



## 2023 President's Report, Alberta Junior Rugby Association

It has been another year of hard earned progress for the AJRA . I would like to thank my board of directors, sub unions, clubs and Rugby Alberta for their support of the junior programs across Alberta.

The AJRA's plans for junior rugby development have been incredibly successful this past year even when faced with adverse situations. The sudden departure of our Rookie Rugby Manager, for personal reasons, in the Spring, was a setback, during a crucial time in the projected development of the program. The open Rookie Rugby Manager position left a gap in communication between the AJRA and the regions for someone to champion the Summer School Student Program which was, and is, a priority for our organization in supporting the various regions. Across the province, we hired 3 Summer students and had them working in Calgary, and Edmonton. Successful applications were granted for other regions but went vacant. The AJRA was able to hire a Rookie Rugby Manager in the Summer. Madeline Crofts has shown herself to be a diligent and affable representative of the AJRA and rugby. Maddie with the Summer Students led over 50 sessions and introduced 6000 new participants to try rugby! The positive growth is undeniable and the plan moving forward is solid and excites us with the possibilities. We expect big things in 2024, building from what Maddie has accomplished in the short time she has been with the AJRA. The Rookie Rugby program has been a huge success wherever the sessions have been run and we will continue to focus our attention on this programming.

Junior rugby numbers across the province grew from approximately 2500 athletes registered in 2022 to 3047. This is still below our pre-pandemic numbers but the margin is decreasing every year. The AJRA have been supporting partners in helping develop the elite tournaments such as the Winter ARC 7s, the Summer ARC 15s, as well as the Provincial 15s, with the guiding principle that any athlete from any region should have a clear pathway from modest beginnings to wearing the maple leaf.

As president of the AJRA, my main focus is on our strategic plan to ensure our programs are running concurrently and effectively across the province with the sub-unions to ensure all clubs, schools and communities have the abilities and resources to increase junior involvement in the game.

As we look forward to the 2024 junior rugby season, we are committed to delivering excellence in our programs and transparency from our board.

Onwards,

Ultan Peters

President, Alberta Junior Rugby Association