

BC Athletics

Officials Recruitment, Training and Retention Programs

This document shows how ideas and recommendations produced in the “Officials Recruitment and Retention Initiative” (2014) can be used to improve our programs in the three areas of Recruitment, Training and Retention. In each of the three sections we offer

- Selected factoids and quotes from the Surveys
- Description of the Officials Committee’s Core Program
- Recommended enhancements to the Core Program

Recruitment

Factoids and quotes

31.3% of respondents in the Event Directors/Club Executives group encourage athletes transitioning out of competition to consider becoming officials. (Good)

12.5% of respondents in the Event Directors and Club Executives group actively advertise for volunteers to become officials through our local community (Not so good)

73 officials responded to the survey. 31 (42%) were former Track and Field Athletes; 11 (15%) current or former road race athletes; 10 (13.7%) were former cross country athletes. Obviously, there is overlap among these categories, but the dominant impression is that a majority of officials originated as participants in the sport..... or are tied to the sport in some other way, e.g.

- coaches or former coaches, 22 (30%),
- parents of current or former athletes (43.8%).
- 18 (24%) became involved through school-based events.

Current age of responding officials 56 (74%) were between 50 and 69. 12 (16.4%) were older than 70. This is parallel with the survey data compiled by Athletics Canada.

Quote

“I was surprised that when my children started Athletics that no attempt to inculcate any of the parents into officiating was made. In swimming, parents are immediately trained to become officials. This process usually begins with timing instruction and quickly brings other, more technical, areas of instruction. One may learn as many functions as one is comfortable with, but everyone is trained to be able to provide some level of assistance at meets. Athletics would be well served by adopting this protocol as I believe that parents do want to help, but feel they are not really wanted. “

[There should be a] “volunteer promo brochure/pdf, available at BC Athletics website for distribution by Clubs with event or registration materials”.

Core recruitment program

We focus our recruitment activities on our “core audience”, as indicated in the survey.....those with a pre-existing connection to Athletics:. We get good results from:

- Making contact with Member Clubs, offering training workshops for their members, and communities
- Maintaining strong linkage with Secondary School Athletics leadership, e.g. support for District and Provincial Championships.
- Reaching out to spectators at Athletics events; providing Event hosts with propaganda text for programs and advertising, and Announcers with suggested text thanking and recognizing officials.

Enhancements

Research (surveys) points us in the direction of an “Association-wide” strategy for officials development, with support and involvement of staff and board. The BCA Officials Committee works most effectively with the Clubs who host events, and foresees a strategy which is based on extending and strengthening partnership with member Clubs. The Association, working through its Board and Staff should play a leading role in bringing its other member Clubs into alignment with this Strategy, so that they can also play a part in recruiting, training and retaining officials in their communities. In addition, we recommend that we:

- develop a professionally produced package to take to Clubs to improve their officials recruitment and development, including presentation materials and handouts, outlining the value of officials, access to training, and best practices. Provide printable promotion brochure for Clubs to use.
- encourage Clubs to reach out in their communities to former athletes, coaches and others with ties to Athletics.
- Seek Improved visibility for officials recruitment at events; booth or table with promotional materials.
- Enhance our linkage with Clubs; “embed” an officials contact (with training and support from Branch Committee) within each Club to foster recruitment and training.
- Continue to track officials who have left the sport when their children move to other activities. At key intervals, invite them back to participate when their family commitments change.

Training

Factoids and quotes

“Training clinics that are local. People won’t pay or give up their time to travel too far”

“Make official training available in the North”

“It may need to be a requirement of membership but must be supported with easily available clinics”

Core program

BCA Officials Committee has created a Provincial Training Network. Level 1 and Level 2 Instructors in each region for are provided with standard training kits including:

- instructors notes
- handouts
- Extensive power point deck for Level 2

The Committee contacts member Clubs to invite them to host workshops. The annual goal is:

- 2 level 2 workshops in each region.
- 3-5 level 1 workshops in each region

The Committee maintains both a Provincial and National “Travel list”, and supports officials who have indicated an interest in being trained.

Enhancements

Strengthen the mentoring program towards level 3

- assign mentors early in the officials career, to foster development

Utilize an on-site “officials concierge” to manage new officials assignments, ensure exposure to a wide range of duties, answer questions, and provide support. Good role for a senior and less active official.

Debrief recruits who have taken an introductory workshop (by telephone), and establish the type of support and experiences needed.

Develop “self-study” materials; on-line modules for all levels, and quick event guides (clipboard material) for novices.

Brief senior officials on working with novices, to ensure that early experiences are positive.

Establish a regular, well-publicized schedule of Level 1 and level 2 workshops

Offer “job shadowing” opportunities for new officials.

Expand the training network to Northern BC

Retention

Factoids and quotes

16 (33%) of Event Directors/Club Executives report that they provide small incentives or gifts to officials at our events to say “thank you”. 17 (35.4%) ensure that a representative from our host organizing committee personally thanks officials and other volunteers on site.

Core program

BC Athletics offers a well-funded recognition program for member officials. It includes:

- an annual gift item (clothing, bag etc) for all active Level 2+ member officials
- free IAAF Rule Book for all active Level 2+ member officials
- free Uniform golf shirt for member officials on upgrading to Level 2
- personal name tag for member officials on upgrading to Level 1

Event hosts are encouraged to thank volunteer officials personally, and to distribute token gifts (gas cards, coffee cards etc).

event hosts are provided with text for their programs, and text for Announcer recognizing and thanking officials.

Officials are recognized in every issue of the Newsletter for their participation in the previous meets, and for other achievements.

BC Athletics Officials Committee has published standards for hosting officials at meets (meals, beverages, parking etc)

Enhancements

More persistence in providing information to event hosts regarding officials recognition (see above), and also hosting standards.

Debrief (interview) officials retiring or leaving the sport.

Encourage Clubs to strengthen their own recognition programs for their member officials (community recognition events, Club official awards etc.)

Work to build a culture and sense of the community for officials (at all levels) – of being part of the team.