



PRESIDENT | MICHAEL MILLER

2024-2025 ANNUAL REPORT

Presented at the Ontario Weightlifting Association Annual General Meeting
Belleville, Ontario/Zoom
Saturday, September 13, 2025,
Submitted by Michael Miller, OWA President

Mission

Govern and promote Olympic weightlifting in Ontario by helping athletes achieve optimum performance through expert leadership, services and programs.

Vision

Foster a thriving and supportive community where athletes, coaches, and officials excel at all levels. Through expert leadership, inclusivity, innovation, and a commitment to safe sport, we aim to elevate the sport and its impact.

Preamble and Acknowledgements

As President of the Ontario Weightlifting Association, it is my honour to present this annual report, reflecting on the challenges, goals, initiatives, and successes of the past year. Our previous meeting took place in September 2024. This marks my sixth and final report as President and my eighth meeting as a board member. I want to express my gratitude for the continued support I've received through both the good and challenging times.

I would like to emphasise that any success achieved during the 2024/2025 season is due to the incredible work of the OWA team and the many volunteers who are the backbone of our sport. Any shortcomings or unsuccessful initiatives remain my responsibility.

Challenges and unsuccessful initiatives

Inflation and Costs: This year, inflationary pressures eased slightly, which allowed us to stabilize our operational costs more effectively. While costs did not rise at the same pace as in previous years, they remain a constant consideration. Our spending was well managed, with actual expenditures remaining within $\pm 2\%$ of projected budgets, reflecting disciplined financial oversight.

The gradual fee-increase plan we introduced is helping us align revenues with real costs, but challenges remain.

Resource allocation for competitions and technical officials has improved compared to last year, thanks in large part to the continuing leadership of Linda Earnshaw. While demand for events still occasionally outpaces our available pool of officials and volunteers, the situation has eased, and progress is being made through expanded training opportunities and stronger engagement. This will allow us to purchase some long-overdue equipment.

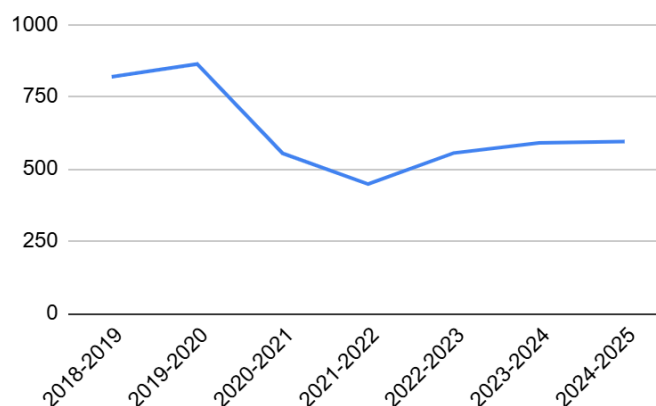
Travelling Teams: The increasing costs associated with travelling teams remain one of our biggest challenges. Unlike other areas where inflationary pressures have stabilised, travel costs have continued to rise. Flights and hotels are absorbing a disproportionate share of our budget, leaving less flexibility for other priorities. While our four-year financial plan includes adjustments to account for inflation, the pace of rising travel expenses has outstripped these measures. This will remain a critical area for us to monitor and manage going forward.

Competition Hosting: Our efforts to curb excess competition spending have been successful. The introduction of an equipment maintenance fee helped ensure the competition system continues to run smoothly, while strategic investments in our major competition centres reduced the wear and tear from moving equipment across Ontario. As a result, we remained under budget, which gave us the flexibility to begin lowering the OWA portion of competition costs and to purchase new equipment to support future events.

Fundraisers/Sponsors: Last year, we noted the lack of new fundraising initiatives as a challenge. This year, we are pleased to share that progress has been made. We entered into a sponsorship agreement with Kayla Products, promoting their brand at competitions and through our live stream. This partnership marks an important step in expanding our sponsorship base and creating new value for members.

On the fundraising side, we are reworking our FlipGive program for a fresh rollout later this year or in Q1 of next year. While this area remains a work in progress, the addition of new sponsors and renewed fundraising efforts represent a positive step forward.

Membership Growth: As always, membership growth continues to be our biggest challenge. Membership numbers in 2024/2025 remained essentially flat.



Strategies and Solutions:

Financial Management: Last year, we implemented proactive measures to stabilise our finances, including closer monitoring of expenses, refined hosting fees, and inflation-aligned membership adjustments. These actions have paid off. We have effectively stopped the financial “bleeding” and are now operating from a much stronger, more sustainable foundation.

With this stability in place, the focus can now shift from short-term control to long-term growth. We are ready to rebuild strategically on top of this solid structure, creating opportunities to reinvest in athlete development, competitions, and organisational capacity.

Club Outreach and Renewal

As part of our long-term growth strategy, we will review the historical club list from our peak membership years and reach out to those clubs that are no longer current members.

Re-engaging an established club is often easier than bringing a new one fully up to speed, as many already have systems, infrastructure, and familiarity with weightlifting in place. While we understand that some clubs closed during COVID-19, we plan to connect with those that are still operating to explore opportunities for renewal and re-entry into the OWA community. This outreach will not only strengthen our membership base but also help us rebuild connections and support grassroots development.

Funding, Grants, Q4G

We continue to see small but steady increases in both base funding and Quest for Gold (Q4G) support. While these incremental gains are positive, no dramatic increases are expected until we grow our overall membership base, which remains a key driver for future funding opportunities.

Human Resources, Staffing, and Committees

Gender Equity Committee: We successfully restarted the Gender Equity Committee this season. However, the initial applicants did not fully meet the Terms of Reference requirements needed to form the committee. As a result, the initiative has been moved to a workgroup format until we can meet our own baseline requirements. This allows the important work of advancing gender equity to continue, while ensuring the eventual committee is built on a strong and compliant foundation.

Membership Administrator Transition: This season saw the departure of Dimitri Mancic from his role as Competition Administrator. In the interim, I have stepped in to ensure continuity of operations while we assess the long-term needs of the position. Although transitions can be challenging, this shift also gives us the opportunity to review and refine how competition administration is structured to better support the growing demands of our events.

WCH Key Points of Interest

Athlete Representation: This year saw the departure of Noah Santavy from the Athlete Representation Committee. We thank Noah for his years of dedication and advocacy on behalf of athletes across Canada. Stepping into the role is Patrick Boileau, whose commitment and perspective as an active athlete will continue to ensure strong representation at the national level.

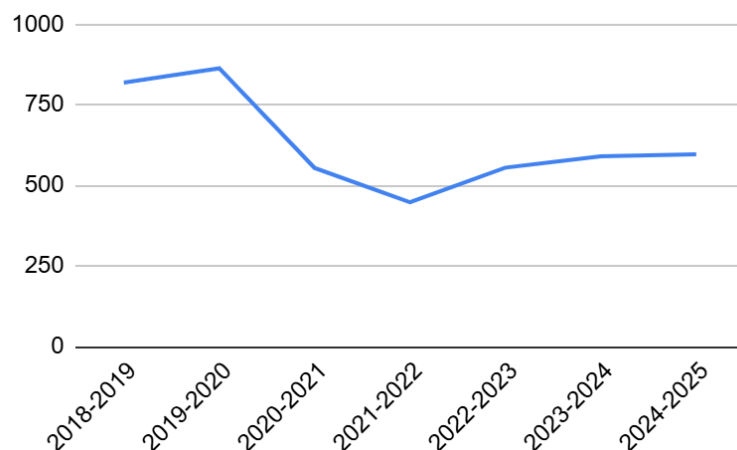
Technical Official Committee: Sara O'Neil continues to serve on the Technical Officials Committee of WCH. Her experience and dedication to maintaining the highest standards of officiating remain a valuable asset to the national body.

Board Involvement: This season also marked the departure of Dr. Trevor Cottrell from the WCH Board. We are grateful for his service and the expertise he brought to the national governance of the sport.

Interest from Ontario Members: It is encouraging to see ongoing interest from Ontario members in running for positions within the national organisation. This reflects both the depth of leadership within our province and our members' dedication to advancing weightlifting at the national level.

Membership/Courses registrations 2018/2019 - 2022/2025

Season	Members
2018-2019	819
2019-2020	863
2020-2021	554
2021-2022	448
2022-2023	555
2023-2024	590
2024-2025	596



Male Breakdown by age group

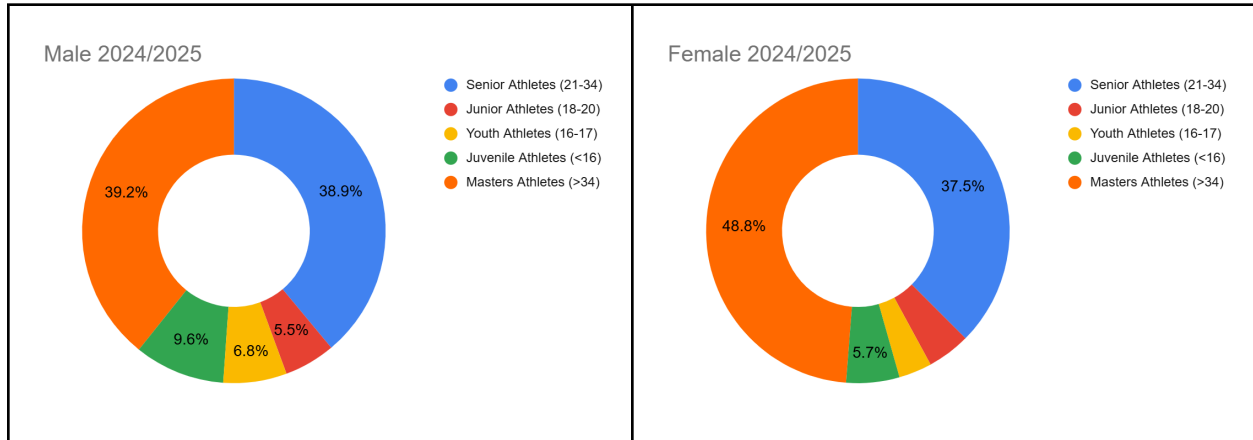
	Male 2018/19	Male 2019/20	Male 2020/21	Male 2021/22	Male 2022/23	Male 2023/24	Male 2024/25
Senior Athletes (21-34)	279	269	115	95	113	130	121
Junior Athletes (18-20)	15	22	17	13	15	16	17
Youth Athletes (16-17)	12	15	16	5	9	17	21
Juvenile Athletes (<16)	18	31	30	24	53	40	30
Masters Athletes (>34)	159	170	128	110	109	116	122
Total	483	507	306	247	298	331	311

Female Breakdown by age group

	Female 2018/19	Female 2019/20	Female 2020/21	Female 2021/22	Female 2022/23	Female 2023/24	Female 2024/25
Senior Athletes (21-34)	167	168	93	78	107	93	106
Junior Athletes (18-20)	24	23	17	5	5	19	13
Youth Athletes (16-17)	10	14	7	14	16	7	10
Juvenile Athletes (<16)	15	22	22	20	36	20	16
Masters Athletes (>34)	120	129	109	83	92	116	138
Total	336	356	248	200	256	225	283

**one participant registered as U

2024 Distribution Male/Female



Technical Officials

Technical Officials	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Prov#4	7	11	29	25	21	31	37
Prov#4 in Training	18	12	10	16	7	30	7
CAN#3	50	46	14	16	11	15	15
IWF#2	16	17	4	4	4	4	2
IWF#1	4	3	9	10	6	8	8
Total	95	89	66	73	49	88	69

**These numbers may not match numbers provided by VP – Technical.
These numbers are self reported during registration.

NCCP

NCCP Courses	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
NCCP Competition Introduction	5	3	0	1	2	2	2
NCCP Comp. Intro. Evaluation	4	4	0	0	2	1	3
NCCP Competition Development	1	1	0	1	1	0	0
NCCP Comp. Dev. Evaluation	1	0	0	3	1	1	0
Total	11	8	0	5	6	4	5

Other

	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
OTHER							
Competitions	29	29	4	11	20	24	20
Training Camps	1 - Senior	1 - Junior	0	3(Junior, Senior, Coach)	3(Junior, Senior, Master)	3(Junior, Senior, Master)	2 (Junior, Senior)

Clubs

	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/2024	2024/25
Clubs	100	101	72	64	61	56	62

2024-2025 Points of Interest

Masters Athletes: Supporting masters athletes remains a priority for the OWA. We were specifically asked to address the lack of OWA support for Team Ontario at the Canadian National Masters Championships.

It is important to note that the current national masters championships are not IWF-sanctioned and are operated by a separate entity. However, recent developments are extremely positive. The President of the Masters Federation has committed to aligning with the IWF Technical and Competition Rules (TCR). This change opens the door for the OWA to participate in the event as a **sanctioned competition** — a major step forward for the Ontario Masters community.

We are also hoping to match their commitment and extend our age brackets with those used nationally, to ensure consistency and create a more seamless experience for athletes. While there are still details to finalise, the progress made this year is the most promising step yet toward one consistent, unified competition pathway for masters athletes across Canada.

Thanks to Bronwyn Lee for bringing this to our attention.

Safety: The membership raised concerns about the lack of a clear first aid plan at competitions. The Board agreed this could not wait until the AGM. As a result, having a designated first aid person at every event is now a requirement, and the OWA has purchased a basic first aid kit. We also confirmed with our insurance provider the liabilities associated with administering first aid. Thank you to Brad for bringing this important matter to our attention.

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Governance: This season marked important progress in strengthening the governance of the OWA. For the first time since 2013, we completed a full update of our by-laws, modernising our framework to reflect current standards and the evolving needs of our membership. Alongside this, we finalised and adopted a new Strategic Plan, providing a clear roadmap to guide the organisation's priorities and growth in the years ahead. These updates lay a stronger foundation for transparency, accountability, and long-term stability.

Doping Control: The OWA continues to uphold the strictest qualification criteria in Canada to ensure all athletes are subject to doping control on the path to elite competition. Despite these measures, this year we experienced one whereabouts suspension and one doping control infraction. These cases reinforce the importance of maintaining rigorous standards and clear expectations for all athletes.

We remain committed to safeguarding the integrity of our sport by working closely with partners to expand doping control access, including through the sanctioning of more club-level competitions. This not only supports athletes in remote areas but also ensures that every competitor follows the same transparent and fair pathway to high-performance sport.

Photography Partnership: This year, the OWA was asked to discuss the exclusivity of our photography contracts. To be clear, there is no exclusivity in place. We contract with any photographer who approaches us, and to date, we have never had two photographers request contracts for the same event.

We continue to work closely with Joel Kingston, who covers roughly half of our events and provides high-quality photography. In return for allowing him to offer athlete photography packages, the OWA receives free promotional material upon request, ensuring we have fresh visuals for communications and promotions. We'd also like to recognise Lucy Star for covering the Back Alley open, and we hope to build relationships with more photographers.

Looking forward, we are developing a bidding submission framework and a formal photography policy to make the process more transparent and beneficial for all parties — the OWA, participants, and photographers.

Thanks to Monica Knowlton for bringing this to our attention.

Stable Competition Calendar: Balancing stability in the competition calendar with the many requests for changes remains an ongoing challenge. While our priority continues to be maintaining a reliable calendar that supports athlete development and team preparation, we recognise that no calendar will fully meet everyone's needs.

In response to member feedback, the Board has approved the creation of a Competition Calendar Committee, which will begin work in the coming weeks. This committee will provide broader input and help guide the development of a working calendar that reflects the needs of athletes, coaches, clubs, and officials, while preserving the stability required for high-performance planning.

Thanks to Craig Vandeweghe for bringing this to our attention.

Team Leader Selection: Last year, we recognised the importance of having a dedicated team to oversee the Team Ontario process from start to finish. Nominating team leaders well in advance — rather than just weeks before an event — has proven to be a successful approach. Leaders such as Nichole Lee, Moe Badreldin, Logan Baker, and Jess Verway demonstrated how effective consistent guidance and established relationships can be for our athletes.

This year, we are committed to building on that success by continuing to appoint team leaders for the full season. Our focus is on setting clear goals, documenting processes, and ensuring that each team has leaders who provide continuity and strong support. While weightlifting is not a team sport in the traditional sense, having a reliable leadership group is essential to creating the best possible environment for our athletes.

Strategies moving forward

Four-Year Plan: This Board completed the development of a new four-year strategic plan. This is an important milestone, giving the OWA a clear framework to guide decision-making and growth. We also recognise that the incoming Board will bring fresh perspectives. As new

challenges and opportunities arise, they will refine and adapt the plan to reflect the realities of our sport and the evolving needs of our members.

Policy Overhaul: In our last meeting, I reported that the goal was to complete a full policy review by the end of 2025. While we remain committed to this objective, progress this year has been slower than we had hoped, and fewer policies were updated than originally planned.

A yearly policy review is an important exercise — not only to keep our organisation relevant, but also to ensure we continue to meet the highest standards of safety and accountability. This remains a priority moving forward, and we will work to regain momentum in the coming year.

NCCP Facilitators: Identifying NCCP (National Coaching Certification Program) facilitators is a priority. We aim to make coach training more transparent and accessible, reducing obstacles to certification and enhancing the quality of coaching within our organisation.

Club Challenges: The Club Challenges program continues to be one of the OWA's most successful initiatives for growth and community building. It has strengthened clubs across the province, supported grassroots development, and created new opportunities for athletes at every level.

Looking ahead, I am excited to dedicate more time and energy to helping this program expand even further. With continued support, the Club Challenges can play an even bigger role in sustaining Ontario's growth and fostering a vibrant, connected weightlifting community.