

2019 AOA President's report

Thank you all for taking the time to attend this AGM.

I'd like to start by thanking my fellow Board Members for their wisdom and sound judgement to keep me on track and the AOA moving forward over a busy year. Being backed up by an experienced board and an active and self-motivated Executive Director makes the job of being President rather easy.

Last year, the AOA identified three areas of change based on feedback from Alberta Sport Connection's new "Accountability Framework", these being:

1. Extending orienteering programming outside the established areas of Calgary and Edmonton.
2. Membership management and reporting
3. Policy development and implementation

The first of these lead us to expand our focus on outreach. In 2019, we entered two new locations – Red Deer and Rocky Mountain House where new coaches have been trained and programs offered to attract new members. Grande Prairie is also on the books for spring 2020. And we continued the outreach program in Airdrie while SOGO took over the program in Cochrane. New maps, some of them small, were created in these areas (thanks to Don Riddle, Don Bayly and Teresa Winn for these). It is also important to acknowledge our Executive Director, Bogi, for her energy, enthusiasm and for going above and beyond the call of duty (evenings, weekends, 13 hour days and coordinating new maps) to ensure these outreach programs were a success. I hope these can continue to flourish over the coming years and develop into new orienteering clubs.

On membership management and reporting, I would like to thank the clubs for implementing our new membership fee structure. If you remember from last year, we used to split the Orienteering Canada affiliation fee three ways between the two clubs and AOA. This resulted in the AOA receiving no formal revenue from membership which the ASC perceived as a problem (we have no members!). Under the new structure, AOA receives a set fee per adult and junior member from each club and the AOA programs. Separately from this, AOA pays the OC affiliation fee. This sounds like juggling with money and really it is, but it clarifies AOA's revenue stream from memberships. We still have a little more work to do on membership reporting as you'll hear in a few minutes.

On policy development and implementation, we have put considerable effort into developing our Volunteer Management Program Policy, which includes screening and waiver requirements for certain volunteer positions, such as coaches. Our concussion policy has also been published on our website and we are currently working on our Safe Sport Policy which establishes regulations and processes for the prevention of harassment, abuse and discrimination in our sport. Since these policies are a requirement for all sports in Alberta, it is essential that both clubs adapt (if necessary), adopt and publish these policies within their own clubs.

Progress on these three key areas has been included in our annual report to ASC and will be vital to securing funding at or above our current level. Next year is the end of a three-year funding cycle when ASC will conduct a major review of our performance. This is when we will find out whether the changes we have implemented have improved our "score" (they should!). Last Thursday (7 November), Bogi and I met with Marvin Dobish from ASC to review our progress to the end of 2018. Overall, the feedback he gave was very positive with just three main issues we need to consider addressing, these being:

1. Looking into the cost for an accountant to produce a “notice to reader” statement for our finances (this is one step down from an audit).
2. Looking into moving our AGM to earlier in the year so it is closer to our financial year end. (Marvin thought our November retreat was a great idea and should maintain it even without the AGM.)
3. As mentioned earlier, membership reporting: the clubs need to update their membership registration so members must choose from one of coach, official, athlete or leader as their main role in their club. These numbers are required by ASC which they are required to pass on elsewhere in the Ministry. Bogi is available to help update the clubs’ registration systems.

There doesn’t appear to be any immediate impact on our funding from the recent provincial budget.

Last year, I touched on the subject of what “governance” means in the relationship AOA has with the two clubs. While this is still a topic for conversation, my interpretation is that it means the AOA ensures the clubs comply with the minimum requirements mandated by Orienteering Canada and government.

Going forward, the focus will be on maintaining what we have achieved over the past year. We will continue to support our current outreach locations and will not actively look for new locations unless we are approached by them. What we have established now gives us a presence in four sport zones (five with Grande Prairie) which satisfies the minimum ASC requirement.

We also want to focus more on supporting the Edmonton and Calgary clubs, specifically in the areas of mapping where we have fallen behind over the past couple of years resulting in underspending on our budget.

The other area of focus is junior development where we want to provide a clear path for promising young athletes to join the High Performance Program. To do this, a Junior Program Development Grant has been created using funds previously allocated to the Team Alberta concept. This grant is specifically for clubs to develop and implement more advanced training programs, providing a gateway for athletes into the High Performance Program.

This was the first year we held the “Alberta Compass Series” of forest events, to try and encourage athletes to attend events in Alberta hosted by the “other” club. A great thanks to all those who made the effort to participate in these events – and to the organisers of course! The Edmonton winners of the Alberta Compass Series received their prizes last weekend at their AGM. The Calgary winners will receive theirs today. The grand prize of a new Silva thumb compass will be decided by a raffle of all the winners and they will receive their compass when it arrives next March in time for the new season.

I want to thank all the volunteers who have made orienteering a success in Alberta this year. Coaches, officials, board members, event organisers, chaperones, parents – without you giving up your valuable time, our sport would not exist. Kitty will be running the volunteer appreciation after the AGM.

In closing, I want to note that I will be entering the last year of my three year term as President. I also want to note that the current composition of the AOA board is highly skewed towards Calgary (five out of seven board members). I’d like to encourage Edmonton members to consider serving on the AOA board so that your club can be better represented at the provincial level. Perhaps the next President can also come from Edmonton.

Thank you for your attention. Are there any questions?