

OBC President's Report 2023

2023 has been a mixed year for our orienteering clubs as we continue to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic. Some clubs continue to struggle with volunteer resources and/or access to terrain, both of which were exacerbated by the pandemic. Others are making great strides in developing orienteering in their areas.

The 2023 Western Canadian Orienteering Championships (WCOCs), which were also the BC Orienteering Championships (BCOCs), were hosted by Sage Orienteering Club (SAGE). This was a no-frills event that focused on excellent courses on a pair of superb brand new forest maps, with plenty of time to socialize in the evenings at the nearby lakeside campground. Roughly 170 participants came from across Western Canada, Western USA, and as far away as Ontario, the UK, and Sweden.

We look forward to next year's WCOCs in Manitoba and BCOCs hosted by Victoria Orienteering Club (VICO).

After last year's financial support from Orienteering BC (OBC), for the acquisition of orienteering equipment and the creation of a number of local maps, the Cariboo Chilcotin Orienteering Club (CCOC) has been growing quickly with a number of junior programs and family activities.

SAGE joined the Greater Vancouver Orienteering Club (GVOC) and started using Interpodia for membership and event registration. A few refinements still need to be made, but it is really nice that the system ensures that event participants have their memberships, which relieves one event organizer headache.

After last autumn's evaluation by *viaSport*, Orienteering BC retained our status as an accredited Provincial Sport Organization. This means that we qualified for continued annual funding for the next 3 years. This year's funding to OBC is the same as that provided in the previous few years. However, the evaluation and *viaSport's* implied future direction indicate that orienteering will need to grow in several areas, including membership, officials and coaching development, over the next few years if we are to retain our status as an accredited sport and have access to this funding.

This year, several individuals reached out to clubs and/or OBC for help developing orienteering in their areas. Interest came from Prince George, Terrace, several Interior groups, and recently Abbotsford. Unfortunately, the nearest clubs and OBC struggled to find the personnel needed to help these groups kickstart orienteering in their areas. We need to find a path to providing this type of support.

In 2024, OBC plans to kickstart some programs that will address these resource issues and make some progress toward growing orienteering in BC. We are looking at applying financial resources to a junior development program and a paid executive/administrative/technical director position. OBC has the financial resources to get these programs started in the coming year. In subsequent years, we may need government grant support to maintain them.

Thank you to all of the members of the Board of Directors for their time and contributions this year. A special thank you to the retiring board members, Emily Ross, Ross Burnett, Jackie Bonn and Laurent Mingo, for their years of service and valuable contributions to OBC.

Kevin Matrosovs