



## Sir Wilfrid Laurier Collegiate Institute

An International Baccalaureate World School

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## The Benefits of a Strong Football Program

Over the course of the last 6 years the staff and administration of Sir Wilfrid Laurier Collegiate Institute have committed to a focused process of school improvement. Back in 2004 the school, along with the entire Toronto District School Board, was suffering from the impact of declining enrollment. Newcomers to Canada who had been settling in Toronto were now migrating to the 905 area of the GTA. Back then, the student population of Laurier was approximately 950 students and the school, fighting a negative reputation in the local community, was attracting only 47% of students residing in its actual catchment area.

Today Laurier is literally busting at the seams with a student population of 1500 students. Undoubtedly, improvements to the school's academic program and enhancements to the co-curricular program have helped to once again make Laurier a highly regarded school of choice. A major feature of the co-curricular program has been the resurgence of the Laurier Blue Devil Football Program.

Changes in TDSB student demographics, declining enrollment, lack of funding and low numbers of qualified teacher/coaches have been factors contributing to a general decline in the number of schools offering football. Laurier was experiencing similar difficulties in fielding a football program. That is until a chance encounter 3 years ago between a few Laurier athletes and Guildwood Village community member Greg Baun.

Greg, a long time sportsman and successful business owner of Innovative Surface Solutions, spoke to the boys asking them about the school and its sports program. After learning of the issues the school was experiencing such as lack of equipment, insufficient coaching staff and limited resources, Greg contacted me and offered their assistance. With Greg & Innovative's financial backing and strong support the football program at Laurier has grown from a single varsity team to a full program featuring teams at both senior and junior levels.

This year, thanks to their support, both teams were fully outfitted with equipment and had full coaching staffs. The senior team made it to the TDSB East Region Championships losing narrowly in double overtime and the juniors made it to the playoffs but got knocked out in the quarter finals. Just prior to playoff action, Greg used his friendships and connections by inviting TSN's Rod Black and Chris Shultz in for a motivational talk to all boys involved with our football program. This was a discussion the boys will remember for the rest of their lives!

We look forward to even better performance as the program continues to grow and mature. On behalf of the students, teachers and administration of Sir Wilfrid Laurier CI, I would like to thank Greg and Innovative for their generosity and commitment to sports and public education... your support truly makes a difference!

Paul Ambrose  
Principal  
Sir Wilfrid Laurier CI