



Marist's Amanda Tuck is one of several players from the Larchmont-Mamaroneck area.

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10538

Add Larchmont to Empire State's strong lax lineup

By **Andy Krauss**

As Ray Kinsella walked around his vast Iowa cornfield in the film "Field of Dreams," a voice continually reminded him, "If you build it, he will come."

Kinsella wound up building a baseball field where the corn used to grow, and before he knew it, one by one, legends of baseball came to play on his field.

In the mid-1990s, Long Island native Bob Garry and his wife Leigh heard similar voices, but "it" wasn't a baseball field. It was instead a thriving youth lacrosse league in Larchmont, N.Y. "Be careful what you ask for," they said to each other, not knowing exactly what they'd get.

Although Larchmont is only a stone's throw from Long Island and a short drive to upstate New York, youth lacrosse did not exist in Larchmont or surrounding towns such as Rye, White Plains or New Rochelle in 1997.

Garry decided to change that and immediately begin a league based on one simple premise: "Players play, coaches coach, refs ref and parents get to watch the fastest game on two feet."

That first year, Garry and a few other parents pulled kids that were playing football and soccer and wanted to see what lacrosse was all about. Approximately 75 lined up with sticks that year.

Thirteen years later, the Larchmont-Mamaroneck Youth Lacrosse League boasts over 800 players, with an equal number of boys and girls suiting up.

It's also been important for the league to remind its players not to get too big for their britches. Travel teams exist, but the rule is that if you participate, you also have to play in the house leagues that practice on Friday nights from April through June and play on Saturdays.

"We don't just want to have travel

teams so that kids can have the experience," said league president and fellow Long Island native Fred Cambria. "It's important to us that players have the house-travel commitment balance."

The league's success has helped Mamaroneck High School's teams improve and the league received the highest form of flattery when neighboring New Rochelle started its own league a few years later.

"From the beginning of our league, Fred and Bob could not do enough to encourage us, share their experience with us and even share their players with us," said New Rochelle Youth League President Mitch Bradbury. "In fact, kids who started out with Larchmont-Mamaroneck Youth Lacrosse before New Rochelle had a program, now play for both teams. That truly speaks to the spirit of lacrosse and the love of the game perpetuated by both leagues."

Good to know that in Larchmont, players are still playing, coaches are still coaching, refs are still refing. And while Westchester County may not be Long Island in terms of lacrosse, the gap is getting smaller every day. **LM**



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Sticks

ZIP Code: 10538

Town: Larchmont, N.Y.

Location: 18 miles northeast of midtown Manhattan

Founded: 1891

Population: 6,485



US Lacrosse Chapter: Hudson Valley

Web: www.hudsonvalleylacrosse.com

Famous Lax Alumni: Amanda Tuck is a sophomore midfielder at Marist. Shane Ferguson is a junior midfielder at Springfield College. The brother-sister combination of JP and Elizabeth Garry are on the respective attack lines of Dartmouth and Middlebury.

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