

A ball and a stick

New documentary tells the story of the North Glenora Blues lacrosse club
by Jim Tayler

I was nine years old when my father introduced the game of box lacrosse to North Glenora youth in the summer of 1966. Little did anyone know at the time that, fifty-six years later, we would celebrate the legacy of the North Glenora Blues lacrosse club in a documentary film.

The little-known story of the North Glenora Blues and its 1969 Canada Games team is told through personal narratives, artifacts, and

archival materials. Over fifty years have passed since these young men first picked up a ball and a stick, learned the game, and became the first Alberta team to represent the province in the 1969 Canada Summer Games.

John Tayler grew up in Westmount and was part of a small group of lacrosse enthusiasts who revitalized the game across the city of Edmonton in the mid-

1960s. Between 1966 and 1969, a group of teenage boys in North Glenora embraced the game and unfurled a new passion for Canada's national summer sport. These teenagers brought no extraordinary experience to the game. Most were community hockey players who initially saw lacrosse as a way to stay in shape during the summer. But for John Tayler, the dream was bigger. As part of the growing



interest in the game across Canada, John boldly set his sights on the Canada Games in Halifax in 1969.

With that goal in mind, the team got to work. Through local and provincial competitions, skill levels evolved. Exposure to experienced teams from British Columbia and Ontario provided all-important modelling. In their third year of existence, the Blues achieved their goal by winning the Alberta Junior championship and travelling to Halifax in August 1969 to compete in the Canada Summer Games.

But the narrative of the 1969 Blues didn't stop in Halifax. In the three years leading up to the Canada Games, the groundwork for something bigger was being laid. Through the inspiration provided by the 1969 team, the North Glenora Blues represented Alberta in the Canada Games in 1973 and again in 1977, while the club itself grew in size, success, and influence.



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With the remaining members of the 1969 team now in their seventies, the connection to the North Glenora Blues remains strong. The lives of each team member were influenced and shaped in ways that can only be understood through reflection that comes with time and age. Incredibly, Blues players from the three Canada Games teams still gather on a yearly basis and have done so for fifty years.

In a unique collaboration, 'A Ball and a Stick' was filmed completely by first year students in NAIT's Digital Cinema program. These aspiring filmmakers have a deep respect for the story they told and high regard for the players and the experiences that were shared. The documentary also received support from the Film and Visual Arts Society of Alberta (FAVA). The film premiered at Ross Sheppard High School on October 28, 2022 with

over one hundred and forty people attending.

The 47-minute documentary can be viewed at northglenorablues.ca.

Photos pp.26-27:

The North Glenora Blues in a match at the North Glenora Box, spring 1966. Bill Talyer, son of John, is in the foreground wearing the white jersey.

The original 1969 Blues team, taken on the day of the film shoot at North Glenora, in 2022. Some of the players had not seen each other in over 50 years.

This page: Jim Talyer, Executive producer of the documentary and John Talyer's son,

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