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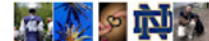
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THE MAJOR LEAGUE LACROSSE EXPERIENCE: MLL ALL-STAR GAME

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Editor's Note: This Summer we'll be looking at different MLL teams, taking in games in person, and talking about the overall experience you can expect at each venue, and from the league in general.

To make it easy to understand, and to keep it structured, the experience will be looked at from five different angles: **Travel and Location, Game Play, Game Atmosphere, Amenities, and Aftermath.** The first three are pretty simple, and Amenities refers to any extras available at the game. Aftermath refers to the experience leaving, and any thoughts that percolate during the days following the game.

Kim Black has been snapping photos like CRAZY this year, and now she's hopping over to the dark side of things: WRITING! In her first ever post on LaxAllStars.com, Kim details her MLL experience at the All-Star Game in Florida!

I'll be totally honest here. Driving into Boca Raton, Florida for my first MLL All-Star game two weeks ago, I had the unfounded concern that I was about to experience a bit of snobbery from the good people who reside in the Boca Raton area, drive expensive cars, live in mansions, and enjoy cocktails parties on their private beaches. I was also a little worried about working near professional athletes who were somewhat superior to us mere mortals.

However, what I found during my brief stay in South Florida was anything but what I expected.



I drove straight to Florida Atlantic University's Stadium on Friday evening, just as the clinics were coming to a close. The players were still lingering and mingling on the field, signing autographs and actually interacting with kids of all ages. And I'm not sure who was enjoying the interaction more, the kids or the players. The parents looked like they were having a pretty good time as well. All in all, it appeared that I had just walked in on the family affair of the summer.



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After spending a little time in the stadium and walking around the fan zone doing a little shopping for my own sons (both now college age), I made my way over to the hotel. The players were staying at the host hotel and were very visible throughout the lobby, the restaurant and the swimming pool. They made themselves available to MLL fans of all ages.



The delight on the kids' faces when they rubbed elbows with professional athletes in the elevator or fist bumped while passing by in the lobby was priceless. This type of involvement by the MLL players was surreal to see in person, and is what will help grow the game of lacrosse, and grow the MLL.

I spent Saturday morning going to various fields on campus to watch tournament play. The tournament was part of the weekend lacrosse experience and was coordinated by Casey Powell and Tony Lowe. Dads were coaching from the sidelines, moms were pulling coolers around with drinks and snacks, and the kids were preparing for their games. What a great way for a lacrosse loving family to spend their vacation; clinics on Friday, tournaments on Saturday morning and early afternoon, and the MLL All-Star game Saturday evening. It was a well planned, and well executed event!



Prior to the game Saturday evening, the youth tournament players formed a tunnel for the players to run through onto the field. The MLL didn't miss a beat when making sure the fans were involved in all aspects of the week-end activities. The kids were all reaching out to touch the players as they ran through, a few tapped the players with their sticks. Being a part of the tunnel earned these kids bragging rights for quite some time to come.



I am not going to waste space discussing issues such as the uniforms (you can decide for yourselves whether or not you like them), the audio difficulties that ESPN2 experienced (I was not even aware of the audio issues until much later in the game when somebody on the field mentioned it), or any other problems that may have plagued the weekend, because for me, it was simply a positive experience.



Most of the people I met and talked to only had good things to say about their experiences as well. While I was shooting the tournament games, a family offered me water, people were quick with smiles and friendly greetings.

I will say I have never been to a tournament where there were so many BMW s, Mercedes Benz, Lamborghinis and other high profile vehicles. While in the bathroom I overheard a conversation about an upcoming botox party (something I would definitely be interested in attending). I was experiencing a culture much different from the area of Hampton Roads where I reside. This is not a bad thing by any means, just different, and a nice change from my day to day routine.



Palm trees were in abundance, lending to a very tropical and somewhat exotic feel to the event. This was a great venue for an event such as this. Families could plan their vacations around the sport that they love. Perhaps a sand lacrosse event could be implemented at future events, this has been popular in Virginia Beach in conjunction with a large sand soccer event.

The MLL fans appreciated the time the players spent with them and their families, both on the field (during autograph sessions and clinics) and off the field (at the hotel, restaurants, etc). The players seemed to genuinely enjoy being involved in the All-Star event and promoting their respective teams and MLL.

Kids and parents I talked to have assured me that they would return, they are going to encourage other lacrosse fans to attend as well. I hope to return as well and will certainly encourage others to attend. It is an experience that any lacrosse enthusiast will enjoy (this

includes the moms and dads). When kids are happy and occupied during a vacation, parents are happy. When mom is happy everybody is happy. Believe me, I know. I am a lacrosse mom and proud of it. I will be first in line to help promote this event each and every year.

As a mom I encourage lacrosse loving families to include the MLL All-star game and activities as part of their summer plans.

I heard talk of a possible expansion team in the South Florida area. If this event was an indication of how a team would fare in that area, I would say the possibility of a team in that area gets a big thumbs up. Overall I had a very positive experience as did the families who attended. This will all go a long ways to help Grow The Game".

For more on the MLL All-Star Game Experience, and everything else [Major League Lacrosse](#), look no further than our [MLL Article Archive!](#)

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