



FEDERATION OF INTERNATIONAL **LACROSSE**

Chief Executive Officer Report **Federation of International Lacrosse** **General Assembly Netanya Israel, July 9-10, 2018**

Introduction

I am very honored to serve as the first Chief Executive Officer of the Federation of International Lacrosse and am pleased to provide this report of my activities during my first year with FIL. I look forward to making a deeper connection to each of you, learning more about your expectations for FIL and myself, and working with all of you to grow the great game of lacrosse, build the brand of lacrosse and FIL, and return the sport to the Olympic Games fulfilling the vision and mission of FIL.

The first year has been a very invigorating start to my term as the CEO of FIL. The reception from the international lacrosse community has been fantastic and I am enjoying the work with the FIL Board and the Olympic Vision Committee. Much of that work has centered around the development and refinement of the FIL Strategic and Olympic Vision plan and fundraising plans and efforts to support it. The Board and I are excited to share our progress in this regard during the General Assembly. I will share major areas of my work focus this past year as well as activities undertaken on behalf of FIL and a look ahead to the future.

Strategic Planning

Work began on the development of a FIL Strategic Plan and Olympic Vision Plan post the International World Games Association competition in Poland where lacrosse debuted as a World Games sport July 27 – 30, 2017. Research had been on-going and was furthered with face to face conversations with many in the international sport community at the World Games. The key underpinning of the plan development was to undertake a very complete analysis of the international sport landscape, the existing pathways to be included in the Olympic Games, and the political climate and realities at the International and Olympic family level to determine the key factors to be addressed in the FIL strategy. In addition, the development of a SWOT analysis to determine the existing strengths, weaknesses,

opportunities and threats to the FIL potential strategy was a very specific focus of the early work. The SWOT analysis is contained in the plan summary that is part of the General Assembly materials as is a quick summary of the IOC sport landscape analysis (if anyone wishes to see a copy of the full analysis, please ask and I will send it to you).

The first draft of the Olympic Vision plan and the FIL Strategic Plan was initially presented at the FIL board meeting September 9 – 11, 2017 in Baltimore, Maryland. The plan did not revise the existing FIL Vision and Mission but instead built upon that Vision and Mission to develop the strategies necessary to fulfill them. The plan then underwent a series of reviews and refinement by FIL leadership and was formally approved at the January 21, 2018 FIL board meeting. A quick recap of the Vision, Mission, Core Values, and Key Strategies follows:

FIL Vision

Lacrosse is recognized and played by all countries world-wide and is an Olympic Sport.

FIL Mission

FIL will provide governance and integrity for all forms of lacrosse and will provide responsive and effective leadership to support the sport's development throughout the world.

Olympic Vision Committee Mission

Create and lead a global movement to amplify the message to the Olympic family of the values and benefit of lacrosse, support the growth and popularity of lacrosse, and effectively lobby and present the case for lacrosse to the IOC.

Core Values –

*Suggestions (FIL would select 4-5)

Passion	Teamwork	Inclusiveness
Respect	Innovation	Impact
Integrity	Friendship	Unity
Determination	Fairness	
Excellence	Solidarity	

FIL leadership has included a larger potential set of core value propositions than would normally be included in a strategic plan. Before adoption FIL would like your input as the board has not yet confirmed the core values. FIL will present a mechanism to collect your input in Netanya.



Scope

This Strategic plan encompasses the fall quarter of 2017 through the fall of 2024 to coincide with the IOC host city proposal process and is designed to create a set of actions and activities that lead to the fulfillment of the vision and mission of FIL.

Organizational overarching priorities

- *Build – build the brand and resources of the lacrosse*
- *Grow – grow the game*
- *Lead – inspire greatness*

Key Strategies

1. *Effectively build relationships and successfully present the case of lacrosse to the IOC, Olympic family, and host cities for the Olympic Games.*
2. *Build the brand, popularity, appeal, and growth of lacrosse globally.*
3. *Increase the core competencies of FIL, its Continental Federations, National Federations, and management to support the effort.*

The FIL Strategic Plan and the Olympic Vision plan underwent a number of key review sessions with the FIL Board and others and was revised many times prior to developing the final version in March. The major change of emphasis was the merging of the two plans into the final plan that has been shared with you. The plan also went through a number of versions that adjusted the budgets based on the potential available funds to support the plan and the timing of the receipt of those funds by FIL. The final version was approved in March and the summary has been shared with the membership in the General Assembly materials.

In the process of development of the plan and the work with FIL donors, FIL has also developed a sustainable revenue generation plan. This plan will allow FIL to become financially self-sustainable in 5 years and is consistent with the FIL Strategy but goes into more detail in the plans and timing to build revenue streams to support the activities of FIL.

Olympic Vision Committee/Capital Campaign fundraising plan

The OVC planning process to develop a strategy for Olympic inclusion, the role of the OVC to execute it, and the fundraising plan to support it were a prime focus of my efforts this year.



Extensive work was undertaken to refine the prior OVC strategic plan and evaluate the fundraising efforts that had been in place. The plan was revised and as indicated earlier was incorporated into the FIL strategic plan. A Capital Campaign plan to support the Olympic Vision effort was developed and tested. The final Capital Campaign plan was approved by both the FIL Board and the OVC Executive Committee in January and was presented to the lead donor in January as well. The lead gift for the Campaign has been secured as well as other gifts and the quiet phase of the Campaign will continue after the General Assembly. The quiet phase in a Capital Campaign is the time period for the solicitation of lead gifts prior to the public launch of the Campaign. This year marked a change in the leadership of the OVC as well with Stan Cockerton named to the Chairperson position by the board. Tom Hayes remains as the Director of the OVC with Bob Demarco and Ron Balls as the two other members of the OVC Executive Committee. If you are aware of any candidates that may be interested in serving on the OVC Board (which is advisory in nature), a committee, or a potential donor please share those names with either Stan Cockerton, Tom Hayes, or myself.

Events

Management has approached and coordinated a new approach to working with FIL events to provide additional support and opportunities for television, media and sponsorship support. My thanks to Scott Neiss, Jessie Kraft, and Israel Lacrosse for the collaborative support to create an integrated approach to sponsorship. Working with the 2018 FIL Men's Lacrosse World Championship, FIL was able to reach a three-year agreement with Honig's to provide volunteer and official apparel for FIL events through 2020. The agreement was also supported by Fred Blowes and Cheryl MacNeill, event management, 2019 FIL Women's lacrosse U19 World Championship, Rita Rogers, Associate Director Events, and the team at the Langley Events Center for the 2019 FIL World Indoor Lacrosse Championship, and Michael Kennedy, Ireland Lacrosse, for the 2020 FIL Men's U19 World Championship. Considerable effort has gone into the development of an aggregated content model to create a more robust offering for linear broadcast providers, streaming digital video rights, and event sponsors. Following this world event activity in this area will accelerate. FIL is currently in discussion/negotiation with several potential sponsors and a large number of broadcasters interested in this combined package of rights.

Future plans call for the development of an aggregation model stretching further into the future and encompassing additional yearly lacrosse events outside FIL events. Such a model could significantly increase exposure and the fan base for lacrosse as well as bringing new revenues into the sport.

Sponsorship



FIL made its initial foray into the sponsorship space this year as a precursor to a full sponsorship model launching later in 2019. FIL did experience some success with the signing on Honig's as an apparel sponsor for FIL and FIL events in 2019 and 2020. FIL has also been able to engage in additional sponsor discussions which it is anticipated will result in other sponsor signings soon. The longer-term plan for sponsorship is to build and develop a portfolio of saleable assets prior to going to the market with an extensive sales effort. As contained in the FIL Strategic Plan the priority is to create assets which are primarily associated with FIL events. The event television broadcast and digital rights, media assets, and other event related rights will provide the basis for sponsor assets. In addition, the development of a digital audience through the FIL website and social media will provide additional value to the sponsors. Finally, an investment in building the FIL brand will also help to build the asset base.

Television/Digital media

Management has been very active in developing a model to create programming and distribution opportunities for FIL events and content as well as a possible aggregation model for other lacrosse events. The market currently is very strong for entities holding rights as there is quite a bit of competition as the industry is in flux from a linear broadcast model to a digital distribution model or a hybrid of both. Value will be derived in the future from the ability of a rights holder to create a model that provides significant total audience delivery (TAD). TAD rolls up a telecast's linear, digital and out-of-home viewer numbers, factoring in viewership on broadcast and cable networks, along with streaming on mobile phones, tablets, connected TV's and desktop computers.

Linear giants like NBC who owns the Olympic rights in the US market through 2032 are striving to find a model that encompasses the changing habits of consumers while continuing to achieve profits on their sales of advertisements and subscriptions on broadcast and cable while trying to capture audience and monetize digital (streaming) viewership. Other entities that provide Over the Top programming are streaming (forgive the pun) into the marketplace like Lacrosse Sports Network, Flosports, QTV and others. Broadcast and cable players do not want to cannibalize their existing audiences with digital but have had to make a push into that area to accommodate viewer consumption patterns. Entities like Facebook, Google, Youtube and Twitter have begun to make the foray in to streaming sport and bidding on major sports properties. Netflix, Amazon, Prime Video, Hulu, and Apple are jumping into the fray. That is somewhat a US based look, but the same phenomena is happening in the world markets. The IOC has created its own entity to provide OTT programming – The Olympic Channel. FIL has been conducted in person or video conference meetings with the following entities that have an interest in FIL rights:

ESPN - ESPN is a U.S.-based global cable and satellite sports television channel owned by ESPN Inc., a joint venture owned by The Walt Disney Company and Hearst Communications



CBC - The Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, branded as CBC/Radio-Canada, is a Canadian federal Crown corporation that serves as the national public broadcaster for both radio and television

Comcast/NBC Sports - NBC Sports is the programming division of the American broadcast network NBC, owned by the NBCUniversal Television Group division of NBCUniversal, that is responsible for sports broadcasts on the network.

Olympic Channel - Olympic Channel is an over-the-top Internet television service operated by the International Olympic Committee. It was launched on 21 August 2016, alongside the closing of the 2016 Summer Olympics. FIL has executed an agreement with the Olympic Channel which provides the opportunity to stream live sporting events and create unique content to be aired on the OCS platform.

FloSports – FloSports is an Austin, Texas based worldwide provider of live digital sports and original content. FloSports has digital tiers in a number of sports and has just come to terms with the International Volleyball Federation and the Rugby Union for delivery of content. FloSports is an OTT provider that uses a pay wall and subscription-based service to monetize the rights it purchases.

InPlayer – InPlayer provides a platform that creates an application for content owners to stream their own live events and original programming and provides a flexible paywall platform for the entity to charge for its digital content.

QTV Sports - QTV Sports is one of the UK's leading producers of sports content. Our award-winning team delivers high quality, innovative production and digital solutions that address four aims for rights-holders: extending reach, increasing commercial revenue, enhancing reputation, and rewarding fans. QTV delivers a range of production and digital content services, including outside broadcast, livestreaming, in-play clips, features and highlights production, graphic design, and digital channel management.

Lacrosse Sports Network – The Lax Sports Network is a digital video network dedication to covering the game of lacrosse. LSN is a multi-platform, digital OTT sports network offering live and archived lacrosse content. Its model has been a pay per view and subscription service, but now it is anticipated that LSN will move to a free delivery model monetized with sponsorship and advertising sales.

Along with those entities and others, FIL has engaged in discussion with the National Lacrosse League and Major League Lacrosse about the possibility of working together in an asset aggregation model and co-promotions to develop the game. Those discussions are on-going.



Management has also been in discussion with FIL event hosts as well as other lacrosse events and properties to determine the feasibility of aggregating those rights so that a longer-term approach to selling the rights might yield better results individually and collectively for the events and FIL.

Media/PR

Increasing the promotion of FIL and the sport of lacrosse has been a key target of management this year, particularly in the past four months. Management has taken over the duties of drafting and distributing press releases and media advisories and general promotion activities. The frequency of releases has increased significantly over prior years as has the amount of coverage lacrosse has received due to the expression of FIL's Olympic Vision. FIL has begun to cultivate and work with key Olympic family media and anticipates launching a full PR effort to support the Olympic Vision effort in the last quarter of 2018 or early 2019.

Website and Social Media

As part of the on-going promotional efforts and efforts to keep the membership informed, management has brought the direct responsibility for the FIL Website and social media outlets in house. FIL has also switched its service provider in this area recently with a move to King of the Mountain Sports, a full-service sports and media management company. KOM is responsible for the maintenance of the website and the social media outlets and for capturing, creating and posting content to the sites. FIL's activity in this area has increased significantly over the past three months with this change. For example, for the three-month period of January through March, FIL posted to its Facebook page 10 times, for the three-month period of April through June, FIL had almost 50 posts resulting in significantly increased likes. Over the same time periods the FIL website went from 4 posts to 15, and for Twitter, FIL went from 8 posts to more than 40 which led to an increased engagement rate of 1.4 from .9, link clicks rose from 571 to more than 2000, and likes went from 220 to 724. FIL has put in place a very aggressive plan to provide extensive media coverage of the 2018 Men's World Championship here in Netanya. Working with KOM and other providers, FIL is sending a team of media professionals to Netanya that will provide daily results and news reports from the event directly to the media as well as through FIL's website and social media. This news content will take the form of special interest pieces, local culture and tourism, event results and significant news transmitted via written press releases, video interviews and VLOG's all offering full coverage of the event as well as the organizational meetings taking place. As part of the offering FIL is also creating a web and digital application portal to aggregate content from all event providers easily accessed via home computer, laptop, and any PDA. This central 'hub' for the event will feature fresh content as well as one place to access the FIL website, FIL social media, World Championship 2018 website and results, athlete social media pages,



member nation websites (if desired) and other providers. The objective is to more widely promote the event, distribute the results, and capture an audience that will follow FIL and FIL events into the future.

Staffing

I am pleased to report that FIL more than doubled its productivity with the addition of Kim Bartkowski as Executive Assistant this year. Kim came to FIL directly from the athletic department at Fountain-Ft. Carson High School south of Colorado Springs, CO. Prior to that her experience included a long tenure at the US Olympic Committee and several National Governing Bodies. She brings a wealth of experience in information technology, membership management, event management, board relations, and most importantly for me – CEO support! A brief bio listing Kim’s experience and her contact information is attached. FIL conducted an extensive search for this position which resulted in many qualified candidates of which six were selected for preliminary interviews, three candidates were selected for formal interviews which were assisted by the FIL board, and Kim was selected from that group and started on January 17, 2018.

Sport Accord

In April, FIL was represented at the SportAccord meetings in Bangkok, Thailand by President Sue Redfern, Secretary General Ron Balls, and myself. The SportAccord meeting is the annual gathering of the international sport federations and associated entities. It is attended by international sport federations, event rights holders, organizing committees for various events, cities, press and media covering the Olympic movement, consultants and other organizations involved in the development of global sport. SportAccord annually brings together representatives from more than 100 international sports federations affiliated with the following umbrella organizations that host their Annual General Assemblies at SportAccord: GAISF (Global Association of International Sports Federations), ASOIF (Association of Summer Olympic International Federations), AIOWF (Association of International Olympic Winter Sports Federations), ARISF (Association of IOC Recognized International Sports Federations), AIMS (Alliance of Independent Recognized Members of Sport) and other Associate Members.

In addition, the event is attended by IOC leadership and key staff and receives the full support of the International Olympic Committee.

FIL had three chief objectives for the meeting; 1) to gain information on and further FIL’s application for IOC recognition, 2) to introduce Sue Redfern as the new President of FIL, and 3) to further develop relationships and recognition of FIL and lacrosse as a valued member of the international Olympic sport family and to promote the values of lacrosse. FIL through its

three representatives was able to make contact and conduct productive meetings with key IOC members, members of the IOC program commission, Los Angeles 2028 leadership, the Birmingham World Games 2021 leadership, The International World Games Association, numerous Olympic family consultants, marketing and television companies, and Olympic family media as well as leadership of many of the international federations present. FIL was also represented at the GAISF's, AIM's, and IWGA General Assemblies. Of note, was the approval by the IWGA of the addition of Men's lacrosse in the World Games in Birmingham, Alabama in 2021 along with the inclusion of Women's lacrosse for the second time. Kudos to Ron Balls for his work with the IWGA to help make that happen. I am also pleased to report that the reception by the international family of Sue Redfern through her efforts to be visible and meet as many attendees of the convention was outstanding.

Looking ahead

The next year should be a landmark year in the history of FIL and for the sport. The work of many years by a great number of key individuals will come to fruition in the coming year. One of my favorite quotes is by Sir Isaac Newton who said, "If I have seen further than others, it is by standing upon the shoulders of giants." And so, it is with FIL this coming year as we will be building upon the efforts of the past to take FIL into a new era. This coming year FIL anticipates the launch of many new and exciting programs and activities that will be instrumental in the efforts to achieve the vision and mission of FIL. Among these will be the implementation of the proposed FIL strategic plan, the launch of a Capital Campaign lead by the Olympic Vision Committee and the FIL board, and the political and promotion campaign to return lacrosse to the Olympics. Among the new programs that support those initiatives and are contained in the strategic plan include:

- International Olympic Committee and Olympic family relationship building and lobbying
- Brand review and Brand Campaign
- Website makeover and relaunch with intensive social media strategy
- Public relations campaign
- Reimagination of FIL World Events platform and Game
- Addition of new FIL staff positions
- Sponsorship Sales initiative
- Media aggregation and distribution platform

I will be pleased to present the FIL strategic plan with Olympic vision at the General Assembly in Netanya to update you further about these initiatives and others. I would like to thank the FIL Board of Directors for their leadership and guidance this past year especially president Sue Redfern. Her leadership and commitment to FIL and lacrosse is exceptional. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank you for your work on behalf of the sport and its athletes,

coaches, and officials in your roles with your NGB. I will see you in Netanya and as they say in Israel, “Yalla!”.

