

2015 RMLL Senior B Commissioner Report

This year unfortunately started in turmoil, as the former Spruce Grove Slash team became the Edmonton Warriors Senior B team. The division had no objection to the transferring of the franchise, as it was felt that the transfer would strongly assist the team in staying viable. But dissension and hard feelings resulted when the Warriors decided that they were going to use Bill Hunter Arena as their home arena. Bill Hunter has been the home arena of the Outlaws for many years and the Warriors chose to not have any discussion with the Outlaws on their choice. The Outlaws had been about to secure storage space at Bill Hunter and had been working with the City of Edmonton to secure space for the past 3 seasons. All of those negotiations were now voided. Bill Hunter Arena is being utilized throughout the season by many minor and major teams, but there was only 1 Sr. B team there. The RMLL felt that if they could place one more Sr. B team into it, the City would see that major lacrosse could fully utilize this arena.

Unfortunately, this plan backfired a bit, as the City still did not give us the needed floortime at Bill Hunter for playoffs and provincials this season. The Outlaws moved to Sherwood Park, feeling forced out of Bill Hunter, and amassed expenses in doing so. Their Edmonton team wear and merchandise was now defunct and logos had to be changed. Their budget had to be reworked and they had to scramble to get floor. Sherwood Park had already made their floor allotments and the Outlaws had to take practice time at a less than ideal location. Much of this could have been avoided with discussion from the Warriors, but it did not take place. All at the expense of a team that was established. Others will disagree with this, as they feel that arenas are public buildings for all. However, there were other options available and they were not explored. This resulted in major expenses and upheaval to a team that did not cause the issue.

2016 sees the return of the Sr. B National Championship Presidents' Cup to the RMLL. Once again, more discord. There were 2 bids received by the agreed deadline. A third team requested an extension and had it granted by the ALA. This portion of the bidding is administered by the RMLL – not the ALA. To the best of my knowledge, the team asking for the extension had made no communication to the RMLL that they were bidding on the championship. Meanwhile, both of the original teams had submitted their bids. The 3rd team was given a one week extension and came up with a terrific bid. No question there. But this extension was not granted to the two original bidders. Nor was an explanation ever satisfactorily offered as to why an extension was granted to a 3rd team, when there were already 2 bids received.

Successful drafts in the north and the south regions were held in February. However, once again, the Sr. B division was left trying to negotiate player rights from the south to the north to bring graduating juniors “home” to play lacrosse. Jr. A teams eliminated from playoffs will send 5th yr. junior players to the teams that are in playoffs. This is a practice that should not stop, as all agree that it's great for the involved players. However, a 5th yr junior player must remain in the draft region where he finishes his/her 5th yr of junior. So player rights get trapped in a region that is far away from home. In the past, the Sr. B teams have been able to work things out with trades and future considerations. However, this year, the transferring of rights became very complicated with misunderstandings of perceived promises vs. actual promises. This started more discord. It's hoped that the Sr. B division can find a solution to this problem at their breakout session this fall.

The playing season, despite the pre-season, was pretty uneventful and produced very good games. Discipline was minimal. However, the biggest and most common complaint this year was not in the game play but with the officiating. The majority of the teams seem to be in agreement that the officiating is determining the outcome of games, instead of the play on the floor determining the outcome. This is a pretty distressing situation and unfortunately, not specific to just Sr. B. Without resolution to this problem, we will be seeing the loss of players and the loss of teams. Very thorough discussion is needed and all involved have to cooperate to solve the problems. The interest of all is common – the game of lacrosse. It's hoped that all can resolve the issues with this in mind.

Many of the problems within the Sr. B division could have been avoided with much better communication and having all consider the players and the good of the game. To not do so results in severe misunderstandings between teams and it transfers to the players, reflecting on the play on the floor. Organized sports of any kind do not always run smooth. And the jobs we do in the administration of lacrosse, at all levels of governance, are difficult. We cannot please everyone all the time. That's understood. But, it becomes much tougher when people stop communicating.

Respectfully submitted,

Shauna Sterparn

RMLL Senior B Commissioner