

Issue 6 — April 18, 2026

RE:LAX

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*Clinching season:
Examining scenarios for the
Bandits to earn higher seed*

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The announcement that an unlicensed lacrosse video game will release soon has fans of the sport excited, but it leaves the question: will there ever be another NLL video game?

4. *Bandits' clinching scenarios entering Week 21*

The final week of the 2026 NLL regular season has arrived. The Bandits know they'll be in the playoffs, but a win tonight could guarantee them a home playoff game — or possibly even more.

6. *Bandits close out season in Oshawa tonight*

For the first time in franchise history, the Bandits will travel to Oshawa to face the newly relocated FireWolves. These two teams faced off in the 2024 NLL Finals, and although the FireWolves are nowhere near the team they were two years ago, they're still not a bunch to take lightly.

Front and back cover photos by **MATT VOLZ | Editor in Chief**

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Requiem for an NLL video game: 'Lacrosse 26' won't include NLL

MATT VOLZ
Editor in Chief

For NLL fans and gamers alike, I have good news and bad news.

The good news is that next week, an official lacrosse video game will hit the shelves on Xbox and PlayStation.

The bad news is that it's not a licensed game through either the NLL or PLL.

Before I dive into my thoughts, I want to give a massive shoutout to the one who has been covering this game's release, Mike Straw.

Straw is the executive editor for Insider Gaming, and to make matters even better, he's a Buffalo guy.

He's the one who's been keeping fans posted on the release of "Lacrosse 26" on X, and he deserves a ton of credit for it.

I'm excited about the game's release, and I think it could be excellent for the sport.

But I also can't help but feel a bit disappointed in the fact that there still hasn't been any kind of NLL video game released over the last decade and a half.

Years ago, independent game companies released "NLL 10" and "NLL 11" for the Xbox 360 in consecutive years.

When I first started following the Bandits in 2013, I downloaded "NLL 11" and played it a few times.

I remember finding the controls to be very difficult, and after consistently struggling, I gave up.

Now, I try to rediscover that game on the Xbox Game Store, and it's nowhere to be found.

Logistically, I understand why there isn't an NLL video game coming out each year.

It's too small of a league to justify releasing a new game, as not enough people would buy the game and the companies wouldn't be able to pay developers without going into the red.

But how awesome would it be if there was a game?

NLL fans could count down the days until the new game came out, or they could have a fan vote to determine who might be on the cover.

For what it's worth, I would have put either Jeff Teat or Dhane Smith on the cover of this past year's game.

If the league wasn't able to create a new game, though, how awesome would it be if we could all still play the old games?

I'll provide a similar example in the form of NCAA games.

While the NCAA was dealing with lawsuits related to what would become NIL, they stopped making football and basketball video games.

This left "NCAA Basketball 10," released in 2009, and "NCAA Football 14," released in 2013, as the most recent video games for their respective sports for more than a decade.



The cover of 'NLL 11,' featuring Boston Blazers forward Casey Powell.
Image via laxvideogame.com.

While fans waited years for a new game to come out, they kept playing the old games and just updated rosters.

As a result, "NCAA Football 14" became iconic, and fans rejoiced when "College Football 25" was finally released in 2024.

Can you imagine if NLL fans could do that with "NLL 11"?

Bandits fans could play games with Dhane Smith and Josh Byrne, and they could make a run at championship after championship.

Wings fans could save their team, ensuring that this version of one of the league's original franchises wouldn't leave home again.

Fans of rebuilding teams could stack their team with young talent and go for the NLL Cup.

All of it would be tons of fun, but alas, it's wishful thinking.

There are no plans on the horizon for a new game, and given the frequency of teams relocating or folding, I don't know that we'll ever get another NLL video game.

Still, for a league that wishes to brand itself as "The Next Major League," it would be neat to add a video game to the fold.

Bandits' clinching scenarios entering Week 21

MATT VOLZ
Editor in Chief

It's the final week of the NLL's regular season, and one thing is guaranteed — the Bandits are going back to the playoffs.

They locked up a spot with a 15-5 beatdown of the Vancouver Warriors two weeks ago, and a seven-game win streak has given Buffalo the chance to earn a home playoff game.

Beyond that, it's still possible for the Bandits to earn the league's top overall seed.

It's not all that likely, but it is possible.

Entering the final weekend, the Warriors and Colorado Mammoth are tied for first in the league, with both teams holding 12-5 records.

The Bandits are in a three-way tie for third with the Toronto Rock and Saskatchewan Rush, with all three teams holding steady at 11-6.

The Georgia Swarm are the proverbial "wild card" of the final week's playoff picture, as they've played one less game than everyone else.

They enter a doubleheader against the Rochester Knight-hawks at 10-6, currently good for sixth place.

Let's take a look at some scenarios for the Bandits heading into the weekend.

To clinch a home playoff game in the first round:

- **Win at Oshawa OR**
- **Georgia loss in either game vs. Rochester**

Yes, it's that simple for the Bandits to start the postseason at home.

They're in Oshawa this weekend for a matchup in which they'll be a heavy favorite.

The FireWolves enter the weekend already eliminated from playoff contention at 5-12, so they'll just be looking to build some positive momentum towards next season.

All the Bandits need is a win in tonight's game to ensure that KeyBank Center will see the opening round of the NLL playoffs.

If the FireWolves manage to pull off an upset, it's still possible for Buffalo to be at home in the first round, but they'd need some help.

The Swarm and Knighthawks have a doubleheader this weekend, facing off at 4 p.m. today in Georgia and 3 p.m. Sunday in Rochester.

If Georgia loses either of those two games, it'll guarantee a first-round home playoff game regardless of what happens in Buffalo's game against Oshawa.

However, there is another scenario in which Bandits fans may be rooting for Georgia to win both games.



The 2023, 2024 and 2025 NLL Cups.
This image is free to use under the public domain.

It's a wild and unlikely scenario, but let's dive in.

To clinch the top overall seed:

- **Win at Oshawa AND**
- **Calgary win over Colorado AND**
- **Philadelphia win over Vancouver AND**
- **Georgia win in BOTH games vs. Rochester**

It's a lot, I know.

Not only is that a lot of specific results that need to happen, but those are also some unlikely upsets.

For starters, the Bandits need the league's bottom two teams to upset the league's top two teams.

The Calgary Roughnecks and Philadelphia Wings have both limped to 5-12 records this season.

Nobody has had it worse than the Wings, though, as the City of Brotherly Love is losing its team for the second time in a decade.

Buffalo is hoping the Wings go out with a bang, as they face the Warriors in Vancouver tonight.

They're also hoping Tanner Cook, Tyler Pace and the Roughnecks will pull off the upset against the Mammoth.

The Roughnecks have home advantage in this game, and Cook and Pace could give Dillon Ward and the Colorado defense some fits.

If both of those upsets happen, and if Buffalo takes care of business against Oshawa, the attention turns to the Swarm-Knighthawks doubleheader.

Oddly enough, the Bandits would be rooting for Georgia to win both games.

That seems counterintuitive, as two Georgia wins would draw the Swarm into a tie with Buffalo.

But allow me to explain.

There's one game I didn't mention yet, and that's the contest in Saskatoon between the Rock and Rush.

Both teams enter play at 11-6, and whoever wins will tie the other teams at the top.

If the above scenario plays out, it would be a tie between the Bandits, Mammoth, Warriors, Swarm and whoever wins the Rock vs. Rush game.

This is where Buffalo's strong performance against top teams pays off.

In the event of a five-way tie, Buffalo would emerge on top because of head-to-head winning percentage.

Against those five teams, the Bandits have a combined 6-2 record this season.

To this point in the season, that means that more than half of the team's wins have come over some of the best opponents in the NLL.

That should come as no surprise, given Buffalo's consistent playoff success over the past half decade.

Depending on how the weekend goes, they might find themselves in Banditland with a chance to bring their fan-base more postseason magic.

Stats for this story were provided by nllstats.com, a league-wide database run by NLL writer Graeme Perrow.

Check out his commentary on nllchatter.com as well as his updates on X (@GraemePerrow).



The 2023 NLL Cup.

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The NLL's logo and wordmark, circa 2016. This image is free to use under the public domain.

**NATIONAL
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Bandits close out season in Oshawa tonight

MATT VOLZ
Editor in Chief

The NLL's regular season comes to a close this weekend, and the Bandits are looking to extend the league's longest win streak.

The three-time defending champions looked like anything but champions early in the season, as they limped to a 3-5 start.

Since then, they've won eight of nine games, including the last seven in a row.

Entering Week 21, Buffalo finds themselves tied with the Toronto Rock and Saskatchewan Rush for third in the NLL.

As explained in the previous article, all the Bandits need to do tonight is win to secure a home playoff game in the first round.

To do that, they'll have to come out on top in their first ever trip to Oshawa.

The FireWolves have had a rough last few seasons after reaching the NLL Finals in 2024, back when they called Albany home.

The team went 7-11 last year before relocating to Oshawa, citing low attendance in the state capital.

It was rare for the team to see more than 4,500 fans in attendance for any given home game.

They didn't reach that number in either of the first two games of their 2024 playoff run, a quarterfinal win over Halifax and a semifinal-clinching win over San Diego.

They hosted Game 1 of the NLL Finals against the Bandits, and they still only managed an attendance of just over 5,000 fans.

Many of them were Bandits fans, who took the drive on I-90 to watch their team take the first game of the series.

The FireWolves have not had a great first season in Oshawa, and they enter the season's final week tied with Philadelphia for last place overall.

The season started in promising fashion, as their home opener in Oshawa resulted in an 8-7 win over the Toronto Rock.

But after the opening win, the FireWolves won just one of their next 11 games.

There have been a couple bright spots for Oshawa this season, most notably in the form of their two young scorers.

Alex Simmons, who just celebrated his 27th birthday last week, is enjoying a career-best season for the FireWolves.

That's quite something for a player who has tallied 95 points or more in each season he's played.

Now in his third season after being a top-five draft pick, Simmons enters the final week with 40 goals and 102 points, both personal bests for him.

He's the franchise's first 100-point scorer since 2022, when current Bandit Joe Resetarits racked up 111.

HOW TO TUNE IN:

TV: MSG
(Buffalo market only)

STREAM: ESPN+

RADIO:
WWKB 1520 AM

Along with Simmons, the FireWolves are led by fellow 27-year-old Tye Kurtz, who is having a stellar season of his own.

Like Simmons, Kurtz was a first-round pick of the FireWolves in 2022, and he was also a rookie on the 2024 NLL Finals team.

In his third season, Kurtz has scored a career-best 37 goals, ranking him in the top ten across the league.

Other notable players on Oshawa's roster include Dyson Williams, son of former Bandit and current Las Vegas Desert Dogs coach Shaun Williams.

He's also the brother of the late Tucker Williams, the namesake of the "Tucker Out Lymphoma Cup" that the Bandits, Desert Dogs and FireWolves started last season.

Dyson, the first overall pick of the 2023 draft, has recorded 20 goals and 47 points so far this season.

Ethan Walker, Dawson Theede and Taggart Clark are also solid contributors, so the FireWolves' offense definitely isn't one to overlook.

It's also worth mentioning that former Bandit Ryan Benesch has found himself in Oshawa, and he's tallied 13 points in just four games.

Another former Bandit, Emerson Clark, is part of an Oshawa defense that has struggled this season.

Goalie Doug Jamieson hasn't had the best season, either. He's allowed more than 11 goals per game, and his save percentage has dipped below 79%.

As a team, the FireWolves have given up the third-most goals of any team in the league, behind only the Desert Dogs and Knighthawks.

That bodes well for a Bandits offense that has played well as of late.

One of the biggest reasons for their recent success has been Josh Byrne's resurgence.



The Bandits face the Rochester Knighthawks, Saturday, April 11, 2026.
Photo by MATT VOLZ | Editor in Chief

Byrne didn't have a very good first half of the season, and at one point he had a span of four games where he scored three total goals.

Over the last two months, though, Byrne has been back to his old self.

He has recorded at least seven points in each win throughout the current streak, and he enters tonight's game looking for his third consecutive hat trick.

Matt Vinc has also been rock solid in net, despite the fact that he turns 44 in June.

Across the seven-game win streak, Vinc has arguably been a top-three goalie in the league, and his save percentage has been above 81% in each game.

At least for now, Vinc's play is keeping Father Time on the shelf.

Throughout his illustrious career, he's excelled in postseason play, and the Bandits are hoping that'll be the case one more time.

Vinc hasn't said whether or not he'll be back next year, but it's entirely possible that tonight marks the final regular season game of his career.

If he does retire at the end of the season, he'll walk away as the undisputed greatest goalie in the history of the NLL.

His mind is focused on this season, however, as the Bandits gear up for a run at an unprecedented fourth straight championship.

They can put themselves in good shape to do that with a win in Oshawa tonight.

I think they do just that, ensuring themselves of an opening round matchup in Banditland.

Matt's pick: Buffalo 14, Oshawa 8

Fans in the Buffalo market can catch tonight's game on MSG or listen live on WWKB 1520 AM.

The game will also be viewable on ESPN+.

Faceoff for tonight's game is set for 7 p.m.

Stats for this story were provided by nllstats.com, a league-wide database run by NLL writer Graeme Perrow.

Check out his commentary on nllchatter.com as well as his updates on X (@GraemePerrow).

*Got any thoughts about the Bandits
you'd like to share with us?*

*Leave a comment on social media at
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