

The Fundamentals Needed for a Strong and Productive Track and Field Club

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1. A track and field club is formed too serve the needs of its members. The organization must be aware of what these needs are and then decide whether it is equipped to meet these needs.
 - The Club must have a Statement of Purpose or Mission Statement--What are its short term functions?--i.e. what age groups is the Club going to be able to serve? What event areas Is the Club able to be responsible for? What level of coaching is the Club going to offer? This statement should be constructed by utilizing as many Club Members as are interested.

2. A responsible group of Directors and Officers must be elected.
 - Different segments of the Club should be represented on the Directorate--i.e. various age groupings, various disciplines. There are advantages in having some of the directors recruited from outside the membership of the Club-- i.e. community businesspersons, interested outside parties, former members or parents of former members. Elected directors should the abilities and skills needed too insure the success of the Club.
 - The Officers, particularly the President and Vice President must be prepared to take a hands-on approach in the day-to-day operation of the Club.
 - It is important that there be some stability amongst the Directors and Officers. Recognizing that some change is sound and good, it must also be realized that massive change is most often a detriment to a stable and sound organization. Two or three year terms are desirable. Rotational terms--say a 1/3 of the directorate elected each year of a 3 year cycle which adds to stability.
 - The Board of Directors is responsible for establishing a Club philosophy, setting policy guidelines, producing yearly budgets, setting short and long term goals, forming committees to carry out Club business, and generally reviewing the Club's progress. However, the Directors must realize that once philosophies and policies have been arrived at, that coaching decisions, as long as they fall within the sphere of what has been established, are the Head Coach's decision. The Directors must be supportive of the coaching staff and allow that staff the freedom with which to get on with the job of coaching.
 - At least two committees Finance and Equipment should be formed or named by the executive. Other possible committees could include Banquet, Newsletter, Uniform, and Registration.
 - At the end of each year, an evaluation of goals and objectives should be prepared by both the directorate and the Head Coach. These reports should be delivered at an Annual General Meeting.

3. The Head Coach is appointed as part of Club's Coaching Structure.
 - The position of Head Coach is very important too the success of the Club and the position must be filled with care. The Head Coach should be qualified to coach what he or she is expected to coach. Certification to Level 3 at both Technical and Theory or working towards these levels is most desirable. This person must be able to communicate with athletes, parents, directors and other coaches. This Coach must have an understanding of the structure of BC Athletics and Athletics Canada, and if possible, play some part within this structure or committees of these Associations. The Head Coaches relationships with the athletes under his or her charge must be beyond reproach. The Head Coach is a leader and an administrator. The Club can succeed only if this person is strong and competent enough to provide the needed leadership.
 - The Head Coach should have the final say in the selection of assistant coaches. Assistants must be subject to the direction of and be compatible with the Head Coach. The duties and responsibilities of the assistants must be firmly established. Assistants must be competent at their coaching assignments. Assistant coaches must be given credit for their coaching successes. Coaches need to hold meetings to discuss coaching business, and they should have recorded minutes taken at these meetings.
 - The coaching staff is responsible for coaching, but cannot be expected to assume all the administrative responsibilities of the Club. Coaches will have to work within the financial and policy guidelines set down by the directors. The coaching staff will attend to coaching functions such as entries, organization of practices, help in the recruitment of athletes, and keep abreast of information sent out by BC Athletics and Athletics Canada. The Coaches must operate within the rules of these two organizations, be aware of their athletes' performances, and fulfill other coaching duties as agreed upon between themselves and the Directors.
 - Coaches should not be fundraisers. However, coaches do have the responsibility of motivating athletes to participate fully in Club functions, particularly fund raising functions. Responsibility for uniforms, registration of athletes and other such details that are non-coaching related, should not be coaching responsibilities.
4. A successful Club must be financially viable.
 - A club must have the financial resources to carry out its objectives. It is fundamental to the success of the club. The planning and execution of the fundraising programs has to be done very carefully. Sources of funds—membership fees, bingo funds, casino funds, track meet promotions, concession stand profits, donations and sponsorships can all be utilized? The Club must operate within its financial limitations. This may mean that a Club may have to restrict its operations to certain age groups or to certain events. Clubs should not try to be all things to all people when it does not have the financial resources to do this. The executive or budget committee, which also includes the Head Coach, should prepare the annual budget for approval by the Board of Directors of the club.

- The first priority for Club funds should be directed towards making sure that the basic costs of coaching are covered. High level coaching demands a high level of commitment and time from the coaching staff. These coaches should not lose money or pay out of their own pockets for the privilege of coaching. Over time, the Club should try to reimburse a coach for his or her time commitment in addition to meeting basic costs such as transportation, meals/accommodation (if on a club trip), coaching uniform, administrative and equipment reimbursement.
 - The amount of money available for the Track & Field Program must be decided upon at the beginning of the year. The Head Coach should prepare guidelines for the allocation of these funds to the various programs in a fair and reasonable manner". While the Head Coach is ultimately responsible to the Board, he or she must have the freedom in the use of these the program funds as per the guidelines and the program for the year. Performance standards need to be established in order to award financial aid for athlete travel. Athletes must realize that financial assistance will only be offered to them if they or their parents have fulfilled their commitments as per fund raising activities.
 - Athletes, or their families, must take a prime responsibility in providing or raising the funds needed for the Club's operation. These people must be willing to contribute time to fundraising or be prepared too personally pay for the costs of membership. These costs include coaching, facility and equipment use, uniforms, entry fees, travel, administration.
5. A successful Club must recruit and utilize capable and responsible persons for key positions.
- President: Must have leadership capabilities. This person must be able to deal responsibly with all elements of the Club. The President must have a vision of what the Club is and what it wants to be. This person must be ready to give guidance to the directors and be able to intercede with parents, if, and when necessary. The President must have confidence in the coaches, but be ready to give advice and offer support, when needed. A President must be able to get things done him or herself and have the talent to convince others to get things done.
 - Treasurer: As has been mentioned, a Club can live or die by its finances. A competent treasurer, one who understands financial recording, is organized, and committed to the job is vital to the sound operation of the Club.
 - Membership Chairperson and Registrar: An up-to-date Club list is vital. Membership fees must be collected and registrations with BC Athletics completed in an orderly manner. This person is also responsible for explaining to new members what they are to receive with their club membership, and what their responsibilities are. Many future problems can avoided if the responsibilities of each member are outlined at the beginning.

- **Fund Raising Chairperson(s):** Fund raising can never work if left too only one or two persons. It is important that someone must be responsible, once the fund raising schemes are started, for over seeing these projects. Major fund raising ventures e.g. the promotion of a large Junior Development age group track & field meet or open age group road races; bingo nights; casinos; concession stands at sport events; or raffles, necessitate large expenditures of time and effort. The person(s) who that heads up these projects can be easily discouraged if they do not receive support from the whole membership. At the very least, the person(s) in charge of these fundraising ventures, should probably be reimbursed or rewarded for their efforts.
- **Uniforms:** The purchasing, storing, issuing and collecting of uniforms, sweatshirts, rain suits, warm up suits etc. is a job in itself. This requires an organized hard working individual.
- **Entry Chairperson:** While the coaching staff will always be concerned with entries, in some cases it is advisable to have someone else also involved. This is vital if athletes have to pay their own entry fees, coaches should not be expected too fulfill this type of duty. It is advisable to use an entry chairperson for junior development entries as these younger athletes take part in a number of events or may only take part in particular meets. A responsible and dependable entries chairperson can cut down on many wasted dollars in no show entries.
- **Travel Chairperson(s):** Once again, the coaches will probably take some part in travel arrangements. However if a Club is to take a large contingent of athletes of various ages, particularly the younger athletes to meets requiring travel and over night(s) stays, then many details must be worked out. Recruitment of transport, departure and return details, hotel/motel reservations, rooming lists, chaperons, codes of conduct and behaviour are some of the more important considerations. It is not a bad idea to assign different individuals to look after different trips. Once a person has handled these tasks, they will have a great respect for the complications of Club travel.
- **Track and Field Meet Team Manager:** A Team Manager for each track & field meet the club attends is appointed. It is not always possible for a coach to be present from dawn to dusk at two-day meets. A different individual for each meet is appointed and it is his or her duty to obtain the club athletes' competition numbers, keep a record of entries, obtain results or statistics and generally be of help to the coaches.
- **Club Statistician:** Someone must be responsible for keeping statistics of the results of athletes in various meets. These statistics are valuable to chart the progress of athletes, decide upon club awards, to make decisions on what athletes to nominate for BC or National Awards, to be used as support materials for nominations to various Provincial or National teams, utilized as background information for Provincial or National funding program or to compile a history for the Club.

- Newsletter Editor: It is important for a Club to communicate with its members. A printed or electronic newsletter can effectively meet this need. This publication features the accomplishments of the members and brings members up-to-date on what the Club is about administratively and promotion wise. It should be an interesting and motivating publication.
 - Publicity Chairperson: Accomplishments of athletes should be publicized in local newspapers and on both radio and television. This is particularly important in communities outside of the major urban centers where community media are more than willing to publish stories and results that are supplied too them. Someone who writes fluently should be encouraged to take up this very important task.
6. A Successful Club has to build a tradition and communicate a sense of Pride to its membership.
- Athletic accomplishment has to be earned, noted, publicized and built upon.
 - The Club should be involved in projects that can be successfully carried out. These projects must be suitable to the membership of the Club and should involve as many Club members as possible. Hosting track meets, cross country races and road races is very important. Organizational meetings are conducted, the event staged and a wind down get together held. If such events are organized with care and credit given all round interest, pride in staging such events will grow. In addition, such events can generate revenue for the Club.
 - A Policy and Procedures Manual: This is a very important part of the Club's administrative work and outlines the various responsibilities of the Directors, Officers and Club members and serves as an introduction too what the Club stands for. This booklet could also contain other information that will be useful to athletes and parents and will solve some of the mystery and apprehensions associated with Club membership.
 - A newsletter can generate interest and is a great vehicle for communication. Four to six issues per annum would seem to be a reasonable number for most Clubs. These newsletters would high light athletic achievements, publicize upcoming events and note other news worthy items.
 - An annual Awards Banquet is very desirable. These banquets should be fun events and the awards wide spread. Some Clubs not only honour their top athletes, but also make sure every athlete who has attended practices on a regular basis is recognized. Examples of Award categories include: Gold-those athletes in the top three in the Province in an event in their age group; Silver-those athletes in the top six; Bronze-those athletes in the top eight; Participation-all other athletes who have attended practices on a regular basis. This is the place, also, to honour other outstanding workers in the Club. Each year a different sponsor might be recognized.

Otherwise, the Awards' Banquet is an opportunity to review the year's achievements. Fun awards if done in good taste, can be a highlight at an Award's Banquet. Add to the above a good meal, fast-paced evening and you have an event that members look forward to each year.

- Club and Team meetings are important moral builders. These can be formal and informal. Goals are discussed and questions answered at these functions. One Club holds a get together for its athletes in the U16 to Senior age groups each September. It is in the form of a light workout followed by lunch and a review of the up-coming season. Younger athletes in that Club celebrate birthdays with barbecues and other similar activities. Any of these types of functions help build spirit and give a sense of belonging.
 - The Club's successes should be reported too the community newspapers and radio stations. This is a very important function and someone to fill this role must be able too write and be dependable. Media attention keeps the Club visible in the community, makes the athletes feel important, aids in recruitment of new athletes and helps attract sponsors.
7. The successful Club is one in which its' members take pride, want to belong to and are eager to support. The successful Club is one that has a vision and a long-term commitment to achieving the objectives and goals it has set out for itself. There is considerable work to be done in establishing a successful Club. They are certainly not one-person operations. With strong leadership and a commitment from its members, a track and field club, with its Olympic and Commonwealth Games' connections, can be one of the most prestigious organizations within a community.
8. A productive track and field club should strive to expand its involvement beyond the narrow confines of the Club. Contract with elementary and secondary schools in the community and offering to help host meets, coach or make equipment available are all worthy considerations. Involvement with BC Athletics is necessary. Encouraging parents to be become qualified officials or serving on the Board of Directors or committees of BC Athletics are but a few ways to become involved.

Self-Assessing Questionnaire
On the
Fundamentals Needed for a Strong and Productive Track and Field Club

This questionnaire is designed too provide the Track and Field Club with a self-assessing tool to evaluate their progress in club development. Answer the following questions from the perspective of your club and referencing the preceding outline of the Fundamentals needed for a Strong and Productive Track and Field Club. If you would like to forward a copy of the completed questionnaire to BC Athletics, it will assist in us in helping you with your club development. Thank you.

1. What is your Clubs' Mission Statement or a Statement of Purpose?

2. Do you consider that this statement accurately describes what your Club's main function is? Yes / No? If No, how do you think it should read?

3. For those clubs that have not defined a Statement of Purpose, can you describe what you believe your main function to be?

4. On what basis are the club directors and executive chosen? _____

5. What are the main duties of your executive?

6. What are the three main goals of your Club for this year?

a) _____

b) _____

c) _____

7. What age groups form the basis of your Clubs' athlete membership? How is the membership recruited? _____

8. Does your Club have a relationship with the school system? If so, at what level:

- a) Elementary _____
- b) Junior Secondary/Middle School _____
- c) Senior Secondary _____
- d) Post Secondary _____

How do the club and school(s) help each other?

9. Does your Club have a Head Coach? If so what is expected of this person?

10. Do you believe that it is important for your Head Coach to have completed levels of the Coaching Certification Program Yes / No.? If yes, what level of certification does your Head Coach have? Sport Coach _____ Club Coach _____ Level 3 Performance Coach _____ Level 4 _____ Level 5 _____

11. Does your Head Coach carry out coaching duties on a year round basis or just for part of the year? All year _____ Seasonal _____ If seasonal, for what months?

12. How many coaching sessions per week does your Head Coach conduct?

Spring ___ Summer ___ Fall ___ Winter ___

13. Is your Head Coach a specialist i.e.--responsible for only one event area, or a generalist and if a specialist, in what events?

14. How many other coaches besides the Head Coach does your Club utilize?

15. What are the responsibilities of the assistant coaches?

16. Do your coaches receive any sort of remuneration? If so, on what basis?

17. From what sources does your Club secure its operating funds? If you are willing and it is possible to do so, please list approximate dollar figures.

18. Do you believe that your Club has come up or is going to be able to come up with adequate fund raising ventures?

19. What are your Club's main problems concerning Fund Raising? _____

20. How does your Club assign Fund Raising activities and what kinds of activities does your club undertake? _____

21. If you are willing, please list approximate dollar expenditures for each of the following:
- a) Senior, U20, U18, U16 Program _____
 - b) Junior Development Program _____
 - c) Coaching: honorariums _____ salary _____ other _____
 - d) Equipment _____
 - e) Administration _____
22. Which of the following positions has your Club established?
- a. Membership Chairperson/Registrar _____
 - b. Fundraising Chairpersons _____
 - c. Uniform Chairperson _____
 - d. Entries Chairperson _____
 - e. Travel Arrangement Chairpersons _____
 - f. Track and Field Meet Team Manager _____
 - g. Statistician _____
 - h. Newsletter Editor _____
 - i. Publicity Chairperson _____
23. Which of the following is your Club able to provide?
- a. Hosting Track and Field Meets _____
 - b. Hosting Cross Country Races _____
 - c. Hosting Road Races _____
 - d. A Policy Manual _____
 - e. Newsletter _____
 - f. Newspaper Write-ups _____
 - g. An Awards Banquet _____
 - h. Entry Fees to Competitions _____
 - i. Uniforms _____
24. Do you believe that your Track and Field Club is well established and well known in your community? _____
25. Do you know if the "powers that be" (government, business, service clubs and institutions) in your community believe that your Club is serving an important function? Are they prepared to provide assistance?
- _____
- _____
26. Do you foresee any obstacles that could hinder the continuation of your Club? If yes, can you list and explain.
- _____
- _____

27. How can these obstacles be overcome? _____

28. What do you consider too be the three main weaknesses of your Club?

a) _____

b) _____

c) _____

29. What do you consider too be the three main strengths of your Club?

a. _____

b. _____

c. _____

Thank you and all the best with your club development.