

# 'Bellies win a wild ride

## Large crowd takes in WLA match-up

The Western Lacrosse Association couldn't have hoped for a better game to showcase the action and intensity of lacrosse to the 2,649 fans who picked the New Westminster Salmonbellies and Maple Ridge Burrards over the Dallas Stars and New Jersey Devils.

The scoring was tight all the way through, with the Salmonbellies always just a few goals ahead of the Burrards, whose offence was led by Toronto Rock National Lacrosse League player Chris Gill. But even Gill could only manage to squeak four goals past the 'Bellies all-star goaltender Matt Disher to end the game at 11-10 for New Westminster.

"I'm starting to feel I'm getting more and more into it," says Disher. "At the start it felt like the team didn't need me to win. After a while I slid into it and it becomes fun."

It's understandable why Disher would be having fun now, this was the fourth win in a row for the 'Bellies and the second win against the Burrards in the space of a single week, with Disher's ferocious goaltending playing a hefty part in each victory.

"We like battling it out with this team. They are a hard-nosed team, they grind and get under your skin."

One face on the 'Bellies Saturday night that may have been familiar to some Prince George fans was local product, Quinn Smethurst, playing for his first season in the WLA and his first game in front of a hometown crowd.

"At first I was a bit nervous and I was getting razzed by the guys pretty good.



The Salmonbellies, dark uniforms, and the Burrards treated the PG crowd to a physical game Saturday night at the Multiplex. JOHN MCKENZIE/FREE PRESS

But a shift or two and it goes away. You've got to block it out and just play," says Smethurst.

Smethurst has his lacrosse roots in PG, playing minor lacrosse here when he was young and competing in the President's Cup in Prince George in 1995. Afterwards he played two years of junior lacrosse on the Coquitlam Adanacs, a team that was, at the time, coached by the current Salmonbellies coach Frank Nielsen. It was Nielsen who brought Smethurst over to the Salmonbellies.

"He's an awesome coach, he was the coach of Team Canada and the Buffalo Bandits in the NHL," says Smethurst. Nielsen is equally enthusiastic about Smethurst and praised him for keeping a cool head in front of the hometown crowd.

"He had to be nervous. WLA rookie in the league, going to play lacrosse in front of his hometown and with family in the

crowd. Some guys would be out there and too nervous to throw the ball, but Quinn did good and I'm happy for him."

It wouldn't be surprising to find out that all of the lacrosse players at the Multiplex that night may have had a touch of nervousness in front of the PG crowd. At 2,649 it was easily the biggest lacrosse crowd of the year says Nielsen.

"If we could get a crowd like this down at Queen's Park, we'd be happy."

And Quinn may be getting the chance to show off for his home crowd again if plans for a WLA franchise in Prince George work out. But although Smethurst would relish the chance to play at the Multiplex again and visit his home, he doesn't have any plans to try and make the move to a Prince George team.

"It would be one of the nicest buildings in the league, it's loud and Prince George has good fans. But I'm happy with the 'Bellies and happy where I am."

# Slow start, hot finish for Grays

Maybe it was the four straight victories their last time out that lulled the Grays into a false sense of security last weekend when they travelled south to take on Kamloops on their home ground. They lost their first game of the four-game series 4-3, a loss that Gray's coach John Kazakoff pins on a lackluster offensive effort from the road-weary Grays.

"We didn't hit the ball at all. It could have had to do with driving down all day Saturday. We were a bit stiff getting off the bus. Maybe we looked at where Kamloops was in the standings and decided it was going to be an easy game."

But losing that first game shook the dust of the road off the Grays and they were back in familiar form by the next game of Saturday's double-header. "I think the guys realized that even though Kamloops hadn't gotten a lot of games they were there to play," says Kazakoff.

And once the Grays' pitching machine of Simon Stoner, Ryan Lupul, Terry Bonnar and Adam Walton was cranked up and the Grays started to rack up some hits, it proved to be the end of Kamloops' brief winning streak.

"He was in control the whole game," says Kazakoff of Lupul, who was recently drafted by the major league Texas Rangers. "There wasn't any question that he was going to lose it in any way."

The next two games went like clockwork, with the Grays winning 7-2 and 10-0.

"So far we've played teams with losing records. We'll be finding out who we are in the next few weeks. Kelowna is going to come on strong. We're going to start hitting some of the teams in the top half of the standings and that will test us."

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## Bon Voyage Outdoors...

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The weather was beautiful this past weekend and hopefully everyone had a chance to get out and enjoy it. Char fishing has been picking up over the last couple of weeks and although many fish are still being caught in the top forty feet of water, many anglers are having success at one hundred feet of water and lower.

Thursday was opening day on the Stellako and although the water is extremely low and the cool water temperatures kept bug activity at a minimum, many anglers had successful outings. Crooked River is another good bet for anglers looking to wet their lines on moving water. Small caddis and Adam's patterns in sizes 12-16 are a good bet for the Crooked, while many anglers were successful on the Stellako using assorted bead head nymphs and various caddis emerger patterns.

Decent numbers of Chinook are now showing up in the Kitimat River and by the end of the month the season should be in full swing. Four years ago the Kitimat saw one of its best Chinook returns in years, so this year we'll hopefully see a similar scenario.

Remember to bring in your best fishing picture for the June "Wall of Fame" contest and have a chance at a fifty dollar Bob's Sports gift certificate. Also, remember to come in and check out our sale flyer and get ready for Father's Day!!

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