

2007 BC ATHLETICS AGM

BCA ROAD RUNNING COMMITTEE REPORT FOR 2006

by Frank Stebner (Interim Chair)

INTRODUCTION

The following committee members have participated at our Road Running Committee meetings in 2006; Maurice Wilson, Jake Madderom, Geoffrey Buttner, Rick Jenkner, Bob Reid, Frank Stebner, Jerry Tighe.

I would like to thank members of the BC Athletics Executive Committee for meeting with our committee on two occasions (July 12 and August 23) to discuss our road running sanctioning proposal that is being presented to the 2007 BCA AGM as a resolution item.

The Road Running Committee is "responsible for examining the current status of Road Running in British Columbia, designing, planning, and recommending programs and policies to the Board of Directors and implementing approved programs and policies to ensure the existence, growth, and development of Road Running in British Columbia."

The goals of our committee in 2006 were to increase the number of sanctioned road races in BC and also to create a new sanctioning policy to encourage more events to seek sanctioning - in particular the Vancouver and Victoria Marathons. As well an additional objective is to encourage Vancouver Island events and clubs to return to BCA after a long absence. The committee also feels that fair policies, effective communication, offering true value for sanctioning and consistent enforcement of policies/procedures are critical if BCA is to attract more road races to seek sanctioning with BCA.

Road Running is still very healthy in BC and road race participation easily out-numbers the combined participation in track & field, race walking and cross country events. The number of road running events in BC continues to increase, however over 70% of road race events in BC still remain unsanctioned. Unfortunately three of the seven largest BCA sanctioned road races from 2005 left BC Athletics in the past year.

Most running stores and community centers do offer road running clinics to the general public and large events such as the Sun Run 10K, Time Colonist 10K, Vancouver Marathon, Royal Victoria Marathon and the Run for the Cure continue to attract many new people into the sport. In 2006 the Vancouver Sun Run attracted over 50,000 participants to register for Canada's largest running event.

The only BC Road Running championship event held this year was the BC 5K Championship that was held in conjunction with the Lakeside Resort 5K in Penticton on March 13. No other Road Running Championship events were held in BC in 2006. The committee would like to encourage more BCA sanctioned events to apply for BCA Road Race Championships.

IAAF NEWS ITEM FOR ROAD RUNNING

Road Running Working Group becomes new IAAF Commission

Because of the increasing desire by the IAAF to become more closely involved in the world of road running, it was agreed by the IAAF Council that a specific Road Running Commission should be created consisting initially of the members of the existing road running working group, namely:

Lamine Diack (IAAF President)

Roberto Gesta De Melo (IAAF)

Otto Klappert (IAAF Road and CC Committee)

Dave Bedford (IAAF Road and CC Committee) (London Marathon Race Director)

Carlos Cardoso (IAAF Road and CC Committee)

Mary Wittenberg (World Marathon Majors) (New York City Marathon Race director)

Hiroaki Chosa (AIMS)

Pierre Weiss (IAAF General Secretary)

The IAAF Council will review the membership of this new commission at its next meeting in Mombasa in March 2007.

It was also agreed that the current IAAF Cross Country and Road Running Committee would change its name at the next Congress in Osaka, and be known only as the IAAF Cross Country Committee.

SANCTIONING POLICY FOR ROAD RUNNING

In 2006 the committee was primarily focused on helping to create a new sanctioning policy for road running. The first 5 months of 2006 were focused on the National Sanctioning policy. Unfortunately the BCA Board of Directors did not consult with our committee when they made a motion on April 26 *that staff be authorized to respond to any "Athletics Canada National Sanctioning Policy for Sanctioning Drafts" as they are received.*

The Road Running committee felt that the BCA board and staff should have consulted with our members who have been dealing with road race sanctioning issues for over two years. The committee members for the most part did not support the official responses from BCA staff.

Athletics Canada Sanctioning Review for Road Running

In the fall of 2004, Athletics Canada undertook to review road running sanctioning policies with the goal *"To create a uniform process, administered provincially and nationally, across the country so that races are treated equally and runners know what to expect from a sanctioned race."* The objective was to have a proposal drafted for presentation at the Athletics Canada AGM in May 2005.

In November 2004 Athletics Canada surveyed the provincial branches on their current sanctioning policies; seven of the twelve branches responded.

In March 2005 AC issued a survey to race directors through the provincial branches, requesting their input on current sanctioning policies. Twenty-four events responded, largely from BC (18) and Quebec.

In May 2005 at the AC AGM, AC presented their analysis of these surveys, which demonstrated a wide range of differing expectations of what the provincial branches thought sanctioning should be. A meeting of the race directors from some of the major Canadian marathons and road races held at the same time as the AC AGM developed a list of expected benefits of sanctioning - a list of requirements expected to be met before a sanction is granted and requested a fair sanctioning fee structure.

No further action was taken by AC until a Manager of Events was hired in August 2005. Trish Zimmerman then proposed a new timeline for developing an AC sanctioning policy to be presented at the 2006 AC AGM. But before any work could be undertaken Trish resigned from AC in October 2005.

In January 2006 David Weicker was appointed by Athletics Canada to draft a national sanctioning policy. He produced a new timeline for completion by the AC AGM in May 2006. David produced three iterations of a document, to which the road running community provided input and feedback. The 3rd draft was presented at the 2006 AC AGM but was not supported by either the road running community or the provincial branches. If anything, it further confused the issue by proposing multiple levels of sanctioning.

Following the 2006 AGM, AC asked David Weicker to continue in his role. But since May 2006 no further communication has been received from Athletics Canada or David Weicker.

After two years we are no closer to having a national sanctioning policy, and AC appears reluctant to take any initiative to resolve this. Nominally the Run Canada Committee of AC has responsibility ***“to review, recommend, and evaluate programs designed to guide the development of road running as an athletics discipline in Canada within the framework of the multi-year plans of the association”***. But at no stage during this process has this committee shown any willingness to address the issues of sanctioning.

The conclusion is that AC has no current plan to resolve why many road races are not seeking sanctioning. Their objective ***“to create a uniform process, administered provincially and nationally, across the country so that races are treated equally and runners know what to expect from a sanctioned race”*** failed miserably and nothing has changed after almost two years of surveys, national race directors meetings, and three sanctioning drafts. The lack of communication to those organizations and individuals who responded promptly to AC’s request for feedback may also jeopardize AC’s chances of getting future feedback from the AC membership and the road running community.

Frustrated with the lack of feedback from Athletics Canada, the BCA Road Running committee requested in December that we send an email to Athletics Canada requesting an update on the National sanctioning policy. This email was sent to Daniel Ouimet (chair of Run Canada) on January 6 with a request to respond before the 2007 BCA AGM and to date no response has been received from Athletics Canada.

In October 2006, Lamine Diack (IAAF President) and Pierre Weiss (IAAF General Secretary) met with AIMS Technical Director (Gordon Rogers) at the annual meeting of the IAAF Cross Country and Road Running Committee held in conjunction with the World Road Race Championships in Debrecen, Hungary. Canada's national sanctioning policy has been on the agenda for three years and they expressed concerns with Athletics Canada's lack of action in creating a national sanctioning policy.

A request was made by Pierre Weiss that a letter be sent to the chair of Athletics Canada expressing the concerns of the IAAF. On November 22, 2006 a letter was sent to AC requesting an update on the national sanctioning policy. To our knowledge Athletics Canada has not responded to that letter.

BC Athletics Sanctioning Policy for Road Running

Concerns over sanctioning policies in BC were the catalyst for a review of national sanctioning policies. Our committee delayed proposing revisions to our local sanctioning policies in deference to the plans for a national sanctioning policy, and provided input and feedback to the national initiative whenever requested.

With the lack of apparent progress on the national level, in early 2006 the committee undertook a review of the issues itself and drafted a proposal that was initially provided as input to Athletics Canada in March 2006. This was submitted by Maurice Wilson.

With the failure of the national initiative in May 2006, a revised version of this proposal was drafted by Maurice Wilson. Several meetings were held in June and July with race directors of some of BC's largest road races (both sanctioned and non-sanctioned). There has been overwhelming support of this proposal from these race directors; especially from the race directors from Vancouver Island. This sanctioning proposal was sent to the BCA Executive in June 2006, requesting an indication of support or other feedback.

On July 12, 2006 the Road Running Committee met with the BCA Executive Committee to discuss the sanctioning proposal. Some prominent members of the Executive denied that the current policy was causing any problems and were opposed to any change in policy. Specific objections were raised to the suggestion that events be permitted to provide their own liability insurance equivalent to that provided by BCA.

The committee has attempted to demonstrate how out of step the BCA sanctioning fees and services are with the rest of Canada and the US and to address the concerns raised by the Executive.

The committee also investigated sanctioning policies and optional insurance policies in other provinces. Maurice Wilson created a detailed spreadsheet comparing sanctioning policies and fees from across Canada and the United States. This spreadsheet clearly indicates how out of step BC really is with the rest of North America.

Further meetings of the Executive Subcommittee were held in late December and early January 2007, but the Executive Subcommittee was unsuccessful in creating an alternate proposal that was acceptable to the Road Running Committee.

The sanctioning proposal, which has been submitted for the 2007 AGM is an updated version of the proposal initially created in March 2006.

2007 BCA Calendar of Events

The committee did also express some concerns about the new 2007 calendar of events for road running. As of January 17, 2007 only fifty-four road races events were actually posted in the calendar with eight of these being unsanctioned. In previous years that number was well over 200 events with 60% of these events being unsanctioned.

We have informed both BCA board and staff that the fees for the calendar posting and fees for sanctioning are also not as per the resolutions that were approved by the BCA membership at the 2006 BCA AGM.

On a positive note the BCA staff did report to the road running committee that the 2007 printed calendar of events will be mailed out to all BCA members early in 2007.

The BC Timex Road Race Series

This Road Race series continues to attract many participants to its events. Unfortunately with over 60,000 participants in the 15 event series, less than 100 runners actually ran enough events to be considered for the Annual BC Timex Series Awards. Our goal is to hopefully attract more runners to compete in the series.

Committee Goals and Objectives for 2007

Depending on the outcome of the sanctioning resolutions at the 2007 BCA AGM, the goals of the Committee may remain much the same as for 2006. We also hope to focus on other initiatives to ensure the continued existence, growth, and development of Road Running in British Columbia. Some of these goals are:

1. To increase the number of sanctioned road races in BC and to encourage Vancouver Island clubs and events to return to BCA.
2. To encourage BCA to offer true value for sanctioning.
3. To create a sanctioning policy where road races are treated equally without any 'special arrangements' made with any particular events that may be perceived as being unfair to other sanctioned events.
4. To ensure that BCA policies and procedures are consistently enforced.
5. To review current policies and procedures to ensure that they are still valid. If not, an effort has to be made to change the rules.
6. To investigate why more BCA sanctioned road races are not applying to host BC Road Race Championships.
7. To encourage more events to request road race officiating at their events.