

Presidents Report

It's hard to believe another year has come and gone since our last AGM. For me, this is my first year acting as President of KNS and the time has definitely flown by.

We have such an amazing community of martial artists in KNS, and behind every great organization are the wonderful volunteers, dojo instructors, coaches, officials, staff, athletes and parents who dedicate their time to making Karate Nova Scotia (KNS) success. Each group plays an integral role within Karate Nova Scotia through their dedication and commitment to the organization.

Reports submitted by our executive and staff highlight a lot of the hard work that goes on throughout the year, so I'll just brush on a few of these topics as greater details can be found in each report individually.

2025 Nationals

I'd like to send out a big congratulation to all the members of the KNS provincial team who recently returned from the national championships held in BC. Karate Nova Scotia brought home 15 medals in total, four gold, four silver, and seven bronze. I believe this is one of our best results ever so a big shout out has to go to our coaching team and Mitch German in particular for this success. Of course we have to also acknowledge the hard work of each individual athlete. Well done team Nova Scotia!

In addition to the athletes, several officials upgraded their certifications while at the nationals. Both Theresa Griffin and Doug Chetwynd tested and achieved Karate Canada National A certifications, while Lorraine Lazier tested and succeeded achieving her Karate Canada Judge B in both Kata and Kumite while in BC. Congratulations all!

KNS would also like to welcome new coach, Orion Gokiart to the provincial coaching team. Orion recently moved to Nova Scotia, is training out of Murphy's Karate Academy, and is assisting as a kata coach with the team. Welcome aboard and we look forward to working with you for years to come.

Of course, I could finish any discussion from the nationals without sending a big shout out to Kerry Dykman for keeping everyone posted through social media on which athletes were about to compete and on which tatamis they were up on. This was a lot of fun, and I know lots of people were following the developments online daily through the nationals.

Fundraising

Karate Nova Scotia held a province wide fund raiser selling KNS branded hoodies to help raise money for the nationals this year. This was a great initiative led by Stefani Angelopoulos and her team resulting in 75 hoodies being sold, raising nearly \$1100 for the athletes. I hear there are plans for a follow-up

around Christmas time with potentially more colours and styles available. We look forward to seeing what our amazing fundraising team can do.

Sport Nova Scotia

As always, Karate Nova Scotia would like to acknowledge Aidan Devine, our provincial representative with Sport Nova Scotia. Aidan plays a vital role in supporting our organization - he regularly attends our monthly board meetings, assists with funding applications, and is a key resource in updating our governance documents. He also keeps us informed about Sport Nova Scotia programs and opportunities. A heartfelt thank you to Aidan for his ongoing support and invaluable contributions.

Staff Members

KNS now has three part time staff positions within the organization. Most people are familiar with Mitch German and Jeff Murphy in their roles as High-Performance Coach and Technical Director respectively.

We would now like to welcome Milton Bourque to the team in his new role as Outreach Director.

The Outreach Director's position will be chiefly responsible for interacting with the member dojos of KNS to increase the base of competitive Karate athletes and increase the number of athletes participating in Karate across Nova Scotia. The work the Outreach Director will undertake will be per the results from the Sport Development Tool funding model developed by Sport Nova Scotia, Canadian Sport Institute Atlantic, and the Province of Nova Scotia. The Outreach Director will play a large role in helping KNS increase scores in the Sports Development Tool's Participation, Coaching and Officiating, and Excellence pillars.

Welcome to the team Milton, and we wish you success in your new staff role with KNS.

Karate Nova Scotia's Supporting Role

It may not always be visible, but each year Karate Nova Scotia supports initiatives led by our member dojos that bring valuable opportunities to our membership.

The Yarmouth Cup and the Battle of the Bridges are two great examples. Each year, these events make use of KNS's equipment and resources - such as the transport trailer, mats, TVs, flags, competition software, printers, and more - to help deliver high-quality competitions. As a gesture of appreciation for the dedication and effort of these organizers, KNS is proud to provide this equipment free of charge to help make these events possible.

Beyond providing equipment, KNS's support extends to our website registration system and the volunteer contributions of Cary Hollett, our tournament coordinator, whose work is critical to the smooth running of these events. It's also common to see officials from clubs across the province volunteering their time to lend support, further demonstrating the spirit of community within our organization.

By donating equipment and resources to these initiatives, KNS helps keep costs manageable for event organizers while expanding competitive opportunities for our members—a true win-win situation. We look forward to continuing these strong partnerships well into the future.

The Board

It's impossible to speak about all the great things happening within Karate Nova Scotia without recognizing the incredible work of our Board. The time, energy, and commitment that our executive and directors dedicate each year is truly the backbone of our organization.

Our current Board includes:

- **Vice-President** – Lorraine Lazier
- **Treasurer** – Peg Mumford
- **Secretary** – Anthony Shanks
- **Athlete Director** – Serena MacRury
- **Directors at Large** – Kevin Seyffert, Doug Cheywynd, Daniel Benoit, and Ambuj Laroiya

I also want to extend a heartfelt thank you to Greg Da Ros, who continues to offer his insight and support in a past-president capacity. His contributions over the years—as a long-serving (and long-suffering! 😊) board member—are sincerely appreciated.

This year, Kevin Seyffert will be stepping back as his mandate comes to an end. We're grateful for his dedication and years of service to KNS. Thank you, Kevin!

We also want to recognize Peg Mumford, who will be finishing her time as Treasurer. The Treasurer role is one of the more complex and demanding positions on the Board, and Peg has handled it with unwavering commitment. Thankfully, Peg isn't going far—she's hoping to continue her service in a new capacity as Vice-President.

Since last year's AGM, the board has met ten times (eleven if you include the AGM) on Sunday evenings to discuss KNS business. This of course does not include any special meetings or events that they may also attend on behalf of KNS. These meetings typically last from one and a half, to two hours and we discuss all manner of business. Just this year some of the items discussed this past year were:

- Hiring the new Outreach Director.
- Review tournament procedures to help prevent errors on competition days
- Inventory of KNS tournament assets.
- Canvas membership for new executive and director positions
- Policy creation and evaluation.
 - New Drugs and Alcohol Policy
 - New Members Club Application process and orientation options.
 - Transgender Policy
 - Annual Funding Policy
- Working to reinstate KNS yearly awards
- Updates to bylaws where required
- Reviewing KNS finances
- Create a new KNS Team Treasurer role to work in partnership with KNS's Treasurer
- Create a strategy to fund and replace worn competition mats.
- Make improvements to the Staff Oversight Committee
- The list goes on.

Challenges Facing the Organization

With all the positive momentum within Karate Nova Scotia, it may come as a surprise that we are also beginning to face a few emerging challenges. Like many not-for-profit organizations, KNS is entering a period where careful financial planning will be essential. Over the past 2–3 years, our annual expenses have exceeded our revenues. This has largely been due to increased demands on our resources, rising operational costs, and the broader impacts of inflation.

Fortunately, thanks to careful financial management and savings accumulated during the COVID pandemic, KNS remains in a solid financial position. However, we recognize the need to proactively address our budgeting approach to ensure the long-term sustainability of the organization.

As a not-for-profit organization, KNS has always strived to keep costs low and karate as accessible as possible to our members. That said, many of our core expenses—such as Karate Canada membership fees, insurance, facility rentals, and equipment replacement—have continued to rise. One example affecting our athletes directly is the increase in division fees at the Karate Canada National Championships, which have risen to \$200 per division. This adjustment was made in part to help offset accommodation costs for officials, highlighting the ongoing balancing act between supporting all areas of the sport.

The continued success of Karate NS has always been built on the generosity of our coaches, volunteers, and officials—individuals who contribute their time and often cover their own expenses. Recently, there have been conversations suggesting that expectations around expense reimbursement are evolving, and this deserves thoughtful discussion.

Moving forward, we'll need to explore where KNS can either identify new revenue streams or find ways to reduce costs and expenditures. We're committed to transparent communication and collaboration as we work through these important decisions together.

Housekeeping

A couple of items we would kindly ask of our membership to help streamline administration:

- If you anticipate any expenses that may require reimbursement, please submit a budget for approval in advance. Moving forward, we kindly ask that all expenses be approved ahead of time, as we may not be able to accommodate reimbursement requests made after the fact.
- Please submit expenses forms for reimbursement with 30 days of the end of the event.
- Karate Nova Scotia kindly reminds all member clubs that annual membership fees are due by January 1st. This timeline is important, as Karate Canada requires its own fee submissions by mid-January.

In recent years, many clubs have submitted fees in February, March or even as late as June and July, which has made it challenging for KNS to meet our national obligations in a timely manner. It also places extra administrative pressure on the KNS executive to follow up with clubs individually.

To help streamline the process moving forward, we respectfully ask that all clubs aim to complete their membership payments by the beginning of January. Clubs that have not submitted fees by this date will receive a reminder notice. If fees remain outstanding by the time of the Annual General Meeting (AGM), the club will be considered not in good standing. This may affect voting privileges at the AGM and coverage under KNS's insurance policy.

We truly appreciate your cooperation in helping us stay organized and compliant, and we're here to support any questions or concerns as we approach the new season.

Awards!

Last but certainly not least, one of our initiatives that we're excited to see come to life is the reinstatement of the KNS annual awards, recognizing the achievements of our athletes, coaches, officials, and volunteers. These awards were put on hold due to the COVID pandemic, but we're committed to bringing them back. Thanks to the hard work of the Recognition Committee, it looks like we will be able to present the awards at the Yarmouth Cup this June.

In addition, we hope to make the awards ceremony more inclusive by rotating the event's location each year, so that in the future, it will be held in different parts of the province.

Final Thoughts

Karate Nova Scotia will continue to strive to be an accessible, inclusive and forward-thinking organization. We have many passionate and dedicated volunteers and members.

Thank you again to everyone who makes Karate Nova Scotia the success it is!

Shannon Doane
President – Karate Nova Scotia

KNS is the recognized Provincial Sport Organization (PSO) responsible for creating a framework where everyone from casual participants to international champions can develop in a safe and fair environment. KNS's member clubs/dojos adhere to standards set by KNS, Sport Nova Scotia, and Karate Canada.