



Canada Rugby League Association | 2024 AGM

- **President's report – John Cameron**

- The last 15+ months have been a one of the strongest for the CRLA in a number of years as the sport has continued

- **Membership**

- Membership has increased from 315 at the end of 2023, to a record early estimate of ~530 in 2024 – representing an over 60% overall growth
- Growth has been across all of our demographic groups – Women (Ospreys + Ottawa Tigers), Men (Trash Pandas, Ottawa Tigers), Masters (Brantford Broncos), but especially youth (BC, ON)
- Youth have contributed over 150 new members representing 70% of total membership growth
- Two U-18 team in BC and Ontario, combined with the partnership with Iroquois Roots Rugby have allowed our membership to span from 4 years to 67 years of age – representing a 63 span in the age of members of our organization
- Special thanks to Blake Stewart, Stephen Lenahan, Steve Piatek, Chris Bond and Robin Legault for their efforts in getting this program off the ground, and to Melanie Squire for her continued efforts with the mini rugby program

- **Financials**

- Special thanks to volunteers Greg Furyk (CPA, CA) and Colin Mates (CPA) who have been working with John Cameron and Michael Steer to correct past tax errors with Revenue Canada to rectify the GST amount owing
- The process has involved re-stating financials since 2016, and professionalizing templates and processes
- For the 2nd year in a row, the CRLA broke-even and did not run a deficit – a special thanks to Katie Grudzinski on her fundraising efforts

- **National Teams**

- **East vs. West**
 - Women's and Men's national competitions were successful combined in July and October with camps – players and coaches commented on the success of these combinations, and recommended the opportunity for travel cost savings etc., should be replicated in 2025
- **Wolverines**
 - Despite the qualification setbacks the men faced with the IRL membership criteria, the team continued to improve on the field – playing two internationals in 2024, with a draw vs. the United States, and after 10 years without a home game vs. Jamaica, winning a match attending by over 400 people in Toronto



Canada Rugby League Association | 2024 AGM

- Ravens
 - The Ravens had a positive camp at nationals early in the year, and hope to follow-up their growing success at the RLWC qualifiers in the US in two weeks time
 - They will also be wearing our new indigenous designed logo, by the same artist of the Wolverines
- U-19 Wolverines
 - In September, the CRLA announced the creation of the U-19 Wolverines, with their first international to be played against the United States, in Las Vegas, in February 2025. A coaching staff will be announced imminently, with selections to be announced in December
- Board Transparency
 - We have taken steps with Board transparency in 2024 through a number of steps:
 - All AGM minutes, policies and financials now publicly available on website
 - AGM advertised to all province's members – not just Boards – with all attendees welcome (link publicly shared)
 - Greater communication with provincial boards on calendar, decision making, and strategy
- Opportunities & Risks
 - IRL membership
 - Criteria are closed to being reached, though the final decision will be with the IRL board. Full membership would bring increased responsibility, but also help attracting players and corporate sponsorship
 - Marketing
 - Progress made thanks to Connor Byron on professionalizing socials, but more work needs to be done on keep relevant content, especially updating the website – see volunteers below
 - Financial
 - The CRLA is still too dependent on membership fees, and player funding for national teams, instead of grants and fundraising
 - With updated socials, and expanded committees, the organization will only grow further through a concerted effort in applying for grants and a more centralized fundraising strategy between provincial orgs and national teams – this also includes leveraging tax receipts for donations by private individuals
 - A continued push to eliminate remaining outstanding debt of \$18k – paid off 50% in last few years – while continuing to generate small surpluses in future years



Canada Rugby League Association | 2024 AGM

- Volunteers / Committees
 - The CRLA relies solely on volunteers – and keeping them engaged is a key aspect to ongoing success
 - Overworked volunteers also burn out, so it is important to spread the workload through a concerted effort for more volunteers
 - The planned creation of a National Team organizing committee, Marketing committee and Fundraising committee would help continue to professionalize the organization
 - Early season calendars – including well in advanced planned internationals, would help focus volunteers, and provide stability
- Insurance
 - There continues to be a decline in the number of insurance firms willing to insure rugby, due to the contact nature of the sport
 - Two injuries in Masters this year, including one filed claim, may increase premiums in 2025, and limit the amount of available insurers – thus impacting insurance fees for players
- Governance
 - As we continue to professionalize the organization, attention needs to be paid to finalizing an updated ORL constitution – better reflecting the de-centralized club approach – while a growing membership in Alberta (especially with women) should lead to formal incorporation