion.
10. Any player dedicating himself for 4 years of participation in high school lacrosse but does not meet the playing time requirement will be issued a letter at the end of the season.

We are requesting that both boys and girls lacrosse athletes receive letters when they meet the above lettering requirements.

Facilities

The Chargers lacrosse team has historically practiced and played their home games on the turf field at Public Schools Stadium. This facility has always been a selling point for the lacrosse program when scheduling home games, particularly when scheduling teams that come north from the Twin Cities area. Public Schools Stadium and the new facility at Duluth East will provide two of the better facilities for lacrosse in the State of Minnesota.

Having a turf field is very important for a sport like lacrosse that begins in the Spring as soon as the snow melts. While schools with grass fields are struggling to find a dry field on which to practice or play games in April, we are fortunate in Duluth to have two very nice turf stadiums to practice and play games on.

Regional Competition

Presently, the Duluth Chargers participate in the Minnesota Boys Scholastic Lacrosse Association (MBSLA). In 2013, this league is composed of 4 Divisions (North, South, East and West) and 21 teams. Duluth competes in the MBSLA North with Proctor, Grand Rapids, Brainerd, Fargo and Grand Cities (Grand Forks, ND).

Looking to the future and school sponsorship as a varsity level team competing in the Minnesota State High School League (MSHSL), regional competition broadens. While the sport is growing outside the Twin Cities metro area, the greatest concentration of MSHSL teams remains south of Duluth. As an MSHSL team, Duluth could participate as an Independent team as St. Cloud Tech does. The MSHSL Suburban East conference includes more northerly suburban schools (Forest Lake, White Bear Lake, Roseville) as does the MSHSL Northwest Suburban conference (Andover, Anoka, Blaine, Centennial, Elk River). Along with St. Cloud Tech, these teams would provide the nearest competition in MSHSL lacrosse. A Duluth based MSHSL team would likely compete in Section 7 with Andover High School, Blaine High School, Centennial High School, Champlin Park High School, Coon Rapids High School, Forest Lake High School, and Coop: 433 that includes Spring Lake Park High School (HOST) and St. Anthony Village High School

Duluth could also continue to find games against area club lacrosse teams like Grand Rapids and Proctor in addition to the remaining school districts competing as a co-op with the Chargers (Hermantown, Marshall, Superior, Esko, Cloquet).

In addition, a move to the MSHSL by the Duluth School District would likely encourage other area club teams (Grand Rapids, Hermantown/Marshall/Esko, Proctor) to move toward school sponsorship as well, thus forming a competitive northern division in the MSHSL. As the sport continues to grow, other northern teams including, St. Cloud North and Brainerd would also look toward school sponsorship. In addition, adding lacrosse as a school sponsored sport in Duluth may provide the catalyst for other northern Minnesota schools to add the sport as well.

The girls lacrosse team competes in the Northcentral Schoolgirls Lacrosse Association (NSLA). As mentioned earlier, this league is shrinking as only 9 teams still compete as club lacrosse teams in the State of Minnesota. The remaining girls lacrosse teams compete on school sponsored varsity level teams in the MSHSL.

The Duluth Nighthawks will compete against Brainerd, St. Cloud North, Rocori, Grand Rapids, Mankato, Monticello, Shakopee and St. Paul in 2013. The girls schedule is still being determined for 2013.

With the majority of the girls coming from the Duluth School District, it is anticipated that a Duluth School District team could be supported as early as next year. Section 7 which includes Andover High School, Blaine High School, Centennial High School, Champlin Park High School, Coon Rapids High School, Forest Lake High School, Spring Lake Park High School and Coop: 342 Osseo/Park Center would be the logical section for a Duluth based team to compete in. Again, a move by the Duluth School District would likely encourage the other northern school, Grand Rapids, to make the move toward school sponsorship as well. Soon, there may be no competitive club league to compete in as the girls teams all make the move to the MSHSL.

Playing in established leagues with set schedules and publicly competing with other teams in their respective leagues for Division and State Championships satisfies the criteria for public contests, performances and/or competition and level of performance.

Coaches Availability

As was alluded to earlier in this document, the Duluth area is fortunate to have access to the number one collegiate lacrosse program in the State at UMD. Many fine lacrosse players and men and women have graduated from the UMD program and gone on to coach at Minnesota high schools and colleges including Duluth. The Chargers lacrosse club recently hired a new head Varsity lacrosse coach. The club was fortunate to have 8 highly qualified candidates apply and a highly recommended former UMD lacrosse player was hired. In all, the Chargers coaching staff includes four former UMD lacrosse players. The girls lacrosse team also takes advantage of the successful girls lacrosse program at UMD and includes two former UMD players as coaches.

All of our coaches must abide by and sign a Code of Conduct for MBSLA Coaches prior to the season. Players must also read and sign a Code of Conduct prior to the season. The MBSLA Code of Conduct required of our coaches is nearly identical and patterned after the MSHSL Code of Conduct. All of our coaches are also at least US Lacrosse Level 1 certified and require background checks. Level 1 certification through US Lacrosse requires a 7 hour clinic in addition to an online course.

Cost of Boys Program

Primary costs would include transportation, coaches stipend, officials and uniforms and equipment.

Costs:

Transportation: 13 game schedule (6 home/7 away)

Transportation \$700 per away game x 7 = \$4,900

Stipend:

Head Coach \$3,300

Assistant Coach \$1,700 = \$5,000

Officials:

6 home games at \$160 per game = \$1,000

Uniforms/Equipment:

Start-up costs \$3,000

Maintenance/Paint \$500

Equipment \$1000 = \$4,500

TOTAL = \$15,400

Revenue:

Player Fee:

60 players @ \$250 = \$15,000

Fundraising:

= \$5,000

TOTAL = \$20,000

Gate/Admission:

Will go into the lacrosse fund to pay for:

Score Clock/Announcer

Site Manager

Security Person

Equipment

- If funding does not meet expenses, the lacrosse program will be responsible for funding the difference. The above program cost scenario removes any cost from ISD #709 and would be the basis for the first years of the sponsored lacrosse program operating as an independently funded

sports program with full school sponsorship and competing in the MSHSL. Lacrosse players would be responsible for purchasing their own gear as they presently do as a club lacrosse program. Historically lacrosse has been a sport in which players have been responsible for purchasing their own equipment even in a fully sponsored sport environment. Additional fundraisers would be planned to help players pay for their own equipment if they could not afford it.

Cost of Girls Program

Primary costs would include transportation, coaches stipend, officials and uniforms and equipment.

Costs:

Transportation: 13 game schedule (6 home/7 away)

Transportation \$700 per away game x 7 = \$4,900

Stipend:

Head Coach \$3,300

Assistant Coach \$1,700 = \$5,000

Officials:

6 home games at \$160 per game = \$1,000

Uniforms/Equipment:

Start-up costs \$2,000

Maintenance/Paint \$500

Equipment \$600 = \$3,100

TOTAL = \$14,000

Revenue:

Player Fee:

40 players @ \$250 = \$10,000

Fundraising:

= \$5,000

TOTAL = \$15,000

Addition of Lacrosse

Lacrosse is the oldest game in North America, played by the Natives of this continent for centuries. Because of this special significance, lacrosse has always had a code of honoring the game. The sport is one where sportsmanship, respect of your opponent and officials are critical components. Teams meet prior to the game to shake hands and meet again after, and then cheer for their opponent at the end win or lose. Officials are addressed as sir. The lessons learned from the game of lacrosse, the friendships, discipline, teamwork, leadership and achievements are greater than any monetary concern that might hold the program back from its full potential. **We recommend that lacrosse become a fully sponsored MSHSL sport in the Duluth School District.**

Proposal to Sponsor Lacrosse in the Duluth School District

Timeline:

- 2012-2013 – Cooperative Club sport – independent provider agreement, independently funded**
- 2013-2014 – Cooperative Club sport – independent provider agreement, independently funded**
- 2014-2015 – School sponsored sport in Duluth School District, independently funded**
- 2015-2016 - School sponsored sport in Duluth School District, independently funded**
- 2016-2017 – School sponsored sport, funded by ISD 709**

Rationale: As a club sport the first two years (this season and next) the team could be composed of players that do not go to a Duluth area school as it is now. A review of the current boys roster reveals that Duluth public schools could field Varsity and JV teams as early as this season. However, if the Duluth players did leave the club team this season, there would not be enough players from the other participating schools (Duluth Marshall, Cloquet, Hermantown, Superior, Esko) to field a Varsity level team. In our current proposal, we are planning to remain as a club co-op team for the 2013-2014 season as well. It is proposed that the co-op split prior to the 2014-2015 season into a Duluth based team and area based team. This would be the logical time for the Duluth School District to sponsor lacrosse and possibly for the other schools as well, and will provide the area schools time to plan and grow their numbers.

The fee structure once the lacrosse program becomes a school sponsored sport, should be consistent with the fee structure for other district sports. Fees for football are presently \$235 while fees for hockey are presently \$500. The family limit is \$1,000 (\$1,200 for

hockey). Sports may charge a higher fee but the additional charges must be clearly documented and justified.

Obvious benefits and cost savings of school sponsorship would be the use of school district facilities for practices and games. Other benefits would include field maintenance and painting, district administrative support and additional fundraising opportunities.

Assumption: Based on player numbers and support from the athletic program, the school sponsored lacrosse program would be a Duluth School District team. The assumption is that the school sponsored lacrosse team would be composed only of Duluth School District players. This would mean that there would be two teams formed, one Duluth team and one team composed of players from the remaining schools – Duluth Marshall, Cloquet, Hermantown, Esko and Superior. If the Duluth based team were to be school sponsored and play in the MSHSL by the 2014-2015 season, the remaining area team would have the decision to stay in the MBSLA or move forward with school sponsorship of a co-op based varsity level MSHSL team.

Duluth Nighthawks:

Rationale: The girls lacrosse program will also seek sanctioning as a Duluth School District sponsored sport. At present, the timeline will be consistent with the boys timeline for becoming a school sponsored sport. It may be of even greater importance that the girls program moves forward with school sponsorship and sanctioning since girls club programs are all moving to the MSHSL and there may not be other club lacrosse teams to play in the very near future. Currently there are only 9 girls club lacrosse teams remaining in the State of Minnesota.

Assumption: The boys and girls lacrosse teams will coordinate and move forward with school sponsorship together. If the girls team will also be solely a team sponsored by the Duluth School District, then it will be important to determine if there will be enough girls from area schools to form their own club team or move towards sponsorship at their schools. If there are not enough girls from area schools to form their own team, the girls program may seek to allow those girls from schools that do not offer lacrosse to play on the Duluth sponsored team.

Player numbers in the girls program are currently not at the same level as the boys program. The Duluth Nighthawks fully support the move toward school sponsorship for the boys program even if they currently do not possess the numbers at present to move forward with sponsorship at the present time. The girls agree with the timeline for sponsorship put forth in this document and are prepared to move along with the present timeline as soon as their numbers support a Duluth High School girls lacrosse program.

Disposition of the Club once a Team is school sponsored:

Rationale: Once a team is school sponsored within the Duluth School District, the Chargers board will

have to determine how to proceed with the club. Along with the Nighthawks and area youth lacrosse programs, a Duluth area lacrosse association has been proposed. School sponsored Varsity high school lacrosse teams would not be under the umbrella of a local athletic association like the proposed Duluth area lacrosse association. A lacrosse association if it were to be developed at present, would encompass the high school boys club teams (Chargers), the girls club team (Nighthawks), the middle school club teams, and the youth programs.

Assumption: The newly formed school sponsored Varsity and JV lacrosse teams would no longer be part of the Chargers club and would also be separate from a future Duluth area lacrosse association. The Duluth area lacrosse association would encompass the Chargers high school club team, the MBSLA based middle school program, the girls club team (the area schools that remain after Duluth separates and becomes a school sponsored sport), and the youth program. The association would continue to operate to develop youth lacrosse opportunities and provide the feeder system for all high school lacrosse teams in the Duluth area. Even when all of the high school lacrosse programs in the Duluth area become school sponsored, the association would continue to operate a high school club team, their middle school club teams through the MBSLA and the youth programs.

Steps to School Sponsorship:

- Complete independent provider agreement with Duluth School District and other school districts that are part of the Duluth-Superior Chargers lacrosse club. Have a board member or parent representing one of those school districts take on that task.
- Meet with Nighthawks to coordinate moving forward with school sponsorship for both boys and girls lacrosse in Duluth.
- Present proposal for school sponsorship to Duluth-Superior Chargers board and Duluth Nighthawks board for approval.
- Finalize timeline and begin preparing for split of the high school level boys and girls lacrosse programs into Duluth School District based teams and area based teams.
- Formally present proposal for Duluth School District sponsorship of boys and girls lacrosse to Duluth East and Duluth Denfeld Athletic Directors. Seek formal approval from Athletic Directors.
- Explore school sponsorship opportunities at other area high schools.
- Prepare proposal for the Duluth School Board presentation.
- Present argument to Duluth School Board that lacrosse should be a fully sanctioned and school sponsored MSHSL sport in Duluth.