

BC Athletics - Zone 6 Director's Report (2020-01-18)

Athlete Development

Clubs

- Some clubs cited a decline in membership numbers last year that they are attributing to year-round training and competition opportunities being offered in other sports. For example, Summer Soccer and Summer Hockey Leagues in Campbell River drew kids that traditionally had participated in Track & Field away from the sport.

Facilities

- The Oceanside (Parksville, Qualicum) Track & Field community is collectively holding its breath as it looks like a long-term effort to secure approval for the construction of a modern Track & Field oval could be finalized within the next few weeks. Construction would begin in April, 2020. It would not only transform the community's ability to develop their athletes, but provide another venue capable of hosting track meets on Vancouver Island.

Technical Leadership

Coaches

- Some clubs are finding it difficult to attract and develop new coaches. In smaller clubs the loss of knowledge that departing coaches take with them is not quickly or easily replaced. Some think that current NCCP course offerings are not designed to support this type of situation and can even act as a barrier to attracting new coaches. Course materials may be too broad, and not technical enough at an introductory level, to be useful to new coaches who may be slotted into single events to fill coaching gaps. This is leaving new coaches to feel inadequately prepared to lead and/or unwilling to return and help the following season.
- The President of the CVACs (Cowichan Valley Athletic Club) had the following observations:
 - "I know BC Athletics offers coaching courses but we're finding these are not the kind of courses people want to take. They want something more specific to particular events."
 - "I am often getting parents that want to coach, most have coached soccer, volleyball, hockey, basketball or field hockey, they know how to work with kids but know little or nothing about track & field. They want to know what drills they can run at practice, what to look for to help athletes improve. Given that most of the athletes we have are JDs the coaches need to know how to teach the right technique so the athletes have a strong base to work from."
 - "I'm struggling just to get people to help out at practice, and when I do get a parent who'd like to help coach, the number one question is *"Is there a course I can take?"* I know what the Level One course is like. It's a total waste of time. I don't even bother telling people about it."

Competition

Clubs

- 2020 is set to again have a five meet series (VIAA Island Series) on Vancouver Island. There is also talk of a Throws only meet in Cowichan sometime during the Spring as the calendar this year creates some unusual gaps between events that may allow for additional competition dates.

Schools

- Middle Schools in Victoria are now requesting qualified officials for a 5 meet series this Spring.
- The North Vancouver Island High School Championship meet will be a 2-day event this year.
- The Vancouver Island High School Championship meet will be held in Nanaimo this year, the second time in the last three years that the event will be held somewhere other than Victoria, where it had been held continuously for most of the event's history.

Officials

- The additional requests for officials at the school level (Middle Schools) is further stressing Island Officiating resources. There is work being done by BC Athletics Officials to encourage schools to begin training their own pool of officials; something made difficult by the short focus ("Don't bother me until April") of many schools on the sport.
- Two major events on Vancouver Island this year (Pan Am X-Country, 2020 Francophone Games) are an opportunity for Island officials to gain some National/ International experience, though the requirement for French-only communication with athletes will seriously restrict the eligible pool of officials.
- The depth of Officials that are trained, and available, to handle Photo Finish & Results is a point of concern.