



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.



2024 wrap-up and annual general meeting

We were fortunate to have a long and sunny fall session, with some groups continuing late in the month. We have now started preparation for winter and spring ball. There is not a lot of baseball that happens in the late 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:

"2024 was another amazing year at OWLL. We saw our greatest number of spring participants, hosted successful tournaments, and worked hard to showcase skill, dedication, and great teamwork. Much of what makes our league strong is volunteers that come together to make sure that everything can run as smoothly as it needs to. Whether coaching a team, weeding a field, scorekeeping, distributing supplies and equipment, being a part of the volunteer team, all of these roles are key to success for our players and families.

Our team recently held a meeting to run through our successes and areas to work on from the '24 seasons. I was thrilled to hear where members felt we had shone: custom jerseys, amazing minor provincials, communications improvement, in person umpire training, flexibility of spring coaches, merchandise and many more.

In 2025 we will focus extra effort on more support/training for coaches and in turn players, how to maximize our facilities and care for equipment/materials, and increasing our volunteer base."

IMPORTANT DATES:

- **NOVEMBER 10: REGISTRATION FOR WINTER BALL OPENS**
- **JANUARY (VARIOUS DATES): WINTER BALL TRAINING STARTS**
- **FEBRUARY 1 (APPROX): SPRING BALL REGISTRATION OPENS**
- **APRIL: INDOOR SORT OUTS FOR ROOKIE AND HIGHER DIVISIONS FOR SPRING BALL**
- **APRIL (TBD): UMPIRE TRAINING**
- **APRIL (TBD): COACH TRAINING**



Important dates for 2024-2025*

Please pencil in the following dates

- Winter registration opens Nov. 10, 2024 via website
- Spring Registration begins early February 2025 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) June 6-8, 2025
- **NEW** Junior tournament (TBD)
- Senior districts (KLL hosts) approx. June 22-27, 2025
- Junior districts (OWLL hosts) approx. July 3 - 9, 2025
- Intermediate districts (TBD)
- Major districts (ENLL hosts) approx. July 9-15, 2025
- Minor districts (KLL hosts) approx.. July 17-23, 2025
- Rookie Tournament July 19-21, 2025 (Frank Ryan Park)

***note: all dates are approximate, based on available information. We will update as we get confirmation.**

AGM Wrap up

REGISTRATION – Spring, summer, and fall registration numbers were the highest yet for each season. Fantastic participation growth has allowed us to increase the number of teams fielded and offer new programs, like our U11 house program in summer. Winter ball numbers are not yet available, as registration has not yet opened.

PLAYER AND COACH DEVELOPMENT - 2024 winter training was a success for all groups, our offseason coach development sessions were also well received, and fall development program was strong this year, with a good mix of training and exhibition games across all levels, helped by the summer-like weather. Looking ahead, we want to be improving the program in the same way we ask players to improve, using feedback from our survey and existing coaches. For 2025 we look grow coach development team, age specific skill level expectations and development plans, focus on support for our early stage coaches, and continue pitcher and catcher development.

OPERATIONS - In 2024, our uniform committee redesigned our caps for spring and summer. We were fortunate to have four large sponsorships that enabled us to provide dryfits for players to keep at rookie - major & girls. We also provided dryfits to serve as jerseys for summer ball. We saw some on-field success at all levels. Looking forward to 2025, the ops team looks to design new caps, standardize all star jersey across levels, secure new and returning sponsorship, and ensure teams and fields are properly equipped for the spring and summer seasons.

ADMIN – We hosted a successful photo day for our Tball to major teams this year - the new photographer had the teams photos completed quickly and was very organized. Our banquet was again hosted the event outside at Pinecrest fields. It was well attended, the weather was great and the feedback from parents and coaches was that it was a great venue and allowed us to host our huge number of summer players. Looking forward, we anticipate that we will reopen the OWLL merchandise store with our new merch leads, we will transition from TeamSnap to SportsHeadz, and will order new hats and some coach shirts for spring and summer.

UMPIRES - We were able do our in-person training for our new and returning umpires this spring. This year our umpires worked at all of our house league and interlock games from minor to GOBL. We had 52 active on-field officials officiate a total of 800 on-field games (this does not include the games done as part of the Little League tournaments). Looking forward to 2025, we hope to add an on-field exhibition game to work on mechanics and positioning, more mentoring by senior officials for beginning/newer umpires, continued “Rule of the Week” postings on District 2 discord server, advanced clinic for those umpires chosen for LL Tournament, and a possible updated platform for game scheduling.



WINTER BALL

OWLL will once again be offering winter ball programs to both our co-ed and girls players. We anticipate offering programs from rookie through to senior divisions. As is always the case, our programs are coach dependent. If we have the coaches, we can offer sessions at the various age levels. If you are interested in coaching fall ball, email OttawaWestDev@gmail.com / Registrar@gmail.com



Winter ball 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, Monarch and the Sensplex. The program will start in January (various dates).

Watch your email or our social media channels for information on our registration – **opening November 10th!**

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

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



FIELDS AND CAPITAL PROJECTS - In May 2024 we undertook a revamp of Pinecrest senior and are very happy with the eventual results of the upgrade. The city has indicated it will not support upgrades to Pinecrest minor/rookie/t-ball as the field space may get damaged with any future Pinecrest recreation centre renovations/expansion. We also added yellow bins to many fields to store our umpire gear to keep it clean and undamaged this year. We will be looking at further expenditures on “field bins” in order to keep equipment undamaged. Looking forward, we had earmarked both Ainsley and Hanlon as possible fields to upgrade but, we will be focusing instead on existing infrastructure and focus on small dollar high impact changes to many diamonds in 2025. Frank Ryan fieldhouse, where we have stored our equipment/uniforms since the 70s, is slated to be torn down in the next 12-24 months. The city will no longer be supporting community sports groups with storage spaces so we will be required to look at budgeting safe and accessible storage in our 2025 and beyond budget projections.

CO-ED PROGRAM REPORTS – *T-ball*: we filled both spring and summer sessions this year and eliminated pre-rookie to allow 6 year old players to enter rookie if they are ready. Look to add more fields next year. *Rookie*: continues to grow, we will be running 2 games plus practices again next year and will focus on a fun day to end spring and our tournament in summer. *Minor*: lots of new families this year. We will continue to build on supporting new coaches to strengthen the program. Went to finals at minor provincials! *Major*: Largest collection of players yet with ten teams in spring and five in summer. We are looking to add fields to continue growth and development. *Junior/Senior/GOBL*: We fielded 6 junior/2 senior/1 GOBL teams in the spring and 3 junior/1 senior teams in the summer. We are still getting a lot of new to baseball players at this level and are seeing expansion at the junior level so we will look to support coaches more, and add fields.

GIRLS PROGRAM - Continued increase in girl participants city wide (over 400 girls in Ottawa). we again ran a spring/summer interlock from May 1- mid July, ending in city wide championships! “All star” teams were formed at major and junior to play tournaments. All star major girls won the girls major division at Tokessy and our all star junior girls were invited to play in a televised showcase game during major Canadians. Fall ball was a success, including some new to baseball players. Looking to 2025 we see tiering at all levels, more exhibition games and tournament opportunities.

ELECTIONS - We would like to welcome the following folks who have committed to volunteer and support OWLL in new roles: Chris Wilson, VP Player/Coach; Tyler Cox, VP Programs; Krista Gray-Donald, VP Communications; Eric Santor, Equipment; Liz Shouldice, Volunteers; Jessie Lu & Britt Steinbrenner, Merchandise. Thank you to outgoing members Mike McLean, Craig Alain, Stephen Harrod, Sara Krenosky, and Kyla McCandie Glustien. We are so grateful for your contributions to Ottawa West!!