

Section E: Working with your Community

GETTING THINGS DONE

This section of the manual is not so much a technical or scientific outline as it is a compilation of ways and means to source goods, services, volunteers and publicity outside of your club's limited pool of resources. This section is by no means complete and you are encouraged to share your own club's successes with other Meet Directors by sending in ideas to GO so that these ideas can be included in future Meet Director Manuals.

SOLICITING SUPPORT FROM YOUR COMMUNITY

Meet Directors should remember that by hosting a competition in their community, they are doing their local citizens a service. They are bringing athletes, coaches and spectators to their community that would otherwise not be there. These visitors will eat, stay in hotels, buy gasoline, souvenirs and may even find a reason to return to your community again. All these expenditures add up to a significant economic impact.

Seek Municipal Support for the free use of the local arena or sponsorship (service in kind). The basis for the negotiation should be that your event will provide a positive experience for the Municipality in terms of tourism, economic impact, developing volunteer skills, and promoting the town throughout the province through media exposure. Provide a letter clearly outlining the scope of the meet, the benefits the Municipality would receive and what is asked of the Municipality.

Meet Directors are encouraged to incorporate this type of idea to apply for: Municipal Hosting Grants; assistance from the local Recreation Department, free use of municipal facilities, gifts for visitors etc.

SOURCING VOLUNTEERS

Outside of the parents of gymnasts in your club, there are several other sources of volunteers within your community.

High Schools:

- Local high schools have cooking, woodworking, art, physical education, marketing, leadership courses - all of which include curriculum that can be very helpful to running your competition. Contact the principal well in advance of your competition to see if these classes can use your meet as a special project for class work. These students can help you to prepare food for judges and concessions, promote the event, and assist with computer scoring to name just a few areas.
- At 1992 Elite Ontario in Collingwood, the local high school was approached to help run the competition, as there was no gymnastics club in the area. A portion of the meet profits were negotiated to go to the school for their efforts. The staff and students provided most of the manpower and much of the minor equipment for the event.

Service Clubs:

- Service clubs are often an excellent source of manpower for events. Check with your local municipality to find the mandate of each service club. These organizations whose focus is youth will often help with moving equipment, security, providing food for judges and volunteers and even sponsoring the competition. Consider the age group of the service club when assigning a job task so as not to turn the organization off. For example, don't ask an older group of individuals to move your equipment. As well, you may wish to ask a group such as the Legion to donate sandwiches and baked goods.

FILLING THE SEATS

There are several creative ways to sell tickets for your event. This often takes more effort and planning than simply distributing posters and hoping that people will be interested enough to come to your event. The results, however, will help to increase your admissions gate and in turn your concessions and souvenir sales. As well, by attracting those who might not otherwise attend, you will be helping to display our sports to potential new participants. That being said, make sure you have extra seats to fill after you have accounted for the athlete's spectators. You should count on at least 2 spectators per athlete.

Service Clubs:

- Once again, find out the mandate of various service clubs within your community. Certain organizations will focus on senior citizens, youth and persons with various disabilities. Approach these Service Clubs to purchase tickets for people in these identified target groups. Your competition can be an exciting vehicle for these organizations to create good will within the community while you are able to increase your attendance. For example, if you are able to convince the Optimist Club (whose focus group is youth) to purchase 50 tickets at \$5 each and send two to local public school classes to attend your competition you have accomplished the following:
 - increase attendance by 50
 - potential increase to souvenirs and food concessions
 - created a positive opportunity for Optimist Club
 - created a possible interest story and photo opportunity in local newspaper
 - exposed individuals to the sport and possibly encouraged future participation

Note: Don't forget to offer a few free tickets and some welcome announcements to the Service Club and the group they have sponsored!

Colouring Contest:

- Here is another spectator push with a promotional twist. Invite local youngsters from public school classes to take part in a colouring contest for your competition. Students can create their own pictures, or colour in pre-designed diagrams (trace and photocopy old poster designs etc.). Then display all of the entrants' "work of art" on a special wall and invite all of the kids to come to the competition for free. A winning draw can also be chosen by your club with a special presentation being made to the winner at the meet.

Student Card Discount:

- Another way to attract students to your meet is to offer a discount to the meet when they display their student cards. You may even attract potential gymnasts in your club.

Club Recreational Members:

- Offer a discount to any of your clubs' recreational gymnasts.

Food Drive:

- Publicize that you will offer a discount ticket price to anyone that donates a non-perishable food item to the meet. Then donate all of the food collected to your local food bank.

*Brainstorm with your committee regarding unique ways you can increase your spectators