

## **2024 AGM Staff Report**

Over the past year, Rugby Alberta's programs in Alberta have experienced remarkable growth, nearly doubling in size thanks to the ongoing support of the CRU and ERU. Building on prior successes, here are some key highlights from 2024:

### **Alberta Regional Championship 7s**

This year's Alberta Regional Championship 7s saw an impressive 16 teams compete across boys' and girls' divisions at Foote Field. Due to increased participation, we introduced a new format, splitting the tournament into two separate events, each hosting eight teams. University competitions ran alongside these events, providing an added layer of excitement and opportunities for aspirational athletes.

### **Alberta Regional Championship 15s**

Held in Lethbridge, the Alberta Regional Championship 15s broke records with 800 participants, marking it as the largest ARC 15s event to date. New regions, including the County Warriors and Big Country Storm, joined the competition, showcasing the expansion of regional rugby. Special thanks to the Lethbridge Rugby Club and the City of Lethbridge for their support. In 2025, the event will return to CRU.

### **North vs. South: Battle of Alberta Series**

The Women's Wolf Pack returned for the North vs. South Battle of Alberta series, which expanded to include three games for both men's and women's teams. Matches in Calgary, Red Deer, and Leduc highlighted the series, resulting in one player earning their first national cap in 2024. Notably, interprovincial participation included teams from Saskatchewan and Manitoba, adding a dynamic element to the competition.

### **Blue Card Pilot Program**

In 2024, we launched the Blue Card pilot program for U16 and U18 male and female rugby to enhance player safety through standardized concussion management. While the program provided valuable data on injury rates, challenges in implementation—such as incomplete team sheets and reporting errors—underscored the need for better training and resources. These insights will guide improvements for future rollouts.

### **Age-Grade Wolf Pack Programs**

The U16 and U18 Wolf Pack programs excelled in the Prairie Cup, dominating the competition in Winnipeg. The U19 teams delivered mixed results at the CRC in Halifax, with the women narrowly missing the top spot and the men securing their first win in two years. Several players gained valuable experience and are eligible to return in 2025. Additionally, Albertan athletes earned spots at U18 national camps held in BC. Despite the cancellation of the Prairie Cup for the U16 girls age group, the girls toured Abbotsford in October, beating the Fraser Valley Rugby

Union Selects in a fantastic game and also attending the WXV match between Canada and England at BC Place.

### **Alberta Women's Premier League and Alberta Cup**

The Alberta Women's Premier League concluded with the Edmonton Leprechaun Tigers RFC Women triumphing over the Calgary Rams RFC in Edmonton. The Alberta Cup followed a double round-robin format, with the Edmonton Leprechaun Tigers RFC defeating the Calgary Hornets in the final.

### **Provincial Junior Rugby Championship (PJCC)**

Launched in Red Deer as a season finale for U16 and U18 clubs, the PJCC aimed to extend the season and offer meaningful competition for eliminated teams. With over 300 participants each day, the event successfully showcased the first-ever Provincial Junior Rugby Championship in these age divisions while maintaining affordability and accessibility.

### **Membership Growth**

Membership increased by nearly 11% in 2024, marking the highest numbers since pre-COVID. This growth is attributed to a targeted spring marketing campaign and revitalized interest among the 16–20 age group.

As Darren highlighted, significant investments made in 2023 have contributed to our success this year. While such investments will not always be feasible, their impact is clear and will continue to benefit the sport.

We extend our sincere gratitude to the Board, our dedicated staff—including Christi Sue, Breanne, Roisin, and Steph (in Communications)—our summer students, sessional coaches, especially our Zone Volunteers, and countless others for their contributions. Here's to building on this year's achievements as we look ahead to 2025!

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