

President's statement regarding 2024 "A" Team Evaluations

One of my goals when I was appointed president for Rockyview Lacrosse Association, was to revamp our A team evaluation process to address many concerns myself and other board members had been hearing over the years.

A major part of that was to separate the A evaluations and hold them earlier. This was an effort to avoid playoffs for winter sports such as hockey. Once the annual AGM was completed, and we had the 2024 Board of Directors in place, we went to work on finding floor time for these earlier evaluations. Initially, the goal was to have these evaluations on weeknights to avoid conflicts with games for other sports. After 10 days of calling, searching and nearly begging for weeknight floor times, it became clear that we weren't going to be able to get the times we wanted.

The dates on the two weekends of January 20/21 and 28/29 were the only times that we could get a large enough block of time for evaluations to happen in January. After some discussions, I personally made the decision to move forward with the evaluations on these dates. We knew there was potential conflict, but I felt it was important that we take the leap.

There were immediately some rumblings about players not being able to attend some or all sessions. To be honest, this has happened every year. In the end, everyone normally finds a way to attend enough sessions for proper consideration. But it bothered me. And it bothered other members of our Board and specifically members of our Evaluation Committee. This change was being made to reduce time conflict issues. It was obvious it had not accomplished that goal. Discussions began almost immediately to try and find a way to accommodate players who absolutely could not attend the sessions we had scheduled.

This was not an easy conversation. I am a strong believer that lacrosse cannot establish itself as more than a fringe minor sport if we constantly allow other sports to dictate our decisions. I have been very vocal over the years about players needing to earn their spot on the team through the evaluation process. But I also understand the changes we made were not ones we could have communicated early enough to provide everyone with ample opportunity to adjust their schedules. We needed to find a way to maintain the integrity of our evaluation process while allowing for some accommodation for players that wanted to be part of the evaluation process but could not attend.

This was important because, while giving someone a spot on the A team they did not work for hurts the integrity of the process, so does excluding players in our association based on their commitment to another sport during what most would consider our off season.

As a result of these discussions, our Evaluation Committee presented an evaluation process that considered all the items I've discussed above. I believe that the process developed by our Evaluation Committee has found the balance we've been looking for.

I'm happy to approve this process for evaluations. I commend the evaluations committee for their efforts and look forward to seeing this plan in action.

The evaluation process is explained in the "2024 Evaluation Process" document available on our website.

Regards,

Rene Reutlinger
President, Rockyview Lacrosse Association