



# Edmonton Rugby Union Strategic Plan 2025 - 2027

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## Introduction

Findings from the January 2024 Edmonton Rugby Union (ERU) Rugby Summit and Survey provided critical insights and feedback from a diverse group of stakeholders. This strategic plan intends to leverage this information to outline a clear path forward for rugby development in Northern Alberta. Our purpose is to create access, promote, develop, and deliver rugby to Northern Alberta residents.

## Situation Analysis

**The State of Rugby in Greater Edmonton and Northern Alberta (2024).** See Appendix 1 for full text.

- Adult Membership in Clubs, while it has recovered post COVID, is on a declining trend over a 10–20-year horizon.
- High School rugby participation fluctuates from school to school, year to year.
- Youth membership in Clubs is generally on the upswing. Non-contact game appeals to participants and their parents. (Flag Rugby for U9-U15 progressing to contact)
- The transition rate from school programs and club youth programs to the adult competitive programs is poor. There is no current opportunity for an U20 league.
- The program for regional representative teams has been inconsistent over the past years.
- Senior regional and provincial representative teams have been non-existent or inconsistently administered.
- The game of rugby in Alberta is challenged by a lack of referees. Increase focus on courses.
- The game of rugby in Alberta is challenged by a lack of coaches to lead youth, school, junior and senior rugby programs.
- The **Ellerslie Rugby Park (ERP)** was the focal point of both the competitive and social interests of the sport from 1976 to the early 2000s. Clubs built their own facilities, and the focal point dispersed to all clubs and communities. ERP was sold.
- An ERP Legacy Endowment Fund has been established. Annual distributions allocated in the interests of improving the future of rugby as decided by all clubs.
- The onus of providing safe fields for rugby competitions is now the responsibility of each club and is providing challenges in both cost and logistics.
- ERU members clubs are not only struggling to attract members and players, but they are also struggling to raise enough funds to support both their rugby programs and facilities.
- There currently is no community wide Flag Rugby Division for Youth U9 – U15 to increase participation numbers.
- There is a belief that the administration of the game in both the regional and provincial domains can be more efficiently streamlined to more effectively support the game at a club level.



- There is a belief that increased awareness of rugby due to international media coverage may provide an opportunity for the ERU to consolidate its focus on growth and development of the game at the grassroots club and regional level. Provision of more opportunities for local high-performance athletes (i.e. International players, Olympians) to connect with youth should be considered.

## Vision Statement

To be recognized as the premier regional Rugby Union within Canada fostering a culture of excellence, inclusivity, and growth in rugby across our communities.

## Mission Statement

The Edmonton Rugby Union is dedicated to being a premier regional rugby organization, committed to fostering a culture of excellence, inclusivity, and growth. We aim to:

- Register and support playing membership across all levels.
- Organize and schedule competitive league play.
- Establish and enforce local rules to uphold and exemplify the World Rugby Playing Charter
- Promote an inclusive environment where everyone can participate and excel in both the non-contact and contact game.
- Strengthen community bonds through the values of teamwork, sportsmanship, and respect.
- Develop and maintain representative programs for junior, youth, and senior players.
- Recruit and develop skilled coaches and officials through comprehensive leadership programs.
- Uphold transparent and effective governance for sustainable growth.
- Collaborate with stakeholders to enhance the accessibility and development of rugby.
- Advocate for the safety and welfare of all participants through robust policies and educational initiatives.

## Principles and Values

1. **Developing Excellence:** We aim to cultivate a pathway for players, coaches, and officials to achieve their highest potential in rugby, providing quality training, resources, and support.



2. **Promoting Inclusivity:** We are committed to creating an inclusive environment where everyone, regardless of background or ability, has the opportunity to participate, contribute, and excel in all aspects of the game of rugby.
3. **Enhancing Governance:** We uphold transparent and effective governance practices, ensuring accountability, integrity, and sustainable growth of the sport within our region.
4. **Fostering Partnerships:** We seek to collaborate with stakeholders, including clubs, schools, sponsors, and local authorities, to promote the development and accessibility of rugby within our region.
5. **Advancing Rugby Culture and Building Community:** We are dedicated to strengthening community bonds by upholding the World Rugby core values of integrity, passion, solidarity, discipline and respect. We recognize these values as integral to individual and community development.
6. **Ensuring Safety and Welfare:** We uphold World Rugby's Player Welfare strategy by prioritizing the safety and well-being of all participants through comprehensive policies, practices, and educational initiatives focused on injury prevention, medical care, and safeguarding

By embodying these principles, our regional Rugby Union aspires to enrich lives, inspire growth, and contribute positively to the broader rugby community.

## Conclusion

The ERU is committed to growing the game of rugby in Northern Alberta by focusing on player growth and retention, administrative efficiency, development of referees and coaches, player development through representative programs, and enhanced marketing and sponsorship efforts. By following this strategic plan, we aim to create a vibrant and sustainable rugby community that provides opportunities for all residents to engage with the sport.



## Three-Year Implementation Plan (2025-2027) for the Edmonton Rugby Union Strategic Plan

Strategic Priorities, Objectives, Tactics, and Actions (note budget figures for general reference only)

### Strategic Priority 1. Growth of the Game

**Objective:** Increase player registration and retention, focusing on transitioning high school players to junior club programs and junior players to senior teams.

**Performance Indicators:**

- Increase high school to junior transition by 5% per year.
- Increase junior to senior transition by 5% per year.
- Increase registration in Senior Clubs by 10% per year for 3 years.

**Total Budget for Growth of the Game (2025-2027): \$17,600**

Year	Tactics	Actions	Budget	Responsible	KPI
2025	Youth Outreach in Schools and Communities with Rookie Rugby Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Establish partnerships with 20 schools and/or community programs to run Rookie Rugby programs.</li><li>- Screen schools/communities to assure they are aligned with a high school or club program.</li><li>- Advise closest clubs of which schools or groups have been exposed to Rookie Rugby and provide contact information.</li></ul>	\$5,000 – balls \$2,000 - \$200/kit	ERU VP Rugby AJRA Rugby Manager	5% increase in youth (=<U15) rugby registration and junior club registration



# ERU Strategic Plan 2025 - 2027

Year	Tactics	Actions	Budget	Responsible	KPI
2025	Youth Rugby Clinics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Host 4 clinics in rural and urban areas. Include leader training component in each clinic to develop self sufficiency.</li> <li>- Coordinate with clubs.</li> <li>- Track participants to see if they belong to or join clubs.</li> <li>- For Example: Run Kinsmen mini and junior rugby sessions open to all during the winter</li> </ul>	\$600 (\$150 per clinic, fees to offset balance of cost)	AJRA Rugby Manager ERU VP JR. ERU Program Manager ERU Jr. Manager ERU Operations Manager	Attract 5% more new participants and players to clinics.
2027	Youth Flag Rugby Leagues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Progress to 4v4 flag rugby for junior high competitions (i.e. intramural) in the schools that hosted rookie rugby in previous years.</li> </ul>		AJRA Rugby Manager	100 players participating
2025	U20/21 Development League (targeting players 2-3 years post high school, post U18 eligibility)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Form a task force to craft the communication strategy engaging clubs and educating of the long-term benefit to clubs of the program.</li> <li>- Discuss the league competition details developing a pilot project for spring 2025. Option to match the lower number of 12's or 10's.</li> <li>- Based on pilot success book indoor venues for training and early games in March/April 2026.</li> <li>- Identify parents from past U19 registrations and recruit as fund raisers, recruiters, managers, marketing experts, volunteers, etc.</li> </ul>	Team fees waived for pilot season	ERU VP Rugby ERU Senior Director ERU Operations Manager ERU Program Manager	League schedule drafted Pilot project run Venues booked for 2026
2026	U21 Development League	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Run an U21 early season 15 aside league (April-May)</li> <li>- Engage U21 players with recruiting responsibility to get their friends signed up.</li> <li>- ERU to facilitate Clubs should they need to combine rosters if their numbers are insufficient to assure the games will always be played. Option to match the lower number of 12's or 10's.</li> </ul>	Team fees waived for first full season	ERU VP Rugby ERU Senior Director ERU Operations Manager ERU Program Manager	3-4 teams in year 1, 10% increase in U21 participation on senior teams



# ERU Strategic Plan 2025 - 2027

Year	Tactics	Actions	Budget	Responsible	KPI
2027	U21 Development League	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Promote this competition as a high-profile product for marketing and sponsorship.</li> <li>- Attain a major sponsor.</li> <li>- Engage publicist and profile league in media to support sponsor.</li> </ul>		ERU Communications Director	Establish benchmark for media hits and grow by 5%
2025	Fall U23 Inter-Provincial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Support fall competition with teams across Alberta and Western Canada.</li> </ul>	\$5,000	ERU VP Rugby ERU U23 Dir.	4 teams competing in U23 fall league, expanding over 2026 and 2027
2026	Junior to Senior Bridging Program – Mentorship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Launch club template outlining a mentorship program providing tools and guidelines for invitation, introduction and transition of young and new players to senior club rugby.</li> </ul>		ERU VP Rugby ERU Program Manager ERU Operations Manager	Increase retention of new players by 10%
2026	Junior to Senior Bridging Program - Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Create brochure that clearly outlines the available pathway for both recreational and competitive rugby for distribution to players, parents and coaches.</li> </ul>	\$5,000	ERU VP Rugby ERU JR. Program Manager ERU Operations Manager	Production and distribution of brochures. Posted to resource library.
2026	High School to Junior Bridging Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Encourage clubs to establish a program to encourage/entice high school graduates entering club rugby using club YDO's, where employed, to establish relationships with club feeder schools</li> <li>- identify recently graduated, registered club members, to recruit their former high school teammates.</li> </ul>		ERU Junior Director ERU Operations Manager ERU Program Manager	Transition 5% of high school players to club programs
2027	Recruit Cross-Over athletes from other sports, or inactive rugby players	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- ERU Coordinate with Clubs to develop regional marketing campaign aimed at attracting athletes and fitness buffs to try rugby or return to rugby.</li> </ul>		ERU Communications Director Marketing Contractor	10 new players per year to ERU clubs



## Strategic Priority 2. Efficiency in Administration and Program Delivery

**Objective:** Streamline administration to reduce duplication and improve delivery efficiency.

**Performance Indicators:**

- Improve stakeholder satisfaction with operations by 20% by 2027.
- Increase consistency of program delivery across clubs.

**Total Budget for Efficiency (2025-2027): \$8,000**

Year	Tactics	Actions	Budget	Responsible	KPI
2025	Review of Current Administrative Processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Review the roles and responsibilities of various rugby associations to identify, then minimize duplication.</li><li>- Post hierarchy of associations with their roles and responsibilities in the resource library.</li><li>- Distribute to the Club Presidents and Executives.</li></ul>		ERU VP Admin	Admin review completed and distributed
2025	Scheduling of Competitions Leverage technology to facilitate scheduling of games	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Review current scheduling processes &amp; software</li><li>- Assess &amp; determine effectiveness of AI, Sportlomo, and other software</li></ul>		ERU Senior Director ERU Program Manager ERU Operations Manager	Schedules completed Defaults reduced by 50%
2025	Scheduling of Competitions - Adults	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Consult the Clubs to set a Senior M/W competition schedule for June, July and August, and potentially September.</li><li>- Determine if play-offs for all divisions to be complete before Labour Day weekend, or the end of September.</li><li>- In the event of playoffs ending in August, trial an “in-fill” program for September. For example: a regional 10s or equivalent competition during Fall in parallel with University and U23 leagues.</li><li>- Establish a Competitions Committee responsible to develop a</li></ul>		ERU Senior Director ERU Program Manager ERU Operations Manager	Season length established Game weeks/ week-end dates established Teams ranked Division assignments complete.





# ERU Strategic Plan 2025 - 2027

Year	Tactics	Actions	Budget	Responsible	KPI
		<p>seeding format for senior M/W at the beginning of the year that allows clubs to assess their own capacity in terms of numbers and competitive level. A seeding “ladder” format would help clubs determine the most appropriate levels to enter their teams for the competitive season.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Conduct a series of mini-game tournaments for senior M/W teams in the month of May in parallel with U21 competitions. Ie. A series of 3 team mini-game round robins (40 min games) each week with results determining the seeding for the following week. Initial seeding based upon last year's placements. The purpose is to create a ranking “ladder” from which tiered competitions, Alberta Cup, 1st division, 2nd divisions can be established. NOTE: The shorter games allow for more opportunities to compare against others. At lower tiers of the “ladder” teams may be allowed to play at reduced numbers as needed (12's or 10's). Injuries could be minimized due to players being able to play at the appropriate levels.</li> <li>- Upon completion of the seeding round, ERU to outline proposed break-out for Divisions. Clubs to finalize teams and divisions based on evidence from seeding round results.</li> </ul>			<p>Schedule completed</p> <p>New program trialed</p>
2025	Scheduling of Competitions - Juniors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Coordinate youth festivals and competitions (15 and under) in May and June.</li> <li>- Schedule junior competitions (U17, U19) (U16, U18) post high school season through to August.</li> <li>- Schedule a 6-week U21 competition schedule starting mid-April to end of May.</li> </ul>		<p>ERU Junior Director</p> <p>ERU Junior Manager</p> <p>ERU Program Manager</p> <p>ERU Operations Manager</p>	Schedules set
2027	Online Knowledge Library	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Develop a central library of best practices and resources for clubs and programs in terms “how to create and deliver programs to the community”, “how to create and operate a successful nonprofit SPORTING organization”</li> </ul>	\$1,000	<p>ERU Admin Director</p> <p>ERU Program Director</p> <p>ERU Operations Manager</p>	Library used by 50% of clubs



## ERU Strategic Plan 2025 - 2027

Year	Tactics	Actions	Budget	Responsible	KPI
2027	Centralized Administrative System	- Research and determine the value of implementing new software to streamline operations and communication within the ERU and its clubs – consulting fees	\$5,000	ERU Communications Director Contractor	Systems determined and implemented
2027	Club Optimization	- Offer orientation workshops to ensure best practices are used across clubs	\$1,000	ERU VP Rugby ERU Operations Manager ERU Program Manager	50% of clubs participating
2025	Satisfaction Survey	- Conduct annual member satisfaction survey assessing of ERU program delivery.	\$1,000	ERU VP Admin	Survey designed and distributed. Satisfaction up by 15% over 3 years



### Strategic Priority 3. Development of Referees

**Objective:** Increase the number and quality of referees by 10% per year.

**Performance Indicators:**

- Increase in registered referees each year. (10% per year)
- Improved satisfaction with referee training programs.

**Total Budget for Referee Development (2025-2027): \$10,000**

Year	Tactics	Actions	Budget	Responsible	KPI
2025	Referee Training Programs	- Host Level 1 and Level 2 clinics for referees	\$3,000	ERURS	10 new referees trained over referees leaving
2026	Mentorship Program	- Pair new referees with experienced ones		ERURS	20 mentor-mentee pairs
2026	Online Training Resources	- Develop a referee resource library or promote and provide links to existing resource library	\$1,000	ERURS	Library accessed by 70% of coaches
2025	Incentive Programs	- Provide certification subsidies and recognition	\$3,000	ERURS	10% increase in referee retention
2027	Referee Exchange	- Establish international exchange for top referees	\$3,000	ERURS and RC	2 referees in exchange program annually



## Strategic Priority 4. Development of Coaches

**Objective:** Increase the number and quality of coaches by 5% per year, respectively.

**Performance Indicators:**

- Increase in registered coaches each year (10% per year).
- Improved satisfaction with coach training programs.

**Total Budget for Coach Development (2025-2027): \$15,000**

Year	Tactics	Actions	Budget	Responsible	KPI
2025	Coach Training Programs	- Host Level 1 and Level 2 clinics for coaches and ensure assessments are available and expedited. - Address issues around policies for minimum course numbers, particularly for rural areas. Budget for support	\$5,000	ERU VP Rugby ERU Technical Manager ERU Program Manager	25 new coaches trained with 10 moving up to Level 2
2026	Create Coaching Network	- Create a database of coaches - Facilitate sharing of best practices through regular communication and in-persons forums to exchange knowledge and experience. - Create mentorship program for new coaches	\$1,000	ERU VP Rugby ERU Technical Manager	Network is created
2026	Online Training Resources	- Develop a coaching resource library promoting and providing links to available sources such as practice plans, drills for specific learning and outcomes.	\$1,000	ERU VP Rugby ERU Technical Manager ERU Program Manager	Library accessed by 70% of coaches
2027	Incentive Framework	- Develop framework of certification subsidies, recognition programs, pathway to coach rep programs at regional, provincial or national level.	\$5,000	ERU VP Rugby ERU Technical Manager	10% increase ERU coaches in high performance programs
2027	Coach Exchange	- Establish international exchange for top coaches	\$3,000	ERU VP Rugby ERU Technical Manager	2 coaches/referees in exchange program



## Strategic Priority 5. Player Development through Representative Programs

**Objective:** Enhance player development through ERU Representative (Rep) programs, increasing "try-out" participation by 20% and having 60% of WolfPack team made up of ERU players.

**Performance Indicators:**

- Increase try-out participation by 20% by 2027
- 5 players invited to national teams annually.

**Total Budget for Player Development (2025-2027): \$10,000**

Year	Tactics	Actions	Budget	Responsible	KPI
2025	Rep Team Coordination	- Develop performance guidelines for rep coaches to effectively advance athletes and teams along the high-performance pathway.		ERU VP Rugby ERU Technical Manager ERU Program Manager	Performance Guidelines created and distributed
2027	Rep Team Expansion	- Research expanding Rep program to include new age groups in other possible areas such as touch rugby etc.		ERU Technical Manager ERU Operations Manager	Report on feasibility of new areas
2026	National Pathway Partnership	- Partner with Rugby Canada, Alberta Rugby and other provincial unions to ensure alignment with national development standards for player identification and development.		ERU VP Rugby ERU Technical Manager ERU Program Manager ERU Jr Manager	5 ERU players on national radar for both men's and women's programs
2026	Financial Support	- Establish a funding program to reduce costs for players	\$10,000	ERU Treasurer	Offer bursaries to reduce costs for up to 10% of players for Rep program
2027	Specialized Camps or tours	- Host regional camps or touring opportunities for aspiring rep players		ERU VP Rugby ERU Technical Manager ERU Operations Manager ERU Jr Manager	A tour for at least one rep team per year.



Year	Tactics	Actions	Budget	Responsible	KPI
				ERU Program Manager	

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## Strategic Priority 6. Marketing

**Objective:** Increase the profile of the sport of rugby in the Greater Edmonton community that show results in increased registration and increased sponsorship revenue of Union and Club level operations.

**Performance Indicators:**

- 5% increase in youth registration.
- 10% increase in adult registration.

**Total Budget for Marketing and Sponsorship (2025-2027): \$11,000**

Year	Tactics	Actions	Budget	Responsible	KPI
2025	Marketing Campaigns	- Develop social media and local event campaigns	\$10,000	ERU Communications Director Contractor	5% increase in youth registration
2027	Evaluate Marketing Effectiveness	- Conduct surveys and review campaign outcomes	\$1,000	ERU Communications Director Contractor	Registration growth maintained



## Strategic Priority 7. Sponsorship

**Objective:** Increase external community awareness and secure sponsorship to support club and ERU expenses.

**Performance Indicators:**

- 10% increase in sponsorship revenue annually.

**Total Budget for Sponsorship (2025-2027): \$15,500**

Year	Tactics	Actions	Budget	Responsible	KPI
2025	Club Survey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Determine average baseline of dollars currently raised from sponsors from each club and the ERU</li> <li>- Determine what product lines that are being sponsored.</li> <li>- Maintain confidentiality of information.</li> <li>- Develop ERU and Club sponsorship strategy based on input.</li> </ul>		ERU Communication Director ERU Operations Manager	80% of Clubs submit information
2026	Sponsorship Package	- Design and distribute sponsorship package that can be adapted for the ERU or by Clubs. (ie. This could include attaining regional sponsors for common expenses across clubs, such as jerseys, balls or fertilizer, of which funds are distributed equitably to clubs with consistent recognition to sponsor as well as dedicated sponsors for ERU or Club programs)	\$3,000	ERU Communication Director ERU Operations Manager	5 new sponsors secured for ERU programs
2026	Retain Expertise	- Contract Sponsorship Manager on combination of base pay plus commission.	\$10,000 plus %	ERU Communication Director	Recover base pay plus % in year 1
2026	Sponsor Relations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Build long-term relationships by developing a regional recognitions program for sponsors of club's and ERU.</li> <li>- ERU to host annual recognition event for Club and ERU sponsors. Invite notable business or motivational speaker as attraction.</li> </ul>	\$2,000	ERU Communication Director	10% increase in sponsorship revenue
2027	Evaluate Sponsorship Effectiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Conduct survey of sponsors and club representatives for satisfaction and suggestions.</li> <li>- Review campaign outcomes</li> </ul>	\$500	ERU Communications Director ERU Operations Manager	Registration growth maintained





## Strategic Priority 8. Field and Facility Management

**Objective:** Ensure safe, cost-effective rugby fields and facilities, with a 5% increase in net income from operations and a 10% reduction in field-related injuries.

**Performance Indicators:**

- 5% improvement in field profitability.
- 10% reduction in field-related injuries.

**Total Budget for Field and Facility Management (2025-2027): \$14,000**

Year	Tactics	Actions	Budget	Responsible	KPI
2025	Create a Field and Facilities Committee	- President to call for representatives from all clubs offering fields for competitive play.		ERU President ERU Operations Manager	Committee struck
2025	Business Plan for Fields and Facilities	- Develop generic revenue-generating models for facilities – consultant retained	\$3,000	ERU Facilities Committee ERU Operations Manager	Fields break-even or turn profit
2025	Facility Use Agreement	- Review existing facility use agreement and recommend changes to the ERU Board for adoption.		ERU Facilities Committee ERU Operations Manager	New agreement
2026	Bulk Purchasing	- Organize bulk purchases or preferred vendors (negotiated volume discounts) of supplies (fertilizer, paint, herbicides, cleaning chemicals)		Facilities Committee	5% cost savings across clubs
2026	Facility Rentals	- Coordinated Marketing of fields and facilities for non-rugby events in off times and off season. Inquiries referred to respective clubs.	\$5,000	Facilities Committee ERU Operations Manager	Increase facility revenue by 10%



## ERU Strategic Plan 2025 - 2027

Year	Tactics	Actions	Budget	Responsible	KPI
2027	Review Facility Management	- Evaluate and refine maintenance and revenue strategies	\$1,000	Facilities Committee ERU Operations Manager	5% increase in net income

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**Grand Total Budget for 2025-2027: \$101,100**

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This implementation plan provides a structured approach to achieve the Edmonton Rugby Union's strategic objectives over the next three years. It includes clear actions, assigned responsibilities, and performance indicators to measure success. The budget outlined, while to be used as a reference only at this time, will ensure the effective execution of each priority, with regular evaluations and adjustments as necessary.



## Appendix 1

### **Edmonton Rugby Union Rugby Summit Report**

**Sunday, January 28<sup>th</sup>, 2024**

#### **Executive Summary**

Plan4ward Consulting was approached and volunteered to Facilitate a 1-day Rugby Summit for the Edmonton Rugby Union (ERU) on Sunday, January 28<sup>th</sup>, 2024. The Session would involve representatives from the ERU, it's member Rugby Clubs, and other stakeholders from the northern Alberta rugby community. The preparation for the Rugby Summit involved Plan4ward working with Helen Wright and Darryell Holowaychuk on the following 4 steps:

1. Gather relevant details and background information for the Rugby Summit and clarify facilitation expectations
2. Review the 8 Session Topic that would be the focus of the discussion at the Rugby Summit
3. Plan4ward to coordinate a survey process that was launched via the Survey Monkey platform prior to the Rugby Summit. The results of this survey were presented by the Facilitator at the Rugby Summit and are attached in Annex A of this report

The agenda for the Rugby Summit was to present the finding from the Survey Monkey process and then have Janene Wilson of Plan4ward facilitate a process was to have the participants consider the 8 Session Topics that were established for the summit. The facilitation process for the Session Topics was to break the participants into smaller working groups to rotate through 4 stations in 30-minute intervals to consider 2 questions in relation the Session Topics. The workgroups then presented their results to all the participants for consideration and discussion. The final facilitation process involved each individual participant using stickers to identify their priorities using 2 green stickers to signify their two top/high priorities 2 blue stickers to signify their medium priorities and 2 yellow stickers for low priorities. The individuals could place their stickers on a Session Topic in general or individual statements that we're presented within the Session Topic.

The following table summarizes the results of the over results from the review of the 8 Session Topics. The results show that 4 of the Session Topics are considered to be of high priority by the participants; these are shaded in green. One Session Topic would be considered of intermediate priority based on the participants; this topic is shaded in blue. The lower priority includes 3 topics based on the feedback from the participants; these are shaded in yellow.



	<b><i>Summary of Priority Vote by Question</i></b>	<b><i>Priority</i></b>			
	<b>Questions</b>	<b>High</b>	<b>Medium</b>	<b>Low</b>	<b>Total Votes</b>
1	Club health and growth throughout northern Alberta (3 prioritized “needs” for club to grow)	10	3	0	13
2	Junior development and growth throughout northern Alberta	1	0	5	6
3	Increasing transition rates from high school to junior and junior to senior rugby	7	4	2	13
4	Maintenance and preservation of rugby traditions	0	1	8	9
5	Marketing of both the game of rugby and the ERU	2	1	2	5
6	Edmonton Gold representative programs	1	4	0	5
7	Referee recruitment and retention	6	6	0	12
8	Possible realignment and clarification of roles, functions, and responsibilities between the seven boards that govern rugby in Alberta	8	4	1	13

The following information provides all of the comments and details that were presented by the working groups for each of the Summit Topics. This included the results from the priority setting process. Please note that the priority process includes individual participants selecting the Summit Topic as a priority or a specific comment from the Session Topic.

**1. Club health and growth throughout northern Alberta (3 prioritized “needs” for club to grow)**

***This topic had 10 high priority votes and 3 medium***

High: None

Medium:

- Balance of rugby with other summer activities
- Online streaming of featured games

Low:

- Look for ways to make a game happen with what you have available, example 7's, 10's or 15's
- Other comments that were provided by not identified as a priority:
- Showcase rugby in smaller communities
- Explore partnership for bus, hotel and travel
- Clubs should pay a per diem for travel vs a bus
- Staff should share club development best practices
- Increase communication



- Collaboration with clubs on Jr program development
- Developing a healthy rugby culture
- Creating accessibility for everyone
- Different season length
- Schedule change with round robin, a fall league, and a shorter regular season
- Cross club events to make social/fun a focus for all
- Focus on rural games
- Edmonton Club no show in Grande Prairie and Ft. McMurray kills the club culture
- Have tournaments for rural teams
- Look for ways to market the game as a union to non-players at a Sr Level
- When recruiting youth target contact sports for easy transition
- Part-time registration for players who cannot dedicate their whole summer
- Paid professional marketing
- Special fee structure for low income
- Look at rates that are \$500 that are too much for a short season
- Use BC Rugby as an example for marketing
- Use volunteer time as a way to lower a player's fees

## **2. Junior development and growth throughout northern Alberta**

***This topic had 1 high priority vote and 5 low***

High:

- Grow the game to show what a great experience it can be

Medium:

- Maintaining ages 35 to 50 as touch rugby

Low:

- Maintaining ages 35 to 50 as touch rugby

Other comments that were provided by not identified as a priority:

- Big goal at all ages and grades
- Access to good quality coaches
- Getting the kids in young
- Multitier provincial tournament to keep the clubs involved to finish the season
- Have a clear rugby pathway
- Play with ASAA Metro
- Education and info on the safety of rugby
- Coaching development for Jr Coaches
- Improve organization by having games start on time with professionalism
- Cross over from other sports
- More support from clubs



- It's hard to find radially available inform on the websites, such as coaches, players, and schedules
- Need to change attitudes towards growing rugby vs growing the club
- ERU / AJRA need to send money to the clubs
- More flexibility towards playing &'s & 10's vs just 15's

### **3. Increasing transition rates from high school to junior and junior to senior rugby**

***This topic had 7 high priority votes, 4 medium and 2 low***

High:

- Properly Trained coaches with subsidized clinics and clinics in rural areas
- Jr & Sr player relationship, especially for first year players

Medium:

- ERU support for club tours for junior players
- Beter marketing
- Making Div 3 a Tens Rugby game to help young players have an opportunity to play as they're not ready to play in Div 1 or 2
- Centralization of high school coaching through the ERU

Low: None

Other comments that were provided by not identified as a priority:

- U21 / U23 takes away from Div 1 games
- Regional reps for junior and senior players
- U21 / U23 Div 1 players often don't stay
- Need more rep level rugby at the Sr Level to allow more players opportunity
- Shorter season for Rep Level so that U23 and younger can go into other programs
- Do not overlap with high school season
- Need to start the Jr season a few weeks early to catch more high school players at the clubs
- Jr & Sr practice integration
- Higher level pathway, example U23 Gold
- Lowering fees at the Sr Level
- Consider injury rates
- How to collect names and bring together high school players with the clubs at the end of their season
- Pairing with other sports, such as football & hockey, to show different opportunities of play

### **4. Maintenance and preservation of rugby traditions**

***This topic had 0 high priority votes, 1 medium, and 8 low***



High:

- 3rd Division, changes to the mentality to have this be a development division vs Old Boys going in with a different mentality
- Have to redefine what are the core culture and traditions
- Over use of drugs and alcohol. Creating a balance of drinking with real rugby
- Make the game for all

Medium:

- Lower fees
- Hosting inter-club days

Low:

- Cancelling toxic environment
- Bring back Super Saturdays
- Is the perception of rugby intimidating

Other comments that were provided by not identified as a priority:

- Junior and senior teams playing on the same night at clubs
- Coaches need to be fostering good rugby culture while volunteering
- Rather than sharing videos of 'boat races', share rugby game highlights
- Public outward facing media aligns with rugby pillars
- Marketing and rebranding to represent our values
- Billeting and hosting other clubs

## **5. Marketing of both the game of rugby and the ERU**

***This topic had 2 high priority votes, 1 medium and 2 low***

High:

- Bring in Rugby Canada Players. Rugby Canada is not doing enough to recruit Alberta players
- Touch rugby option
- ERU run social media, advertising video and professional photos
- Collaborate and share marketing plans from all clubs

Medium:

- Try play/stay
- Marketing of Pathways for inspiration and professionalism
- Touch rugby option
- Starting kids younger and getting into schools with junior coaches

Low:

- Touch rugby option



- Starting kids younger and getting into schools with junior coaches

Other comments that were provided by not identified as a priority:

- streamline social media
- live stream games
- Education on safe rugby
- 6 Nations local rugby events to educate people about the game
- Marketing is only as good as the club member doing it
- Bring back rugby with parent participation
- Welcome package for parents new to the game and marketing safety to parents
- Making level 1 certification available to coaches and more opportunity to get into level 2
- More level 1 and 2 ERU events
- More events in late April to improve parent teachings
- Higher level approach to bring all unions together

## **6. Edmonton Gold representative programs**

This topic had 1 high priority votes, 4 medium and 0 low

High:

- Have more touring for gold Program
- Have more development coaches for Gold Program
- There is a lack of rep programs for Sr Player
- No dues should be charged for rep team tryouts

Medium:

- Real structural consideration to reduce club conflict, we must structure around the rugby season in Alberta

Low: None

Other comments that were provided by not identified as a priority:

- Accurate stats and game sheets
- Scouting of individuals should be done at an open tryout vs coaches picking players prior to tryouts
- There should be game managers
- At a junior level we should be looking for performance indicators for junior players that are performing at a high level. Those players should then be linked to senior programs and high school teams
- Marketing of the Gold Program
- Funding, what happens to players who can't afford rugby
- Better AGRA presents
- Incentive based volunteering to offset cost pressures
- Consistency in applying for grants for players who can't afford to pay





- Division of Boards and not working as one unit; fixing the mind set issue
- Wider spread or rep team opportunities
- Getting as many kids as possible playing rep rugby
- Coaches pub night for learning and developing
- ERU official coaching and mentoring program

## **7. Referee recruitment and retention**

***This topic had 6 high priority votes, 6 medium and 0 low***

High:

- Recently retired players deserve better pay as refs.
- Higher pay will also appeal to athletes
- Looking at high school / university aged people to be refs
- Harsher consequences for abuse which will include parents
- Incorporate World Rugby's 5 Values

Medium:

- Require each club to have 1 ref per junior team ages U13 to U19
- Enforce fines for referee abuse
- Youth referee training

Low: None

Other comments that were provided by not identified as a priority:

- Bringing refs to rural communities
- Outline the standard of referring
- Club code of conduct should include ref interactions
- Every gold player has to take a ref course
- Bring back ref mentoring program
- Higher wages for refs
- Start training refs at U9 / U11 to build confidence
- Disrespecting ref, parent, player suspension from ERU sports
- Clubs must support coaches to implement values
- A barrier to refs is the high cost of entry
- There are not enough ref courses per year
- Encourage practice ref during club training
- Enforcement of respect by ERU
- On-field enforcement to empower Ref to card / penalize parents & coaches
- If a player disrespects a ref they will be required to take ref training course
- Add a disciplinary committee
-



## **8. Possible realignment and clarification of roles, functions, and responsibilities between the seven boards that govern rugby in Alberta**

***This topic had 8 high priority votes, 4 medium and 1 low***

High:

- There are too many Boards. Bring them together

Medium:

- A responsibility matrix and succession planning must be created to reduce duplication and realign governance as part of the overall strategic plan

Low: None

Other comments that were provided by not identified as a priority:

- ARU creating standards for Boards
- How do we align and work together metro ASAA and University
- After the ERU streamline will the make rugby better in Edmonton
- Boards / Governance pathway, what is the role clarity
- Policies rules, regs, and bylaws need to be clarified
- We need better communications on how paid positions are funded
- We need a better feedback system

***Participants were allowed to add private comments as part of the session that were deposited in a separate collection basket. The following comments were received:***

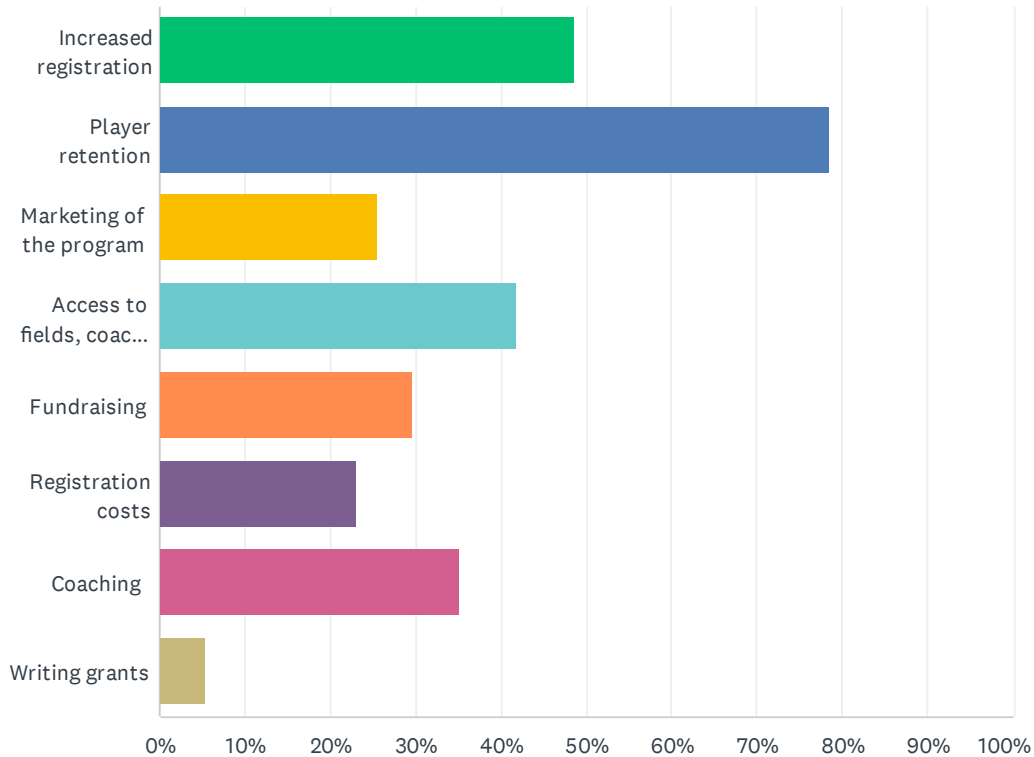
- Prem Teams (fall) playing in Div 2 Finals (semi & city) while sitting their Div 2 players
- Alumni of a club reffing semi/city finals while other refs cannot ref a league they play in
- Disciplinary actions of players/teams being executed
- Players & Teams don't make official complaints to ERU because they feel nothing actually comes of it so I would rather quit playing rugby all together.

## **Appendix 2**

### **Edmonton Rugby Union Rugby Summit** **Survey Monkey Responses ALL DATA**

## Q1 What would you consider the top ( choose 1-3) challenges or barriers for growing your rugby club?

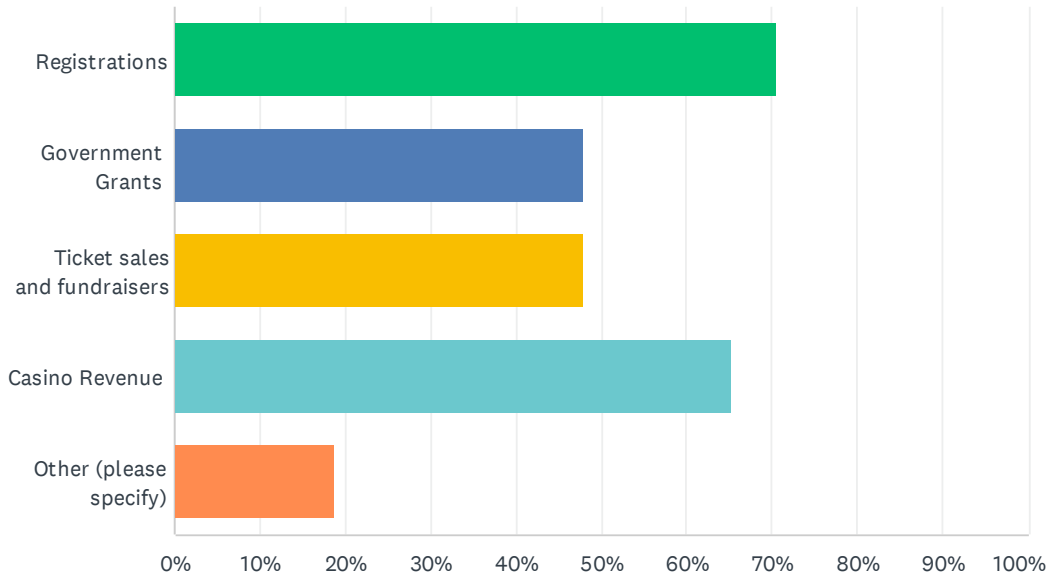
Answered: 74 Skipped: 1



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Increased registration	48.65%	36
Player retention	78.38%	58
Marketing of the program	25.68%	19
Access to fields, coaches and referees	41.89%	31
Fundraising	29.73%	22
Registration costs	22.97%	17
Coaching	35.14%	26
Writing grants	5.41%	4
Total Respondents: 74		

## Q2 What do you think are the top (choose 1 - 3) best revenue sources for a rugby club?

Answered: 75 Skipped: 0



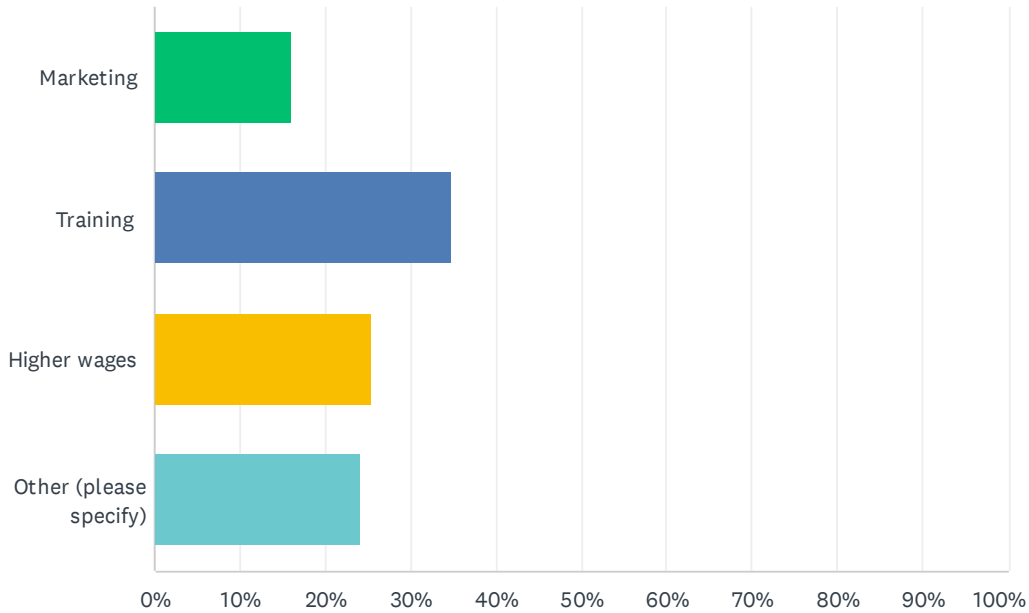
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Registrations	70.67%	53
Government Grants	48.00%	36
Ticket sales and fundraisers	48.00%	36
Casino Revenue	65.33%	49
Other (please specify)	18.67%	14
Total Respondents: 75		

### Q3 What Rugby traditions do you see as being important to the growth of the game?

Answered: 65   Skipped: 10

## Q4 What is the most important factor to recruit, develop and retain rugby referees?

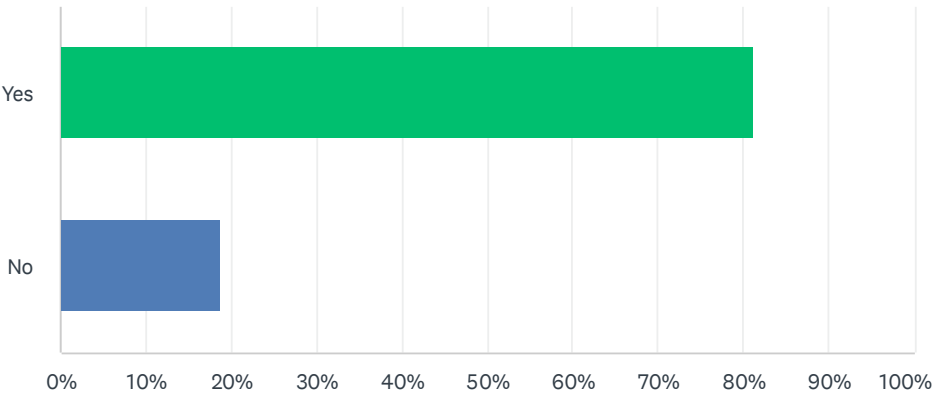
Answered: 75 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Marketing	16.00%	12
Training	34.67%	26
Higher wages	25.33%	19
Other (please specify)	24.00%	18
TOTAL		75

Q5 Are you familiar with the Gold Rugby Program?

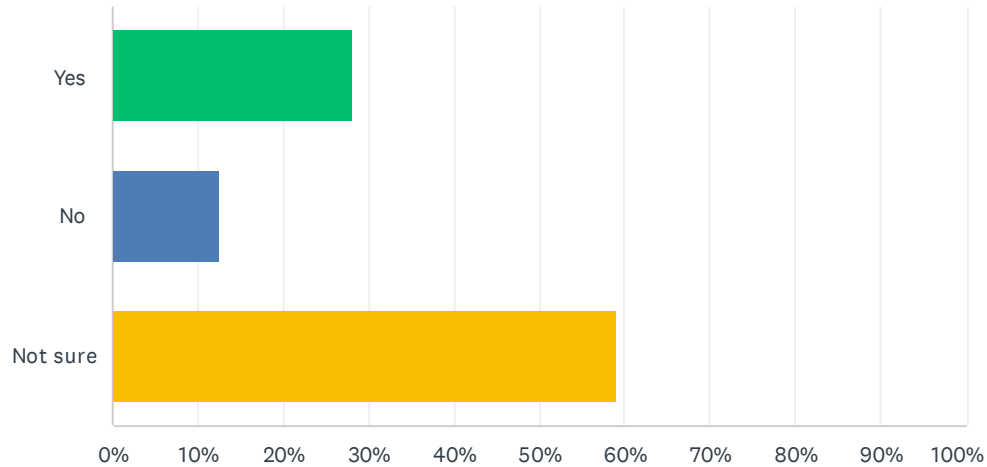
Answered: 75    Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	81.33%	61
No	18.67%	14
TOTAL		75

## Q6 If you answered yes to Question 5, do you feel the Gold program is well run?

Answered: 71 Skipped: 4

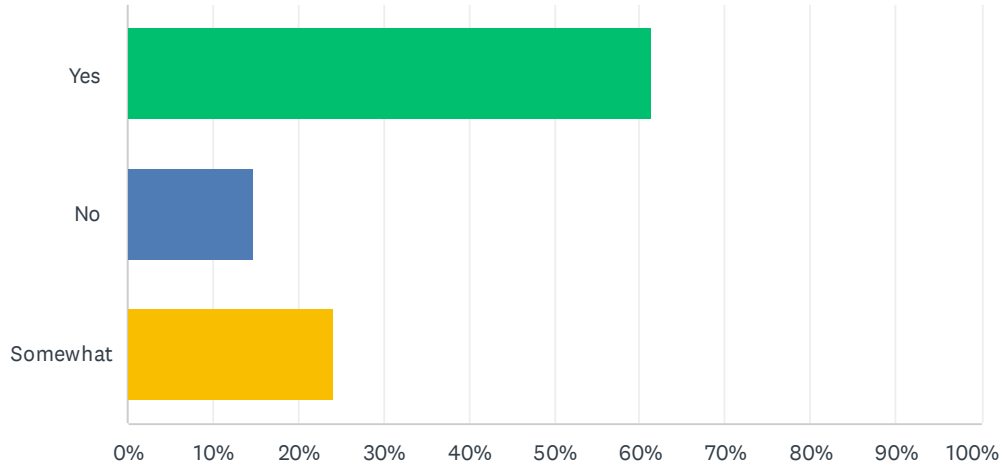


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	28.17%	20
No	12.68%	9
Not sure	59.15%	42
TOTAL		71



## Q7 Under the Gold program, would you like to see a Women's U-23 program?

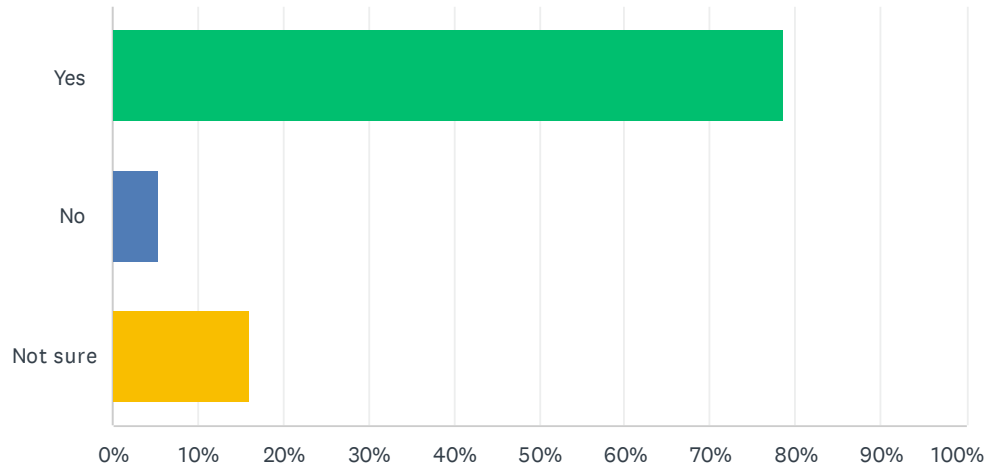
Answered: 75 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	61.33%	46
No	14.67%	11
Somewhat	24.00%	18
TOTAL		75

## Q8 The Gold Senior Men's programs have not been in place for the past few years, would you like to see this program revived?

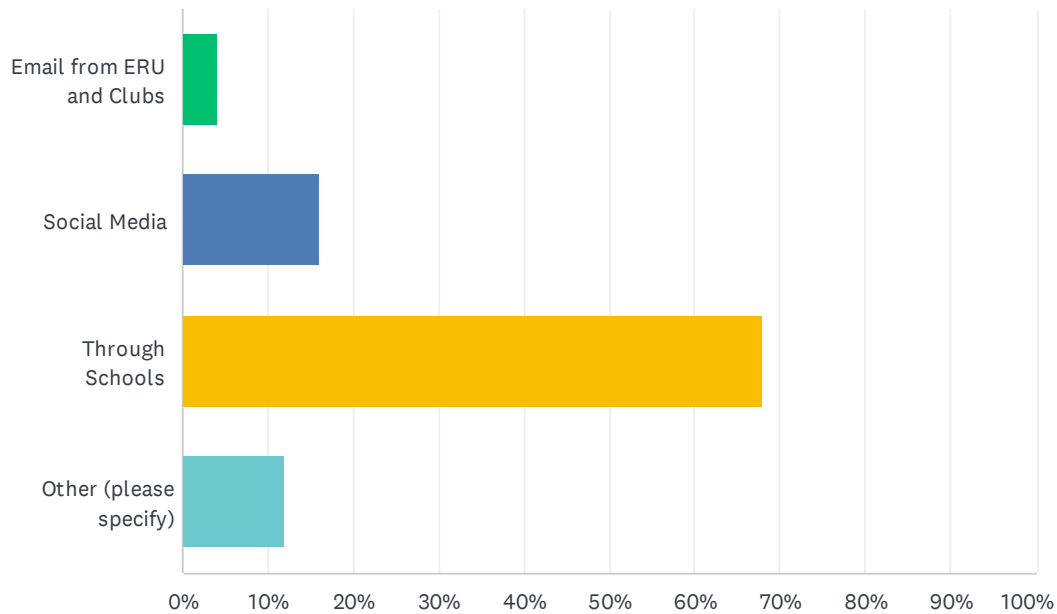
Answered: 75 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	78.67%	59
No	5.33%	4
Not sure	16.00%	12
TOTAL		75

## Q9 What is the best option for marketing junior rugby programs?

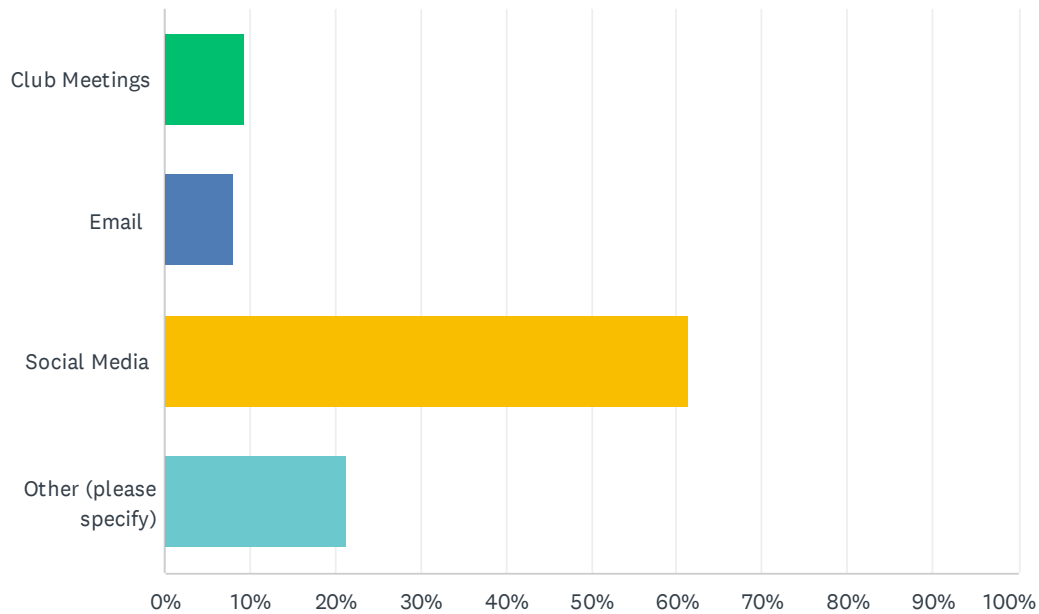
Answered: 75 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Email from ERU and Clubs	4.00%	3
Social Media	16.00%	12
Through Schools	68.00%	51
Other (please specify)	12.00%	9
TOTAL		75

## Q10 What is the best options for marketing senior rugby programs?

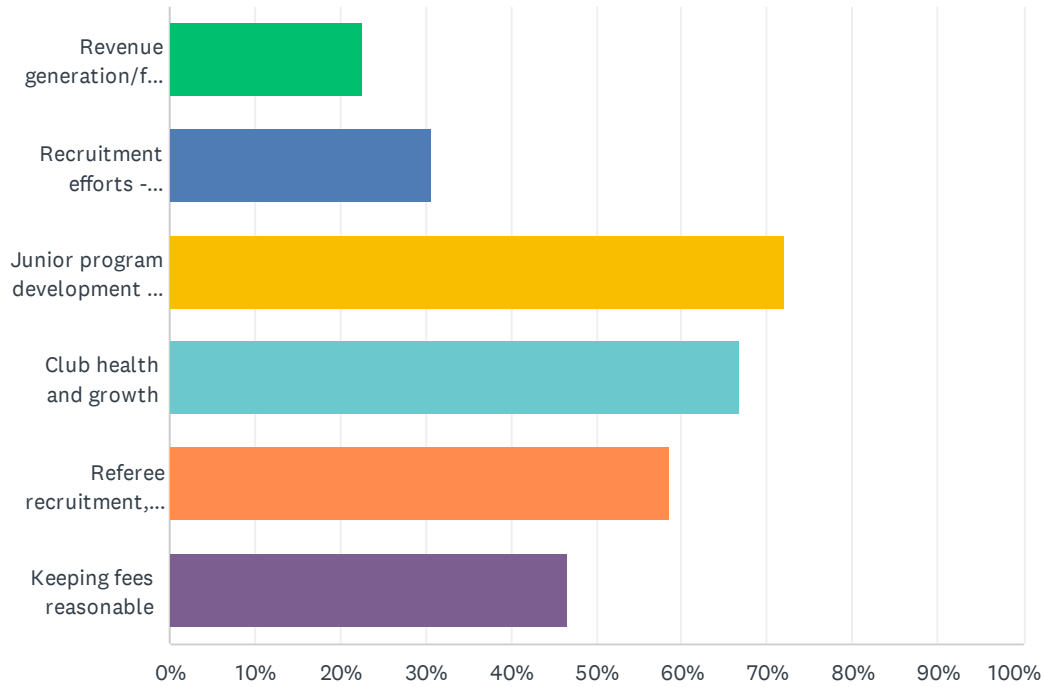
Answered: 75 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Club Meetings	9.33%	7
Email	8.00%	6
Social Media	61.33%	46
Other (please specify)	21.33%	16
TOTAL		75

## Q11 What are the top (1 - 3) areas the ERU focus on that would provide the greatest benefit?

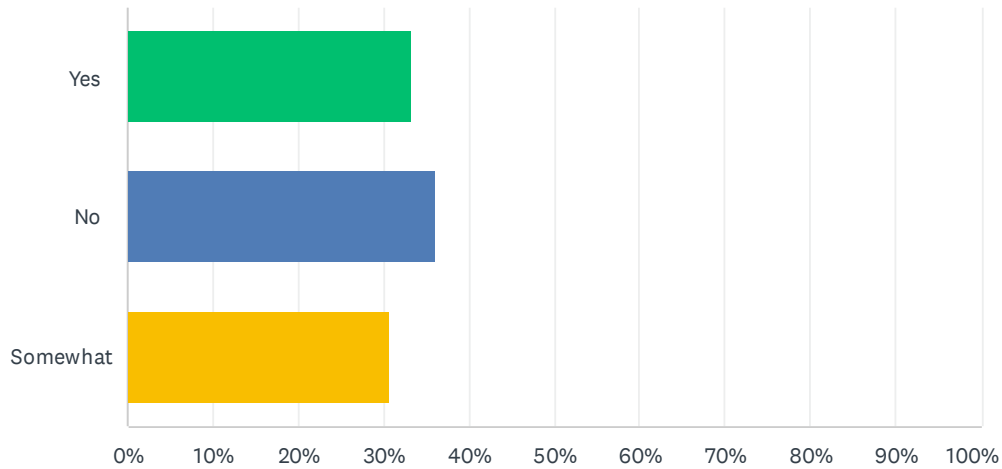
Answered: 75 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Revenue generation/fundraising	22.67%	17
Recruitment efforts - marketing	30.67%	23
Junior program development and growth	72.00%	54
Club health and growth	66.67%	50
Referee recruitment, development and retention	58.67%	44
Keeping fees reasonable	46.67%	35
Total Respondents: 75		

Q12 The seven boards that govern rugby in Alberta are RA, AJRA, ERU, CRU, RAMOA, ERURS, and CRURS. Are you aware of the roles and responsibilities of these boards?

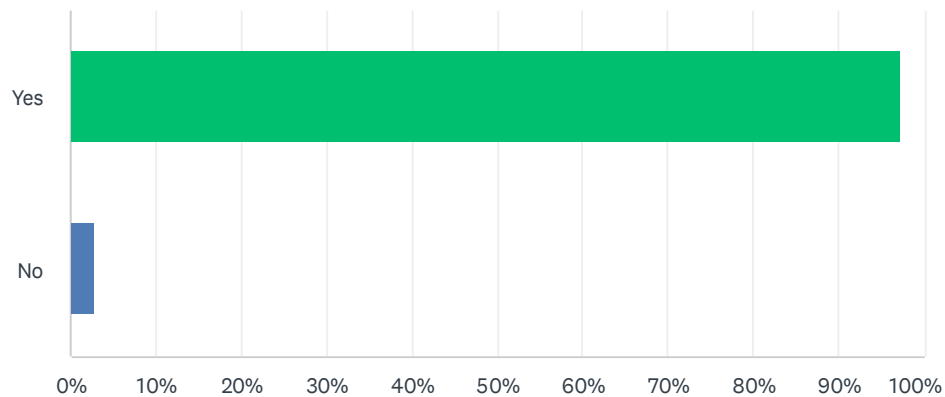
Answered: 75 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	33.33%	25
No	36.00%	27
Somewhat	30.67%	23
TOTAL		75

Q13 It has been suggested that we look at the realignment of these boards to clarify and focus the roles of the boards to reduce to duplication of efforts. A possible side benefit would be an overall reduction of board members needed and a unified effort across Alberta to grow rugby. Do you feel this is an area that merits consideration?

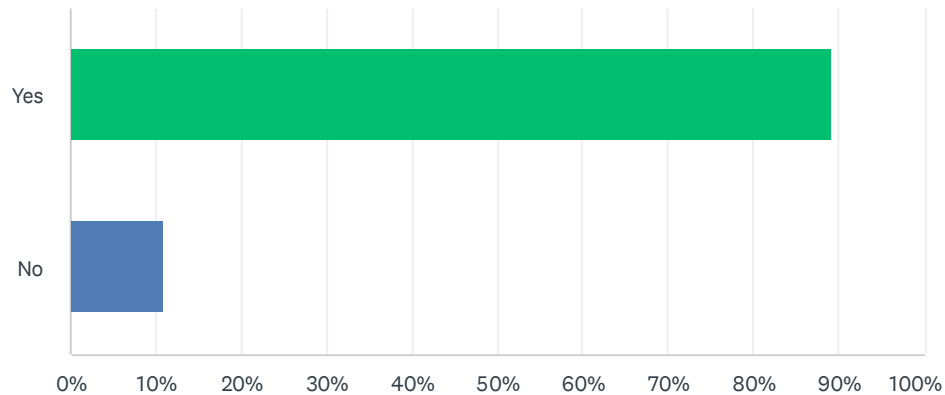
Answered: 75 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	97.33%	73
No	2.67%	2
TOTAL		75

Q14 One suggestion is the ARU takes on the responsibility of organization and operation of the Senior Men's and Women's leagues at all leveles throughout the Province. This would free up ERU to focus on junior rugby and local rep programs. Would you agree that is a concept worth looking at?

Answered: 73 Skipped: 2



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	89.04%	65
No	10.96%	8
TOTAL		73



Q15 Please enter your name and e-mail. This is only needed if you wish to enter your name for the \$50.00 Starbucks gift card.

Answered: 56   Skipped: 19