

Executive Director Report

AGM 2023

Season Overview 2022-23

The 2022-23 season marked significant growth and progress for the Alberta Fencing Association (AFA). Our dedicated efforts focused on enhancing the fencing experience for our members, bolstering athlete support, and fostering sport development at every level. Here's a snapshot of our major achievements and initiatives:

Membership:

Total: 1,206

Associate: 168 (Male: 121, Female: 47)

Competitive: 346 (Male: 223, Female: 123)

Participant: 692 (Female: 240, Male: 431, Unspecified: 21)

Registered Coaches: 32 (Male: 24, Female: 8)

Registered Referees: 35 (Male: 26, Female: 9)

Registered Armoury: 5 (Male: 5)

1. Operations:

- Renewal and update of the Association's liability insurance, ensuring ongoing member coverage; added screening process and safety measures effectively lowering liability insurance costs by \$5,000.
- Extensive updating of organizational files and documents.
- Continuous enhancement of the AFA website in collaboration with EVE Communications.
- Exploration and promising development of a 2M alternative for future implementation.
- Securing a \$10,000 InMotion Grant for SafeSport initiatives and governance improvements.
- Hosting an impactful online clinic focused on Good Governance and Leadership.
- Onboarding and training new Executive Director
- Membership System: Addressing complaints regarding high fees and slow processing times.

2. Financial Management and Reporting:

Bookkeeping:

- Ongoing relationship with King Business Solutions; Hubdoc for uploading and creating invoices and Plooto for payments continues to be efficient.
- Scotiabank dual signature etransfer may be available soon as a supplementary payment alternative to Plooto.
- Conducted multiple meetings, working on the year-end financial audit and report.
- New budget will be finalized once the books are reconciled.

Reporting:

- ADP (Provincial government funding grant):
 - Completed ADP accountability requirements, further improving our standing with SPAR.
- Casino: In March 2023; successful – note that volunteers were very hard to come by; there were even a few no-shows. Thank you to those that participated.
- In Motion grant:

Revised the purpose of the grant to conduct an in-person strategic planning session with Cheryl Humphry of SportLaw in Red Deer's Sport Hall of Fame which:

 - helped create an understanding of the Strategic Planning Process, common terms used, purpose, benefits etc.
 - confirmed and/or revised the Values, Vision and Mission
 - identified and confirmed AFA's Strategic Directions and Priorities
 - identified what the results of an effective strategic plan for an operational/business plan for the 2023/2024 season

3. Athletes Development and Support:

- Effective organization of veteran training camps and cadet athlete subsidies.
- Implementation of new athlete support systems, including the AB Cup Bounties program.
- Assisted the AWG Committee with continued development and refinement of the Alberta Winter Games (AWG) Program.

4. Coaching:

- CFF Coaching development: ongoing collaboration in planning instructor-beginner and new comp-intro courses
 - Alex Martin was certified as comp-dev in October
 - Michelle Ostrickoff was certified as comp-intro in November
- Coaching Development: 2 Coaching Foundations Clinics (through the CFF in alignment with NCCP, but from our prompting) with 17 new coaches attending.
- 2 coaching mentorship clinics led by Maitre Ayach Bounachada; one in Edmonton, one in Calgary. Thank you to Epic Fencing Club and Sergei's Sabre Club for facilitating.
- Promotional efforts for coaching pathways were intensified with new marketing materials.

5. Officials:

- **Referees:** Significant growth with 20 new referees, including **two Nationally certified**, with more candidates now ready for National certification.
- Hosted 3 online referee courses with Mark Stasinis and 4 in-person clinics (in Edmonton and Calgary).
- Created a concise rules/study book for fencing referees by an FIE referee.
- Ongoing referee development support program to track and improve referee performance over the fencing season and to prepare referees for the next step in their development (eg. from regional to Provincial to National levels)
- **Armoury:** Achieved **3 N-level certifications**, enhancing our technical capabilities and operational support.
- **Directoire Technique:** Online DT Crash Course, and How to Run/Manage a Tournament - with FIE DT Filip Vukovic.

6. Tournaments:

- Schedule of events received from clubs and posted on the AFA website.
- Alberta Winter Games 2024: Playoffs were difficult to find hosts; thank you to those who were able to host this year.
- There was a large increase in competition expenses this season, with the approval of another Alberta Cup, and provincial bounties.

7. Communication:

- Website: after the initial redesign of the website to ensure it's customer oriented and easy to navigate; small improvements are ongoing on a regular basis.
- Social media: There has been noticeable improvement after a new manager was put in place; positive feedback from the community
- Supported the Canada Winter Games Team in their journey to PEI in spring of 2023

Summary:

This season has been pivotal in the continued building of a robust foundation for our future. Our focus on enhancing support systems for referees, coaches, governance structures, SafeSport adherence and implementation, and strategic planning marks significant strides in re-establishing a solid groundwork for growth. We are actively addressing issues such as membership system concerns, volunteer shortages, and are recognizing the need for further grassroots development.

I extend much gratitude to the entire Alberta fencing community for your unwavering support and active participation, especially during times of transition. Your dedication is the cornerstone of our success, and together, we are steering towards a more stable and vibrant future for fencing in Alberta.

Sincerely,
Sean Rathwell