



(GELC) President's Report – 2024

As President of the Greater Edmonton Lacrosse Council (GELC), I am pleased to report that the 2024 lacrosse season has been a success. The passion and commitment shown by players, parents, coaches, and volunteers have been remarkable, and together we have built on the achievements of past seasons while navigating new challenges.

Men's Division Registration Trends (2023-2024)

U7 Division:

- 2023: 143 participants
2024: 234 participants
Growth: 91 additional participants
Percentage Growth: 63.6%

U9 Division:

- 2023: 302 participants
2024: 397 participants
Growth: 95 additional participants
Percentage Growth: 31.5%

U11 Division:

- 2023: 227 participants
2024: 399 participants
Growth: 172 additional participants
Percentage Growth: 75.7%

U13 Division:

- 2023: 248 participants
2024: 339 participants
Growth: 91 additional participants
Percentage Growth: 36.7%

U15 Division:

- 2023: 275 participants
2024: 398 participants



Growth: 123 additional participants
Percentage Growth: 44.7%

U17 Division:

- 2023: 1265 participants
2024: 1826 participants
Growth: 561 additional participants
Percentage Growth: 44.35%

Women's Division Registration Trends (2023-2024)

U11 Division:

- 2023: 61 participants
2024: 62 participants
Growth: 1 additional participant(s)
Percentage Growth: 1.6%

U13 Division:

- 2023: 49 participants
2024: 89 participants
Growth: 40 additional participant(s)
Percentage Growth: 81.6%

U15 Division:

- 2023: 120 participants
2024: 121 participants
Growth: 1 additional participant(s)
Percentage Growth: 0.8%

U17 Division:

- 2023: 22 participants
2024: 82 participants
Growth: 60 additional participant(s)
Percentage Growth: 272.7%



Overall Trend Across All Divisions

Both the Men's and Women's divisions experienced overall growth between 2023 and 2024. The Men's divisions showed consistent and substantial increases across most age groups, particularly in the U7 to U11 range, signaling that recruitment strategies for boys have been effective. In contrast, while the Women's divisions saw notable increases in U13 and U17, the younger age groups grew at a slower pace, suggesting an opportunity to refine our promotional efforts.

Key Factors Influencing Trends and Challenges

The registration trends for 2024 highlight a combination of successes and challenges influencing participation rates. Several factors are impacting the growth or decline of participation in certain divisions:

- **Competition from Other Sports:** Sports such as soccer and rugby have seen rising popularity, possibly drawing athletes away from lacrosse. Issues like scheduling conflicts and the overall affordability of competing in multiple sports may be a contributing factor.
- **Grassroots Program Development:** There is a clear need for continued focus on developing strong grassroots programs, particularly for younger age groups and girls. Early exposure and engagement are essential for fostering a lifelong interest in lacrosse.
- **Affordability and Travel Concerns:** As costs related to equipment, registration fees, and travel increase, it is important to explore ways to mitigate these financial barriers, ensuring lacrosse remains accessible to all families.
- **Women's Participation in Lacrosse:** Barriers to participation in women's lacrosse—such as concerns around the physicality of box lacrosse and potential injury risks—must be addressed through the creation of welcoming, safe environments and the enhancement of visibility and support for women's programs. Increasing outreach efforts at the grassroots level will be crucial for sustaining growth in the women's divisions.

Focus Areas Moving Forward

We must continue addressing accessibility and affordability concerns across all divisions of lacrosse. Additionally, recruiting and retaining officials remains a significant area of focus. For our tournaments to continue succeeding and for the sport to thrive long-term, we need to ensure that officials feel valued and respected. Negative behavior directed toward officials, whether from fans, parents, or coaches, cannot be tolerated. Fostering a culture of respect will help us retain these vital contributors to the game.



Acknowledgments

I want to extend my heartfelt gratitude to the dedicated volunteers, coaches, and staff within the Greater Edmonton Lacrosse Council and Alberta Lacrosse Association. Your tireless efforts to promote and facilitate lacrosse across the province are the backbone of our success. Despite organizational challenges, your unwavering commitment has enabled us to achieve so much this year.

Conclusion

The 2024 season has been filled with both accomplishments and challenges. We've seen the resilience and passion of our lacrosse community on full display, and we have identified areas where we must continue to focus our efforts for future success. By working together and maintaining open dialogue, I am confident that we will continue to grow lacrosse in Alberta and elevate the sport to new heights.

Thank you for your continued dedication and support. I look forward to what we will achieve together in the coming year.

Yours in Lacrosse,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "T Stewart". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Tim Stewart
President
Greater Edmonton Lacrosse Council