

2008 BC Athletics AGM
Zone 7/8 Report to the 2008 BC Athletics AGM

It was an excellent competitive season for the registered club in Zone's 7/8.

Sub Zero Track Club in Ft. St. John had a successful Alaska New Meet in the early summer, but does not compete in to many other meets following there participation in the High School Zone Meet and Provincial High School event.

Prince George Track and Field earned many awards over the summer.

'Starting with two gold at the BC Jr./Sr. Championships in Kamloops and then on to Kelowna for the Jack Brow event and a total of 41 medals, eight being gold.

The following weekend, the Club athletes picked up five provincial first placing in the age 15 and Juvenile Groups. One athlete in the Jr. women's events was also picked for the Western Canada Games Team and also earned two spots to the Legion Nationals in Oromocto NB.

At the Nationals they earned one gold, one silver and a 4th place. The Gold was in the 15 yr. girls High Jump where Alyxandria Treasure set a new Legion Nation record of 1.76 meters. She also took silver in the triple jump and anchored the 4x100 to a bronze metal.

That same weekend, one club athlete Geoff Martinson, was in Bangkok Thai., where he participated in the World University Games for the University of Victoria and Team Canada. Geoff was 14th in the 1500 meters.

Zone 7, which covers a huge area from The Queen Charlotte Islands to Vanderhoof continues to lie in the backwater of track and field participation and performance. Except for a select group of good athletes that continue coming out of Smithers and the odd athlete from Terrace there has been no significant improvement in the Zone for the last 20 years. There are simply too few coaches willing to make the huge commitment necessary to run a program in the Northwest and too few athletes who can afford the cost. There are several reasons for this situation.

1. Travel distance/Expense: Because of the size Zone 7 and the sparse population, travel to competition sites requires a minimum of two hours. To reach the nearest competition site east of our zone (Prince George) from Smithers requires 4 hours, from Terrace 6 hours and from Prince Rupert 8 hours. After Prince George, the nearest competition is found in Kamloops, a 10 hour drive. And to the Lower Mainland, a mere 14 hour drive or a 1.5 hour plane flight that costs more than flying from Vancouver to Paris. There is also the cost of accommodation during travel and at the destination to consider. It is little wonder that so few athletes and their parents can afford to take part in track and field in the northwest. Ask yourself this question. How many times would coaches/athletes consider travelling from the Lower Mainland to Saskatchewan during a season in order for their athletes to compete enough times to reach their peak performance? This is the distance equivalent to travel from Zone 7 to the Lower Mainland.

The Sport Funder Program implimented last year to help support travel was at first thought to be our saving grace but in actual fact covered only 10% of the actual cost of travel/accommodation. Because of the location of some of the important competitions (ie. Kamloops, Nanaimo), the only possible method of transportation, givin the time constraints, was to fly but the Funder provides support based on milage. This left a shortfall of nearly \$9000 for six athletes and 1 coach for just these two competitions.

2. Facilities: There are two track and field facilities in Zone 7, one complete site in Smithers and one track in Prince Rupert where no throwing events can be offered.

3. A Void: There has been one competitor in the last 20 years from Burns Lake to Vanderhoof and he was coached by Prince George T & F. In spite of several offers to hold coaching clinics in the schools of the towns in this region of Zone 7 there has been no interest shown.

4. The short season: At the earliest, outdoor training cannot take place before late March with the first competition in late April. In many years there is snow on the ground until mid April inland and cool, rainy weather on the coast. There are no indoor facilities.

On a more positive note, Smithers athlete Stacey Irvine was selected to the Canadian Junior Team for competition in Brazil where she finished a respectable fifth in the pole vault. Stacey also won the B.C. High School pole vault competition for the third straight year and was named Outstanding Athlete of the meet for the second year in a row. Her performance of 3.80 meters is a new Canadian Interscholastic record and ranked her second as a Junior in Canada. Stacey, along with pole vault teammates Erica Rutley, Meghan Richey and Jaci O'Neill are the top four ranked junior vaulters in B.C. Erica and Meghan were members of Team B.C. for the Western Canada Games.

RunJumpThrow made an appearance last Spring in Smithers with a week long camp. Coincidentally, the four athletes named in the preceding paragraph are RJT trained instructors and conducted the camp which had over 60 participants.

The track in Prince Rupert was re-surfaced last year and appears to be holding up well. Unfortunately, very few athletes are using it.

On a less than positive note, Smithers long standing coach, Greg Peters, has decided that 32 years of fighting cold weather, fund raising and long trips are enough and is heading to Victoria to work for the competition.

Submitted By

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With additional input from Greg Peters