

MALE ATHLETE DIRECTOR BOARD MEMBER REPORT – BC ATHLETICS AGM 2020

Submitted by John Gay

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As with all areas pertaining to athletics in British Columbia, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has drastically altered the experience of athletes through the course of the 2020 winter/spring/summer athletics calendar.

Prior to the beginning of provincial and national lockdowns in Mid-March of 2020, BC Athletes had achieved many noteworthy performances, provincially, nationally, and internationally. BC athletes accounted for 10 members of the Canadian National Senior Team competing at the World Athletics Championships in Doha, Qatar September-October 2019, including a bronze medal performance in the 50km race walk by Evan Dunfee (Coach Gerry Dragomir) of Richmond, BC.

In November of 2019, BC and the Valley Royals Club hosted the Canadian Cross Country Championships in Abbotsford's Clearbrook park. The event demonstrated an impressive level of planning on the part of the LOC and featured several stand out performances from BC Athletes, including podium performances from each of BC Athletics Provincial teams (men's and women's U18, U20, and Senior).

While the indoor track and field season was abbreviated due to COVID-19. BC athletes produced multiple strong performances internationally at both the collegiate (NCAA, USPORTS) and Elite levels.

Since the beginning of provincial lock-downs, most athletes have experienced significant adjustments to their daily training environment including limited facility access (tracks, strength and conditioning centres), treatment options (physio, chiro, massage etc.), and in-person coaching. Furthermore, as part of efforts to combat the spread of COVID-19, many athletes have resorted to training alone or in small groups, often remotely from their regular coaches or training environments. While allowances for sanctioned competition in British Columbia were unfeasible for much of 2020, many athletes achieved noteworthy performances in informal competitions such as time trials (Track events) or field event competition simulations. Several opportunities for virtual competition arose as well, including the Canadian "Virtual" 10km Road Running Championships, won in both the men's and women's categories by BC Athletes Justin Kent (Coach Richard Lee) and Natasha Wodak (Coach Lynn Kanuka) respectively.

As the pandemic situation continues to develop, many athletes have continued to adjust their training and racing prospects in hopes of fall competitions at a regional or provincial level. Athletes remain encouraged to prioritize personal and public health by maintaining limited social interactions in training environments and practicing safe social distancing at all times.