



REPORT NAME: Chairman's Report
SUBMITTED BY: Tim Powers
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Rugby Canada went through a year of transition in 2016. Many senior leadership positions were filled by new people. The Chairman of the Board, Vice-Chairman of the Board, Chief Executive Officer, World Rugby Representative, the Men's XV Head Coach and the Men's Sevens Head Coach all changed over from the previous twelve months.

There have been some changes in approach and engagement strategies, which come whenever an organization has leadership transformation. But commitment to the goals articulated in the long-term strategic plan remains firm and resolute. The leadership of the organization will always be open to hearing from our members, partners, players, alumni and fans on how we can continue to lift our game. We don't have all the answers nor will we pretend we do. Collaboration is not just a buzzword it is something we believe in and will work to keep improving.

This past year saw Canada become the first Americas nation to win an Olympic medal in the first ever Olympic rugby sevens competition. That history can never be undone. Canada's Women's Sevens bronze medal win was without a doubt the highlight of the year. Our team was not only outstanding on the field they were first class ambassadors off of it. What they did in Rio helped inspire many young Canadians to consider playing the game, excite television networks about showing rugby and turn some of our athletes into household names. Building more Canadian rugby heroes to help our sport grow is essential.

A second highly successful Canada Sevens tournament in Vancouver was vital for our sport and organization. What a delight it was to see attendance grow from 60,000 in year one to 75,000 plus in year two. This bodes well for all of us. From the exposure the event gives rugby to the revenues that are raised and reinvested across a variety of programs will help us continue to compete in an ever increasing global rugby landscape. A tremendous thank you to John Furlong, Bill Cooper and Jamie Levchuk as well as many of our own staff and board who helped make this event a resounding success. No one will rest on their laurels in 2018; we need to keep excelling with Canada Sevens and we need the support of all to do that.

Just before Christmas another important moment occurred in the life of Rugby Canada. In early December the national training centre in Langford was christened as the Al Charron Rugby Canada National Training Centre. That was made possible thanks to the generosity of board member Bill Webb and Canadian businessman Kevin Reed. Bill and Rick Powers, former board member and COC representative, have driven an aggressive national fundraising program to build this \$8 million facility. The doors to of the Charron Centre should be officially open in the fall. Former Rugby Canada Vice-Chair Keith Gillam deserves much credit for his determined project management. And thank you again to you all as the Provincial Unions were among the first to put your hands up to put funds into the centre. That will not be forgotten.

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While on the other side of the boarder they may be distracted with alternative facts that is not an affliction we will allow ourselves to suffer from here. Not everything was rosy in 2016. We all felt the pain of our Men's Sevens team not qualifying for the Olympics, not the least of all the players who were gutted. And the subsequent blow of losing Own the Podium funding that came with that. Regrouping, rebuilding and refocusing have occurred. Damian McGrath has come into coach the team and is having an in impact as evidenced by the results so far this season. Harry Jones, Nathan Hirayama, John Moonlight and others have worked not only to improve the wellbeing of players but build a can do culture of confidence. There are always more bumps in the road but the overall trajectory is heading in the right direction.

We were all disheartened by the recent results our men's XV in the Americas Rugby Championship competition. No one will be making excuses and coach Mark Anscombe along with his leadership team are firmly focused on doing what is necessary to make sure Canada qualifies for the 2019 Rugby World Cup. Nothing else is acceptable.

Coach Anscombe will be speaking at the AGM and will outline some of his plans. That said some context is necessary and important. We are developing for 2019 not 2017. New players need time to develop in a world where all countries are getting better. Centralization has just begun. The competition structures we use to develop players will continue to be enhanced. And you do not get better without taking risks, which includes letting developing players play in highly competitive games.

While our rugby public's passion should never be limited and the time taken to hear what is actually being said, it is vital we all work "as one" to achieve the best results we can. We all do wake up in the morning thinking of the good we can do for this sport we love not the converse. Finger pointing and blame were not valuable when we all played the game on the field nor are they useful off of it. Come with solutions and we will all benefit.

The Men's XV 2019 Rugby World Cup Qualification is only one key thing to focus on this summer. Our Women's XV team sets out to win the 2017 Women's Rugby World Cup in August in Dublin. Having been in Ireland last year I know there is much excitement and anticipation for this tournament. Canada heads into the World Cup as a favourite to win. Francois Ratier and his team are doing everything they can to get ready. The women have some important tours lined up before the World Cup including to the USA and New Zealand. Not unlike last summer we want to get the country behind the team to give them whatever edge we can on this journey. We continue to work with television broadcasters to make sure Canada can see these top athletes complete.

A hearty thank you to all the hard working staff at Rugby Canada who in my experience are always doing the best they can for the betterment of rugby in Canada this past year. Often the subject of criticism, which comes with the territory, they are to a person motivated, committed and able. It has been my pleasure to see so many of them in action in 2016.

Finally, this AGM will see the terms end of four excellent Rugby Canada board members. Dawn Dauphinee, Mark Lawson, Troy Myers and Gordon Sneddon have been incredible servants of rugby in Canada. They have given countless hours to better the game and have had positive lifetime impacts on numerous people. We will miss them but know they will always have their hands in rugby. Thank you Dawn, Mark, Troy and Gordon!

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Go Canada!

Thank you.

Tim Powers
Chairman

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