



Canadian Elite Basketball League Announces Teams for 2019 Inaugural Season and Appoints League Executive Team

Inaugural season to feature teams from Fraser Valley, B.C., Edmonton, Alta., Saskatoon, Sask, Guelph, Ont., Niagara, Ont. and Hamilton, Ont.

TORONTO, May 2, 2018 – The Canadian Elite Basketball League (CEBL) today announced the six teams that will compete in next year’s inaugural season in addition to key leadership appointments to establish this new professional basketball league. The CEBL will begin its first season in May 2019 and will run a 20-game regular season schedule, in addition to playoffs and championship series in August 2019.

New pro basketball teams in Edmonton, Alberta, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan and Hamilton, Ontario will join previously announced teams in Niagara, Ontario, Guelph, Ontario, and Fraser Valley, B.C. for the 2019 season. Each team will have a 12-player roster and will play 10 home and 10 away games during the summer season.

The CEBL also announced that business executive and veteran CFL pro football player Mike Morreale has been appointed CEO. Following his CFL career, Morreale served as the President of the CFL Players’ Association, and as a senior executive in the Canadian business community. For the past year Morreale has been developing the league’s inaugural season and recruiting a team of basketball and sports marketing experts to staff CEBL’s front office.

“I am delighted to confirm our first six teams that will tip off one year from now in Canada’s newest pro basketball league next summer,” said Morreale. “With basketball surging in popularity in Canada we focused on communities that are rich in grassroots community fan support and share a passion for fast-paced action.”

According to the Canadian Youth Sports Report basketball is the second most popular team sport among new Canadian youth, next to soccer.¹ This year, for the second straight season basketball players from Canada were the largest representation in the NBA from outside of the U.S.

“It’s always a great thing when more people are able to play basketball in Canada. I applaud the efforts made by the Canadian Elite Basketball League,” said Michele O’Keefe, President and CEO, Canada Basketball.

¹ Canadian Youth Sports Report 2014 Solutions Research Group

Experienced Leadership Team

The CEBL also announced key executive leadership appointments:

- **Greg Francis** is appointed Head of Basketball. Greg will lead coach and player recruitment strategy for the CEBL and basketball operations. Greg is also the Manager of Men's High Performance at Canada Basketball, an experienced university basketball coach and a former international player.
- **Lee Genier** is appointed President & COO, Western Operations. Lee is an experienced sports business leader in the west. He was the SVP of business operations at the Calgary Stampeders and launched the Saskatchewan Rush of the National Lacrosse League, where he served as President of the organization.
- **John Lashway** is appointed President of the Hamilton team and Executive Vice President, Strategy and Communications for the CEBL. John has led communications and community development for the National Basketball Association's Portland Trail Blazers and Toronto Raptors, and has advised many high profile companies in sports and other industries.
- **Glenn Young** is appointed Executive Vice President, Sales and Marketing. Glenn has an established track record in senior marketing and sponsorship roles with international corporations.

"With Greg, Lee, John, Glenn and the rest of our CEBL team we bring decades of rich experience in sports and league management to ensure our league becomes one of the best and most competitive basketball leagues in the world," said Morreale.

Canadian Content

In an effort to provide Canadian basketball stars the opportunity to play at an elite level, the CEBL will ensure Canadian players make up a large part of team rosters. According to Francis, Canada continues to develop some phenomenal basketball players. "We have 13 players in the NBA and many more on their way who are currently playing in the NCAA and U Sports," said Francis. Many of our home-grown talents head to Europe to find elite basketball competition in the summer but now they will have an opportunity to play here in their own backyard with other international stars," he added.

Name the Team - Community Outreach

As part of its community outreach, the CEBL will enlist fan support to develop a name for each respective team. In addition, the CEBL will work closely with the teams to develop grassroots community initiatives that will be announced later this Summer.

New Basketball Experience – #HOLDCOURT Campaign Launch Creative

Launch campaign creative is a nod to the full experience CEBL will be providing Canadian basketball fans. An emblem on top of a court features an athlete, a DJ, cheerleader and food icons. CEBL fans will discover that these are not just basketball games they are a full entertainment experience that starts well before tip-off, where fans can come together to experience local food vendors and their community. DJ's will be playing music that's integrated into game play in a way that's never been done before -- throughout the entire game. Local cheerleading squads and talent showcased between game play rounds out the offering, creating a new family-friendly experience for Canadian fans and players alike. Colours are a nod to the beautiful summer days and nights the league will be active.

About the Canadian Elite Basketball League

The Canadian Elite Basketball League (CEBL) is a professional basketball league that plays in the Spring and Summer with teams located across Canada. The CEBL will provide sports fans with premium entertainment while also allowing players, coaches and other stakeholders the opportunity to engage in the sport of basketball at the highest level. The CEBL will operate in accordance with the player and referee standards set by Canada Basketball, the National Sporting Organization for the sport of Basketball in Canada. The league will proudly adhere to the International Basketball Federation's (FIBA) rules and regulations. For updates and more information, please visit www.cebl.ca

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