



Officials

Recruitment, Recognition and Retention

Maintaining volunteers is one of the most difficult and integral parts of any volunteer program. Supporting, recognizing, and challenging volunteers are all separate tasks but together they provide a strong volunteer program with satisfied volunteers. All volunteers want to know that their contribution is valued and not taken for granted. Participation at all levels of an organization is necessary for a successful program. BC Athletics Board, Staff, and Member Clubs have a role to play. The BC Athletics Officials Committee and Senior officials also provide leadership.....we all need those hard working volunteers.

BC Athletics provides funding for the volunteer recognition program administered by the officials committee. We recommend that the Association play a leading role in sponsorship of recruitment and retention of volunteers that are fundamental to sustaining the program. In recognizing the important contribution of volunteer officials, we recommend that the Association acknowledge these volunteers on an annual basis with a letter of thanks. The Association also sponsors annual awards to recognize outstanding achievement. We recommend that the Association recognize the important contribution of Member Clubs to the volunteer program. A letter of thanks at the end of each season would be appropriate.

Member Clubs recruit and maintain corps of volunteers as technical aides and officials. Some Clubs do an outstanding job of recognizing and supporting volunteers. These are some of the "best practices":

- The majority of people who volunteer do so because they were asked. Member clubs are encouraged to approach parents and youth to volunteer.
- Announcements at the event thanking BC Athletics Officials and volunteers.

- Recognition items at the event such as entry in draw prizes, gift certificates or other appropriate appreciation items.
- Annual Club Awards for volunteer service or specific awards for officials.
- Financial support for development of Club officials, e.g. payment of BCA membership.
- Recognition of the contribution of Club officials in their newsletters, submissions to media or on the Club web page.

BC Athletics Officials Committee has a leading role in recruitment, recognition and retention of volunteers. Recognizing the work of volunteers is crucial for any organization that wants to retain them and attract others. The key elements in our strategy:

- We make it a priority.
- We provide a promotional kit to senior officials to support “in the moment” opportunities with volunteers and new officials.
- We do it in different ways. We vary our recognition efforts from the informal thank you and spontaneous treats, to more formal events such as dinners and awards.
- We make it appropriate to the achievement. We are developing a program that recognizes length of service. We distribute NOC award pins at 25, 30, 35, 40 and 45 years of service as an official. Officials who upgrade to Level 3 receive a lapel pin and a letter from the National Officials Committee. We provide letters and certificates for all upgrades.
- We try to be consistent. Making sure whatever standards of recognition can be consistently maintained by the organization in years to come. We provide registered officials with a gift item each year in recognition of their volunteer service.
- We try to provide timely recognition. Response should be provided soon after achievement has been reached to enhance the value of our gratitude. If someone has done a good job, let them know!

All officials have a key role in welcoming, supporting and recognizing the efforts of volunteer technical aides and their fellow officials.

- Welcome all volunteers and encourage them as potential volunteer officials. The majority of people who volunteer do so because they were asked. Officials are encouraged to approach parents, youth and individuals/groups to volunteer.
- Encourage volunteers to try new things in terms of their levels of interest and desires to 'move on'. Volunteers who remain in the same positions, with no chance of change or variety, may become bored. While many volunteers are happy doing the same work, it is important to check-in with individuals to see if they want to try something new or have increased responsibility.
- Do it often. Recognition of volunteers should happen on a year-round, frequent and informal basis – begin with saying “Thank you” often!
- Be sincere. Make each occasion we use to recognize our volunteers meaningful and an opportunity for the volunteer to truly reflect on his/her value to our organization.
- Make it unique. Getting to know each of our volunteers and their interests will help us learn how best to recognize each individual and make them feel special.
- Recognize the person, not the work. Phrase recognition to emphasize the contribution of the individual, not the end result. “You did a great job!” as opposed to “This is a great job!”

Sources:

Making the Most of Volunteer Resources workshop materials. Community Services Council
Celebrate Volunteers. Volunteer Canada

For more information, check out these helpful sites:

www.charityvillage.com

www.volunteer.ca