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SUBMITTED BY: Allen Vansen
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EXTRAORINARY is the only way one can describe Rugby in Canada in 2016. What a remarkable year it was! A huge congratulations to every member, player, coach, official, volunteer, partner and fan!

The unquestionable highlight for 2016 was our Women's Sevens team performance at the 2016 Rio Summer Olympic Games, bringing home the Bronze medal!!! Not only did our Women perform on the pitch exceptionally well, they were even better off the pitch with media interviews and events, spreading the message of how great the sport of Rugby is and in motivating thousands of youth across the country to give Rugby a Try! The Summer Olympic Games captivated a massive world-wide television audience with the excitement that the Sevens game is! This was indeed the case in Canada with our Women!

2016 provided many more highlights as well, from the important elimination of the Women's Fifteens Pay-to-Play model, with the financial support of the Monty Heald Fund donors and Rugby Canada, to the inaugural Men's Canada Sevens tournament in Vancouver, with record setting audiences, to the start of our Men's Fifteens centralized training program, to the fundraising and ground breaking of our Al Charon Rugby Canada National Training Centre, to the launch of a new Strategic Plan (2016-2020), to the National roll-out of our Rookie Rugby program and the launch of our PlaySmart program. What a year indeed!

2016 saw several new faces in key leadership positions around the Board of Directors and Management team. We have remained firm in our focus on implementing our Strategic Plan and achieving the long-term objectives set out in that plan. Three important areas of focus we have initiated in 2016 and will continue to drive through 2017 and beyond are; 1- Player Welfare, 2- Increased Transparent Communication and Collaboration, and 3- Professional Rugby Expansion into North America.

While we have many success to celebrate & be proud of, we must remain focused on finding long-term solutions to broadening the development of the game from the grassroots level to the Age Grade programs to the Junior and Senior National Teams and professional player opportunities. As such, it is more critical than ever that we work closely with our Provincial members and the Clubs to grow and improve. As Rugby continues to see world-wide growth, it is important that Canada takes proactive and innovative approaches to bringing more players to our Game in Canada and providing these players with the training, skill development and opportunities to reach their performance potential and continue Canada's long standing tradition of high level performance.

Neither the success we have achieved, nor the challenges we face, are the result of one initiative, person or organization. Rather they are the collective forces of every Rugby member, partner and volunteer working together that has allowed us to achieve these successes and it is here that we will find the solutions to our current and future challenges.

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I would like to thank the many supporters, funding partners, sponsors and members of Rugby Canada. Most importantly I want to thank our Players for their inspiring dedication and aspirational performance as they represent Canada on our National Teams at home and around the World. The support and dedication of everyone involved in Rugby Canada are the backbone of our success and our future. Thank you to the Provincial Unions, Clubs and Rugby Canada Board of Directors for your bold leadership and vision to bring our sport to new heights. To the volunteers and staff of Rugby Canada, thank you for your passionate contributions to our organization!

Sincerely,

Allen Vansen
Chief Executive Officer

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