Dear Rugby Ontario member clubs,

I hope this newsletter finds you well. It is my hope to be able to produce a newsletter at least four times this year to keep our membership up to date with the current rugby-related events in our province and in Canada. I know that many clubs are in the early stages of preparing for the upcoming season, and I want to wish you best of luck with all your indoor and dome training.

I would like to draw your attention to my goals for 2013, and to update you all on a few topics.

**Presidential Goals**

In 2013, I am seeking to...

1) Establish a strong relationship with the British Columbia Rugby Union and la Fédération de Rugby du Québec.
   - As the largest provincial union of Rugby Canada, we want to partner with Rugby Canada to move the sport forward. There will be an opportunity to have a greater voice with Rugby Canada if all three provinces are aligned.

2) Normalize relations with the Eastern Ontario Rugby Union.
   - As an organization that seeks inclusivity, it is important to ensure that the needs of Eastern Ontario clubs are met as stated at the Strategic Planning Session. A task force has been struck, chaired by Phillip Stone, to begin to address the concerns and bring suggestions and solutions forward for approval.

3) Improve relations with Rugby Canada.
   - Through Executive Director-Chief Executive Officer meetings between our two organizations, we will work towards growing and improving our relations.

4) Lead Rugby Ontario in the transition to a policy Board
   - As we move to a Board that has responsibility for governance, we become more efficient in addressing the issues of our members.

**Rugby Canada’s Proposed Dues Increase**

I would like to remind clubs that it is the Board’s intention at the Rugby Canada Annual General Meeting to vote against the $4.50 increase for each member to receive a magazine three times
a year. The motion to not support this increase was unanimously supported by our Board at our last meeting.

Las Vegas Invitational Sevens Tournament

The Rugby Ontario Board of Directors has received a number of questions regarding why we did not send an officially sanctioned team to the 2013 Las Vegas Invitations Sevens Tournament, held February 7th – 10th. I would like to offer some insight as to why we made this decision.

The Rugby Ontario Board is asked by our members to make sure every programme we approve and run falls under our mission statement, does not go over budget, has a transparent hiring practice of all appointed officials and players picked for the squad, has a season plan, etc. This ensures accountability to our paying members.

That being said, not all programmes we ran in the past followed the above criteria on all points.

At the AGM in December, a policy was passed that all programmes must be approved by the Board at a Board meeting after they had submitted their checklist form we developed and processed during the months of October and November. Since this was a new process, many teams were caught by surprise when we began implementing it in early December, including the Jr. Blues Sevens team.

This all came to pass over the week of Christmas holidays. At this point, people were already away on vacation, and we were left with a difficult decision. After much consultation, we decided to uphold the policy we passed. However, through the outstanding work of some of the team’s parents and staff, a creative solution was achieved that would still permit the team to travel and compete at the tournament.

Rugby Ontario is quite proud of the Ontario Selects’ performance at the Las Vegas Invitational, with the team finishing third in the International High School Elite 7’s division.

Ontario Jr. Blues Program to be based out of Eastern Ontario

At our February 24th /25th Board meetings, we made the decision to grant the Eastern Ontario Rugby Union the opportunity to operate Ontario East Jr. Blues U18 and U16 programs for the 2013 rugby season.

In the past decade, the EORU has built a very successful branch junior program. This is evident
over the last seven years, as EORU junior sides have recorded a number of impressive wins against provincial teams from the eastern half of Canada, and in 2008, 2011, and 2012 (they were unable to attend 2009, 2010), the EORU U16 boys team did not lose a game against the Maritime teams who all compete at the Junior National Championship.

Rugby Ontario has sufficient proof that the region has effectively developed their rugby program, both on a management side as well as a player development side, and has earned the opportunity to represent Rugby Ontario and Eastern Ontario at the Junior National Championship Festival.

It is important to note that this is a one-year pilot project, and will be evaluated extensively before making a decision on what steps will be taken for 2014 and beyond.

I look forward to a fantastic 2013 rugby season, and wish you all the best moving forward.

Regards,

Domenic Scuglia
President
Rugby Ontario