



RINGETTE ONTARIO

President's Report to the Annual General Meeting

Ringette Ontario has continued to make solid progress toward our strategic objectives over the last year.

SAFE SPORT ENVIRONMENT

Our top priority has been to ensure we had set the foundation for a **Safe Sport Environment**. This has been achieved with the implementation of a comprehensive suite of Safe Sport policies that meet or exceed the requirements of Ringette Canada and the Ontario government. On the operational level, improved systems have been adopted for injury reporting and analysis and volunteer screening and training, complaint investigation and dispute resolution. As a sign of commitment to a safe sport culture, the Board of Directors has adopted a requirement that all Board members will complete the same Respect in Sport and Concussion Awareness training that is required of coaches in our sport.

A set of policies is not enough to ensure a Safe Sport culture. All of us in Ringette, in keeping with our values and our commitment to a positive athlete-centred experience, must commit to “walk the talk” personally and to hold one another accountable to do so as well.

OPERATIONAL EXCELLENCE

Our focus on **Operational Excellence** is intended to help local associations and volunteers deal with the burden of administering the sport. Nobody becomes a Ringette volunteer because of a passion for filling in forms! A certain level of administration is essential of course, but Ringette Ontario's goal is to simplify as much as possible, and provide guidelines, templates, processes and online resources that make best practices easily accessible to the volunteer and local association. We want to make it easy to comply with requirements, so we can all get to the rink and watch the game! The RAMP registration system was commissioned this season and will be an important platform for this strategy going forward.

PARTICIPANT PATHWAYS

Sport research tells us that there are many different **Participant Pathways** that athletes choose to follow – different entry and exit points, and different routes along the way. An athlete-centred sport program needs to offer an effective and rewarding development experience whatever pathway the athlete may choose. For Ringette Ontario, achieving this goal will require us to rethink some traditional approaches and program designs. The competition review workshop held this January was a good first step in getting key stakeholders in our sport to discuss the opportunities and challenges.

Ensuring effective participant development pathways is a key strategic and philosophical emphasis for the Board and to ensure that all Board members are familiar with the principles that underpin this movement, all Board members are now required to complete **Introduction to Long-Term Development in Sport and Physical Activity** (Sport for Life Society).

STRENGTHENING OUR GOVERNANCE CAPACITY

We are about 4 years into our project to transform the governance model for Ringette Ontario. This year marked the first year since the reporting relationships for operating and advisory committees were fully transferred to staff, leaving board members to focus on governance duties completely. A governance model that puts a capable and motivated Executive Director in charge and gets the Board of Directors out of the way on operational matters makes Ringette Ontario much more dynamic and responsive to the membership on operational issues.

Two key standing committees have developed essential roles in the governance of Ringette Ontario.

The **Governance and Human Resources Committee** has been chaired by Margareth Peressutti, who is a human resource professional in her “day job”. Under Margareth’s leadership, the committee has developed the Board of Directors skills matrix, has implemented a performance management framework for the Executive Director and has worked with the Executive Director to ensure effective HR policies and procedures are in place for RO staff.

The **Audit and Risk Management Committee** has been chaired by Christine Thorndyke, a Chartered Accountant and finance executive, and includes members with professional experience in accounting and risk management. The committee has been active the development of the Safe Sport policy framework, and with decisions in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The role of these committees is to act as a technical resource to the Executive Director in these important areas, and to assist the board to make sure that these aspects of a policy or program proposal have been thoroughly examined before an item comes to the full Board for deliberation. These committees have been important additions to our governance structure, and they are working well.

We are getting our legs under us in the new governance model, and it is proving effective. The success of the model depends on having Board members who understand the role of governance is to provide insight, oversight and foresight, but to stay out of the way on day-to-day operational decisions, which are the responsibility of the Executive Director. Effective directors are those who bring life experience as well as needed professional skills and experience, together with a passion for our sport. It is gratifying to look at the list of board candidates for the upcoming term and see that we have more well-qualified candidates than we can seat. That people of this calibre are willing to serve Ringette Ontario speaks well for the strength of our organization and the depth of our Ringette community.

THE YEAR AHEAD

While this report is primarily intended to summarize the recent past, we cannot help but look to the immediate future. The challenge and uncertainty presented by the COVID-19 pandemic is the biggest challenge our sport has faced since its inception.

When an unexpected setback or challenge knocks you for a loop, there are two important points of reference to reach out to in order to get back on track:

- What are our priorities?
- What are our values?

Our priorities for **enhancing participant development pathways** and for **improving organizational efficiency and effectiveness** are still valid and can still be pursued even as we face a modified season ahead. Moving some existing development material like coaching and official development programs online – something made necessary by the circumstances – could also have a long-term benefit by making the material more widely accessible even when we are “back to normal”. Similarly, developing parallel development programming for athletes to engage in away from the rink meets an immediate need – if we can’t get to the rink – but can also be a long-term asset and give coaches and athletes access to a broader base of training resources even after we are back on the ice.

We can do the things that are essential in the short run in a way that is consistent with our long-term priorities, meeting urgent needs while still advancing the organization.

As for our values... In Ringette Ontario, we view **Challenge** as an opportunity for growth. In facing the COVID-19 challenge we will develop new tools and try new methods so we can deliver as much Ringette as possible in the circumstances. We will rise to this challenge. We will demonstrate that the fun and growth of meaningful **Competition** can be found even without highly structured tournament play.

Our sport promotes values of **Community, Collaboration, and Character**. These are attributes that will help us get through the challenge successfully, by supporting one another, working together constructively, and focusing on our long-term mission in order to be resilient in the face of short-term setbacks.

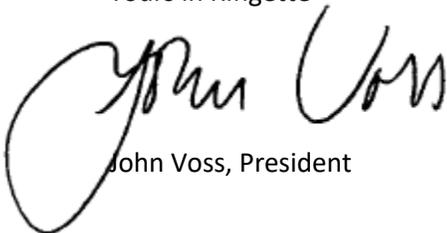
THANKS TO PAM JULIAN AND HER STAFF

I want to acknowledge outstanding work by our Executive Director Pam Julian and her staff, Karla Xavier (Technical Director) and Marian Agyei-Gyamera (Marketing and Communications Co-ordinator) for their energy, drive and enthusiasm. More details of what has been accomplished this year are provided in Pam’s report, because she and her staff were the ones who did the work. The COVID-19 shut down was a stressful time, and it has imposed significant additional work on the team, but throughout all of it they have never failed to work with enthusiasm, grace and professionalism to move RO forward.

IN CLOSING

I am grateful for the opportunity to serve in the role of President. It is rewarding to work with a team of capable, dedicated, and motivated people who share important values and a common vision. We have accomplished much over the past year, and with a strong team around the table and an outstanding Executive Director and staff driving us forward, we are prepared to face the challenge that lies ahead.

Yours in Ringette

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John Voss". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the beginning and end.

John Voss, President