



## RMLL 2014 Report from the Development Commissioner

In 2014 I took on the role of VP - Organizational Development with the Alberta Lacrosse Association (ALA). I consider this role to be very complementary to my role on the RMLL executive since they both are concerned with the development of the game and the liaison with officiating.

As a result of taking on this new role, I have advanced the idea of a broad reassessment of lacrosse at the major level to also include minor lacrosse. The ALA formed a group called the Heretics Committee that was charged with asking any and all questions and taking an unflinching look at the state of lacrosse in Alberta. This included a look at current reality as well as desired future states and the best pathways to take to get there. This committee has representation from across the province in all levels of lacrosse. So far the committee has rapidly gelled around vision, principles and key strategic steps to take. These will be discussed in further detail with the RMLL and at the ALA annual general meeting. The process should generate a great deal of development activity over the next five years and most of the RMLL development issues are folded into this work at present.

The following summarizes work in the key development dimensions:

### **Officiating**

The main effort from the RMLL was in coordinating the first 'Top Prospects' camp for officials in Alberta. It was an intensive weekend of off and on floor development work for a select invited group of officials in the 18-30 range that we all see having the potential to form the core of the officiating crew in Alberta for years to come. The feedback all the way round was very positive and the assistance of Dave Paskevich from the U of C and Walt Christianson from Victoria were vital. Warren Rendon did a terrific job of pulling the event together. Referees leaving this clinic received good reviews through the rest of the season and the members who went to National tournaments were rated among the highest performers at their respective tournaments. I have submitted project requests to the ALA to build deeper resources in the area of psychological preparation and we are considering adding a future stream to officiating clinics to keep this group engaged as well as offering the camp again in the future.

The ALRA moved away from the UberClinic and opted for a series of senior clinics instead. The anecdotal feedback from the teams in major lacrosse seemed to indicate that there was a lower level of consistency in how the game was called around the province (between referees). Having said that, the scores on the coach evaluations have stayed relatively high (although they do not register consistency between officials in different leagues and geographic locations). We have set a target of 3.5 overall for officiating in the RMLL. That means a score halfway between meeting the challenge of the game most of the time and all of the time. The average score for the RMLL was 3.3 in 2014. It is clear that many teams are not sending in their evaluations and it is hard to make assumptions about how that would affect the scores although I would think they might come down somewhat. We still have to work to increase compliance with this important tool. There are interesting trends in the data including some officials who seem to struggle in certain levels and an overall - but not always present - trend to see grades for officials

descending as they move into higher levels. This last finding is a particularly important finding for ALRA assignors and evaluators. Another important finding was the levelling of the scores across dimensions. It used to be that 'Penalty Selection' was clearly graded the worst (no surprise really) and although it is still lowest, it is within 0.2 of the highest of the average (3.3) and is still above the level of 'usually' gets it right. A difference this year was a guide that we gave to all those filling out these evaluations that clearly explained the different ratings and how they should be used along with the intention, consequences and purpose of the whole process.

There is an expectation that the ALRA will return to a province-wide clinic for senior referees especially since it is a rule change year.

## **Coaching**

There was no coaching SuperClinic in Alberta in the past year. There was an attempt to organize one to run in Edmonton (the previous two years had been in Calgary and there was concern about market saturation) but facility availability became a problem. There is a plan to offer one next year with some innovative touches with streams that may appeal to players and coaches alike.

The technical aspects of coach development are a large focus of the ALA Heretics Committee. Recommendations for increased focus on curriculum and teaching discipline in lacrosse are a significant part of this focus as is more outreach to rural programs and expanding rural play (quantity and quality).

## **Playing**

Again, an area of intense interest for the ALA Heretics Committee. There is a project proposal for a roving stick clinic that will assess every player's stick up to Tier 2 to make sure they are all playing with decent sticks. Much more will come from the committee reports over the next few months.

Issues have come up that relate to rules and regulations around hold outs and player lists that have highlighted the need for a focus on key principles and concepts being clear in the RMLL approach and supporting documentation.

## **Game Promotion**

This is an area that needs more focus and 2015 will be a good year to do it with the Founders Cup coming to Alberta. The RMLL will create a small task force in the last quarter of 2014 to work on the development of the game outside of the lacrosse community so that the media and the public are more connected to the RMLL.

Greg Hart  
RMLL Development Commissioner