

---

Gerry Swan, Chris Johnson, Sue Northey, Jerry Tighe

It was suggested to us that this year's report should be framed by the goals and objectives of the BC ATHLETICS STRATEGIC PLAN 2013 – 2016. While we can comment on middle/distance running and its accomplishments within the Strategic Plan, as authors, we take no more credit for the advancement of this discipline than those of the many other BC middle distance coaches that worked diligently to advance our events.

Competitively, middle distance running is on a sound footing as the discipline offers a vast number of opportunities that span most of a calendar year. If we had concerns in this regards it might stem from the fact that a majority of competitions are held in the early spring when weather conditions are not favorable and the season for all but a few ends before the conclusion of July, thereby missing the great conditions for running provided during the weeks of late summer.

Facility wise, we seem to be making good advancement. Indoors, Achilles International has secured the use of the Richmond Indoor facility for several meets and these competitions are gaining popularity. Many existing tracks throughout the province are being upgraded and there is even hope that in the near future a new facility is to be constructed in Vancouver City proper.

Although there are numerous competitions offered to middle distance competitors, we would like to see events packaged in such a manner that they are interesting, reasonably exciting and attractive enough to draw the attendance of our top ranked athletes. In addition, we have some concern that the school system and club system overlap and in the younger age groups particularly, offer a confusing array of events. As an example, the school system offers a steeplechase complete with a water jump for junior secondary school athletes while the club competitions have deemed it detrimental to do so. A steeplechase without a water jump is, in our opinion, not a steeplechase but merely a 1500m run with a number of very low (2'6") jumps. In other words just another event for the capable 1500 m runner.

The middle distance area has a number of athletes that have made an impact both nationally and internationally. To mention just a few: twenty year old Keffri Neal, with a 1:46.39 800m clocking to his credit, was the second ranked Canadian in that event and may well possess the potential to be a successor to Gary Reed. Thomas Riva with a clocking of 1:47.02 is fourth ranked in Canada.

Cam Levins, Canada's top ranked runner at 5,000m (13:15.38) and 10,000m (27:36), won the bronze medal in the latter event at this year's Commonwealth Games. Levin's clocking of 3:38.46 for 1500m demonstrates that this runner, who now trains in Eugene, has the speed and aerobic ability needed to be the world-class runner that he is. Lucas Bruchet (3:39.46) for 1500m and 13:33.20 for 5,000m is another BC athlete who is making an impact.

Chris Winter with an 8:28.17 clocking for the 3-k SC is third ranked in Canada and if he can keep healthy this competitor has the talent to follow the international successes of Graham Fell. Ryan Brockerville (8:37.65) BC's gift from Newfoundland is another young athlete showing international potential in the SC.

On the female side of the ledger: Jessica Smith's 2:00.92 for 800m is the second ranked time in Canada and, additionally, Jessica was a semi finalist in this event at the Commonwealth Games. Helen Crofts (2:01.54) has hopefully put injuries behind her and will be able to utilize excellent speed she possesses to break through that 2:00 minute mark in the coming season. Proving that age need not be a deterrent, Diane Cummins with a clocking of 2:01.54 for 800m, was ranked third in Canada.

Creditable times of 15:44.89 for 5,000m and a second place 10-k Cdn. Ranking of 32:43.14, were recorded by BC's Natasha Labeaud. Rachel Cliff was fourth ranked in Canada over the 5-k distance (15:48.14)

BC has a number of up-and-coming middle distance athletes in both the youth and junior divisions. Youth athletes Dean Ellenwood (1:52.50 for 800m) and Reid Muller (800m 1:52.51, 3:54.07 for 1500m), gave BC good strength in those events. Nathan Tadesse had a BC Youth division leading time over 1500m (3:56.11) while Oliver Jorgensen was the leading junior man over 5,000m (14:34.94).

Junior Kayla Stone had a provincial best junior women clocking over 1500m (4:24.43) while Regan Yee clocked a creditable 9:29.68 for 3,000m.

There are many opportunities for BC distance runners to attend university and receive financial support from various institutions. All four BC Universities that offer track and field programs are to be congratulated on attracting many of our province's best runners to their schools rather than losing them to out-of-province institutions. And the results of this are evident with all four universities amassed excellent results in middle distance running at various national university cross country and track championships.

We would like to conclude this report by congratulating the middle distance coaches of BC for doing an excellent job in producing quality programs.