



**Subject: 2023 Year-End Review for the GELC Annual General Meeting**

Dear Members of the Greater Edmonton Lacrosse Council,

As we draw the curtains on another lacrosse season, I reflect with a blend of emotions on the journey we've collectively undertaken. The 2023 season has been a canvas painted with both triumphs and challenges, shaping the narrative of the Greater Edmonton Lacrosse Council.

The 2023 lacrosse season stands out as a significant stride forward, marked by both successes and challenges. Navigating the ongoing effects of the pandemic, we witnessed a gradual increase in registration numbers, a testament to the enduring passion of players, families, and enthusiasts for the sport they love. The uninterrupted season allowed our athletes to showcase their skills and determination on the floor, resulting in multiple GELC Championship Teams at Provincials.

The success of the GELC-hosted Provincial Championship was evident in the overwhelmingly positive feedback from participating teams. The efforts of the ALRA ensured consistent and equitable officiating, contributing to the overall fairness of the games. Noteworthy was the impressive turnout of GELC league champions, showcasing the dedication and talent within our lacrosse community. While challenges, including regrettable coach ejections and instances of parental conflicts, arose, the event maintained a commendable level of organization. Despite these isolated incidents, our aspiration is that all participants found the championship enjoyable and rewarding.

Our GELC teams demonstrated exceptional talent and hard work, securing several Provincial Championships. These victories symbolize not only our commitment but also the immense potential within our lacrosse communities.

Throughout the season, it became apparent that some member clubs held critical views that required intervention. Instances of code of conduct and social media policy violations, along with issues of communication etiquette, necessitated reminders. The recurring theme of grandstanding must be addressed, as such behavior is not conducive to the cooperative and supportive environment we aim to foster. Our collective goal remains unwavering—to foster the growth of lacrosse in Edmonton and surrounding areas and create a lasting positive impact.

Transitioning into the role of Executive Director proved exceptionally challenging for our new Executive Director, compounded by a prolonged predecessor tenure of over 20 years. Unfortunately, a notable disconnect in transferring crucial information complicated the handover process. I would like to thank the clubs that were patient and understanding during this process as this was a year of learning and growth for many of us in new positions, not to mention several positions on the executive were left unfilled for the season which added to the workload of the volunteers already juggling their professions and families outside of their volunteer commitments. Redirecting negative energy into positive and constructive support is crucial for the organization's effectiveness moving forward.



I extend heartfelt gratitude to the dedicated Volunteers, Presidents, and staff of the Greater Edmonton Lacrosse Council, who have worked tirelessly to promote and facilitate lacrosse across our province, even in the face of organizational challenges. Your unwavering commitment and contributions are deeply appreciated.

In conclusion, this year has been a mixed bag of accomplishments and challenges. We've seen the passion of our lacrosse community shine through in moments of triumph, but we've also recognized areas in need of attention. Together, we can pave the way for a brighter future for lacrosse in Alberta.

Yours in lacrosse,

Tim Stewart

President

Greater Edmonton Lacrosse Council

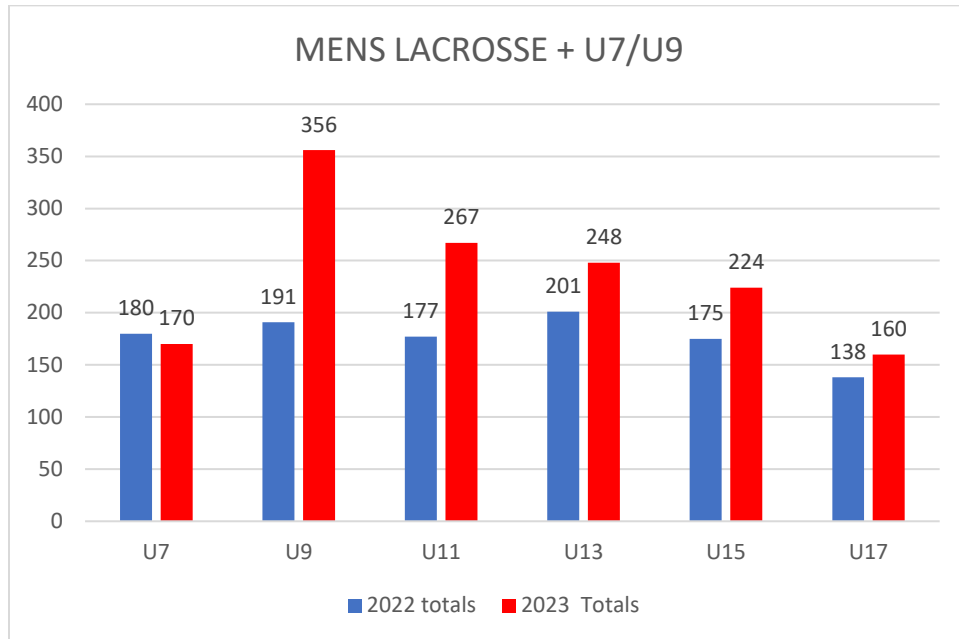
In closing, I invite you to reflect on "The Man in the Arena":

*"The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly; who errs, who comes short again and again, because there is no effort without error and shortcoming; but who does actually strive to do the deeds; who knows great enthusiasms, the great devotions; who spends himself in a worthy cause; who at the best knows, in the end, the triumph of high achievement, and who at the worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who neither know victory nor defeat."*



## Re: 2023 Registration Trends

Focusing on the registration trends across various age divisions and gender-specific divisions in the year 2023. These trends provide valuable insights into the state of lacrosse in our region.



In the U7 age division, we observed a slight decrease in registration, with the number of players dropping from 180 in the previous year to 170 players in 2023. While this represents a modest decline, it's essential for us to investigate the reasons behind this decrease and identify potential strategies to address it in the coming seasons.

Conversely, the U9 age division experienced a remarkable increase in player registrations. In 2022, we had 191 players, but in 2023, this number surged to an impressive 356 players. This substantial growth is a testament to the growing interest and enthusiasm for lacrosse among young players.

The U11 age division also saw significant growth, with the number of players increasing from 177 to 267 in 2023. This is a positive sign that our efforts to engage and retain players in this division are yielding successful results.

Moving to the U13 age division, we observed another increase in player registrations, with the count rising from 201 players to 248 players in 2023. This steady growth reflects the association's commitment to providing a compelling lacrosse experience for players in this age group.

In the U15 age division, we witnessed a notable increase from 175 players to 224 players, indicating sustained interest and participation among older players. Similarly, the U17 division also experienced growth, with the number of players increasing from 138 to 160, underscoring the continued engagement of older players in the sport.



Shifting our focus to the girls' divisions, we noticed a mix of trends in 2023. The U11 girls' division experienced a significant increase in female players, with the number growing from 28 to 74 players. This surge in participation among young girls is an encouraging development for the growth of lacrosse among this demographic.

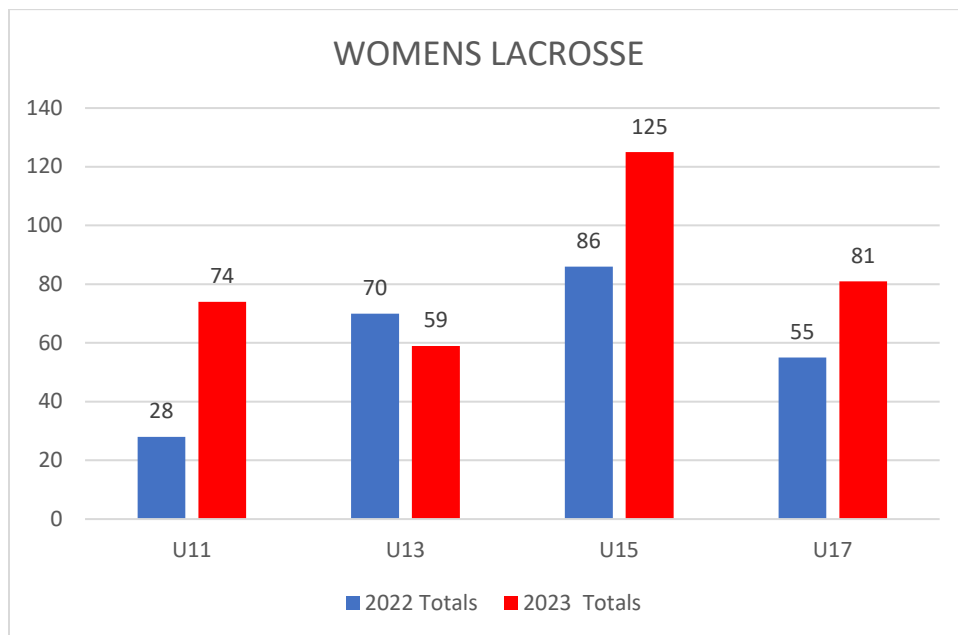
However, the U13 girls' division saw a slight decrease in players, with the count dropping from 70 players to 59. It's important for us to understand the factors contributing to this decline and work on strategies to reverse this trend.

On a more positive note, the U15 girls' division saw a substantial increase, with the number of female players rising from 86 to 125. This signifies a growing interest and involvement among teenage girls in the sport of lacrosse.

Lastly, the U17 girls' division also experienced growth, with the number of female players increasing from 55 to 81. This demonstrates that older female players are actively engaging with and contributing to the sport.

Overall, the registration trends for 2023 are promising, with a total increase from 1,300 to 1,800 players.

Therefore, the overall registration for 2023 saw an impressive percentage increase of approximately 38.46%. This growth is a testament to the association's dedication to promoting and developing lacrosse in our region.





**Efforts and external factors that have influenced these trends are as follows:**

1. **Focus on Female Lacrosse:** The concerted efforts by the GELC and its member clubs to promote and enhance female lacrosse have been paying off. By targeting girls who play other sports like ringette and volleyball, they've successfully attracted new players to the sport, contributing to the growth observed in the girls' divisions, particularly in the U11 and U15 categories.
2. **Popularity of Ringette:** The increasing popularity of ringette as a summer sport similar to spring hockey has led to some scheduling conflicts for players who wish to participate in both sports. This factor may have contributed to the slight decrease in registration in certain age divisions, as players are faced with challenging choices when their favorite sports overlap.
3. **Hockey's Influence:** Hockey, being a dominant sport in Canada, continues to attract both male and female players during the summer months. The allure of hockey may have pulled some athletes away from lacrosse, resulting in fluctuations in registration numbers in certain age categories.
4. **Emergence of Football:** The increase in the number of athletes playing football in the Edmonton area could have had a negative effect on lacrosse registration numbers. The competition for player participation among different sports can impact registration figures, particularly if football has gained traction in recent years.
5. **Affordability and Grassroots Initiatives:** The GELC's focus on making lacrosse affordable and promoting grassroots participation has likely contributed to the overall growth in player registrations. These initiatives make the sport more accessible to a wider range of individuals and families, encouraging more people to try out lacrosse.
6. **Winter Lacrosse Programs:** The introduction of winter lacrosse programs designed for new players has been instrumental in attracting newcomers to the sport. These programs provide an affordable and low-barrier entry point, allowing individuals to explore lacrosse before committing to the summer season.

In summary, the increases and decreases in player registrations can be attributed to a combination of efforts by the GELC and external factors related to the popularity of other sports. The association's focus on affordability, grassroots development, and winter programs has been instrumental in driving growth. However, the influence of sports like ringette, hockey, and football on scheduling conflicts and player choices has also played a role in shaping the registration trends observed in 2023.