

President's report to the 2006 COF AGM

Following the 2005 COF AGM, the newly-elected Board along with input from other Canadian orienteers identified a number of priority areas. These areas have been the focus of our volunteer efforts over the last year. Progress has been made in a number of areas, but we continue to be challenged by limited volunteer manpower.

One of the Board's main goals is to make the COF more useful to all Canadian orienteers. The Board has worked to convey the message that the COF is not a small group of individuals, but that it is in fact the entire Canadian orienteering community; and that the COF Board is not a small tight group of administrators, but that it is an elected, representative group of dedicated volunteers whose job is to provide leadership to the national membership.

As we move forward addressing the identified priority areas we hope to continue to engage more and more volunteers from across the country, to increase the number of clubs, to help organizers hold high quality events, and to help orienteers meet their individual goals in the sport.

Here is a brief summary of each priority areas and progress made in the past year.

TECHNICAL RACES GUIDELINES

New race guidelines have been proposed by Ross Burnett and Brent Langbakk. It was a challenging job to create appropriate winning times and course designations with the introduction of the M/F75+ categories as well as the inclusion of sprint races in championship events. Leigh Bailey assisted with this process by surveying the older Canadian orienteers to get their input regarding course length, technical challenge and physical challenge. It still needs to be determined how best to implement these guidelines for smaller A meets and B meets. There has also been interesting discussion about introducing skills-based categories at smaller events in order to increase the appeal of the sport and to simplify organization.

EVENTS AND SCHEDULING

2007 Canadian Champs: There was no application made at the 2005 AGM to host the 2007 COCs. However since then the proposed Saskatchewan association has applied to host this event, with assistance from Alberta and Manitoba. New maps have been created this season.

Future major events: Andrée Powers has been communicating with clubs across Canada to try to identify the future major event hosts well in advance. We want to expand the event listing on the COF web site substantially so that events are listed well in advance and the timing of events is well planned to avoid conflicts and maximize attendance.

World Ranking Events: Canada has a quota of 3 World Ranking Events (WREs) each year, plus an additional 3 when the NAOCs are held in Canada. It is important to host our full quota of WREs each year. The applications recently went to the IOF for all three WREs in 2007 to be held in conjunction with the 2007 COCs. We need to ensure that we are allocating our WREs to maximize attendance given a recent rule change at the IOF level that determines participation in World Cup events based on a country's standing on the WRE scale. Charlotte MacNaughton recently sent a letter to the IOF President expressing frustration with these rule changes which provides significant challenges to the developing orienteering nations such as Canada.

Orienteering Week In Canada: The COF board will continue to support the "Orienteering Week in Canada" concept - an opportunity to profile all the orienteering that is going on across the country on a given week. As it develops, there should be some potential media profile. Adrian Zissos has been the lead volunteer with this project.

HIGH PERFORMANCE DEVELOPMENT

Twelve Canadians competed at the World Orienteering Championships in Denmark and nine competed at the Junior World Championships in Lithuania. We have increased the profile of the national team on the COF website. We will continue to better publicize the process for becoming a national team athlete. We are grateful to Ted de St. Croix for his continuing involvement as the national team coach. More volunteers are

required to assist with the HPP in the areas of administration, coaching, long-term elite development planning, sponsorship and fund-raising and team selection.

GRASSROOTS DEVELOPMENT

New orienteers: We hope to use the new COF web site and the new club email list to better share ideas and information about grassroots development, junior development and schools programming ideas across the country.

New Members: Saskatchewan has applied to join the COF. Andrée Powers has been talking with Newfoundland encouraging them to join again.

MEMBERSHIP

It is very clear that the COF membership structure needs to be revamped to ensure better effectiveness and efficiency. There are many challenges that go along with this task. The COF Board would welcome suggestions of how best to revamp the membership. The COF Board would like to strike a pan-Canadian committee tasked with creating a new membership format.

COMMUNICATIONS

Website: Charlotte MacNaughton has created the new COF web site and will continue to expand it. Feedback is welcome.

Canadian Orienteering email list: In August, Charlotte created an email list to facilitate communication between Canadian clubs and associations. This has been well received.

Newsletter: Volunteers are needed to assist with the COF newsletter. We require a newsletter editor right away.

Athletes CAN: The COF plan includes the goal of increasing our profile within the amateur sport community. This is a long term project. The Canadian junior and senior team athletes are now all members of Athletes CAN – Canada's association of national team athletes.

IOF Congress: Charlotte attended the IOF Congress in Denmark in August. It had been a number of years since Canada has had a voting delegate at the Congress.

RouteGadget: Dave Graupner and Adrian Zissos have created a national "Route Gadget" database (rg.orienteering.ca) for loading courses and allowing competitors to draw their routes online and run animations of the races. This has been very well received by the clubs and orienteers which are using it. It is a fantastic race analysis tool and we encourage all the clubs to use it.

National Orienteering Conference '07: The COF will host a national orienteering conference immediately prior to the 2007 COCs. This will be an ideal opportunity to put on some officiating and coaching seminars as well as other seminars of interest. We require volunteers to assist with the implementation of this.

VOLUNTEER DEVELOPMENT

Sharing Resources: The COF has a role to play in reducing the amount of duplicated volunteer effort between clubs by encouraging nation-wide sharing of tools and resources. The new COF web site is one mechanism to better share resources between clubs and associations, but clubs and associations need to take a more active role in forwarding the information that would assist others and should be posted on the COF web site. The new email list also assists with information sharing between clubs, hopefully reducing the instances that a volunteer "re-invents the wheel". The implementation of the nation-wide RouteGadget database is an example in which a club does not need to go through the technical difficulties of setting up the database individually. There are other potential systems such as a national event registration software system, a national membership signup/renewal database, an on-line event statistic reporting system, etc that we would like to set-up. Volunteers with technical knowledge are required to help to move these projects forward.

Volunteer Recognition: The COF Board is attempting to do a better job at saying thank-you to volunteers to assist us. We also plan to start some easy-to-implement volunteer recognition awards over the next year.

OFFICIATING

We took the first steps to start revamping the official's certification. A preliminary report from John Rance is available. We would like to make significant in roads into this project over the next year and require more volunteers to assist.

COACHING

The COF Board continues to support the on-going efforts of the coaching program redevelopment currently underway, being spearheaded by Bill Anderson.

ADMINISTRATION AND PLANNING

Staff transition: After close to 30 years in the role of COF Executive Director, Colin Kirk has retired from his role with the COF. He will be the first to point out that he is not retiring from the sport of orienteering, only from the Executive Director role. We are still in the process of transferring the business affairs of the COF accordingly. The transition is not yet 100% complete and Andr e and Charlotte are grateful to Colin for his on-going assistance. New banking arrangements have been set up in Calgary. Charlotte has agreed to take on the role of Executive Director on a volunteer basis until the COF staffing needs can be finalized.

Planning: Over the past year, the COF Board has been open to feedback from Canadian orienteers and their feedback was included in the plan created by the Board. This planning process was valuable and we recommend it on a yearly basis.

Finances: The national team created a sponsorship proposal to offset uniform costs and this brought in 6 sponsors. There were several successful fundraising initiatives to solicit funds for the HPP fund. The COF Board changed the way that HPP funds are distributed to provide more equality between the junior and senior teams. Various fundraising efforts by HPP athletes and others solicited funds for the HPP fund. Andr e and Charlotte will be setting up an on-line donation mechanism on our web-site after a few logistical issues have been resolved. We would like to examine other potential financial sources.

We have taken some important steps over the past year to move orienteering in Canada forward. A very grateful thank you to the volunteers who have contributed to this.

Respectfully submitted,
Charlotte MacNaughton
President