



Presidents' Report

The RMLL had 63 registered teams for 2013 season, down from 66. The RMLL had 1427 registered players for 2013 season, 1378 from Alberta. This is an increase over 2012 numbers but is due to an increase in Senior players. The increase in Senior players is offset by a decrease in Junior players. The RMLL retention rate from minor to major continues at approximately 50%, suggesting that minor numbers are dropping. The RMLL will need look to the ALA to increase activities within the minor organizations if we are to reverse this trend.

2013 was a new rule year and the two biggest changes were the severe penalties for fighting and the restructuring of the high sticking rule. Fighting was reduced across the board in all divisions with an overall decrease of 37% and there was no associated increase in severe penalties for cheap shots (e.g., spearing and butt ending). The high sticking rule generated a dramatic increase in major calls for high sticking, since the minor penalty call in the new rules requires very insignificant contact. These calls rose 615%. Players and coaches are still not clear on the new high stick rules and need to become more familiar with the specific wording.

I received more complaints from players, coaches and even parents regarding officiating this year. While some can be attributed to the new rule changes, the general tone of the complaints focused on inconsistency and officials being put into situations where they are not comfortable. The RMLL is committed to working with the ALRA to increase the level of officiating. To that point, the RMLL's development commissioner is working on a program launch for 2014 season. The RMLL is hopeful for an increase in communication with the ARLA in order to move officiating to a higher level.

The flood of 2013 required the RMLL to cancel a number of games. This decision was not an easy one for the RMLL to make but was necessary due to the number of players and coaches affected by the flooding. Some games were rescheduled while others were cancelled. While this may have inconvenienced a few teams, I will stand by the decision as the right one for the circumstances.

The Junior A division will see the most significant changes to their playoffs for 2014 and onward with the change to Minto Cup and the introduction of a western play off. It will be incumbent on this division to work on a solid plan to move forward into the future if it is to survive.

I believe Lacrosse in Alberta is at a crossroads today and must look at what can be done in the future to ensure the ongoing viability of the sport. There are a number of

new initiatives that the RMLL will be presenting to its membership this year that are geared to address these issues.

After a number of months of reflection I have made the decision to not seek reelection in the upcoming RMLL AGM. I have enjoyed working with the RMLL and the ALA over these past 5 years and wish everyone the best of luck in building lacrosse for the future.

Bill Sucha