



Western Lacrosse Association
Press Release

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Western Lacrosse Association cancels 2020 season due to COVID-19; Mann Cup national lacrosse championship is also cancelled

For release on May 19, 2020 at 9a.m. PST

Burnaby, B.C., May 19, 2020 – Due to the ongoing and evolving impacts of the global COVID-19 pandemic, the Western Lacrosse Association (WLA) in British Columbia and Major Series Lacrosse (MSL) in Ontario have made the difficult and disappointing decision to cancel both their 2020 seasons and the Mann Cup national championship.

Initially, both leagues planned to delay the beginning of their 2020 regular season play, which was to have kicked off in late May; revised schedules were drafted as the two commissioners worked towards the planning of the Mann Cup series, which was to be held in September in Ontario. Their focus was to ensure the greatest calibre of lacrosse in the world would be played when it was safe for players, staff, volunteers and fans.

However, WLA commissioner Paul Dal Monte and MSL commissioner Doug Luey, in consultation with the Canadian Lacrosse Association and while considering directions from government and public health authorities, have now concluded that it would not be possible or responsible to play box lacrosse in 2020.

According to the WLA's Dal Monte, a number of factors went into the decision to cancel, including:

- statements by B.C.'s Provincial Health Officer that legal restrictions on gatherings of more than 50 people would be unlikely to be lifted this summer;
- provincial guidelines about eliminating all non-essential travel that would make it difficult for players to travel to their summer clubs and reduced BC Ferries sailings that would have impacted teams' abilities to travel between the mainland and Vancouver Island;
- and the serious economic impacts on the WLA'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, all of the players, coaches and fans — our primary responsibility is the health and safety of the competitors, volunteers and thousands of fans who will attend and contribute to the success of

the Mann Cup,” said the WLA’s Dal Monte. “This unprecedented cancellation reflects the gravity of situation the world currently faces.”

“As disappointing as it is cancelling the 2020 Mann Cup,” said MSL’s Doug Luey, “without question, it is the absolute correct decision.

“We look forward to welcoming back lacrosse fans to the 2021 Mann Cup, which will be hosted in the East by the MSL champions,” Luey said.

Since the modern era of the Mann Cup began in 1926, this will be the first 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 (for more Mann Cup information, see attached backgrounder).

In 2019, the Peterborough (Ont.) Lakers won the Mann Cup — their third straight — four games to one over the Victoria Shamrocks in B.C.’s provincial capital.

The Western Lacrosse Association (WLA) is an amateur league of men’s Senior A box lacrosse sanctioned by the Canadian Lacrosse Association. The WLA consists of seven teams, based in cities throughout southwestern British Columbia. Each year, the playoff teams battle for the right to compete against the Major Series Lacrosse champion (Ontario) for the Mann Cup every September. The championship is hosted alternately between Ontario (MSL) and British Columbia (WLA) every year.

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