



OWLL News

WHO WE ARE:

Ottawa West Little League (OWLL), is a community-based, volunteer-driven, non-profit organization dedicated to providing both House and Competitive level baseball for boys and girls (aged 4 to 19), as well as coaching, umpiring, and other volunteer opportunities for community members of all ages. We focus on developing in our players the qualities of citizenship, discipline, teamwork and physical well-being through the game of baseball.

OWLL is part of the Little League program governed by Little League International. Little League Canada is one of its regions. OWLL plays in Ontario District 2, with teams from Kanata and East Nepean.



Fall wrap up and annual general meeting

October brought the end to our fall seasons, and preparation for winter and spring ball. There is not a lot of baseball that happens in the fall months, but there is a lot of work behind the scenes to prepare for next year.

Our AGM was held at the end of October, and we reviewed the operational aspects of the league, elected some new and returning board members, and handed out some awards to very deserving individuals. In this issue we will share some of the highlights, starting with president Sarah Futterer's opening remarks:

"After a full year of "presidenting" under my feet, 2023 has been another exceptional year for our league. It is apparent, after sending 3 of 5 all star teams past district play this year, and having our largest number of spring players ever, that Ottawa West Little League has established itself as a premier Little League program in Ontario and beyond. Not only does our executive work incredibly well together embracing new ideas and challenges, but we have grown every level of our programs so that all families can learn, have fun and develop. We have also continued to invest in 4 seasons of baseball programming accessible to all levels, hosted amazing local tournaments and Ontario provincials, as well as community building and connecting events like hosting the Stanley Cup. Building, growing and expanding is not something that can happen without the amazing support and energy of our volunteers. Please think about joining us and see how you can be a part of the OWLL community."

IMPORTANT DATES:

- NOVEMBER 8: REGISTRATION FOR WINTER BALL OPENS
- JANUARY (VARIOUS DATES): WINTER BALL TRAINING STARTS
- FEBRUARY 1 (APPROX): SPRING BALL REGISTRATION OPENS
- APRIL: INDOOR SORTOUTS FOR ROOKIE AND HIGHER DIVISIONS FOR SPRING BALL
- APRIL (TBD): UMPIRE TRAINING
- APRIL (TBD): COACH TRAINING

**WE THE
WEST**
BASEBALL

Important dates for 2024*
Please pencil in the following dates

- Spring Registration begins mid-February 2024 via website
- Saturdays and Sundays in April - sort outs for rookie and higher for spring ball
- May 1st city of Ottawa opens fields 🙌
- May 15th, OWLL can name tournament teams.
- Pete Loyen tournament (minor and major aged) May 31 - June 2, 2024
- Senior districts (ENLL hosts) approx. June 26-30, 2024
- Junior districts (KLL hosts) approx. July 11-15, 2024
- Major districts (OWLL hosts) approx. July 12-15, 2024
- Minor districts (ENLL hosts) approx.. July 19-22, 2024
- Minor provincials (OWLL hosts) approx. end July to early August, 2024
- Rookie Tournament July 19-21, 2024 (Frank Ryan Park)

***note: all dates are approximate, based on available information.**

2023 AGM wrap up

REGISTRATION – Spring 2023 registration numbers were up over last year, slightly higher than our pre-covid peak. Summer and fall registrations dropped a bit compared to last year, again to numbers approximating pre-covid. Winter ball numbers are not yet available, as registration has not yet opened.

PLAYER AND COACH DEVELOPMENT – 2023 was a great for our coach development and our player development. We saw excellent progress on the fields and continued to improve our coach development programs and tools. Looking forward to 2024, we hope to grow our coach development team, develop age level specific skill level expectations and development plans, offer more support for our early stage coaches - rookie and minor, and enhance our pitcher and catcher development programs.

OPERATIONS – The Twins had a very successful year on the field that included a rookie A team winning the city championship, the minor all-stars making it to the finals at provincials, and the major all-stars qualifying for nationals! Our parent and coach surveys showed that overall families and coaches are happy with the league and how the programs are run, but that there are a few things that we can work on in the new year.

ADMIN – TeamSnap was once again used widely by teams in all four seasons, and we will continue to budget for it. For uniforms, we increased our jersey stocks to accommodate our growing junior and girls programs, added girls program hats, coach polos, and dryfits for all summer players. We are looking into offering a more permanent ‘storefront’ for parents and players to purchase OWLL swag. In 2024, we will need to invest in new hats for spring and summer. Photo day was offered to our tball and rookie players this year, with slots available for our older divisions on request basis. The summer banquet followed the same format as last year, and was well received.

UIC AND UMPIRE SCHEDULER – We had many new youth and adult umpires sign up to join our core of returning umpires, resulting in 47 umpires who officiated 706 house league and interlock games (this does not include the umpires who were asked to officiate district and provincials games, or those who mentored new officials as part of our new mentoring program). Next year, we hope to add some on-field training to our spring training, have more mentoring by senior officials, and offer an advanced clinic for umpires chosen for Little League tournaments.

FINANCIAL – OWLL’s registration fees are responsible for the bulk of our revenue, with spring season accounting for almost half of the revenue, and the remainder coming from summer, fall, and winter. Fundraising and tournaments also contribute to the overall revenue. Expenditures are mainly split between uniform needs, winter facility rentals, field rentals, and umpire fees, with smaller amounts allocated to equipment, Little League fees, field maintenance, trophies and awards, website, insurance, and fees. In 2024, OWLL has planned for a major capital expense with the work at Pinecrest senior, and has a wish list that includes new tarps, a scoreboard, maintenance equipment, speakers, and additional bunkers.



WINTER BALL

Registration will open **November 8, 2023** on our website. Winterball is a skills training program that runs January to March. The purpose of this program is to give players the opportunity to work on their baseball skills over the winter months at Sir Robert Borden High School, and the Sensplex. The program will start in January (various dates).

Our winterball program is run by volunteers (with guidance from experienced winterball coaches!) If you are interested in helping (especially for the girls programs and the rookie to major age groups), please contact [Mike McLean](#). Providing we have sufficient volunteers, we plan to divide the programs into different age groups as follows:

Girls rookie & minor, ages 7-10, Sunday mornings at SRB

Girls major, ages 11-12, Sunday mornings at SRB

Girls junior, ages 13-15, Sunday mornings at SRB

Co-ed rookie, ages 7-8, Sunday afternoons at SRB

Co-ed minor-major, ages 9-12, Sunday afternoons at SRB

Co-ed junior-senior (first year) training, ages 13-15, Saturdays at Sensplex

Costs will vary by division, and be available on the registration form.

Due to limited space, priority is given to players in OWLL boundary.



2023 AGM wrap up (continued)

FIELDS AND CAPITAL PROJECTS – OWLL has made significant updates to local fields in the last three years (batting cage, Pinecrest major, Pinecrest Junior). This year we improved the dugouts at Britannia and laid the groundwork for upcoming work at Pinecrest senior (2024), and hopefully Ainsley (2025). In 2024, we are also planning for a new scoreboard, replacement tarps, and new maintenance equipment. We are looking for a new facilities lead to shadow our current lead for the 2024 senior diamond project, and take over the role at it's completion.

PROGRAMS – *Tball*: Bigger program again this year, and we will be adding more fields/nights next year. *Rookie*: continues to grow and get stronger, will run with 2 games a week + practices again next year. *Minor*: we had a lot of new families and coaches this year, will add more focus on developing coaches as well as players in 2024. *Major*: many new families and coaches here too, hoping to add another practice/game field for spring. *Junior/senior*: we had a robust program again this year, including many new to baseball junior aged players so we will look to help support coaches and these players in the coming year.

GIRLS BASEBALL – Our girls programs continued to see growth city wide this year. There were also several successful exhibition games (including the major and junior showcase games during major provincials) and a fantastic junior girls tournament to end the season. Moving forward, we will continue to tweak the rules to more closely match the co-ed rules, plan to lengthen the season til the end of July in 2024, and look to offer two teams at each division from rookie to major.

ELECTIONS – We held elections for a number of positions on the Board. Sarah Futterer (President), Frances Chan (Registrar), and Charleen Glover (Treasurer) were all re-elected, and Greg Milks (VP Admin) Sara Krenosky (several roles!) and Justin Merrlles (Fall Convenor) were welcomed to the board! We do have some positions open, please email president@owll.ca for more information.



Warren Stone Junior Umpire Award

The Warren Stone award is presented to the junior umpire who displays the most commitment, willingness to learn and enjoyment of the game. Warren Stone was one of our most committed Umpire-in-Chiefs and was always around to help and teach young umpires. He was well-respected by all families and full of good humour. Warren's family continued to be part of our baseball community even after his passing

This year's recipient is Lucas Gray-Donald! Lucas is a second year umpire who is dedicated to umpiring. He is very knowledgeable of the rules for all divisions, always keen to learn and improve, and has been very helpful mentoring our newest umpires. He was also chosen to umpire at the local district tournaments this year, a testament to his abilities as an umpire. Congratulations Lucas!



AGM Honourees

Curtis Johnston "For the Love of the Game" Award

This award is donated by the Johnston family in memory of their son, Curtis who passed away in 2016. Curtis was a liver transplant recipient at 9 months of age and his family are active supporters of the [Be A Donor](#) campaign. Curtis played baseball with CFR, OWLL, the Ottawa Royals and Nepean High School. This award is presented to a first or second year Minor player who has shown enthusiasm for baseball as well as developed significantly over the course of the season.



This year's recipient is Aaron Aquinos! Aaron joined OWLL in winterball this year, having never played organized baseball before. A highly coachable player, he quickly learned the game, including baseball's rules and tactics. He remained committed to baseball through summer play and into the fall, joining and thriving in our fall prospects program. Congratulations Aaron!!

Volunteer(s) of the year awards

This award is given to the Ottawa West volunteer(s) in recognition of their efforts to improve the league overall. The recipients have shown dedication and a willingness to help out where ever needed for the betterment of the league.



We presented the awards for 2022 and 2023 at the meeting, and all four of our recipients went above and beyond for the players, families, umpires, the league overall. OWLL is a much stronger league thanks to the contributions of:

Steph Futterer (2022)

Justin Merrlles (2022)

Luc Hamel (2023)

Rob Dowell (2023, *not pictured*)

Congratulations and thank you all!