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MAJOR SERIES LACROSSE CANCELS 2021 SEASON DUE TO PANDEMIC; MANN CUP NATIONAL LACROSSE CHAMPIONSHIP IS ALSO CANCELLED

TORONTO, ON – MAY 18th, 2021 – Due to the ongoing impacts of the global COVID-19 pandemic, Major Series Lacrosse (MSL) in Ontario and the Western Lacrosse Association (WLA) in British Columbia, in consultation with Lacrosse Canada, have made the difficult and disappointing decision to cancel the 2021 league seasons as well the Mann Cup national senior men’s box lacrosse championship.

It’s the second consecutive year the pandemic has forced the cancellation of both league play and the national championship event. Both leagues had high hopes for 2021 and had planned to delay the start of regular season play, which was scheduled to begin in July. Revised schedules were drafted as the two commissioners planned the Mann Cup championship series, which was to be held in September in Ontario. The focus throughout all planning was to ensure the greatest calibre of box lacrosse in the world would be played when it was safe for players, staff, volunteers and fans.

But MSL commissioner Doug Luey and WLA commissioner Paul Dal Monte, in consultation with Lacrosse Canada and with attention to directions from government and public health authorities, have determined that it would be neither possible or responsible to play lacrosse this season.

According to MSL’s Luey, a number of factors went into the decision to cancel, including:

1. Government restrictions on large gatherings such as sporting events and concerts;
2. Government guidelines that call for limiting all non-essential travel, and;
3. The serious economic impacts on MSL’s many business partners, whose support its member clubs rely on for operations.

“While we know this is a huge disappointment for everyone involved in lacrosse — in particular, our players, coaches and dedicated fans — we are committed to doing our part to reduce the spread of COVID-19. Our primary responsibility is the health and safety of the competitors, volunteers and thousands of spectators who would contribute to the success of the Mann Cup,” said Luey. “This decision to cancel was not taken lightly and is a reflection of the gravity of situation the world, including the world of sports, currently faces.”

“Doug and I have been in regular contact over the past several months, and having to cancel the Mann Cup for a second consecutive year is very disappointing to both of us. However, it is undoubtedly the right decision,” said WLA’s Dal Monte.

“The decision to cancel the Mann Cup this season was made with the support of the MSL and WLA,” said Shawn Williams, Lacrosse Canada President. “Lacrosse Canada has had to make the difficult decision to cancel most of our National Championships for a second year in a row. We encourage our lacrosse community to stay safe and focus on brighter days ahead.”

“We look forward to welcoming back lacrosse fans to the 2022 Mann Cup, which will be hosted in the East by the MSL champions,” Luey added.

Since the modern era of the Mann Cup began in 1926, this will be just the second time the trophy will not be awarded to the best Senior “A” lacrosse club in Canada. The Mann Cup series is held each September, with the WLA and MSL champions facing off in a best-of-seven competition (additional background on the Mann Cup can be found on the following page). During the most recent Mann Cup in 2019, the Peterborough Major Series Lakers won the national title— their third straight — defeating the Victoria Shamrocks in BC’s provincial capital four games to one.

About the Ontario Lacrosse Association:

Since 1897, the Ontario Lacrosse Association (OLA) has been recognized as the administrative governing body which exists to improve, foster, perpetuate and govern of all levels (youth, junior and senior) and disciplines (box, field and women’s field) of lacrosse in the province of Ontario.

In addition to coordinating the operation of the sport, the OLA provides informative resources, technical development programs and additional supplies for those interested in the “fastest game on two feet.” For more information, contact the Ontario Lacrosse Association at 416-426-7066 or email info@ontariolacrosse.com.

About Major Series Lacrosse

Major Series Lacrosse (MSL) is a Senior “A” division box lacrosse league based in Ontario, Canada and sanctioned by the Ontario Lacrosse Association. Most of the players in the league play or have played in the National Lacrosse League. Each year, the league’s six teams battle for the right to compete against the Western Lacrosse Association champion for the Mann Cup national championship of Canada, which is hosted in alternating years between Ontario and British Columbia annually.

For more information, connect with Major Series Lacrosse online at www.majorserieslacrosse.ca.

About the Mann Cup

The Mann Cup is the trophy awarded to the Senior “A” Division men’s box lacrosse champions of Canada. The championship event is a best-of-seven, East-versus-West series played between the league champions of Major Series Lacrosse (MSL, the east) and Western Lacrosse Association (WLA, the west). The Mann Cup championship event is sanctioned by Lacrosse Canada.

The trophy, emblematic of Canadian lacrosse supremacy for over a century, was donated for competition by Canadian railway contractor and entrepreneur Sir Donald Mann in 1910 as a challenge trophy for senior men’s field lacrosse, which was the dominant version of the sport in Canada at the time. In 1925, the New Westminster Salmonbellies turned the trophy over to the Canadian Lacrosse Association (now Lacrosse Canada) which instituted the current national playoff system.

In 1932, the Mann Cup was redesignated from a field lacrosse championship to a box lacrosse championship, reflecting the growing popularity of the indoor box lacrosse format in Canada. The first Mann Cup box lacrosse championship was played at Toronto’s Maple Leaf Gardens Arena in October of 1932, where the Mimico Mountaineers defeated the Winnipeg Argos two games to none in a best-of-three series.

The original Mann Cup trophy, made of solid gold, was awarded until 1985 when it was permanently retired to the Canadian Lacrosse Hall of Fame and Museum in New Westminster, British Columbia. A replica trophy was awarded in the period between 1985 and 2004 when it was accidentally destroyed during a team celebration. A second replica trophy has been awarded since 2005.

Throughout its history, the Mann Cup championship format has been:

- a one-game championship from 1910 through 1926, as well as in 1973 and 1974;
- a best-of-three series from 1927 through 1932, as well as in 1975;
- a best-of-five series from 1933 through 1949, and;
- a best-of-seven series from 1950 through 1972, as well as from 1976 until the present day.

The New Westminster Salmonbellies hold the record for the most Mann Cup championship titles, with 21 wins since 1910. The Peterborough Lakers (previously the Peterborough Trailermen, Mercuries, Petes and Red Oaks) hold the record for the most consecutive titles with four (1951 through 1954). Excluding the one-game finals, the Mann Cup has gone its maximum length only 17 times, while the winners have swept their opponents a total of 32 times. Aside from the current pandemic restrictions, the Mann Cup was not played five times in the Challenge Cup era; in 1915, 1921 and 1924 (because of no challenger), and in 1916 and 1917 (because of Canada’s involvement in the Great War). Until 2020, the Mann Cup has been played without interruption from 1925 until 2019. Although teams from outside British Columbia and Ontario have occasionally played in the Mann Cup, only teams from those two provinces have ever won the trophy. Ontario teams have won 59 titles and British Columbia clubs have won 52 titles. The most recent Mann Cup event, in 2019, was hosted in Victoria, BC between the Victoria Shamrocks and the Peterborough Lakers; the 11th time that these two clubs have competed for the Mann Cup. Peterborough won the 2019 series 4-1, giving the Lakers the all-time edge with six titles to the Shamrocks five.