

Freestyle Alberta

Head Judge Report – 2019 Season

September 26, 2019

Curt Whitteron – Head Judge

This past season was another busy one for Freestyle Alberta (“FA”). That said, when compared to the previous season’s schedule that included the AB Winter Games Qualifier, the AB Winter Games and test events in Red Deer in advance of the 2019 Canada Winter Games, I would coin 2019 as being somewhat of a more “normal year” for Freestyle Alberta.

A couple of highlights for the past season were:

- We held our first “Timber Tour” event in Jasper that included a Club Competition event in moguls & slopestyle along with our first two provincial mogul competitions of the year. These events were run simultaneously over the weekend. Other than some weather issues the event ran very smoothly and there is no doubt that the OC and volunteers at Jasper deserve a huge shout out for their efforts in running this inaugural Timber Tour event!
- Hosting a very successful Canada Winter Games in Red Deer.

In total, during the 2019 season we held 7 Provincial/Club level events located in Jasper, Fernie, Lake Louise, Sunshine, Tawatina and Winsport. These events called for a total of 56 seats required on the judging panels. A total of only 19 judges were active during 2019 to fill these 56 seats as they judged at multiple competitions and events as required. These numbers highlight the importance of the need for developing a sustained recruitment and training program for judges so we can continue to offer our OC’s the strongest panels possible for their competitions. We are very fortunate to have a solid core of judges that remain active in our province. That said, there are some longer-term judges retiring for various reasons while others are achieving higher licensing levels meaning they will potentially be busier judging higher-level events such as Nationals and/or Nor-Am. Both of these realities are adding up to a potential void of judges available for our regional events and are good examples of why a well thought out and sustained recruitment plan for Freestyle judges is paramount in our province. I have met briefly with our new FA Executive Director, Jared Linden and was pleased to hear that he brings fresh ideas to the table that target getting ex athletes, coaches and parents more involved on the judges stand. I am confident that Jared’s plan in its entirety will bode well for us in this initiative as we move forward. The beginnings of his plan will be kicked off at the upcoming Freestyle Alberta Symposium being held in Red Deer during November where a regional judging clinic will be a part of the curriculum. We are hopeful that overall attendance at this event and participation in the judging clinic will be strong. This is the only Regional Judging Clinic currently planned for the upcoming season in Alberta but we can and will respond quickly to add another clinic to the schedule should there be enough demand to warrant the same.

The following is a brief comparison of the Regional judging clinics held and attendees over the past two years:

- Prior to last season (2019) we held one Regional clinic at Winsport and had a total of 8 participants. A total of 18 people had registered for the clinic, 4 cancelled prior to and there were 6 no shows on the day of the clinic.
- Prior to the previous season (2018) we held two clinics and had a total of 25 attendees. These clinics were held in Tawatina (7 participants) and Winsport (18 attendees).

This represents a sharp drop in numbers at these clinics over the past two years, which I believe is further evidence that a more formalized, sustainable recruitment and training program for judges is required in our province. **We really do need the continued support of all clubs to help encourage parents, retired coaches & athletes and any other interested parties to attend these judging clinics.**

The following is a list of the number of Alberta judges we currently have included in our database along with their individual judging license level:

FIS A Level – 1

FIS B Level – 3

FIS C Level – 6

D Level – 17

E Level – 15

The total number of judges in Alberta has dropped slightly over the past 2 seasons, mainly due to retirement. On the positive side of the ledger, I believe that the experience level of our core group of judges is strengthening and there are a number of judges that are close to bumping up to the next license level. To this point, we are hoping to see some of our “D” license judges attend the upcoming FIS “B” Clinic in Calgary.

On behalf of all of Alberta’s judges I will close by saying that we are looking forward to another successful year of Freestyle Skiing in our province in the 2020 season!

Best regards,

Curt Whitteron
Freestyle Alberta - Head Judge