

## Athletics Manitoba

### March 2017 President Report

Since our last Board meeting, I have attended several track meets, a coaches' meeting and several Branch Council meetings. At a very successful Boeing track meet, I presented an achievement award to a very deserving Jane Edstrom, who has 35 years of service as a track official, and was one of only 2 Canadian officials in Olympic Athletics in Rio. Jane, as well as many other senior officials, have given so generously of their time to make our competitions possible, and for so many years.

The Boeing meet featured some excellent performances, not only from the young athletes but from 60+ veterans such as Karl Sproll, Dennis Lang and Grant Towns, who has just turned 70, as well as speedy runs from our own Omena Babalola. It would be great to get more board members to attend track meets, especially feature ones such as Boeing.

One significant issue that the Branches are addressing is the timing of the national championships. The IAAF is asking that all national championships be held near the end of June. This is a major challenge for cold climate countries like Canada because the lead up season is made so short. It also makes other championships in July and August harder to sell. The IAAF idea is to serve the interests of the Diamond League meets. Canada has several athletes who are now key to drawing big crowds to those European events. We also want to have Drouin, De Grasse et al attending our national championships. There is also a significant concern about high school students who would like to attend national U20 having a conflict with their exam schedule at school. AC and the Branches will be working on this issue in the coming months. The subject of whether U20 needs to be held at the same time as the senior championships has become a live issue again on this account.

AC has done a major review of its operations and has made some more personnel changes. Information on both is on the AC website. The positions of Head Coach and of Chief Technical Officer are still being filled. Criteria for national team selection, especially for para athletes, is still under review.

A complaint by Athletics Alberta against board member Tim Berrett was heard and decided by the Commissioner, Hugh Fraser. The complaint was that Tim was in a conflict of interest in representing TrackTown Canada and Athletics Canada at the same time. Commissioner Fraser dismissed the complaint as Tim had not been representing AC when speaking to Edmonton City Council seeking support for TrackTown's bid for hosting the 2020 IAAF U20 championships in Edmonton. Commissioner Fraser clarified the conflict of interest rules for AC Board members and pointed out that Tim could recuse himself if the AC Board is considering any issues regarding TrackTown Canada. He pointed out that if no one who has any involvement with other Athletics organizations could serve on the Board, the AC Board would lose a lot of expertise and good people. Tim is running for re-election at the AGM in July in Ottawa. There has been a longstanding conflict between TrackTown and Athletics Alberta.

We have our own AGM coming up in the next few months and if anyone wishes to serve on the Executive of Athletics Manitoba, they should start making their intentions known to Kathy Kelly soon. It is healthy to have more and new people interested in taking on governance roles in AM and so interest will be welcome.

Grant Mitchell, AM Board president