

ATHLETICS CANADA 2009 REPORT

B.C. ATHLETICS - ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

2009 has been marked by the growing international success of our athletes and by Athletics Canada's ability to expand those vital services which are key to these successes.

In May, the announcement was made of the implementation of that part of the Association's Strategic Plan which would expand coaching and support services to our athletes. This included naming the High Performance Centres of Victoria (for Middle Distance events), Kamloops (Throws), Ottawa (Relays) and Calgary (Jumps, Hurdles and Combined Events, plus outreach programs to NCAA athletes in the U.S.). In addition, Sherbroke was confirmed as the Para-Athletics High Performance Centre.

Together with these H.P. Centres, National Development Centres were established in Toronto, Montreal and the Atlantic Region.

The positions of National Event Coaches were also confirmed, as was the creation of both National and Centres Integrated Support Teams, to provide a variety of the required physical and psychological services needed for ongoing success.

It is anticipated that the road our athletes are travelling on the way to London in 2012 and beyond, will be significantly enhanced with this reinforcement of the coaching and support services available to them.

Among other administrative changes, the resignation of Jean-Guy Ouellette as Board Chair to take up an Assistant Deputy Minister's position for Sport in Quebec was sorry news for Athletics Canada but good news for the sport in Quebec. An excellent replacement for Jean-Guy as Chair came with the election of Gord Orlikow, a former international decathlete and experienced business executive, at the AGM. Also elected to the Board of Directors were Catherine Bond-Mills (who had earlier served as a Director before stepping aside for family reasons) and Attlee Mahorn, a previous National Champion and still record holder. This means that there are now three Olympians on our Board who, in their ongoing professional and post-competition lives, bring a unique combination of high-level athleticism and corporate management skills to our decision-making processes.

On the performance side, the collection of medals by Canadian athletes at the World Youth, Pan Am. Juniors, World University, Jeux de la Francophonie, World Championships and World Athletics Finals confirms the growing ability of our athletes to succeed at the highest levels.

While celebrating the silver and bronze medals won by Aaron Brown, Greg MacNeill and Django Lovett in Italy; the 13 (3 gold, including a High Jump record of 2.27m for Derek Drouin, 3 silver, and 7 bronze) secured at the Junior Pan Ams; the 8 medals (1 gold, 3 silver and 4 bronze) brought back from the FISU Games; the 20 (5 gold, 5 silver and 10 bronze - an all-time high by far for the Canadian team) captured in Lebanon at the Francophone Games, including a Games record in the 110m Hurdles by Jared MacLeod; the outstanding silver medals for Priscilla Lopes-Schliep in Berlin and Gary Reed in Thessalonika; it was the success of our Women's 4 x 400 metres relay team which was particularly noteworthy.

Beginning with their gold medal success at FISU, they only missed out on a place in the Berlin Finals through an unfortunate the heat draw (they had a time faster than the winning US team in the other heat), but returned to the top of the podium in Beirut as JDLF champions. Although the members of the teams varied throughout the year, the leadership of Esther Akinsulie was a key to their ongoing success.

While there were no major Senior Para-Athletic Championships this year, outside of the Canadian event as part of the integrated Senior Nationals in Toronto, many of both our older and younger "Wheelies" continued to excel in their various events.

Diane Roy remained dominant in all distances from the 400 to the Marathon, while Josh Cassidy extended his run of middle and long distance successes. But the performance of several of our Junior para-athletes was a strong indicator that our position as a leader among the world's Paralympic nations remains bright.

Both Keira-Lyn Frie and Isaiah Christophe brought back multiple gold medals from the World Junior IWAS Championships in Switzerland, with Isaiah's performances being all the more outstanding as he is still in the Youth age category. This will surely be most encouraging news for the newly appointed Head Coach for the Para-Athletic Program, Ozzie Sawicki, who joins Athletics Canada following a successful tenure as Head of Canada's Para-Alpine program. Ozzie is also a member of the Canadian Paralympic Committee's High Performance team.

Respectfully submitted,

Danny Daniels,
Vice-Chair, Athletics Canada.