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Olympians Cameron Levins and Jessica Smith led middle distance running in British Columbia. Levins had an outstanding year that saw him conclude his collegiate career by placing first in both the 5,000 and 10,000 meter events at the NCAA Championships. Levins elected to participate in the 5,000-meters at the London Olympics and qualified for the semi finals of that event with a personal best clocking of 13:18.29 in the preliminaries: the second fastest time ever recorded by a Canadian runner. Levins also led the Canadian rankings at 10,000 meters with a world-class time of 27:27.96. Levins is an example of an athlete who combines natural ability with persistence and an understanding of what is required to excel in a highly competitive discipline. His disciplined approach to running has to be an inspiration to young and upcoming runners in our sport.

Jessica Smith, like Levins, also had a spectacular year of running. Smith, a young lady who elected to remain in British Columbia during her collegiate years, demonstrated that world class times can be produced in the often soggy weather conditions that are prevalent in this province during much of the year. Smith achieved the Canadian Olympic standard by taking advantage of the competition provided by the Achilles Harry Jerome meet to win the 800-meters in the excellent time and a personal best 1:59.86. Smith advanced through the preliminary round of the Olympic Games and placed seventh in her semi-final section. Smith had a host of other quality performances and the international experience that she has gained will undoubtedly serve her well in the coming years.

Several other BC middle distance runners had a taste of international experience. Thomas Riva posted a best time of 1:48.90 for 800 meters during the season and placed fifth in the final of that event at the NACAC Championships in Guamjuato, Mx. Devon Wiebe, another athlete who is pursuing her post secondary schooling in province, was fifth in her heat of the 800m at the World Jr. Champs posting a personal best of 2:05.40. At the Cdn. Jr. Championships, Devan was second in the 800m just fractions of a second behind the winner.

Once again BC athletes produced some good steeplechase performances in a variety of age classes at Canadian Championship meets. Katelyn Hayward was the gold medalist in the 2-k SC (7:01.91) at the Canadian Jr. Championships while her male counterpart, Deon Clifford, placed second in the 3-k SC (9:13.86). At the Canadian Legion Youth Championships, Emma Balazs (6:57.65) and Regan Yee (6:58.52) ran stride for stride throughout the girls 2-k SC placing first and second respectively. Nickolas Colyn placed second in the midget boys' steeplechase (4:22.68): an event that was minus the water jump of course. Chantelle Groenewoud (10:27) was the bronze medalist in the 3-k steeplechase at the Canadian Senior Championships.

Other national performances of distinction produced by BC runners included Kala Stone's first place finish in the Canadian Youth 1500m (4:35.77) and her second place in the 800m (2:13.74), while Emma Balazs took bronze in the 1500m event. Nickolas Colyn was the gold medalist in the midget boys 2,000m (5:33.73).

At the Canadian Jr. Championships, Kala Stone was the bronze medalist in the 1500m (4:37.55) while Matthew Swanson turned in a creditable 1:52.08 for fourth place in the men's 800m. At the Canadian Sr. Championships, long time 1500m international, Prince George's Geoff Martinson, was the bronze medalist in the men's race with Justin Marpole-Bird close behind in fourth place.

Although the above performances contain some excellent performances and a number of national medals, it is our opinion that we must do more if we are to keep up with world performances in the middle distance runs.

Levins has led the way in demonstrating the type of training, desire, commitment and **vision** needed to excel in a discipline that worldwide attracts talented athletes. British Columbia has a number of excellent and committed middle distance coaches and they are producing some good athletes: the problem is, we have an under abundance of coaches and that in turn is a major reason why we are not producing enough good athletes. If we could increase the quantity of committed and talented athletes there is no doubt that performance times would improve: talented runners rise to the challenge of improved performances presented by fellow runners.

What can we do?

- Attempt to recruit teenaged athletes that possess a balance of aerobic and anaerobic ability. This point refers to the middle distance runs rather than longer distances.
- Convince reasonably talented 400-meter runners (or even 200m competitors) to give middle distance running a try.
- Work at recruiting athletes from team sports by showing them the advantages of individual accomplishment. This point may be even a more vital point for females.
- Work on assembling a group of runners for training purposes that includes both sexes. Middle distance running lends itself to companionship if for no other reason than hardship loves company.
- Paint a vision for the athletes of what is possible.
- Create a pride in accomplishment.
- As a coach, don't be afraid to seek out assistance from others who have had some success. Runners respect coaches that reach for input and knowledge.

Suggestions and considerations.

- Perhaps it would be desirable to integrate some of the activities of the Victoria National Centre with the development of BC middle distance running.
- Make our programs more attractive. A start has been made in this direction but more needs to be done.
- The high school events and BC Athletic events should be standardized. It makes little sense for “midget aged athletes” to run the 1500 and 3,000 meter events during the three month school season and then having to switch to the 1,200 and 2,000 meter distances during the remaining two month BC Athletic season.
- Making little sense is having an event in the midget division that is called the “steeplechase” but omits the water jump, the obstacle that is the **essence** of steeple chasing. The event, as it is now designed for both sexes, includes only twelve, 30” barriers, none of which is a water jump, and covers 1500 meters, and with no barrier for the first 300 meters, it makes this event more similar to running a flat 1500 meters rather than a true steeplechase. Even stranger than fiction, of course, is the fact that midgets are not allowed to run a flat 1500-meter event in BC Athletic competitions—except if they run the SC.

- While this committee is charged with the responsibility of selecting athletes in various age divisions as finalists at the annual BC Athletics Awards' banquet, all clubs, and universities, need to take a more active part by nominating athletes for these awards. It's not good enough to leave this chore as the sole responsibility of the committee.
- A major responsibility of this committee is to select athletes to various BC teams by following strict guidelines that have been established and set down. As always, it is our belief that a major strength of BC Athletics is the support given to athletes that offset the cost of their travel to Canadian Championships. In addition, the BC Team concept creates a spirit amongst the athletes chosen to the various teams and makes them appreciate the part that BC Athletics plays in their development.
- There is always room for new blood to serve on this committee and if you are willing to put your name forward and have a desire to serve as a BC Track and Field Committee member, I sincerely encourage you to do so.

In conclusion, the three of us believe that this committee serves it's members well and are proud and pleased to have expended some time and effort in supporting an association that we consider to be a leader of track and field in Canada. If this committee's work is successful, in good part this is due to the guidance of Brian McCaldar, the chairmanship of Garrett Collier, the dedication of the committee members that represent the various disciplines of track and field, the officials committee and board members of BC Athletics and the BC Athletics membership at large.