

PRESIDENT

2024 will be a busy year for many of the members of EIOC and FWOC as they prepare for the Canadian Orienteering Festival 2025, while still organising the regular city and forest club events. FWOC will be holding the Western Canadian Orienteering Championship, and EIOC will be holding the Canadian Orienteering Championship. The AOA (well, our ED, Bogi) will be lending a hand with logistics, registration, and banking.

The initial tasks for these events, such as mapping and course planning, take experienced orienteers. But, as we get nearer to the events, there will be MANY volunteers needed for tasks that require limited, if any, orienteering experience. So, if any of you have ever been inclined to see what goes into putting on these larger events, consider keeping an eye out for the call for help that will go out in 2025, and consider volunteering.

Lastly, I am hoping that the Red Deer portion of the grant that the AOA received from the Alberta government, will build on the interest shown by some Red Deerians in the programs our ED has created for Red Deer in past years. It would be wonderful to see a nucleus of keen orienteers grow in Red Deer.

2023 Alberta orienteering highlights (from my perspective):

- I thoroughly enjoyed the training camp organized by FWOC along with the Kootenay orienteering club early in the year. The terrain near Cranbrook was just wonderful, and the training exercises very useful.
- EIOC put on the Alberta Champs in 2023 – thank you to everyone who came out. For those who have not organised a larger event, this entailed hundreds of hours of planning and field work by a core of about five key volunteers (expanding to eight as the event grew closer), starting many weeks before.
- First planning meetings and field checking for COC 2025 (nothing like thrashing through the bush in the snow!).

From my perspective the AOA is in good shape: we have an excellent Executive Director (ED) in Bogi Gyorfı and are healthy financially. As the AOA ED, Bogi is working hard to expand orienteering into other regions of the province, to provide opportunities to children and adults wanting to see what orienteering is all about, all the while providing support to the clubs as needed.

My Role:

1. With the Board and input from members, set strategic direction for the Association.
2. Ensure sufficient resources (human, financial, infrastructure) to ensure effective delivery of Association programs;
3. Represent the Association and advocate on its behalf;

4. Support the efforts of Orienteering Canada

AOA board activities this past year:

- As well as the regular on-line monthly meetings, the AOA board held its annual in-person strategic planning session in Red Deer
 - Reviewed strategic plan, identified priorities for 2024, and developed 2024 budget;
- Air quality policy – given the probability of times of poor air quality, the AOA board is developing guidelines to help event officials decide what to do if air quality is a potential health issue during their event.
- Funding:
 - Successful grant application to the Alberta “Every Kid Can Play” initiative (\$30,000 to be equally split between Calgary, Red Deer, and Edmonton programs)
 - Next AOA casino will be held in 2024 in Edmonton;
 - Deliberately running a larger deficit in 2024 to promote programs.

2024 priorities:

- Finalize air quality policy for orienteering events
- Develop an independent third-party reporting mechanism for membership concerns (as required by our provincial funder, SPAR)
- Support the current 3-year strategic plan objectives (based on Orienteering Canada’s current strategic plan):
 - Increased awareness of the sport of orienteering
 - Seamless sport delivery system
 - A strong and unified orienteering community
 - Organizational excellence;
- Continued support of developing a Red Deer orienteering community;
- Support for maps and events for 2025 COC / WCOC;
- Find and recruit the next AOA president

Kim Kasperski
President, Alberta Orienteering Association