

MAJOR LEAGUE RUGBY ANNOUNCES ADDITIONS OF TORONTO AND WASHINGTON, D.C.



SALT LAKE CITY (November 2, 2018) – Major League Rugby (MLR) released today the Toronto Arrows will join MLR for the upcoming 2019 season. Additionally, the team in Washington, D.C. (DC MLR) has been accepted as a member for 2020.

Major League Rugby will launch season two in January with nine teams: Austin, Houston, Glendale (Colorado), New Orleans, Rugby United New York, San Diego, Seattle, Salt Lake City (Utah) and Toronto. Each market has an extensive history of rugby-support in their respective communities.

“We are thrilled to officially expand the League to Washington, D.C. and Toronto” said Dean Howes, Commissioner of MLR. “Each team’s leadership has demonstrated their ability to positively affect their community, and we look forward to watching their top-tier talent on-field.”

The Toronto Arrows, formerly known as the Ontario Arrows, recently notched a 40-14 win over the New England Free Jacks, who are set to join MLR in 2020, at an exhibition match in Halifax, Nova Scotia. In September, the Canadian side also secured a convincing 40-18 victory over 2018 MLR runners-up, the Glendale Raptors, in Toronto.

“After a very successful, 2018 ‘proof-of-concept’ exhibition season both on and off the pitch, the newly named and rebranded Toronto Arrows are thrilled to be joining MLR as its first Canadian team, making this a truly North American professional rugby league whose time has come,” said Arrows Co-Founder, Bill Webb.

Webb, who is a Partner and Chief Investment Officer at Waypoint Investment Partners, has been a long-standing supporter of youth, school, club and high performance rugby in Ontario and Canada and has served as a Director and Capital Campaign Co-Chair of Rugby Canada, in addition to being on the Captain’s Council of TIRF (Toronto Inner-City Rugby Foundation) and a founding member of the Rugby Alliance, supporting grassroots and youth rugby.

“Our Arrows investor group, staff and in particular, our very dedicated players, have been thrilled with the strong support we have received from rugby fans of all ages from coast to coast, our commercial sponsors, governing bodies (Rugby Canada and Rugby Ontario), volunteers and our very patient families,” Webb continued. “The advent of professional rugby in Canada and the United States is a watershed event for the growth and development of the sport we love and is an integral link that has been missing on the ‘rugby pathway’ in North America.”

The Arrows are backed by a founding investor group of sports-minded, rugby-loving business professionals that includes Bill Webb, Boat Rocker Sports, a division of Boat Rocker Media, Brian Burke (Rogers Sportsnet Analyst and former President and GM of the Toronto Maple Leafs), Duncan McNaughton (Rugby Canada National Senior Women’s XV scrum coach),

Kevin Reed of AR3 Capital, John Ferraro of Mass Marketing Inc. as well as creative strategy and design leaders, Doubleday & Cartwright.

Arrows Vice-President and General Manager, Mark Winokur, who has served for many years as manager of the six-time Canadian Rugby Championship winners, the Ontario Blues, and of the Rugby Canada National Senior Men's team said, "The Arrows are committed to playing a high-tempo, physical and entertaining style of rugby that will excite current rugby fans and draw new fans to the game. In short – Real. Canadian. Rugby. We look forward to competing in the seasons ahead."

While the Arrows will take the MLR pitch for the first time this coming January, DC MLR will not see regular-season competition until 2020. Promotion from associate-team to member-team ensures that DC MLR will be an on-field competitor during the 2020 season.

DC MLR's founders are both heavily involved in the local community. Co-Founder Paul Sheehy played rugby for the Washington Rugby Club and the United States National Team —

representing the USA Eagles in the 1991 Rugby World Cup. Sheehy is a proud father of rugby athletes and coached at his alma mater, Gonzaga College High School, and the DMV United 7s Team. He is also a supporter of the local rugby scene, sponsoring teams such as: Maryland Exiles Youth Rugby, Washington Youth Rugby, University of Mary Washington, Scion Rugby Academy and the Potomac Referees Society.

"We know the Mid-Atlantic rugby fans will love the game, and we expect MLR to be a big success here in the second largest rugby market in the United States," Sheehy said. "Now with five east coast teams on board, the chance for some serious rivalries is taking shape."

DC MLR Chairman Chris Dunlavey is President and co-founder of DC-based Brailsford & Dunlavey, one of the nation's top 30 program management firms, which focuses on large scale institutional facility development such as sports venues, higher education campuses, and schools. Since the late 1980s, Dunlavey has played rugby with the Washington Irish Rugby Football Club, and continues to do so today.

"We couldn't be happier to bring professional rugby to DC," Dunlavey said. "Our work over the last ten months has shown that the market is ready for MLR and that we have a plan for success that will make our region proud."

The upcoming 2019 schedule, featuring newcomers Toronto and New York, will be released in November 2018, with approximate timing to be released soon.

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About MLR

MLR is a professional rugby league that launched in April of 2018. It's an initiative of the American rugby community, in partnership with private investors, who believe that American rugby can thrive at the highest levels: as a commercial enterprise; as an influential player on the international scene; and as a participation sport at the youth and senior level. MLR is the pinnacle of the American rugby, and provides a rallying point for local communities, a focal point for American rugby fans, and an aspirational destination for young athletes.

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About Chris Dunlavey

DC MLR Chairman Chris Dunlavey is President and co-founder of District-based [Brailsford & Dunlavey](#), one of the nation's top 50 program management firms, which focuses on large scale institutional facility development such as sports venues, higher education campuses, and schools. He is also a founder and owner of [Centers, LLC](#), the nation's first management company for outsourced collegiate campus recreation services. Since the late 1980s, Dunlavey has played rugby with the Washington Irish Rugby Football Club, and continues to do so today.

About Paul Sheehy

Paul Sheehy is an Owner and Director of Used Operations for [Sheehy Auto Stores](#), a local family-owned business with 23 locations within the Mid-Atlantic. They have served the Washington, DC area for over 50 years and retail 45,000 new and used vehicles annually. He played rugby for the Washington Rugby Club and the United States National Team. He

represented the US in the 1991 Rugby World Cup held in England. Sheehy is a proud father

of rugby athletes and coached at his alma mater, Gonzaga College High School, and the DMV United 7s team. He is also a big supporter of the local rugby scene, sponsoring teams such as

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