

2025 RMLL RIC Report

As we look to the 2026 season and the increased interest in expansion across all divisions, the largest issue the RMLL will experience is scheduling games with the floor available so appropriate referees can be assigned. Unfortunately, if all team applications are accepted, weekday games will become required, which will mean teams losing practice time, or finding additional floors in order to have appropriate officials assigned for the best interests of the players and coaches. An alternative solution would be to reduce the number of games each team plays in each division.

Season Accomplishments

The feedback across the RMLL is largely that the RMLL continues to maintain an overall high level of officiating competency, with the exception of the Jr B Tier I level. This was highlighted at the national level by RMLL officials refereeing on-floor at the national levels, both minor and major. Rule application and situations have largely been consistent, with the exception of the Founders Cup, where rules were unclear and unset until competition was set to begin. Another Central Alberta official from the RMLL was hired to the NLL.

Season Overview

We have continued to recover officials who elected to take time off over the past few seasons, and promoted many others into the RMLL, or new divisions within it. Three officials have been tasked with contacting RMLL officials who have not re-registered in the past few years, as well as graduating RMLL and minor players who are not registering to play in 2026.

The implementation of the 3-official mechanic to Tier II, in addition at the leagues with National Championships (Jr A, Tier I, and Sr B), was another large success for safety and game flow, however, 38 fewer games were covered by the 3-official system in 2025 compared to 2024. All major national championships continued to use the 3-officials system, with only Founders not using modified rules identical or nearly identical to the RMLL rules.

Having another official on the floor to de-escalate scenarios behind the play, or assess infractions, or even staying low when teams spread the floor, still allows for two officials to move up with the play and maintain adequate sightlines/coverage. Additionally, when fights/scrums/altercation occur, two officials are able to defuse the situation, while the third is able to control the benches and record additional infractions away from the scrum, or that the officials breaking up the situation may not be able to see. Using hockey as an analogous sport (and controlling for cost in the comparison), the comparable leagues to the RMLL have nearly all moved to four-official (WHL, USport, ACAC, Jr A, Sr AAA, Jr B, Sr AA), and did not adjust their fees downwards. Included [is a link to compare](#), but the difference between a University Men's game and Sr B is over \$100/referee, and \$5/linesperson). This is due to the increased speed and rules that emphasis speed and skill. It is not unreasonable to have the third official standard in our leagues with National Championships and then cascade down, as more officials become available.

Season Setbacks

As in previous years, the basing of Lloydminster in Hillmond, Sk and overlapping home game start times, particularly in the North East region of our province, made home games were difficult to schedule referees. **Centres in these areas must assist us in recruiting ex-players or officials from a different sport in order to reduce travel costs and ensure these games are able to be played as scheduled.** Hopefully, the officials slated to contact the aforementioned players not registering in 2026 are able to find officials in this specific area.

A change in assigning practices was required, and executed in 2025. Jack Sylven was able to assign all regular season games as scheduled and I assisted with confirming officials for playoffs and provincials. Our 2026 goal will be to have all leagues who have requested 3-official have 3 officials assigned. I will be closely monitoring and assisting Jack in the regular season assignments to meet this goal.

Growth and Recruitment

With the success of LC utilizing the 3-official system and moving towards it for major national championships, the RMLL would best support the continued excellence of officials at national championships by using the 3-official system for all playoffs and provincials. This will continue to require more officials be moved into the RMLL and be available during July & August. Officials consistently gaining in-game experience in different levels and settings has returned to historic levels. Minor assigning of appropriate up-and-coming officials where they gain experience in real game situations is still crucial to promoting more officials to the RMLL, especially as more officials are retiring and others are requesting to limit the amount of games they work in a week. Existing officials also have improved over the course of the last few season.

With the assigning responsibilities delegated elsewhere, I can continue to work on solidifying the playing rules for the RMLL and work with the WLA on creating a pathway for officials to work 2-3 weekends in Sr A this summer, and work to move more of our officials into the Sr A circuit.

Looking to the Future/Upcoming Season Goals

Staffing 100% of all regular season games in the leagues with national championships, and 100% of playoffs/provincials with the 3-officials system is one goal. We need to additional about 20 new officials to officiating staff, with 5 of those being in Wheatland and 5 of those in the Edmonton area, 5 in Central Alberta, and 5 in Calgary.

Thank you to everyone for their support in making the 2025 season an enjoyable experience.

David
RMLL RIC