

Presidents Report

Another year has come and gone and Karate Nova Scotia has done some really exciting things since the last AGM.

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.

2026 Senior and U21 Nationals

As many know Nova Scotia had the privilege of hosting the 2026 Senior and U21 Nationals this past February. This was an undertaking that required months of planning, coordination, and a tremendous team effort from many dedicated volunteers from across the organization.

Working closely with Karate Canada, our local organizing committee, and a dedicated group of volunteers, we were able to bring together all of the pieces needed to deliver a high-quality event. From preparing competition areas and training spaces, to managing logistics, scheduling, equipment, and volunteer coordination, there was an incredible amount of work happening behind the scenes. All of this culminated in a nationals that went off pretty much without a hitch, and had competition days ending on time throughout the event.

I'd like to recognize our Technical Director, Jeff Murphy, for the leadership and steady guidance provided throughout this process. His work in coordinating the many technical and operational elements of the event played a key role in its overall success.

What stood out most was the level of collaboration across our community. Volunteers stepped up in a big way, and there was a shared commitment to making the event a success for everyone involved, athletes, coaches, and officials alike.

We're proud to say that the event was very well received. Feedback from Karate Canada and participants across the country was overwhelmingly positive. More importantly, it showcased the strength, capability, and spirit of our karate community here in Nova Scotia.

Hosting an event of this scale is no small task, and it's something our organization, and everyone who contributed, should be very proud of. As a nod of appreciation, each volunteer was presented with a commemorative medal for their contributions to the event. Well done everyone!

Guardian Girls

Karate Nova Scotia was pleased to host its first Guardian Girls clinic in March of this year.

The Guardian Girls program is a global initiative developed by the Koyamada International Foundation in partnership with the United Nations Population Fund and supported by the World Karate Federation. Implemented in Canada through Karate Canada, it uses karate-based training to empower women and girls with practical self-defence skills while building confidence, resilience, and leadership. The program also promotes gender equality and helps prevent violence by equipping participants with both the mental and physical tools to protect themselves and advocate for their well-being.

Presented by Hana Furumoto-Deshaies, the two-hour clinic was held at the Sacred Heart School in Halifax with approximately 30 women and girls attending ranging in ages from 9-73!

New Initiatives - Dojo Connect

We are in the final phases of initiating a new program within Karate Nova Scotia called Dojo Connect. This program is designed to help act as a networking framework to strengthen community connections, enhance technical standards, support instructor development, and build relationship within the organization.

When our instructors are actively developing, collaborating, and sharing knowledge across dojos, it demonstrates that KNS is engaged and connected to the broader membership. It also helps bring in groups that may not traditionally participate in tournaments, strengthening our overall community. These are important indicators of a healthy and active sport system. The more we can demonstrate consistent development opportunities and meaningful engagement across the province, the stronger our organization becomes.

The idea is simple. Instructors can sign up to be part of a provincial list, sharing their areas of experience and what they're passionate about teaching. From there, dojos can reach out and request a guest instructor to come in and lead a class based on what their students need.

For example, a dojo might be considering attending a tournament for the first time and want someone with strong tournament experience to walk through rules, structure, and strategy. Or maybe they're looking to focus on kata, kumite, basics, strength and conditioning, youth development, refereeing, kobudo, self-defense, para karate...or something else entirely. We'll work to connect the right instructor with the right dojo.

At its core, this program is about sharing knowledge, build relationships, and support each other across the province.

Its success will depend on both instructors willing to share their time and expertise, and dojos open to bringing in new perspectives. We're really looking forward to seeing how this grows and the connections that come from it. We'll keep you posted when it's ready to launch.

New WKF Mats

We can't talk about Nationals without also mentioning the new WKF approved mats KNS has invested in to replace our previous competition tatami. Thanks to Jeff's work on grant applications, we secured a \$25,000 legacy grant that helped fund the purchase of four 12 x 12 tatami areas. This upgrade brings our events in line with international standards and gives athletes a safer, more consistent surface to compete on, with better shock absorption, grip, and overall feel. It also helps prepare our competitors for higher-level events by more closely matching the conditions they'll experience beyond the provincial stage. On top of that, these mats are a great asset for KNS—we now have the ability to rent them out to clubs and other events, creating a new opportunity to generate revenue for the organization. All revenue generated by rental of our mats will go towards support for the provincial team.

Fundraising

Our fundraising committee was hard at work this year, and it shows! They have done a marvelous job of supporting the team and raising funds for the athletes.

All told, 11 initiatives supported by a great group of volunteers, athletes, and families were undertaken this past year as fundraisers. In total, 88 people took part, helping raise over \$11,800, with very little spent thanks to donated supplies and the time people generously gave. These efforts went directly toward supporting our Provincial Team as they traveled to the Karate Canada National Championships in Halifax and Edmonton. Along the way, we saw great success with initiatives like the sponsorship banner and tournament canteens, and we continued to build connections with local businesses and community leaders. More than anything, this was a real team effort, and a great example of how our community comes together to support one another.

Staff

This past year some staff positions have stayed the same, but others have changed within KNS.

I'd like to begin by recognizing Mitch in his role as High Performance Coach. He continues to play an important role in supporting our athletes and guiding our high-performance pathway, and we appreciate the time, energy, and extensive expertise he brings to the position.

We also saw the departure of two individuals this year. I'd like to extend a sincere thank you to Jeff for his leadership and dedication as Technical Director. He has been a steady and thoughtful presence

within the organization, and while we're sorry to see him step away, we fully support his decision to focus on family commitments.

As well, thank you to Milton for his time as Technical Outreach Director over the past year and for his contributions in that role.

These positions require a significant investment of time and energy, and we are grateful to those who step forward to take them on.

As we move ahead, the board will evaluate the Technical Director position and decide how we will move forward with this position. We will update the membership when a final decision is made.

New Member Clubs

We would like to give a warm welcome to our two new member clubs. Mike Smooke from Infinity Martial Arts Karate, and Yasser Mostafa Kamel from the International Canadian Martial Arts Federation.

Mike brings a wealth of experience in Chito-Ryu karate and is the longtime head instructor at Infinity Martial Arts in Dartmouth. He began his training in 1976 in Ontario under Sensei Dick Sansom and later went on to open and operate his own dojo there in 1994. After relocating to Nova Scotia, Mike established Infinity Martial Arts in Dartmouth in 1996, where he continues to teach today.

Yasser Mostafa Kamel has practiced karate since 1981, beginning in Egypt and continuing his training in the United Kingdom and Canada. With a background in Shotokan Karate, Yasser is the founder and president of the International Canadian Martial Arts Federation, where he promotes traditional martial arts through instruction, seminars, and international collaboration, with a focus on karate, Tang Soo Do, and inclusive initiatives such as para-karate.

Sport Nova Scotia

The big undertaking this year was the Sport development Tool submission and review.

This is a comprehensive evaluation done by Sport Nova Scotia and used to assess how provincial sport organizations are operating across a number of key areas.

The review looks at things like governance, programming, athlete development, coach and official pathways, and overall organizational capacity. It helps provide a clearer picture of where an organization is performing well, and where there may be opportunities to grow and improve.

Beyond evaluation, the process also plays an important role in determining future funding and support, helping ensure that organizations are aligned with best practices and long-term development goals within the sport system.

We are currently awaiting the results of this review, which will help guide our priorities and planning over the coming four years.

The Board

As always, the members of the board often go as the unsung heroes of the organization. Meeting regularly, working in the background evaluating policies, addressing concerns, reviewing financials, approving budgets, debating new initiatives and working to steer the organization in the best direction possible.

The Board has continued to operate with a strong focus on governance, accountability, and representing the needs of our membership.

I'd like to recognize our current Board:

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

Since last years AGM, the board has met every month, and sometimes twice a month, on Sunday evenings to discuss KNS business or special considerations. These meetings typically last from one and a half, to two hours and we discuss all manner of business.

Provincial and Federal Funding

This past year has been a tough one across the sport system, with funding cuts being felt at both the provincial and national levels.

Organizations like Sport Nova Scotia, Sport Canada and Karate Canada are working with tighter budgets, and that's having a ripple effect across all sports, including ours. There's less funding to go around, while at the same time, the demand for programs, events, and athlete support continues to grow and feel the impact of inflation and external, world events.

What this means in practice is that sport organizations are having to be more careful with how they plan, prioritize, and use their resources.

For Karate Nova Scotia, it's something we are definitely keeping a close eye on. We'll continue to look for ways to deliver strong programs and support our members, while adapting to the realities of a more limited funding environment.

Housekeeping

Some of the same points from last year still apply.

Yearly Membership - First off, thank you very much to all the clubs that submitted their membership data and fees on time. I think this year was one of the best years in recent memory for clubs submitting by the deadline.

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.

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.

Budgets - We would kindly ask that all committees ensure that budgets or anticipated expenditures are submitted ahead of time and aim for at least 30 days to allow for the approval process to take place.

Expenses - If you have incurred any expenses that require reimbursement, please submit an invoice with receipts within 30 days of the event conclusion.

Final Thoughts

As we look ahead, Karate Nova Scotia remains committed to being an accessible, inclusive, and forward-thinking organization. The strength of KNS comes from its people, and we are fortunate to have such a dedicated and passionate community supporting the growth of karate in our province.

On behalf of the board, thank you to everyone who contributes their time, energy, and support. Your commitment is what makes Karate Nova Scotia what it is, and what will continue to carry it forward.

Shannon Doane
President
Karate Nova Scotia