



RMLL Executive Decision about the 2021 Official Season

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This is the update from the April 3, 2021 communication regarding COVID-19.

On May 26, 2021 Premier Kenney announced a re-opening plan for Alberta that would gradually reduce all COVID-19 restrictions. For lacrosse purposes, the key is to reach Stage 2 that would allow all youth and adult indoor team sports to resume without restrictions. This would occur with over 60% of those over the age of 12 with at least one vaccine shot combined with fewer than 500 hospitalizations (triggered two weeks after the threshold is met). Currently Alberta is at 58% of eligible Albertans with at least one vaccine dose and 548 in hospital. The government estimates that it could hit Stage 2 by mid-June.

This is good news and hopefully achievable. Unfortunately, it is too late for an official RMLL season. **Therefore, the RMLL Executive has made the difficult decision to cancel the 2021 official season.**

In a typical year, teams have a pre-season in March and April and the regular season begins in late April. The regular season wraps up in early July. Playoffs are completed by early August and national championships occur in late August. There are even RMLL divisions that wrap up their regular season in late June and playoffs by early July.

With the gradual lifting of COVID-19 restrictions, teams could hit the floor at the earliest in mid-June. Given that most players have not been on the floor in months (and in some cases since 2019), a minimum of two weeks of practice time would be needed before games could begin. That would mean, at best, a regular season starting in early July. That is simply too short to run even a reduced schedule of regular season and playoff games.

In addition, Lacrosse Canada has cancelled all but two 2021 national championships. Moreover, it is widely expected that the two remaining championships (President's Cup and Minto Cup) will be cancelled within the next week.

Lacrosse leagues across the country have already announced the cancellation of the 2021 season including the Western Lacrosse Association, Major Series Lacrosse, and Senior Series in Ontario.

The good news is that if Premier Kenney's "Open for Summer" re-opening plan goes ahead according to schedule, then RMLL teams could start to participate in different return to lacrosse activities in mid-June.

This decision is for the regular RMLL season only. The RMLL Executive decided it could not afford to gamble with your money and retain floor time and therefore as part of this decision, it has given notice to the City of Calgary that it wishes to cancel ALL floor time

that it had under contract. Going forward, any “return to play/activity” will be made on a team-by-team basis, the RMLL Executive did not believe that it was fair under these extraordinary circumstances to “force” any team to play or participate this season given they may not have collected fees for the past 2 seasons.

This team-by-team “return to play/activity” will ultimately be governed by directives received from the Government of Alberta but could be a combination of practice sessions, exhibition games, and even the possibility of tournaments. These activities are much broader than those that were offered in 2020. It is important to note that the responsibility for organizing such activities will be on the teams involved and would have to follow RMLL regulations. Teams are encouraged to contact their players and get a sense of their level of commitment and desire to take part in any summer 2021 lacrosse activities and then plan accordingly.

Losing an entire RMLL season is something that none of us has likely thought about. Let alone losing two seasons. Then again, few of us would have foreseen the near total disruption of life in general. This presents us all with a number of difficult challenges to navigate over the coming months. Among those is all of us working together to keep the momentum in our game and our league so we can build a successful comeback lacrosse season in 2022.

With a view to reducing, or eliminating, fees for the 2021 season, the RMLL Executive approved the application for government funds to offset the continuing costs of operating the RMLL and its relaunch for next season. We will not know the results of this application until mid-July and will advise teams when we know more.