

RMLL RIC REPORT - 2017

Judging by the coaches' evaluations forwarded on to me and by my own observations, the ALRA did an excellent job in covering the RMLL games in 2017. Due to co-ordinated and excellent scheduling and the willingness of senior officials to travel on weekends, we were able to staff all the RMLL games this year with the highest rated officials available. While complaints were down almost uniformly in all RMLL divisions, there was also a noticeable decrease in Major infractions this year. It seems as the quality of coaching improves then so does the quality of play and with it a commensurate decrease in stupidity and viciousness on the playing floor.

One division that stands out in this respect is Senior C. Since Tracey Haining has taken over as Senior C commissioner the participants have known that there is now appropriate governance in place and that there will be consequences for stupid players committing loutish or dangerous actions. This fact means that there is an incentive for the skilled players to continue in the game, while the brutes are encouraged to mend their ways or retire from contact lacrosse. In this new, refreshing environment, the ALRA had a much easier time finding referees who wanted to referee this league in 2017. A real win – win situation for everyone!

This was another year with NO bench clearing brawls, at least our seventh consecutive. Also match penalties and game misconducts to non-playing bench personnel seemed much lower again this year in my estimation. Congratulations to us all.

In 2017, we were able to integrate several younger referees into higher levels of competition. This met with all round satisfaction, both from the referees themselves but also from the competitors. Again, the dollars spent over the past several years by the ALA, ALRA and RMLL on referee development are finally bearing fruit. Evidently, more younger, but experienced referees, are staying in the game and transitioning smoothly from minor lacrosse into higher RMLL level games. We will be presenting a programme for RMLL consideration that I believe will enhance this trend.

The ALRA responded to the requests from several divisions in the RMLL that we institute a “fast track” programme for ex players to expedite their progress up the ladder in the ALRA. While this programme was instituted this year, it operated with only moderate effectiveness in my estimation and it will need some tweaking in 2018 in order to achieve any lasting success.

The Uber Clinic, which is our high level provincial referee's clinic, was again held in conjunction with the RMLL Super Coaching Clinic in Okotoks this year. This year, as a trial, we added a fitness component to the clinic programme. This portion of the clinic was very well received by everyone to whom I have spoken with and we plan on improving on it and doing it again in 2018.

Naturally not everything was peaches and cream. The Junior A league was, to be blunt, a travesty. With two very weak teams in 2017, unfortunately nearly 35% of the games were basically played under “house league” rules in order to prevent injury; yet the ALRA was expected to assign its best officials to every game of this league. This meant that other more competitive games within the RMLL were probably not assigned the appropriate officials for their games because officials were involved in a Junior A game. I am confident that the league will address this situation for 2018 and make decisions for the league that conform with the new reality of Alberta lacrosse to make things better and safer for the participants of our flag ship level of lacrosse.

I was unhappy with the level of the officials that we had to choose from for the Junior Ladies Provincials. There seemed to be an inordinate amount of lacrosse activity on that particular weekend in July and we were short a couple of more experienced hands for this event. I apologize for that but we did the best we could under the circumstances.

We continue to have problems assigning games on the July weekend that the ALA runs its provincials. Several clubs insist on having non-travel games on that weekend instead of mid-week and these remain difficult to cover.

I would like to thank the following:

My assignors – Val Miles and Lawrence Zdrill

My problem solver – David Westwood

My (and everyone else’s) RMLL liason – Christine Thielen

The ALA – especially Executive Director Lisa Grant

All of the above do so much work to help make sure that the RMLL games run smoothly. Thanks again to all of you and your patience with me and I look forward to working with you all again next season.

Warren Renden

RIC RMLL