



ONTARIO LACROSSE ASSOCIATION

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Statement on Cancellation of Box Lacrosse Games June 29-30

June 30, 2019

In response to a second serious incident involving a box lacrosse referee in as many weeks, the Ontario Lacrosse Association (OLA), in conjunction with the officiating community and the commissioners of each Junior and Senior league, were left with no choice but to cancel a select number of scheduled games while representatives of the OLA's Board of Directors met with representatives of the officiating community to address the current climate of box lacrosse in Ontario.

Following receipt of reports outlining a serious incident involving a player participating in an Ontario Series Lacrosse game on June 28th, 2019, the decision was made to cancel a league game scheduled for June 29th, 2019 between the Brooklin Merchants and the visiting Six Nations Rivermen. The decision to cancel this Ontario Series Game was made by Jim Bomhof (OLA VP Junior-Major) in direct response to the serious incident which took place in the parking lot following the June 28th game. When a number of OLA referees expressed that they felt unsafe working games for which they were scheduled, league commissioners were left with no choice but to cancel additional games that could not be filled, despite everyone's best efforts working up until game time to ensure that as many games as possible would be played.

A meeting (which was previously scheduled to address the first referee incident) between representatives from the OLA's Board of Directors and leaders in the referee community took place on June 29th, 2019 in Cambridge, Ontario. The OLA's representatives met with and listened carefully to feedback from these referees about their officiating experience throughout the 2019 season. This meeting lasted nearly six hours, and seven recommendations were documented which are being carefully considered by the OLA's Board of Directors prior to officials agreeing to accept assignments moving forward. The OLA is optimistic that a resolution will soon be reached that addresses the concerns raised during the June 29th meeting. We also feel that it is important to note that referees will never be disciplined for reporting dangerous environments, or for declining assignments which they feel may be unsafe.

As previously stated, the officiating community has always been an important part of the sport of lacrosse, and the Ontario Lacrosse Association's Board of Directors values the competency, passion and dedication that members of the officiating community display each season.

The safety of all OLA members, which includes our game officials and administrators, is of the utmost importance to us.

Reports of misbehaviour and/or abuse are investigated by the OLA and may result in sanctions against clubs, including mandated on site security, forfeiture of performance bonds, fines, suspensions, termination of membership, as well as any criminal or civil liability when appropriate. The OLA is fully committed to cooperating with law enforcement during all investigations which may result in civil or criminal liability.

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