

Executive Director's Report – AGM 2005

AGM. As a result of COC & WMOC date conflicts and the majority of association presidents unable to attend the COC the AGM was re-scheduled and in a tele-conference format. Hopefully, this is a “one-of” and future AGM's conducted in the normal fashion.

Combining the AGM and COC has been, for the most part, a positive move, but there are areas of concern. The original concept was for the AGM to be on a “free” day with the day prior to Day 1 identified as best “free” day. COC expansion to include other events has placed a burden on available time. The decision of combining the AGM with the COC should be revisited to determine if this is still the best solution.

Planning. A major portion of past AGMs was Planning; Development, Promotion, Future Projects, etc. Since changing to a COC - AGM there has been a decline in discussion of such topics. Association reports identify lack of growth, declining memberships, aging volunteers, etc. yet none of the submitted motions address such matters. Decisions on all 9 can be taken with little Board action. The Board are not asked to do anything and can essentially make their own work plans. Most sports develop work plans or conduct Planning meetings. AOA hold an Annual Retreat to formulate plans. The COF should develop strategies that address some identified items of concern.

Recommendations:

1 Association Reports. Only three associations submitted Annual Association Reports. I recommend these reports be removed from the AGM and submitted at a more appropriate time in the year. eg. After association AGMs or as of December 31. A non-related AGM time frame will provide more time for review/comment and may also be better for associations.

2 National Team Pre-selection. At a February 2005 board meeting I proposed COC Short and Long champions plus athletes who qualify for WOC Finals be pre-selected to the next WOC team, with the condition they compete in the discipline in which they earned pre-selection. This policy would reward our national M/W 20+ champions by not having to compete in selection events. Board members were receptive to this proposal and I hoped it would be adopted prior to COC 2005. Unfortunately, there was not another board meeting prior to the COC. I think it could be adopted retro-actively with 2005 Canadian champions, Pam James, Louise Oram, Mike Smith, and Mike Waddington pre-selected plus Sandy Hott Johansen for her excellent WOC performance.

3 Orienteering Canada. Consideration should be given as to continue publishing in the present format or changing to an electronic format. Preparation of O Canada is very time consuming and much of the content available on club and association web pages long before O Canada is published. eg. COC, WOC, reports/results are available immediately after/during events. Converting to an electronic version could mean: more issues per year; more current content; reduced printing/mailing costs. Many clubs and associations

have discontinued publishing newsletters in favour of electronic versions. Associations print/mail copies to members who do not have internet access. eg. Orienteering Ontario

4. National Team – Calendar year funding. I recommend support to national team members be allocated on a calendar year rather than from one COC to the next. When WOCs were every second year funds there was always some level of support available from the HPP Fund. – enough to cover Entry Fees, Accommodation & Meals. Athletes were responsible for travel costs. Annual WOCs created a situation whereby team members receive benefit of 2 COC fund raising efforts and the next year receive nothing.

5 Membership – Re-structure. The Membership structure should be reviewed with the view of everyone above Beginner level being members of their association and COF. Becoming a member of the association should be the main emphasis. Joining a club should be an option but not the primary connection with the sport. The COF membership is a small amount and should be included in association membership – when someone joins the association they automatically become a member of the COF. Insurance should be included in association membership (perhaps the only method of obtaining insurance).

Under the present system, associations are not contributing equally to the association affiliation fee. Some associations only report “Full COF Members”. While others include all members. The Yukon and Manitoba associations’ only offer Association Membership. YOA reported more members than Quebec and almost as many as British Columbia. The various membership types result in a COF Affiliation Fee structure of comparing apples with oranges. We should strive for a uniform membership structure.

The membership problem is not unique to Canada. The British OF has been struggling for 18 months to develop a membership structure with everyone contributing rather than 40-50% of participants. One proposal was for a BOF fee of \$5 – 7.00 and a meet levy of approx. \$5.00. Other national federations are reviewing membership structures to have a greater percentage of participants contributing. Current association fees are considerably higher than the COF fee (under \$8.00). The COF fee and insurance coverage (\$1.80) could be incorporated and result in a better and fairer system.

Space and time does not permit a more detailed report on this subject but I recommend associations and COF undertake a review of the COF, association and club membership systems with a view to an improved structure.

Submitted by: Colin Kirk

