

## **2009 AGM Executive Officers report.**

Late September snow falls have given a white mantle to some resorts and prolonged the season just a little longer. It's all fine and well if you have the chance to take up on it but for most of us the skis are packed away until the next season, be it here or overseas.

The European season starts very soon and for our Olympic hopefuls of Mark Raymond and Alex Almoukov it's upon them now. Alex is already in Russia training and Mark flies out in a few days to Germany to continue his training. The whole Association takes this opportunity to wish both athletes the best of luck in all races. We shall all be eagerly awaiting the Olympics in February to see an Australian Biathlete fly the flag high and proud for us.

To go back over a year of events and activities is always a hard task and difficult to do it justice in report such as this. Some of the highlights over the year have been,

### **The 2009 Youth/Junior Biathlon World Champs in Canada.**

With the commitment and dedication of Toscha Stopar as Coach and her athletes Aislinn Kildea, Giles Richardson and Dyllan Harmer we had a team at the Junior/Youth Champs in Canmore Canada. This is the first time in over 12 years that we have had any team or individual for that matter attend at such competitions and it is great to see the enthusiasm that has been shown by all involved in continuing to promote that sport to their peers since they have come back. Toscha also came back armed with some great networking opportunities as well as giving Jackie Kildea a greater insight into the sport and some of the work involved in managing a team.

The ideals of the Canadian Training model (LTAD level 1 & 2) is what Australia has shaped itself around and was a key factor in underpinning the framework principles of our Coaching Accreditation process now approved by the Australian Sports Commission.

The more coaches such as Toscha that take the lead to get a team together, commit a lot of hours leading up to the trip and then accompany the team to the events, can only be a good thing for the sport. Whilst Toscha covered the majority of her own expense it is hoped in the future years that costs may be offset by other contributions.

### **The 2009 World Champs in Korea.**

World Champs in Korea was something very different and I had the opportunity along with Nick Almoukov and our athletes Mark Raymond and Alex Almoukov to be present for them. This was the first time in Biathlon History that World Champs have been taken to Asia and they were out to impress as Korea are vying for the 2018 Winter Olympic Games.

Poor snow conditions marred the Championships in what was an unseasonal warm February for them. In true fashion, the day after we left the weather got cold again and good conditions returned. The Koreans are very hospitable seemed to have people everywhere and offering to help us out in any way. Just as well, as we spoke no Korean and they no English so a translator came into play a number of times.

Exploring Biathlon events in the Asian Pacific Rim is a reasonable concept for Australians as travel time is half of that to Europe and a number of non IBU events can be on offer for those willing to work through the protocols to get a rifle into Asia. (not that easy considering owning a rifle in Korea is illegal)

### **Purchase of new rifles for the club arsenal.**

Through successful IBU grant submissions we have been able to acquire 2 new rifles for the Association to hire out. With these 2 new rifles we now have 5 mostly new Baikal Rifles in our stock. These are far more reliable than some 25-30 yr old Anschutz that we pensioned off and could not be relied on to hit the broad side of a barn. Reliable and accurate rifles are vital in the formative period of someone getting into the sport and not yet ready to commit to the purchase of their own rifle.

### **Continued commitment to the Summer Biathlon at Wangaratta.**

With a small band of Volunteers and Officials the Summer Biathlon series at Wangaratta has steadily grown. The running of Summer Biathlon dovetails into the business plan for development of the sport outside of a winter domain. Leon & Jackie Kildea being based in Wangaratta has been a great asset in maintaining a line of communication with the Wangaratta Small Bore club whose facilities we use once a month.

It was also the perfect training base for Tosch to coach her athletes from prior to heading to Canada for competitions. People are starting to realise that a winter Biathlete is made in Summer when large volumes of training can be undertaken in more conducive environments than a wet winters day.

Once again Thanks go to Toschas for running 99% of these events at Wangaratta along with the helping parents, Geoff & Debbie Harmer, Neil Richardson and the Kildeas

### **Establishment of Biathlon participation from NSW.**

After a long hiatus of athletes from NSW taking part in the sport it is pleasing to see a good number of juniors becoming involved at our recent National Championships. The commitment of the juniors is further shown by the purchase of rifles to use.

Alex Almoukov under the coaching of his father Nick has spearheaded the burgeoning interest in NSW Biathlon after early attempts in 2003 by a now defunct NABA using Laser Biathlon at Perisher.

Cameron Morton has also aligned himself with the NSW Biathlon movement as it fits in with his location to the NSW ski fields and opportunities available at the New South Wales Institute of Sport (NSWIS). As a National Sporting Body we

welcome representation by NSW Delegates onto the committee of the Association so the Association can deliver on an equitable level.

### **Recognition of the Sport by the Australian Sports Commission.**

Most may have thought this as a matter of formality yet I can assure you it is beyond that. It has taken the Association nearly two years to gain this recognition and is based on having established policy such as a Coaching Course, Member Protection Policy, Anti Doping Policy and a host of other documents to satisfy the strict criteria they impose. One positive thing to come out of this is that it opens the door to Federal Funding assistance for the sport and a greater network of training opportunities and resources. Whilst we have been earmarked for funding, the ASC are awaiting a Federal funded report on Sports funding before any funding over the next 4 years is determined.

### **High Performance planning for Elite Development.**

Under guidelines set down the Australian Olympic Committee the Association has produced and submitted a High Performance plan for elite development of our athletes. The plan fundamentally deals with the budgetary requirements to operate the sport at the elite level and covers costs of having a dedicated fulltime High Performance coach(s) an Administrator as well as funding team travel overseas and purchase of team specific equipment such as a SCATT training system. The plan is produced in the AOC publication National High Performance Plan for Olympic and Paralympic Sports in Australia (dated Feb 2009). Of which I have a copy for viewing.

Any funding afforded this plan is also linked to the Federal Funded report with the ASC.

Findings are due late 2009.

### **New Zealand Development Camp.**

This is the most recent achievement we have had for development and was made possible by the IBU and its desire to further promote Biathlon development in the Southern Hemisphere. John Porter as Manager/Coach accompanied Dyllan Harmer, Hamish McLean, Lachlan Porter and Gaby Cigana to the Snow Farm on the South Island of New Zealand. The IBU expert Coach Janis Vodigar attended and put both coaches and athletes through their paces. A full report will be available from John and the team in the near future when they have time to unpack their bags and catch up on themselves.

These development opportunities present themselves on an adhoc basis often with little warning so it was great we were able to take advantage of this latest opportunity.

### **Successful State Government funding for the sport over a 2 year period.**

With no specific National funding for the sport the Association is heavily reliant on Funding grants through the Department of Victorian Communities. The primary funding grant we achieved for the next 2 years is the Ongoing Supports Grant (OSG); this gives us a specified sum per year to operate the sport from and to

run Victorian programs that will benefit grass root level in Victoria. Guidelines attached to such grants are very specific and 6 monthly reports have to be submitted in line with the strategic plan and business plan approved by our Government sports representative. The opportunity of Federal Funding through the AOC and the ASC gives us greater scope to operate from a National Level and with NSW coming on line will also give them a challenge to secure State funding for a sport that so far can only be undertaken in Victoria. It's always a juggling act for funding as submissions often outstrip the resources available, Tier 1 sports attract the most funding. Biathlon as Tier 3 sport gets the least amount generally.

### **Aside from all that**

With all organizations whether it be sport or business, low lights also occur during the year. The successful organizations move forward by what they learn from the lowlights and use the same recipe of success that brought the highlights to fruition.

In the same way we can use what we learnt from what didn't work this year to make corrections it and have work better for us next year. Of course this will take effort by all involved and a readiness to go into some things with an open mind and think on a holistic approach to the benefit of the sport itself and not for the greater good of any one individual.

The end of this season saw a slightly unsavory measure taken by the Executive Board in consideration to the suspension of a member, this was unprecedented in the Sport and has caused a good deal of unrest for a number of people. Hopefully it has not caused a divide by members and we can continue to move forward, which of course, is the only direction we should be moving.

The next 12 months promises to be an exciting year for the sport with a number of new ideas and initiatives to be explored and possibly introduced at events. Whilst the newly elected Board will steer a number of these ideas and initiatives they are always welcome to new suggestions from you as a members as to how it things could be done differently. None of us are experts in all fields. We simply try to do our best with what we have.

Thank you all for the participation you have given over the 2008/09 year and lets look forward to 2009/10 year for Australian Biathlon.

Paul Connor  
Executive Officer  
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