



## Junior B Tier 1 Division 2019 Commissioner's Report

The 2019 season was very successful on many levels.

The Calgary Shamrocks are the Canadian Jr.B Champions with a hard earned victory over the Six Nations Rebels in a thrilling 1 goal victory. This breaks a 9 year Ontario reign in this division. In fact the last time someone other than an Ontario team has won the Founders was the Calgary Mountaineers in 2009. The Rebels finished the round robin in 1<sup>st</sup> place with an unblemished 6-0 record, Shamrocks finished 2<sup>nd</sup> with a 5-1 record. The Rebels blew the Rocks away in the round robin 19-3 while the Rocks rested some key players. This must have sandbagged the Rebels a bit because in the Gold medal game, the Shamrocks roared out of the gate & established 5 & 6 goal leads going into the third period. The Shamrocks withstood a furious challenge by the Ont. Champs to take home the championship by a single digit. This program was 5 years in the making as the Shamrock organization suffered many setbacks before the program reaped the ultimate reward.

The Manitoba Blizzard represented the RMLL very well with a respectable 3-3 round robin record, but fell in the bronze medal game to Coquitlam Jr.B Adanacs. Special congrats to the entire Blizzard organization for, by all accounts, a very well run tournament.

The year end Larry Bishop Memorial tournament was a another great tournament. This year was hosted by the Red Deer Rampage, who also did an outstanding job. The 4 division champions, Calgary Shamrocks, Ft. Saskatchewan Rebels, Red Deer Rampage & Manitoba Blizzard were joined by 1<sup>st</sup> time tournament participants, Rockyview Silvertips. Competition was intense, with 3 teams vying for the gold medal berth to play the round robin leader Shamrocks. The Rebels were victorious in that quest by mere percentage points over the Blizzard & Rampage. In the gold medal game the Rebels gave the Rocks everything they could handle in a close exciting game that tested both teams mettle. The Shamrocks persevered 8-7 to win the Bishop trophy. Normally this would make the Shamrocks the Alberta Champion, but this year the LGB determined in an arbitrary & somewhat punitive decision, that the Alberta Champion must win a minimum best of 3 final. The road to provincial finals included 14 games in 20 days for some of the teams, proving to be very difficult in maintaining the competitive edge. It was determined by a formal request to allow the final of the Bishop to be game 1 of the provincials if 2 Alberta teams were in the final. This doubled the importance of the Bishop final. The Shamrocks closed out the Rebels at home the next weekend to become the 2019 RMLL Champion. The regular season had its peaks & valleys overall. There was a very high number of affiliates used by a number of teams because of weak numbers or the uncertainty of players being released from a higher division. The use of underage midgets was higher than expected & I would like to see more Tier II players being used. The upside to this, is that a lot of young men were exposed to higher calibre lacrosse quicker than usual.

A lot of talent & heart were displayed this season by all the teams in their journey to lacrosse excellence. Players from this division not only compete in their own group, they also play in Junior A, Senior B & C. This division continues to grow & has become the glue that holds the RMLL together.

Mike Fynn, interim Jr.B Commissioner