



AKRON CENTRAL SCHOOLS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE –

AKRON LACROSSE TEAM ENJOYS ANOTHER STELLAR SEASON

Sundown and Hill selected All-American; Bellis named "Coach of the Year" for Section VI

AKRON, NEW YORK (June 8, 2015) – The Akron Tiger lacrosse team successfully defended their title as Class C Champions in Section VI following a 30-13 rout of the Silver Creek Knights. Although the team was defeated by Section V's Penn Yan Mustangs again in the Far West Regional, ending their bid for a berth at the state championship, they earned many individual honors as well as national recognition as a team devoted to respecting the heritage of the game of lacrosse and the Native American people that founded it.

Senior attack stand-out Larson Sundown, who was named Buffalo News Prep Talk Lacrosse Player of the Year, was the team's 2015 points leader with 202 total (114 goals and 88 assists) for the season. This school record, along with 308 career assists, also puts Sundown first in the New York State lacrosse record books. He also ranks second in NYS for career points (641) and season total goals (114) and fourth for career goals with 333. Sundown earned US Lacrosse® New York – Buffalo area All-American honors for the second year and is joined by senior teammate Chaunce Hill for this prestigious selection. The selection is made not only on the player's ability, but sportsmanship, leadership, game sense and teamwork are included in the criteria. Sundown was also selected for the second year to the 1st Team All-Section VI (formerly All-WNY), 1st Team All-League Class C, and Class C Player of Year.

"Larson had a dominating performance this season," remarked Coach Bryan Bellis. "He holds all school records, both individual season and career, for scoring. He's a dynamic lacrosse player and I can't wait to see what he does in the future."

Long stick midfielder Chaunce Hill's academic record as well as his lacrosse skills earned him a \$10,000 scholarship from the Tewaaraton Foundation, a national non-profit organization that honors the historical and contemporary contributions the Haudenosaunee Native Americans have made, and

continue to make, to the game of lacrosse. Hill was awarded the scholarship during an expense paid trip to Washington, DC and the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of the American Indian.

Hill was named to the 1st Team All-Section VI for a second year and 1st Team All-League Class C in addition to his selection as US Lacrosse® New York-Buffalo area All-American. Chaunce was also named Honorable Mention for the Section VI spring season All-Western New York Scholar Athlete.

"Chaunce finished out his senior season and Akron career on top – he's the ground ball leader for individual season and career," said Coach Bellis. "Chaunce is an intense defender who makes life tough for the opposing team's best player. It will be exciting to see what Chaunce accomplishes in the coming years at University of Albany playing for the Great Danes."

Coach Bryan Bellis was honored by the Section and US Lacrosse® as "Coach of the Year" for the New York-Buffalo area. Bellis, who has been coaching the Tigers' varsity lacrosse team for seven seasons, has a 91 win – 51 loss record. He's taken his team to the Class C Sectional Championship game the last four years and has won the title the last two. Bellis also currently coaches Akron's golf team and has coached volleyball and ice hockey teams as well.

Reflecting on this honor, Bellis said, "I am lucky. I'm part of a really great coaching staff and we have the privilege of coaching some of the most talented players in Western New York."

Perhaps the most important and meaningful highlight of the season was the District's decision to forego a non-league game with Class A Lancaster. The Lancaster district and community was embroiled in a heated dispute with regard to the team's "Redskins" nickname. Akron's decision, and the media attention it garnered, resulted in Lake Shore and Niagara-Wheatfield, two other districts with significant Native American populations, opting not to play their non-league games with Lancaster as well. The Lancaster Board of Education would soon make a unanimous decision to retire the offending mascot and allow the current student population to choose a new mascot for the future.

A front page sports section story in USA Today about the team's influence on the name change for Lancaster thrust the team into the national spotlight with interviews from team captains Alex George, Chaunce Hill and Larson Sundown, Coach Bellis and volunteer assistant coach, Gary Sundown, and Akron Athletic Director and Assistant Principal, Stephen Dimitroff. Oren Lyons, Jr., a distinguished service professor emeritus at the University of Buffalo and Chief of the Onondaga Nation who played lacrosse with Jim Brown in the 1950's at Syracuse University, was also interviewed, expressing how proud he was of the Senecas on the Akron team. Lyons was the recipient of the 2015 Spirit of Tewaaron Award given to contributors to society who reflect the virtues of the game.

"ACS is very proud of our lacrosse team's accomplishments both on and off of the field," commented Stephen Dimitroff. "As adults we always try to find teachable moments for student athletes to show how sports can be used as a vehicle to get them where they want to be. This season, these outstanding student athletes proved that passion, patience, and character can be taught to adults as well."

Individual accolades for the team continue. Earning Second Team All-Section VI honors are freshman Owen Hill at midfield with a 72% win record at the face-off and senior mid-fielder Geoffrey Besser. Besser, Hill and junior Gates Abrams join Sundown and Chaunce Hill for selection to the 1st Team All-League Class C. Lee Abrams, Alex George, Aynsley Loran-Pragle and Jarrett Trzenski earned 2nd Team All-League Class C honors and Jared Siska and Frank Uebelhoer were given Honorable Mention.

Akron competes against the Class C teams in Section VI that include Silver Creek, Wilson, East Aurora, Eden, Salamanca, Medina, Lewiston-Porter and Gowanda high schools. The team went undefeated this season until the loss to Penn Yan, beating Class A Clarence and Class B Niagara Wheatfield, Williamsville North and Williamsville South, as well as St. Francis High School, in non-league play.

Seniors Larson Sundown, Chaunce Hill and Geoffrey Besser were chosen to play for the North Team of the Section VI Exceptional Seniors Showcase game to held June 10th at Williamsville South.

Sundown, Hill, Besser and graduating senior teammates Alex George, Aynsley Loran-Pragle and Jared Siska were also honored during a traditional senior ceremony held during the first round sectional game against Gowanda.

For more information about Akron's stellar season, please visit www.akronschoools.org/lacrosse and <http://www.laxpower.com/update15/binboy/rating57.php> for stats on Akron and all Section VI teams.

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