

# Pro lacrosse comes to city

## Machine rally but fall short in first-ever pro game held in Chicago

[Sal Barry](#)

**Issue date:** 6/5/09 **Section:** [Sports](#)

The sky above Soldier field was cloudless and blue on the afternoon of Saturday, May 30. The temperature, a pleasant 75-degrees as a gentle breeze wafted off of Lake Michigan. It was ideal weather for a historic event. The Chicago Machine - a professional lacrosse team who normally play at the suburban Toyota Park - faced off against the Boston Cannons in what was the first-ever pro lacrosse game held within city limits. The only thing needed to make the day a perfect one was a victory for the Machine in their home opener.

Unfortunately, the Cannons had other plans. While the opening and closing moments belonged to Chicago, it was all Boston in between. The Machine - psyched to play their first home game this year - struck right away a goal at the 40-second mark. However, that would be the only time they would lead. The Cannons controlled the majority of the game, including a 7-goal explosion in the 3rd quarter. The Machine battled back in the 4th with an 8-goal comeback attempt, but still fell 16-14. Despite the loss, the 4th quarter offensive surge proved that the Machine can compete.

"We got a couple of goals [in the 4th] and the life came back," attackman Chazz Woodson said. "Everyone was up on the sidelines. The crowd got into it. We were excited on the field. "

"That's what we're going to build on," Machine head coach John Combs said. "I'm very pleased with the last quarter - we can take that momentum into Toyota Park next weekend."

While Toyota Park - located in the suburb of Bridgeport - is where the Machine usually plays, 2 of their 6 home games this season are at Soldier Field. The Machine has been a part of the MLL (Major League Lacrosse) since 2006. The game itself is characterized by end-to-end rushes, high scoring and physical play - a perfect summer alternative for those who find baseball a little slow. All of these



Media Credit: [Sal Barry](#)

Matt Steibel and Steven Brooks of the Machine go after Boston's Ryan McClay.

elements were epitomized by the Machine in their home opener.

Chicago's offensive leader this season is attackman Kevin Leveille. In 2008, Leveille was named to the all-star team and was the Machine's top scorer. He also holds an MLL record for having scored at least one goal in 50 straight games. Actually, make that 51 games - he contributed 2 goals in Saturday's effort.

Another scoring threat for Chicago is also named Leveille. Younger brother Mike - a four-time All-American collegiate lacrosse player - joined the Machine in 2008 and was finished second to older brother Kevin in scoring. Several times this season, the brothers have assisted on each other's goals, creating an offensive 1-2 punch for the Machine.

One defensive player to watch is goaltender Mike Gabel. Standing at 6-4, the Chicago native was twice a collegiate MVP and an MLL all-star in 2008.

"He is our anchor down [on defense]," Combs said. "We go as he goes."

Currently, the team stands at 1-2, but were optimistic after Saturday's comeback attempt.

"It's the way we can play, the way we are capable of playing," said Woodson - an all-star with Los Angeles last year. "If [the 4th quarter] wasn't our best effort, then it will be scary what we look like when we are playing at our best."

The Machine play 5 more home games this summer. More information on the team can be found at [www.ChicagoMachine.com](http://www.ChicagoMachine.com).

Page 1 of 1

## Article Tools

### Share:

- [Facebook](#)
- [Blogger](#)
- [del.icio.us](#)
- [digg](#)
- [newsvine](#)

### Subscribe:



Media Credit: [Sal Barry](#)  
Kevin Leveille (right) celebrates a goal.