

SKATE CANADA ICE SUMMIT 2016

 ST. JOHN’S, NEWFOUNDLAND

The Skate Canada Summit in St. John’s Newfoundland was a great event. We not only had the opportunity to mix and mingle with Skating’s best, both past and present, at the Key note address and the Awards Gala, we enjoyed the comradery of our skating friends from across the country, as well as attended very educational and informative workshops.

Elvis Stojko was the main presenter who very candidly told his story of his struggles within his skating and personal life and how he grew from all his experiences to look at life in the most positive way possible. It was truly a touching and honest account of his survival in the world of skating and his escape to Mexico after his competitive career had ended, meeting his Mexican wife and now loving his connection to the next generation of skater, as well as performing once again.

The Awards Gala honoured our Skate Canada National Volunteer winners. Presented by some National Team members, including Eric Radford and Megan Duhammel and Andrew Poje and Katilyn Weaver, the recognition was well received. Our two BC/YK Section National winners were Marilyn Kreuzinger for Volunteer Coach and Gail Weber for Volunteer Excellence were supported by more than 20 of our club, section and region directors who were in attendance.

The Workshop opportunities were varied and I attended ‘Maximizing A Skater’s Potential Score: A Judge’s Point of View’ presented by Karen Howard and supported by 3 other ISU judges. This session talked about both the skaters’ GOE marks and Program Components and how both marks go into a skater’s ultimate score. All participants had the opportunity to ‘be the judge’ and assess World level skaters. It was a good exercise for those who were not familiar with everything that determines a judge’s marks. Something similar, but at a lower level, would be beneficial learning experience for parents, coaches and the skaters themselves.

The next session was ‘Monitoring Athletes – Best Practices’ presented by Benoit Lavoie. This workshop talked about the purpose of monitoring and the roles of the ‘Team’. (coach, skater, officials, both judge and technical) Planning when monitoring should occur appropriately within the skater’s training timeline, the strategy of program development and ongoing follow up throughout the season, were all part of this informative discussion.

The 3rd session was presented by Lindsay Hillier, a synchronized skating coach from Newfoundland. She shared her developing program and building a synchro system within a club that has limited ice time and number of skaters. In Nfld 13 of 32 clubs have synchro teams and 8 of the clubs have a total of 22 teams. Most exist on 2 hours of ice time per week. Two teams at a time share one hour of ice. The early development of a skater’s skills; edges, stroking, upper body physical skills are the base and the skaters evolve into singles skating after these skills are learned. Lindsay spoke of her teambuilding exercises, team ownership, culture and moral and unified focus. They used Social Media to promote their activities, fun events and awards, resulting in skaters wanting to become involved. Activities such as neighbourhood scavenger hunts, pot luck meals, games nights and fundraising involved everyone and responsibilities in organizing such events were shared by the teammates, without relying on parents.

The Business part of the Summit was held on the Saturday. The electronic voting system was very efficient and results of the elections and the few motions, that were presented, were tabulated quickly.

Of course Newfoundland would not be without their social functions and local flavor. We sampled some great meals throughout town, especially the Lobster Benedict, at Mallard’s Cottage, fish and chips at the Yellow Belly Brewery and brunch at the Gypsy Tea Room. Enjoying the entertainment on the Disco bus to the Kitchen Party adventure to Cape Spear, Signal Hill and Quidy Vidy and the Pub Crawl down George Street where we learned Irish dancing, Newfoundland pub songs and of course being officially dubbed Newfoundlanders with a Screeching Ceremony. Our Section Chair Hilary Quick is originally from Newfoundland so we had our own personal Screech In conducted by a relative of hers. Many laughs were had by all, especially when the camera caught the participants kissing the Salmon head….as no cod was available!

All and all the Summit was most enjoyable and enlightening. Skate Canada’s logo…CONVERGE, CONNECT AND COLLABORATE was an excellent reflection of the annual meeting for 2016. The hospitality was tremendous and the memories are vast.

Submitted by Susan Morriss