



CALGARY RUGBY UNION

Box 5888, Station "A", Calgary, Alberta T2H 1Y4

Office: 403-255-9199

Fields 9025 Shepard Rd SE

MEMBER
Canadian Rugby Union
Alberta Rugby Union
Sports Alberta

CRU Presidents Report 2022

The 2022 season was our first step back into a semi 'regular' season since COVID stunted 2020 and shrank 2021 seasons respectfully. The CRU staff and volunteers back in early spring decided that we were going to have rugby back at all levels in some shape and size no matter what. How that would exactly look only time could tell. The key was to have multiple plans and the plans we built must be flexible enough to handle what may come our way in the way of numbers and other unknowns. The key drivers were that as a community we wanted the game, the family, and the social community back. The CRU can be proud that we did reach our goal in each of these areas but that was due to some hardworking staff, volunteers, players, coaches, clubs, and fans!

Minis (U7, U9 & U11) & Juniors (U13 & U15)

This year to help clubs maintain their identity we decided to run all spring minis and juniors as festival style play. Each week each club submitted their number of teams or players, and the CRU would program weekly festivals that would match up with the numbers. This would mean multiple clubs may work together to form a team and then play other teams grouped together. Thus, allowing clubs to still put a team/players forward rather than turning players away. This helped to build club unity and the idea of community within rugby. This was a lot of work to plan and stress to turn around weekly schedules in a timely fashion but allowed us to maximize player time on the pitch with a ball which is one of our ultimate goals! Clubs, players, and coaches all enjoyed the season and when at the debriefing meeting it was a consensus that it was a remarkable success. Many kudos to the CRU Program Manager Kim Endicott and Assistant Tae Le for their countless hours of demanding work.

Juniors (U16 & U18)

This level of juniors was the most difficult age grade to run a robust season. The summer months are always a hard season pre-COVID never mind after. The enrollment was down, summer vacations, and the competition with both Maverick and Wolf Pack rugby also lowered player availability. To help combat this as most clubs wanted some sort of league play, we combined club teams together that made sense and enough numbers to have close to a full 15's game when possible. The idea of 'Game On' also echoed each weekend to allow players to get maximum play time and enjoyment. Without this flexibility and creativity there would not have been a season.

Unfortunately, at this level we have also seen some things that were not in line with the World Rugby Core Values. Referee abuse was present and continued to increase in years past. It was also witnessed that some coaches did not want to work within the ethos of 'Game On' rules to get games going with modified numbers but instead took it upon themselves to illegally dispensate players up or down without the unions knowing. We have already looked at ways for the upcoming season to mitigate this reoccurring and having our junior coaches all partake in some mandatory learning prior to stepping on the pitch has a coach.

Registration numbers for both minis and juniors were rising from 2021, but we still have our work cut out to match the 2019 numbers. This will be our goal heading into the 2023 season.



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	2022	2021	2019
Minors U5-U11	463	351	538
Juniors U13-U18	839	731	1347

Senior Rugby

This year, with strategic planning, we ran three divisions of Men's and Women's rugby successfully. One of the key aspects of to this success was to continue to embrace the 'Game On' rules and the theme of flexibility. Also, with no cross-over at the women's highest level until the Provincial Final allowed us to use some Calgary based rules such as rolling subs.

Pre-season planning

It was imperative for us to look at both the men and women's divisions separately to allow for the most success. It was decided early on that the women's group would use a seeding round to help set teams to the level they could play at. Were with the men it was decided to have teams declared for each division at the beginning of the season. 'Game On' rules were on the effect for all divisions and genders except at the AC level. This would help with the flexibility piece we spoke about earlier. As well to try and rebuild the level of play at the AC level game.

Season

For the women there was a lot of uncertainty of player numbers and abilities. To help with that and to provide teams with time to recruit players and build player abilities we decided to run a seeding round which allowed us to separate into three divisions based on ability and viable numbers. We are proud that we ran Competitive, Developmental and Recreational divisions with 11 teams in total playing across the three divisions. We also decided to run this all under the CRU banner until provincials. This allowed us to be creative with the rules and had us introduce rolling subs in all games.

The men were a little easier to plan as each club was able to declare the level of play and number of teams they were going to put into leagues. There were also three distinct levels with Recreational, Developmental, and Competitive (AC). At the recreational level we tried to increase the city teams' games against each other and the rural teams against each other. This system seemed to work well for all parties involved. The Developmental level had 6 teams involved and as usual some great contests throughout the year. The league winners were disappointed to not have a provincial final but that will make next year even sweeter. The top division of rugby had 4 teams submitted from both the CRU and ERU. It was only at the men's Competitive level that there was a crossover between AC teams from the ERU and the CRU. At times in the South some of the teams struggled to put forth a team worthy of this competition. We will continue to build this for future years to help build the viability of this competition.

Play-offs

This year at the CRU level we were able to have playoff games for all three men's levels and for the competitive and developmental women's levels. It was unfortunate that Edmonton was not able to field teams in each of these areas for a quality provincial finals series. We were able to get an AC provincial final with the Calgary Canucks representing the south and the Strathcona Druids representing the north. It was a great game which kept all the Spectors on the edge of their seats and the Canucks came away with the title. There was also an AWP final between the



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Calgary Hornets and the LTs/Rockers. The combined North team did come away with a win, but it was a well fought game by our south representatives. We all hope next year will allow us to have a full slot of provincial games.

Registration 2022

	2022	2021	2019
Minors U5-U11	463	351	538
Juniors U13-U18	839	731	1347
Senior Women	248	221	221
Senior Men	539	463	589
Temp/Visitor	339	54	168
Masters	12	0	
Coach	101	126	52
Total	2541	1946	2915

Rep Rugby – ARC and WCRC

This year it was great to see the return of the Alberta Regional Competition (ARC) and the Western Canadian Championships (WCRC). The CRU was thrilled to be the host of the 2022 ARC and the event was a remarkable success. Many thanks go to Rugby Alberta, teams from each region, the staff, and volunteers at the CRU and of course the players and families! The future of rugby looks bright in Alberta with these up-and-coming youngsters.

Facility

The Calgary Rugby Park is a facility run by the Calgary Rugby Union. The park and union have moved back to the green level of financial reliability which we have missed the mark since 2017. This is something the board is quite proud of and glad to have such an active board and dedicated employees. This has come from a whole family approach to fixing our financial woes. We saw the unveiling of the home clubs (Canucks, Hornets, Rams, Saints, Saracens) dressing rooms that were painted and decal in each club colours. They look fantastic and it helps to build the unity of the union and home clubs.

Each weekend of rugby we saw substantial numbers coming back to the park and we had record sales at the bar most weekends. Players, coaches, and families were back and the sure showed it. The park also added debit machines in 2021 that have help streamline the process of purchasing food and beverages. The CRP continues to evolve its practices to allow for more growth of both the sport and community.

As for events we saw the return of Stampede Sevens, hosted the Canadian Classics, the AWP and AC provincial finals, and even created a new event the Oktoberfest 10's and hall party. We hope to keep these events and expand even more this year to promote rugby across all ages and maximize the field/space usage.

Consultant & HR Company



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The CRP land is owned by the city and leased by the CRU. We continue to work closely with the city to make sure we stick in the green for years to come. Part of that was to work with a consultant to help plan out our short- and long-term goals. This information has been gathered and presented to the board. The next step will be to look it over and see if the suggestions match our boards 1-, 3-, & 5-year plans.

As well we received some grant funds to help us work with an HR consultant company called SequentialHR + Recruiting. As a board we have set a goal to move the CRU to a much bigger stage and working with this company has helped to set up the foundational knowledge and the steps we needed to take forward to set us up for success. Each long-term employee will have employment contracts which are new. Sequential also supplied us with paperwork, manuals and much more that will be useful for many years to come.

Conclusion

For a second straight year I am grateful for the board members and staff that work countless hours for rugby to run as smoothly as it has been in Calgary. This is no easy feat but a appreciated one. We hope that next year in 2023 we will be able to grow rugby in all aspects of the game. Grass roots rugby is where we need to focus our time. Thanks again to the rugby community and I look forward to the 2023 season!

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Peter Rowe".

Peter Rowe
President
Calgary Rugby Union

