

Report – Tier III – 2008

First let me begin by offering my congratulations to our Provincial medalists:

- Okotoks Icemen – Gold
- Lethbridge Barracudas – Silver
- Medicine Hat Sun Devils – Bronze

The Tier III division is still in its infancy compared to most divisions and still experiencing growing pains, but I believe we are recognizing and taking steps toward managing these issues and therefore the division is improving. It is not always easy to forecast and prevent problems in a developmental division such as Tier III but we are forging through by trial and error, and with the cooperation of all the division will continue to develop into a showcase developmental level.

Scheduling of games and referees were a major problem last year. Eventually the schedule was sorted out and the season progressed as smoothly as possible.

Last year Fort McMurray entered into the division with the agreement they would travel to Didsbury for ALL league games, home and away. As you can imagine this was a considerable expense to them and a considerable savings to the other teams in their playing division. To have them travel hundreds of kilometers to play and be told no referees were available was frustrating to say the least. We hope we have the problem solved and I'm sure Fort McMurray hopes we do as well. One thing was clearly evident and that was their strong desire to keep a team together and their desire to play lacrosse. As Commissioner I have to tip my hat to the perseverance shown by this team and their organizers.

Fighting was still an issue at this level, although it was not so much the fighting itself, but the intensity of the fights and the injuries that became a concern. Showboating and bragging rights were also in the thoughts of players as fights were being planned prior to the games so friends could video tape the fights for viewing on You Tube. In contact sports where fighting is tolerated to the level of penalizing the combatants, most players involved are trying to lift their team or provide a spark while respecting their opponent, not show off to their girlfriends or attempt to purposely injure their opponent. Something had to be done and I made a decision to suspend players for fights. It may not yet be the perfect solution but I believe action was warranted and continues to be so. Occurrences of fighting did decrease albeit with some complaining from the minority. Most of the teams applauded the decision to take a stand to bring the focus back to skill development.

I took the "off" season to make up a draft of an Operating Policy, which we were operating without, specifically written as:

TIER III DEVELOPMENT BOX LACROSSE OPERATING POLICY.

This operating policy stresses the development aspect of which I believe Tier III lacrosse should be based. This will be discussed further at the break out session.

I have great hopes for the Tier III division. If what I am hearing is correct, we will be getting a number of new teams at this level and look forward to the continued growth and acceptance of this division as a developmental level to develop better skill and respect for the game.

Yours in Lacrosse,
Linda Robertson
Tier III Commissioner