

## High schools prepare for new rugby league Inaugural season to kick off in May

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It's time to do some scrumming, high school style.

Aspiring high school rugby athletes will get to wruck and maul their way through the spring as a four-team high school league fires up in May.

"We're looking to start (training) in the first week of April. Things are happening quickly," said Grande Prairie Centaurs VP of finance Dave Logan.

Taking part in the inaugural season are teams from Grande Prairie Composite high school, Peace Wapiti Academy, St. Joe's and Spirit River.

The seeds for the high school program were planted when Edmonton Rugby Union junior development officer Chuck Bullock paid a visit from Edmonton last year.

"He's heavily involved with the junior club Edmonton. So we kicked off a five-year development plan which includes some high school work," said Logan, adding the league has been in the works for roughly five months. "So we've been on the go for a while."

League play will start on May 8 with each team playing the other once, said Logan.

A May 24 date had been set for the league final, but that date may be changed so it doesn't conflict with each school's graduation ceremonies.

"Basically it'll be a round-robin with a final. The games will take place during the first three weeks of May," said Logan.

But to make sure the athletes are ready to go when league play kicks off, the teams will spend April training and – for those just getting introduced to the sport – provide an introductory course of sorts.

"We've already had meetings with the schools and the kids are signed up and ready to go," said Logan. "They'll start fresh with conditioning and ball handling moreso than tackling, but we'll get into that as we get closer to the games. But the first few weeks will be more geared toward that."

And the numbers have been strong right off the bat, said Logan.

"We've had an extremely good response from all the schools and fortunately none of the schools will have a problem fielding a competitive team," he said. "Spirit River had 12 guys at their meeting, but half of them were at a hockey tournament. (There were ) over 20 (players) who turned out for Peace Wapiti's meeting."

The initial numbers are promising, but Logan said it's not too late for interested athletes to sign up.

Those wanting to take a crack at the sport can log onto [www.centaursrugby.com](http://www.centaursrugby.com).

The registration fee is \$150, that covers team jersey, shorts and socks. All the players need to provide are their own cleats.