



2011, what a year it was for the game of Softball and the Ontario Intercollegiate Women's Fastpitch Association (OIWFA). Before we get started, I want to encourage you to follow us on Twitter @OIWFA and on Facebook at www.facebook.com/oiwfa. We are excited to join the world of social media and look forward to providing you with updates not only for the OIWFA but in the game of Softball as well.

Celebrating our 10th Anniversary in 2011, I believe we have shown the world of University Sport that we can and will continue to provide female athletes with the opportunity to play competitive Softball in Ontario while gaining a grade "A" education. Over these ten years, our student-athletes have turned into doctors, teachers, police officers, managers, coaches and beyond. In a time in which our sport is facing adversity from the Olympic Games and diminishing numbers, we have proved we can maintain our high participation numbers and remain as one of the highest participated female sports at the University level in Canada.

This season, the Western Mustangs illustrated why they are the most successful programs in the country as the first team to defend their Provincial title in 10 years which was streamed live on the internet for the first time ever. Pete Lemon's squad also proclaimed their first National title in Windsor on Thanksgiving weekend. The 'Stangs coasted to their National title allowing just one run over five games, defeating the University of Calgary Dinos 6-0 in the gold medal contest. Western joins the Laurier Golden Hawks as the only Ontario teams to have captured the National title. The Provincial crown would not be as easy for the Mustangs as they defeated University of Toronto 2-1 in extra innings on top of some other close contests that threatened the Mustangs hopes to repeat. This was the fourth Provincial title in the past six years for Western.

In a "transition year", Scott Searle's University of Ottawa defied the odds and had one of their best regular season finishes in recent years. Aided by the arm of fifth year pitcher Jillian Taylor and addition of 2008 Olympian Robin Mackin as an assistant coach, the young Gee Gee's squad surprised many with a second place finish in regular season but fell short of the podium against the Waterloo Warriors. These Warriors captured the first medal in their history with a come from behind win against Ottawa in the bronze medal game. Waterloo, who finished seventh in the regular season, was not indicative of the quality of play this young team brought to the field. Spending years in the basement of the OIWFA, Waterloo capitalized on their energetic team with a bench full of great depth.

The Laurier Golden Hawks finished their fourth consecutive regular season with a top three finish but for the third straight year, fell short of the podium with an earlier than anticipated exit. Over recent years, Laurier and Ottawa have developed what has been phrased by many as the biggest rivalry in the OIWFA. In 5 straight Provincial Championships, these two clubs have met in a highly meaningful game that ultimately determined the fate of the other, and only once have these games been determined by more than a one-run spread. The Gee Gee's and Golden Hawks had two spectacular regular season games and highlighted a first-place pool game Saturday afternoon at the Provincial Championships which was decided in an extra inning thriller.

The University of Toronto found their way back to the podium after a five year hiatus thanks in part, to the arm of transfer student Lauren McLaughlin. McLaughlin would pitch every inning in the Provincial tournament and proved to be the thorn in Western's side allowing 4 runs in 15 innings.

This year, the regular season final standing was split by a mere 6 points from second place to finding themselves outside of playoff contention. Missing the playoff picture this year was the Carlton Ravens, York Lions, Guelph



Gryphons, and Queens Gaels. These teams showed they were just a few wins away from the coveted Provincial Championship with several upsets as the Gaels defeated the Golden Hawks and the Carlton Ravens fell just short of eventual silver medalist University of Toronto by a 2-1 final.

Last year's silver medalist, Guelph Gryphons were forced to win three of their final four games in the last weekend of the regular season but could not do so with the McMaster Marauders claiming the eighth and final position.

The Brock Badgers, who have built a strong program in the past three years, fell short in the Provincial Championships with two hard-fought defeats against Ottawa and Laurier before running out of steam against Waterloo. The Badgers promise to be a force to be reckoned with moving forward.

The Windsor Lancers competed in the National Championships in 2011 for the first time but fell to the injury bug before the weekend came to a close and missed any hopes of medal contention. Heading into the last weekend of the regular season, the Lancers had the opportunity to claim their best regular season finish ever but with a 0-3 weekend in Waterloo, the Lancers would fall to sixth place and eventually be ousted by the Warriors in quarterfinal action.

We are confident that Brian Bates will restore the York Lions program in 2012 and has made some great strides with the University to ensure York will once again be a competitive club in the OIWFA.

I want to take this opportunity to thank Brian Robertson who has stepped down as Convenor of the OIWFA after seven years in the position. His countless hours of dedicated work are a key reason the OIWFA is where we are today. I also want to thank Steve Bottoms and Paula Stamatiadis for their time spent on the executive over recent years.

With this said, I am excited for the direction the new executive has for the league with the addition of Kevin Fagg from Wilfrid Laurier, Peter Miller from the University of Guelph, the return of Pete Lemon from the University of Western Ontario, and Matt Allen from Wilfrid Laurier.

Never before has our league been so competitive, when on any given day could any team win an important ball game. The 2012 OIWFA season promises to be even more competitive and full of new excitement. With new partnerships on the horizon and a re-branding of Intercollegiate Softball in Canada ahead, the future of the OIWFA has never looked better. I am thrilled to see the amount of attention we received this season and only hope we can work harder to keep more athletes in Canada to play our great game.

I encourage you to take in an OIWFA game in 2012 to appreciate the great skill our over 180 student athletes bring to the ballpark every game. You can still watch two games from the Provincial Championships on our website, with broadcasting provided by AirItMedia and Kyle Smith from Ball Park Radio.

All the best in 2012 and hope to see you at the ballpark.

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