

2014 Zone 8 ASG Track and Field Team – Final Thoughts

I had a ton of fun; I hope you did too. This was my 8th **Alberta Summer Games** - 7 as the Zone Coach, and 1 as the Sport Chair. I'll definitely be back for 2016 in Leduc, and I hope to see all of you who participated in the Midget category back for another crack at it in two years.

Overall, I was really pleased with how we did last weekend. I was predicting 8 or 9 medals and we won 7 – 5 silver and 2 bronze. We ran into some really bad luck with injuries to **Greg Student, Kris Baird, Christian Lambert,** and **Luis Ventura** – I figure that cost us at least 4 other medals right there.

For the record, the silver medalists were **Kelsey Wudkewich** (U15 High Jump and Pentathlon), **Cianna Forseille** (U17 Javelin), **Kelsey Bishop** (U17 Heptathlon), and **Alexi Watson** (U15 Triple Jump.) Bronze medals were won by **Kris Baird** (U15 Discus) and **Rylee Peters** (U15 Pentathlon). Kelsey W and Cianna were 2012 ASG team members who weren't on the podium last time, but really stepped up their games this time with personal best performances. Also, this was Kelsey B's first-ever heptathlon, and Alexi's second-ever triple jump competition. Fantastic performances, people!

A number of athletes had heart-breaking 4th place finishes including **Alexi Watson** (U15 300m), **Katrina Hein** (U17 Javelin), **Kelsey Bishop** (U17 300 Hurdles), and the **U15 Medley Relay Team - Alexi Watson, Rebecca Debre, Piper Chillog,** and **Sierra Essau**. Alexi ran a smoking 400m to lead off (62 seconds), and Sierra Essau, on the final 800m leg, hung in there in the bronze position for 650m before just falling short at the end. Sierra was able to record a personal best time of 2:38 on her leg. Also, **Rylee Peters** was a late sub for the injured Chris Baird in the U15 Shot Put and placed 4th.

While **Morgan Luken** didn't have a 4th, he had a quartet of 5th place finishes (U17 800, 1500, 3000, and Medley Relay) all in personal best times. And speaking of relays, we need to give thrower **Cole Stefen** special recognition for filling in on both U17 Boy's Relays. What Cole lacked in speed endurance and smooth form was more than made up in enthusiasm and effort. You rock, my friend!

I reserve my final shout out to the youngest member of our team **Ainsley Wolstenholme**. Competing in your first Games as a Grade 7 against much older athletes is intimidating. However, the experience she gained will be very valuable when she competes again in 2016 and 2018. Way to go, Ainsley.

Away from the track, I was really impressed with the energy and spirit displayed by team members. We may have finished 8th out of 8 teams in the standings, but **we were by far and away the team that had the most fun!** I truly believe that our team was the biggest reason that Zone 8 was chosen for the **Spirit of the Games Award**. Of course, **Luis Ventura's** dramatic "finish" in the Octathlon 1000m was widely covered, but other moments like wearing the pink hard hat on the podium, encouraging the other medal winners to Bill Wave, and getting the slow clap and cheer going on 6th round throws really set our team apart.

With 34 athletes in 72 different events, I needed quite a bit of help with coaching. **Rigel Carias** (2 Games as an athlete, and 5 as a coach), and **Jamie Wigmore, Hayden Hollowell** and **Dylan Zambonelli** (1 Games each as an athlete, and 1 games each as a coach) provided both the Games and technical experience needed to have a successful team. And our assistant coaches, **Dr. Fred Brown, Roland Esposito,** and pacer **Eric Martinek** weren't able to be with us at the Games, but they really helped to prepare the group through our team practices. Thanks a lot.

We also got great support from the team parents, many whom travelled to the Games. Athletes, be sure to thank your parents!

So going forward, I'd encourage any of you who are runners to participate in the **Wolves Cross Country Running Series** this fall. Details are at www.wolvesxcseries.com Apart from this, keeping active in other sports like soccer, swimming, hockey and basketball (notice volleyball isn't included in this list ... but I digress ;-)) is an excellent way to develop skills and fitness for track and field.

And while next year is not a Games year, the **Wolves Athletics Club** will be hosting a meet or two in Grande Prairie, and competing in school track will keep you sharp for 2016. And for those of you who will be too old in 2016 for the Games, I hope to see you at **GPRC** in the next few years competing for the **Wolves in x-country running and/or indoor track**.

I'd be interested in any feedback you might have, positive or negative, about your Games experience. Shoot me an e-mail or FB message with your comments. Also, if you have any pictures from the Games, please share them on our Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/groups/431578573531175/>

Thanks for all your hard work. Like I said in the opening paragraph, I had a blast.

Bill Corcoran
Zone 8 ASG Athletics – Head Coach