**Report of the President of Saskatchewan Rowing Association**

To 2020 AGM

May 25, 2020

It has been quite the year of transitions for SRA. First though, I want to thank all the other Directors and Club representatives who tolerated a first time president of this Association who had not been on this Board for some decades. Thanks for your patience and even more importantly, thanks for all your hard work.

Following are just a few of the transitions for SRA in the past year:

1. We hired and oriented two new coaches, Brenda Colby (Development) and Andrew Knorr (High Performance. There are growing pains in every new position and we experienced those here but I am hopeful that both coaches are learning their positions, understanding the SRA structure and working, as we all are, to make rowing the best it can be in Saskatchewan.
2. We initiated a new position in the Director of Operations position and hired Linda Coe-Kirkham to fill that position. This has involved a huge learning curve for Linda who knew relatively nothing about rowing and who is getting used to a new position. Again, we are hopeful that Linda is settling into her new position, learning about rowing and becoming more comfortable with telling her volunteers what needs to get done!
3. Given these three new positions, it was extremely important that our staff positions have regular performance reviews. Karen Tilsley did an outstanding job of developing a process for these evaluations and then sat on at least two of the review committees. Most importantly, the staff now has agreed upon goals for the year towards which they are to work under the mentorship and direction of their supervising Director.
4. The Western Canada Summer Games were held near Swift Current in the summer of 2019. Saskatchewan again did very well under its new coaches. I also want to thank Doug Zolinski, past, past President for all his work in ensuring our rowing venue worked there.
5. I also want to thank Karen, Nicole Golden and Willy Bingham for their work on the budget this year. We really shifted the emphasis to one on Development and though it was a difficult year to do so, especially with the onset of the pandemic, there were some good, concrete ideas that will form some strategic goals for some time to come.
6. Our Club representatives have also really risen to the year of transitions. Michelle Lopez in Lloydminster, working with Coach Colby, has developed a solid core of oarspeople and given the SRA real hope that we can have an active club there as soon as circumstances allow. Regina Rowing Club sold some equipment to aid in this process and there is a general sense that the rowing scene in Lloydminster is about to take off in a very substantive way. Due to some initial work by Coach Colby and then carried through by Coach Knorr, we are looking at the revival of the Prince Albert Rowing Club. I am also very grateful to Nicole Ede and Tanya Tabel for their efforts as Club representatives in considering how we might get PA on the water again. Chad Jedlic has been a huge influence in the mentoring of Coach Colby in her new position with Joel Banscescue giving good organizational insight when needed. In Saskatoon, Dave Ukrainetz, Brian Woytowich and Sash Broda have represented Saskatoon interests well.
7. I am also grateful to Coach Colby for her work in having Saskatchewan well-represented at the indoor rowing event called Coast to Coast and to Coach Knorr for organizing the indoor rowing championships in Warman. I’m sorry that I wasn’t able to attend either of these or the annual banquet in Warman though I understand they were all good events.
8. In the officiating sector, Sheila Leach has worked hard to ensure that regatta sanctioning is more easily understood by our association. When there was a chance that we would have 3 or more regattas this summer of 2020, Sheila was working hard to ensure that they would all be sanctioned.
9. OF course, the biggest transition this year was the one the pandemic forced upon us. First, we were no longer able to erg together then it was virtually by zoom; I’m especially grateful to Coaches Colby and Knorr for their work in ensuring workouts and zoom sessions occurred. I’m writing this on the first day that Regina is getting back on the water with Saskatoon scheduled for tomorrow, albeit only in singles and with greatly enhanced sanitization and other procedures to ensure we ensure the health and safety of our members. To those in the clubs who have put in so much work ensuring that we could back on the water as soon as possible, I am very grateful.

I have also been able to participate in almost all of the Provincial Advisory Committee (PAC) meetings this past year with meetings held monthly until March when the pandemic struck and then weekly, with RCA staff and officials since then. I was also able to attend the national RCA conference in Ottawa in January, meeting many of my PAC colleagues in person (a concept now all the more valuable since this pandemic) and learning about both the concussion protocol, Safe Sport and Coastal Rowing. A full protocol is being developed for Safe Sport; we will have to work at ensuring that the RCA protocol meshes well with our four year old Sask Sport protocol but this shouldn’t pose too big a problem. It’s just another way Saskatchewan is ahead of the rest of the country!

I hope that as we get back to the water, we do not lose the opportunity to consider Coastal Rowing which may be the future of rowing. Flat water rowing is proving very expensive to maintain at all levels and particularly the Olympic level and it is already in danger of being eliminated from the Canada Summer Games schedule. Coastal rowing has been considered a good substitute as the venues are cheaper to establish and manage, fans are more easily attracted to it and it may be easier to attract athletes to the sport. I hope we will in the future consider how coastal rowing can become part of the rowing scene in Saskatchewan.

Finally, thanks to all those Directors and Club Representatives who have agreed to let their name stand for another year. It is thankless work being on Boards like this but it is absolutely necessary if the sport we cherish is to continue to move forward in the province.

Respectfully submitted,

Bryan Hillis