Arts & Life

The future is now: Lacrosse continues to grow

By CAYDEN STEWART
Copy Editor

For the second time in franchise history and first since adopting the "Philadelphia" tag, the Philadelphia Waterdogs are Premier Lacrosse League Champions.

Led by offensive stars like Attackman of the Year Michael Sowers and fellow attackman and MVP CJ Kirst, the Waterdogs shut down the Denver Outlaws 14-4 in Harrison, N.J., Sunday, Sept. 20.

However, the main storyline of the afternoon's festivities went way beyond the skills displayed on the field. The PLL has grown from its 2019 inception, built in a pre-dug grave adjacent to similar failed leagues, to a reminder that "the Creator's Game," while not as widely known as most, is here to stay.

The league adopted home cities ahead of the 2024 season, with the Utah Archers, New York Atlas and Waterdogs winning the first three championships under the new format.

Viewership has only gone up over those three years, in large part due to an agreement and recent five-year extension with ESPN, giving the network the broadcast rights to all PLL and Women's Lacrosse League (WLL) games through 2030.

This year, the PLL saw its biggest payoff from the collaboration, averaging 265,000 viewers across all regular season games broadcast on ABC, ESPN and ESPN2, marking a 22% increase in viewership compared to 2025.

Further, the 2026 championship game was the most-viewed championship in league history, averaging 405,000 viewers on ABC. The 2026 season also included the most-watched PLL game ever, as the California Redwoods' 21-13 win over the defending champion Atlas averaged 612,000 viewers.

The PLL's rapid growth in viewership over the last few seasons has helped open the door for new growth within the sport.

After its inception Nov. 13, 2024, the WLL hosted its first-ever full season, culminating in its first formal championship game Aug. 15 at Subaru Park outside Philadelphia. The Maryland Charm defeated the California Palms 16-13 to officially begin the WLL era.

Further, in September 2023, the PLL announced a series of pop-up "street lacrosse" events featuring guest appearances by players and coaches, taking place in Philadelphia, New York City and Atlanta the weekends the cities host games. These have continued over the last three seasons.

The league is formatted so teams don't have to contend with other leagues for stadium rights. Each week, a new city plays host to the docket of games. When a given team's connected city has its turn, a "homecoming" weekend is held with said team playing two games there that weekend.

This year's street lacrosse event in Philly, which took place during the Waterdogs' homecoming weekend Aug. 14, was a massive hit. PLL and WLL co-founder Paul Rabil, among many others, was in attendance.

"Having a league that embodies both the best professional men and women, competing separately but in a lot of ways, growing the game together, is an amazing thing," Rabil said. "When you come out here…You realize how worth it (all the work) is."

Even legendary UFC personality Bruce Buffer made an appearance at the event.

"The sport is growing so fast and the league is doing a great job. To create a little excitement for everyone around here is always a pleasure," Buffer said.

The event featured a wide variety of professional and collegiate players, with members of some of Philadelphia's "Big Five" colleges converging on Dilworth Park.

Among the players in attendance at the event were attackman and 2026 PLL Rookie of the Year Joey Spallina of the Maryland Whipsnakes, and his teammate, goalie Emmet Carroll, who was named Second-Team All-Pro.

"The best part about this sport and what makes this sport better than most is that we give back to the youth so much," Spallina said. "At the end of the day, those are the next guys. Those are the next players that are going to come through."

The future looks even brighter for the sport of lacrosse as a whole.

The PLL, WLL and National Lacrosse League announced the Lexus Global Lacrosse Games to take place Dec. 8-13, at The St. James outside Washington, D.C.

These games will be played by four international teams, representing the United States, Canada, Australia and the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, made up of members of tribes like the Mohawk, Onondaga and Cayuga.

Additionally, the Global Lacrosse Championship was created to promote the upcoming 2028 Olympic Games in Los Angeles, which will feature the return of men's and women's lacrosse.

The Olympics will showcase a less popular "sixes" version of field lacrosse, where each team will use six players plus a goalie rather than the typical 11, a format The Global Lacrosse Championship will also use.

Even with the questions and concerns, the Creator's Game has always stood the test of time.

Carroll probably put it best at the Philly street lacrosse event.

"It reminds you of what the sport of lacrosse is. It brings people together, it brings communities together," Carroll said.



CAYDEN STEWART/CHRONICLE

What to wear to Harry Styles' 'Together, Together' tour

By JORDAN FULTON
Contributing Writer

Singer-songwriter Harry Styles is over 15 shows into his 30-night residency at Madison Square Garden for his "Together, Together" tour. From August to October, every Wednesday, Friday and Saturday, fans are flocking to the iconic stadium, dressed to the nines for this tour.

Styles' fans have always brought a unique style to each of his tours. His last tour, "Love On Tour," famously brought about a feather boa shortage in New York City. However, for this tour, fans have taken a different approach to their concert outfits, trading feather boas for something from their father's tie collection.

TOPS

Let's get down to business: a shirt can be the end all be all for a tour fit, so make sure you pick the perfect one.

Baby t-shirts have become a staple for this tour, but not just any plain old baby t-shirt. Find one in an eye-catching primary color; dark blue or bright red is perfect. If you are feeling fancy, try one that has a bit more fitting on the sides.

For an extra personal touch, consider adding one of your favorite lyrics to the shirt. I know my mom will be proudly attending our concert with the lyrics "respect your mother" across her shirt.

If a t-shirt is not your style, that is completely fine. Styles himself has shown us that the "Together, Together" tour is basically what happens when a disco takes place in the middle of a 9-to-5 office job, so there is always the corporate outfit approach. Get a fun striped pantssuit and throw a cute tank top under it. Glitter is a must have, so a sparkling tank top with a thrifted oversized blazer on top could be the perfect outfit.

BOTTOMS

Pants can quickly become the afterthought of any outfit.

The minute we find the perfect top, it's so easy to just pair it with a plain bottom, but on this tour we are all going to try a little harder, so let's promise to show this part of the costume a little love too.

I can summarize the necessities into just a few words: business casual, glitter and polka dots. That is all it needs. If you are wearing a blazer, take inspiration from Styles' own 2026 BRIT Awards outfit and find matching office pants or a skirt. Fans have even gone as far as to make their own skirts and dresses out of thrifted ties; this adds fun patterns and textures to the outfit. If corporate is not your style, try a silver sequin skirt or switch it up and make it a fun color. The sequins also look amazing under a blazer and help to balance the business and disco aesthetics.

ACCESSORIES

Accessories are what will tie your entire outfit together, so don't forget about this step.

Find a tie with a fun pattern; mine is pink with magenta polka dots. Either tie it loosely or throw it around your neck like a neckerchief. Fans have also been customizing their ties by decorating them with rhinestones or some Styles' inspired pins. As we all aspire to be the disco ball in Styles' "Kiss All the Time. Disco, Occasionally" album cover, the "Together, Together" tour has proved itself to be a silver jewelry event. Silver star earrings, necklaces or hair clips are perfect for the occasion.

Now for shoes, Adidas Gazelles have passed the test of time and continue to be one of the most popular sneakers for the singer's tours. Or, by taking inspiration from Styles himself, ballet flats could be the perfect staple to elevate your concert outfit.

Styles has created a truly unique concert atmosphere, one that fans feel completely comfortable expressing themselves creatively in. Each fan has put in the work, making this tour a beautiful array of styles, all coming together to "disco occasionally" just as Styles wanted.

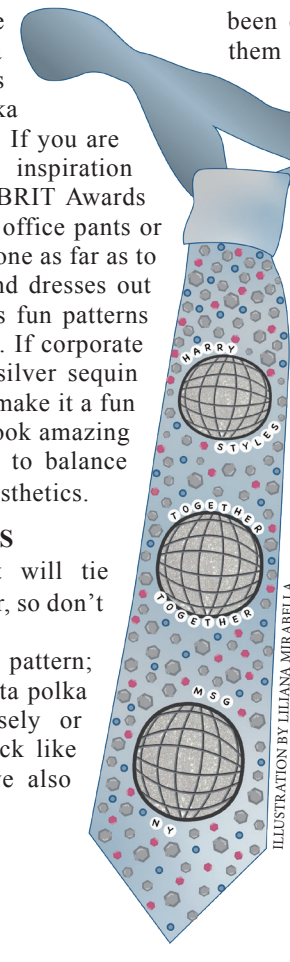


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