

BCA Zone 6 Director's Report (2018-09, AGM)

It was a busy year for Track & Field on Vancouver Island (just ask our officials), but overall the feeling was that it was a successful year. On that good note here is my Zone 6 Director's Report for the 2018 BC Athletics AGM. *(Darren Willis, August 30 2018)*

Athlete Development

Sport/Performance Development

Schools

A couple of observations on our outreach to schools.

- Club Level Engagement: A few instances of clubs engaging directly with schools in innovative efforts (Nanaimo Track & Field Club HS Pilot) does not equal a province wide strategy to get our most engaged local assets promoting and advancing the sport and attracting athletes to choose Track & Field over other options.
- Upgrading Memberships: BC Athletics does not allow athletes who hold BC Athletics HS Memberships to have results, recorded at sanctioned events, become eligible for official rankings/qualifications if athletes decide to upgrade their memberships to full BC Athletics Competitive Memberships. Instead of "unlocking" legally achieved performances, those performances are treated as if they never happened. If we are looking for ways to encourage more high school athletes to participate in Summer track, or find clubs to join, this current practice could be adjusted (there is no written policy at the provincial or national level addressing this).
- BC Athletics Sanctioned School Meets: Encouraging more school track meets to be sanctioned may require some additional education and outreach on behalf of BC Athletics to the schools. Indications are that in some areas of the province (Kootenays) there are basic misunderstandings about what sanctioning a high school meet with BC Athletics means and what impact it may have. Some have been under the impression that BC Athletics sanctioning could raise the cost of school events to levels that are unsustainable for school programs. It is an inaccurate view but one that could be easily put to rest.
- Coach Education: We need to be very careful about how we approach the schools on this subject. If there is a push to require certified coaches in the schools like we are requiring in the clubs BC Athletics will get a lot of negative pushback. We might consider making educational opportunities feel more like rewards than requirements.
- BC Athletics Officials: Until such times as we have a more comprehensive approach to school Track & Field our BC Athletics trained officials remain the most high profile ambassadors of BC Athletics in our schools. In the case of almost all high school meets I've attended they bring a professional and educational approach to the proceedings that is appreciated by all involved.

Clubs

- Competition Participation Rates: Some clubs have been reporting lower competition participation rates since making changes at the club level. (a) Offering training only memberships, (b) not including meet fees in annual club membership fees and, (c) having parents register athletes for meets instead of a club Registrar have all been cited as contributing causes of lower participation rates in track meets. Whether these are just isolated cases or something to better understand is worth paying attention to.
- Athletics Victoria (<https://www.athleticsvic.ca>) was a welcome amalgamation of Victoria track clubs. It was also a successful opportunity to rebrand the sport in Victoria. With the help of a good group of designers they created a consistent visual theme that extended from their website to their new uniforms. It was a really nice way reinvigorate the club and make it fresh and modern. Watching them hand out brand new uniforms to their team at the Dogwood meet, in individually wrapped packages, made the whole thing feel like the best Unboxing videos on YouTube. I believe it happened because the uniforms had just come back from the printers, but seeing it happen publicly made it something everyone on the Island could celebrate...or envy:-)

Technical Leadership

Coaches

Clubs going through difficult times (loss of coaches, parent volunteers and other resources along with diminishing membership) often react to short term stress with decisions that could hamper medium/long term return to health.

- JD Only Clubs: Newly trained coaches and volunteers don't always feel capable of guiding young athletes past the JD Level, and often don't have many older athletes in the club at times of stress. One option has been to consider designating the clubs as JD Only rather than simply focusing attention on that age until they rebuild. By designating a club as JD Only, there is little incentive for parent volunteers to stay around when their kids turn 14, or for coaches to continue to advance their level of certification to support older athletes.
- Coaching Cooperation: One of the best things I see when talking to clubs on Vancouver Island is the shared sense of responsibility that exists for the development of athletes here. The Vancouver Island Athletic Association is a formal link that keeps clubs talking with each other and working together. While clubs are competitive and take great pride in developing their own athletes, they also do a very nice job sharing ideas, offering expertise where it hasn't yet developed and making opportunities available for athletes to come and work out with other clubs that have specific expertise.

Officials

The BC Athletics Officials crew on Vancouver Island continues to do themselves and the sport proud. They provide professional oversight of events while helping build capacity in each community, including athlete education and feedback to coaches to help in the technical development of the kids.

The transition to using Trackie to support registration and both event scheduling and event seedings has been a technical/educational hurdle for many clubs. BC Athletics Officials (special “Thanks” to James Mitchell) have been mentoring clubs so that this transition is smooth. The support has been truly appreciated and another example of officials making our sport better.

Officials Clinics Hosted on Vancouver Island during 2018 to date.

- 3 Level 1
- 1 Level 2
- 19 Total Registered Participants

Track Meets Officiated

- Close to 20 meets on Vancouver Island alone in addition to several off-Island events supported.
- 5 Vancouver Island Athletic Association meets
- 8 Vancouver Island High School meets (Victoria series, Lower Island Champs, North Island Champs, Island Champs)
- Victoria Elementary & Middle School meets
- Victoria High Performance Meet (Bruce Deacon)
- BC Summer Games

The season was chaotic with officials covering so many meets but Vince Sequiera was particularly proud of the Island Officials crew and the work they did together this year.

Competition

Competitions

There was a full slate of competitive opportunities on Vancouver Island this season.

A review:

- Vancouver Island Athletics Association: VIAA clubs got their annual Island Series of events back on track with five successful meets (Port Alberni, Nanaimo, Victoria, Duncan, Courtenay/Comox) during the 2018 season. Significantly upgraded facilities in both Victoria and Duncan welcomed athletes of the Dogwood and Garriock meeting dates.
- High Performance Meet: Bruce Deacon was able to find time in the Spring schedule to host a high performance meet at the University of Victoria’s Centennial Stadium for athletes looking to make standards.
- BC Summer Games: A well run track meet, but facilities upgrades provided a burdensome challenge for the Cowichan Valley Athletic Club (CVAC Jaguars) in preparation for the Games.

- Mid-Island & North Island Schools: Continue to provide few competitive opportunities for teams prior to regional championships. For many athletes on the North Island, the North Island Championship remains their first competitive experience of the season, though a reformatted Bob Dailey Meet in Port Alberni did offer high school age classes and technical standards, but less than a full week before North Islands.
- Pricing...Schools vs Clubs: BC School events are priced quite a bit differently than most club meets. A maximum team entry fee allows teams on a budget to take far more athletes to events than they otherwise could.

Facilities

- T&F athletes competing at Vancouver Island events in 2018 had the opportunity to experience two newly resurfaced tracks and updated T&F facilities.
 - Duncan - In addition to a newly resurfaced track, the Cowichan Sportsplex had a new Horizontal Jumps complex installed and a fantastic new Hammer Circle and Cage.
 - Victoria - The new track surface at UVic's Centennial Stadium freshened up the Island's most impressive competition venue.

Organizational Capacity

BC Athletics Website

A consistent criticism that clubs have with BC Athletics is the state of the website. Of the issues I am asked most by Zone 6 clubs to convey through my position as a Director it is to revamp the BC Athletics website.

The site contains a lot of information, but it is a navigation and search nightmare at times. It lacks easy, intuitive paths to basic information at times. It can also be inconsistent from a terminology perspective which makes it hard, particularly for people new to the sport, to make sense of.