

International Cup 2017
Porec, Croatia
Team Manager Review

We would like to start by thanking the selection committee for choosing us to be the team managers for the International Cup event. It is always an honour to be selected to participate in these events as a member of the Canadian contingent and to represent Canada, its athletes and coaches as they strive for personal best performances.

Nancy and I both thoroughly enjoyed working with each other in preparation for this event and while in Croatia. We feel that our personalities meshed well together and were able to help each other out with our individual strengths and weaknesses to provide an overall fantastic experience for our contingent. We both look forward to an opportunity to be able to work with each other again.

We have written our report together and below is a breakdown of the different areas of the trip and what we felt were successful and recommendations for future.

Planning

Positives:

- 1) We feel the “go to meetings” were a great idea. This allowed us all to communicate and go over our “to do/task” list together and update everyone at the same time. Allowed for questions and thoughts to be asked and addressed in real time instead of back and forth with email chains. This process should continue for future years
- 2) Splitting the responsibilities of pre-trip duties worked well. Having someone work on secret pal organization, and other working on transfers etc. allowed for less stress and work on the managers behalf to get things done. Also allowed for 1 person to be dealing with communication with the organizers from the host country. (cut down on confusion on their end)

Recommendations:

- 1) Earlier involvement of the team managers. Selections weren't made until April and we did not receive any information on the trip until May. This made for a lot of catching up on information at the same time that the contingent was being selected and questions from them. This made it difficult for us to answer questions when we didn't know ourselves.
- 2) If team managers are selected prior to Winter meetings, then information about the hotels, facility, location etc. can be given to them immediately following winter meetings and can allow for the team managers to become better familiar with the information.

Travel

Positives:

- 1) Car rental - This is the second year we have had a car rental for the team managers to use as required and it was very beneficial to us. It enabled buses to depart on time, while the car could then wait for officials who had to stay later in meetings, or get driven to other meetings. This year, in particular, it was very helpful to get some of our injured athletes to medical facilities as needed, without much disruption to other members of the contingent. We would recommend this practice continue in the future.
- 2) Transfers - Bus transfer information was a challenge due some communication difficulties. However, once we were in country, all of the individuals met with us personally and reviewed all

the details for meals, transfers, etc and we were able to deal with any outstanding issues before they became a concern. Having a bus list with who is on each bus was beneficial to keep track of numbers of people on each bus for each day. (thank you Nancy)

Areas for improvement:

- 1) Travel planning (both to and from country and in country) there were too many different travel schedules to coordinate and too many requests for changes that made the planning for transportation very difficult. The travel delays notwithstanding (out of people's control), we had contingent members arriving on 5 separate days with multiple schedules- CBTF was looking after some athletes travel, but not all- made it difficult to plan and assist the contingent members.

***RECOMMENDATION

- There is only 1 option for arrival and departure dates and athletes must travel within those parameters and must be included in the contingent travel plans.
- Other family members should not have to be part of the contingent plans, but athletes and coaches do

- 2) Team Managers responsible for athletes, coaches, judges and officials only. Especially with a contingent the size we had, coordinating the official contingent members presented a significant challenge, then to factor in the additional demands of parents and family members was very time consuming and took away for our ability to be there for the athletes.

***RECOMMENDATION

- Perhaps provinces can identify 1 parent as a "team" chaperone to assist with things and they would be a part of the official contingent
- Parents and spectators if travelling arrange own travel arrangements and hotel accommodations. CBTF should only be concerned with booking enough hotel rooms for the official contingent travelling and not their entourage.
- Parent transportation, meals, ticketing, etc. is left entirely on their own or is arranged by a parent coordinator volunteer ("Spectator Manager"???)

- 3) Touring should be limited to after the competition and not prior to. Families/athletes arriving early and visiting or touring around the area prior to competition, does not allow for the contingent to arrive together, the athlete to train properly leading up to the event, and not focused on the task at hand of representing Canada to the best of their capacity.

Hotel

Positives:

- 1) Hotel meals- The hotel had a fairly rigid schedule in terms of meal times, but they were very accommodating when it came to our requests to alter the meal times due to our athletes needs. The breakfast times were moved up by ½ hour every day during our stay and meal times were extended for the supper hour on a couple of occasions at our request as well. Many thanks to the kitchen staff for putting in the extra hours to ensure our athletes received meals.
- 2) Welcome Party- There were some concerns going in regarding adequate space for our large contingent to host the Welcome Party at the hotel and once we arrived, there were some concerns regarding the timing of the event given some hotel constraints. However, we were

able to work with Mr. Lino- the hotel catering manager to work out all the details and, in the end, it turned out to be a very enjoyable evening. Many thanks to Leisha Strachan, who came up with a fabulous game that the athletes could play that was quick, but allowed them to interact with each other!

Recommendations:

- 1) This concern was identified in Abbotsford as an issue and continued to be an issue this year. It may be an issue in future years as well- considering the size of some of our contingents, but it is a concern none the less. It is really unfortunate that the contingent was divided, yet again, in to different accommodation sites.
- 2) Even though we were in the same facility, the accommodations between the hotel and vila's were vastly different. Created animosity and separation between the contingent.
- 3) Could have been avoided if parents and spectators weren't included in the booking process for the Canadian contingent. Athletes, coaches and officials would have been able to fit into the hotel and spectators should arrange their own accommodations elsewhere

Practices

Positives:

- 1) Practice days- gym time seemed adequate for the size of our contingent. Practice facilities were a good size and worked well for our contingent. The practice schedule also seemed to work well, giving equal time to all groups/teams as well as individual events. Coaches still had final say in what their athletes did and how they used the time at the gyms. We received no complaints from athletes or coaches regarding the practice time while we were there, so we are assuming all were ok with it.
- 2) Amount of practice hours we think were appropriate for the contingent size and the time ahead of competition

Recommendations:

- 1) Official practice time in main arena. WBTF should look at how those times are allotted based on countries contingent size. Larger contingents should have more time booked for main floor practice. 1 hour is not sufficient for a large contingent like Canada, Japan, USA, France etc.

Competition

Positives:

- 1) Facility was fantastic. Very spacious and temperature in facility was well controlled for the heat that was experienced during the early days of the competition.
- 2) Flow of competition was done well with the number of sets that we had, the organizers kept the competition moving smoothly. Not flashing scores definitely helped with that.
- 3) Lots of volunteers around the facility.
- 4) Lunches during competition days were well done and having them delivered to change room was beneficial for the contingent

Recommendations:

- 1) Communication with CBTF president (or rep) and team managers could be improved. We have become so reliant on our North American telecommunications that we take for granted the ability to communicate instantly with whomever we want. This year demonstrated that when

that ability to communicate is lacking, it was very difficult to get answers we needed that were sometimes, time sensitive. *Recommendation- CBTF invest in burner phones in country, that will work properly, or we have some form of wireless communication ability so that team managers can communicate to each other, or with official delegates as required.

- 2) Recommendation for CBTF to take to WBTF- As we were also the technical representatives for Canada, there were times where we needed to deal with some technical issues and questions. However, it was not clear, in many situations, who the right person was to speak to. The host country staff was very good at dealing with facility type questions, but when it came to questions regarding warm ups, open gym time, restrictions, the process for appealing, etc, we did not know who to go to and often could not get to them as they were in the VIP section, or in the TAB room. As team managers, we were not allowed access to either area. It might be something for the WBTF to consider having 1 specific person for country delegates to speak to regarding these types of questions and an identifiable place where they could be found or contacted
- 3) Posting final results at the facility should be addressed. This did not allow for excitement of the athletes winning medals, the thrill of hearing your name announced when it may not be expected. Also, this did not allow country's to make the decision to not tell teams/individuals results on their own if they wanted.

General Thoughts:

- 1) No B athletes to Icup- consider Pan Pacific instead. Or, if B's are allowed, they can only participate in B once, then must compete in A or higher, or not at all. Rational: International cup is supposed to be a stepping stone for our B athletes to improve and better themselves and the country as a whole. If an athlete is competing at the B level for multiple years, they really aren't progressing. International cup may not be the best avenue for them to compete at higher level than Nationals. Perhaps Pan Pacific cup is a better platform for those athletes. This leaves International and World championships for our A and elite level athletes only.
- 2) All members of the Canadian contingent, including coaches, must follow the guidelines established by the team managers. For example- no communication of plans not to attend a day of the competition, or to arrive late at the competition. Team managers need to be made aware of all these plans, the same as with athletes as we are planning for all members of the contingent.
- 3) While we have been quite successful and ensuring the full contingent is at the competition for the beginning and end, there are many examples of Canadian athletes taking the floor with little fan support in the stands. While on certain days, this is understandable (ie- prelim day), where most athletes may be competing, on other days, such as finals days there were many times the stands were relatively empty for Canadian athletes, given the size of our contingent. Additionally, we are all members of Team Canada- and all contingent members should be cheering for all of Team Canada.
- 4) Athletes are given years of participation recognition all the time. Judges should also be recognized for their years of participation with WBTF. Some judges have been representing their country and doing the hard job of judging for years and should be recognized
- 5) Significant others should not be allowed to room with athletes!!! We had a situation this year where a boyfriend came on the trip and was rooming with the athlete during the trip. This was not caught in advance as the name given for travel and hotel was a gender neutral name and the last name of the athlete was included in the paper work (could have been a mother with a

hyphenated name). Better determination of people travelling with contingent and ensuring that boyfriends or girlfriends are not rooming with athletes while they are competing.

While it was a very busy week and we certainly faced some issues, it was extremely rewarding to work with all the coaches and athletes during this event and we certainly enjoyed seeing many of the terrific performances our Canadian athletes put on the floor!

Thank you to everyone who made it possible, but especially to the athletes, who made it an experience we won't forget!

Thank you to Joanne Moser for all your assistance and planning in this trip. Much appreciated.

Sincerely,

Steven Kopas and Nancy Lightheart