

Dear AIDA board members,

As per the request made by AIDA International, the board of directors of the Canadian Association of Freediving and Apnea (CAFA) respectfully submit the following information:

The CAFA Board

President: Matt Charlton
Vice-President: Manfred Lippe
Treasurer: Brent Pascall
Secretary: Greg Fee

Our Members

Please see attached spreadsheet (CAFA Members List) for a complete list of our 71 current members. 38 of those are CAFA Full Members (\$25 membership annual fee). CAFA has had 265 members since 2000. Please note that not all birthdates of our members are being supplied due to privacy requests from those members.

Our By-laws

Please see attached document (CAFA By-laws)

Competitive Freediving

CAFA has been the AIDA National since its inception in 2000. Its goal is to promote the sport of freediving within Canada and to be the governing sanctioning body of the sport.

Since 2000, CAFA has hosted some 55 competitive events, including:

- 20 western regional competitions
- 7 eastern regional competitions
- 8 national championships
- 16 record events
- 4 international competitions
- 1 Team World Championships
- Over 1200 judged performances by 119 athletes

CAFA has also sent athletes to every AIDA World Championships Since 2000 and has placed in the top three for both men and women on a number of occasions.

The Website

CAFA has a website (www.freedivecanada.com) which has a vast amount of information on it. This website has many tools on it that our members can use to create clubs, run competitions, contact the board, etc. Our by-laws, board meeting and AGM minutes can also be found on the site (This year our AGM was conducted online using a Webinar service, allowing all members around the world to participate).

It includes results of every Canadian athlete to have competed within Canada and abroad, with videos of their performances embedded in their competition history, as they become available.

The website is also used to promote our members through the front page, via press releases and pictures which are updated regularly.

Our competition database is very advanced and allows competition organizers to post results within minutes from the competition site directly to the website so our members as well as the general public can follow along.

CAFA is currently working on translating this enormous database into French. This is a vast undertaking given the size of the site and the amount of information it contains, but we have a beta-site up of the important pages and work is ongoing.

CAFA Clubs

CAFA not only maintains the competition side of freediving but is also attempting to help clubs across the country to promote the sport within their community. Because of the sheer size of the country, it is difficult for CAFA itself to run events, however CAFA offers financial help and supports the local clubs and individuals across the country to host events and activities.

Research

Outside of the numerous competition events that have been held, CAFA has promoted freediving through research at Simon Fraser University through a 12-week program, which studies the development of non-divers into competitive freedivers. This program has yielded several athletes who have gone on to compete for Team Canada. CAFA also has members participating regularly in other research programs such as the Eelgrass Survey in British Columbia and more recently, a preliminary study of blood flow through the brain during apnea using MRI (Magnetic Resonance Imaging) at the Ottawa General Hospital.

Promotion

Our association has participated in many sport and environment tradeshows such as DEMA, the world's largest diving industry tradeshow, the Outdoor Adventure Show in both Vancouver and Toronto, and at the Vancouver Aquarium.

Our members have also done demonstrations and public speaking events at the Ontario Science Centre, the Vancouver Aquarium and at Ocean Day events across the country, talking about the sport and environmental stewardship.

CAFA members have also had a substantial amount of press coverage at home and abroad. CAFA now issues formal press releases for its athletes following competitions or record events. These press releases are forwarded to news agencies and the dive industry.

Membership

Our membership structure has changed to be more inclusive and inviting to those who do not wish to compete. Currently, we have four levels of membership:

-Recreational Membership; is free to anyone who wishes to join our association. Those wishing to sign up can do so from the front page of our website. This gives people access to our newsgroup community and allows them to meet other freedivers and participate in activities such as helping out at a competition or volunteering for one of the

many environmental or research activities or simply to set up some recreational diving with other members.

-Full Membership (\$25 annually); this includes all the benefits of the regular membership with access to all CAFA sanctioned competitions, ranking on the AIDA ranking list, Team Canada positions, board positions and voting rights.

-Corporate membership (\$100 annually); this includes all of the above as well as banner ads and links on the website.

-Club Membership (free); to qualify as a CAFA club the club must have by-laws and be created as a non-profit club, though it is not required to be incorporated (CAFA offers on its website a by-law creator tool to help members create a club).

The club must have a yearly elected board of which 3 board members are CAFA Full Members and the club must be financially accountable to its members. As a CAFA club, the club may host their website on our server, create email addresses for its members and apply to CAFA for assistance and financial aid for the purposes of promoting freediving. CAFA will also include a banner on our website to the club's website. As well, all of the club's members are invited to become CAFA Recreational Members, though are not required to.

The Future

CAFA has accomplished a great deal in 8 years but it has certainly had some growing pains. CAFA is still a democracy and as such is accountable to its members. The CAFA board this year has been building on some of the fundamental changes it has made last year and has committed to certain goals for the future development of the sport here in Canada.

- Insurance

Insurance is a primary concern for CAFA. At one time, CAFA had event insurance for its members, allowing them to rent pools and organize competitions with coverage provided they met certain conditions. Through no fault of CAFA, this insurance was withdrawn by the underwriter citing concerns of liability and a desire to minimize risk after the devastating losses 9/11, which dragged the industry down for many years afterward.

CAFA has filed several applications with different brokers following leads on possible insurers for our sport. Because of CAFA's strong information database and history on the sport, we are in a good position to reclaim insurance coverage. This will be an enormous benefit to all our members on a national level, both competitive and recreational, as it will allow certain clubs who have been unable in the past, to host events.

- Team Canada

CAFA has always supplied a team to the AIDA World Championships but not always without controversy. Previously, our team selection process required athletes to attend the National Championships in order to qualify for the team. This was done primarily as a way to promote the Nationals as the premiere event in Canada and to generate excitement around the competition. It also served as a level playing field for potential qualifiers as it was felt that some athletes could have an unfair advantage in weather or water conditions otherwise.

An athlete had two ways to qualify once there; they could either use 100% of their score from Nationals, or they could use a combination of 50% score from Nationals, and 25% each from two regional competitions. This allowed the athlete to make up for a weak score at nationals by 'rounding up' with the two other scores from previous competitions.

This policy has worked well in the past but it was time to change our selection process as more of our athletes live outside the country and the realities of cost, travel and time off work become more apparent. Recently, CAFA changed its selection process to allow athletes to apply using their best scores off the AIDA ranking list for the previous 12 months.

Other concerns on team selection that will be addressed are those of the alternate diver as well as the team coach. These two issues will be addressed in time for the 2010 Team selection process so that athletes will be aware of the changes.

- Conflict of Interest

This is an issue CAFA has been struggling with for some time and it has been difficult, given the relatively small group of people who freedive and the services required to grow the sport either through education, training or products, to name just a few. This is a serious concern for us and our members and CAFA works hard to be transparent on its policies and procedures, however, even the perception of a conflict of interest, regardless of actual conflict, is harmful and so the CAFA board is in its final stages of review of a very extensive conflict of interest policy which has already been agreed to in principle. The new document will be posted on our website and announced to our members.

- Growth of the sport

CAFA has always been for all freedivers but the focus has primarily been on competitive freediving. Over the years, we have seen many people start off as competitive divers but then decide to dive purely recreationally, for one reason or another. CAFA has already started to broaden its focus and reach out to recreational divers with its new membership structure, however CAFA plans to continue to promote freediving as a fun activity for everyone in the family. Competitions are great, but there is a lot to see underwater and all you need is a mask and fins to have a good time. Freediving can be promoted as a healthy, environmentally aware activity for just about everyone. CAFA has some interesting promotional ideas in the works to reach out and introduce freediving to new groups of people within Canada, using some creative cross-marketing tools. Details on these plans will be released as the promotions are scheduled.

Competition Freediving

As always, CAFA plans to host several competitions this year, including the Western Regional competition in a few days as well as other local and national competitions, the dates of which will be supplied to AIDA for the calendar.

CAFA recently had great success in connecting with the Montreal Freediving club, who until this past winter had never been involved in a CAFA event. As a special incentive to encourage participation, CAFA offered a free Full Membership (\$25 value) to all first-time CAFA competitors. This was an outreach effort to encourage participants to get involved in the competition as well as to invite new and fresh ideas into the association.

CAFA raises money by charging the organizer of a CAFA competition a \$25 sanctioning fee per athlete, per competition. Athletes must be a CAFA Full Member (\$25 per year) in order to compete at a CAFA competition. This is similar to AIDA International, where the AIDA National pays a yearly membership fee plus a sanction fee per athlete, per event. CAFA will be maintaining its sanction fee at \$25 per competition, from which the AIDA sanction fee will be deducted.

Conclusion

For 8 years, CAFA has met and exceeded all the requirements set out for it by AIDA international. It is the board's position that CAFA is doing everything reasonable to be accountable to its members, to grow and promote the sport and to make change to current policy as time allows and ideas are discussed on the newsgroup, at the AGM and on the board. We understand that CAFA has not been all things to all people and are disappointed that those members who have chosen to create a new association felt they were not able to effect change from within the current structure of CAFA. We continue to reach out to those members and non-members who are not happy and we continue to make changes to make CAFA a more diverse and inclusive association. Our current board has made great strides towards some of those changes and we have clearly outlined where CAFA is going in the future.

As President, I have a couple of concerns with this challenge from AIDA Canada. The first is the way in which they became an AIDA National. There once was an AIDA Quebec, an association that petitioned to become an AIDA 'national' for Quebec, a province within Canada. They never supplied any athletes to the world championships, and they let their dues lapse for several years. A new group of people (only one of which actually is from Quebec) paid off the debt to AIDA International, then changed the name of AIDA Quebec to AIDA Canada (now no longer a provincial association) and thus changed their scope to become a full AIDA National.

This does not appear to meet with AIDA's own statute 5.2. AIDA Quebec was accepted into the assembly under quite different terms than its current situation.

My focus has been to invite all of our members to participate in the betterment of our association. Several key people who expressed strong opinions over controversial issues were nominated to the board because it was felt that their voice needed to be heard. Unfortunately, all declined. The CAFA community is saddened by this since it would have helped make rapid changes in a positive and more inclusive way.

I am happy to see that AIDA Canada would like to organize some local and national competitions this year and CAFA would be more than happy to help the organizers promote and run the events, even if they do not win their bid to be the AIDA National for Canada. I plan to continue to work with our board and our members to make CAFA an association that ALL Canadian freedivers can be proud of. I ask that AIDA International recognize our success and our history and allow us to continue to work hard to meet the demands of our members, our clubs and our critics. Support the bid of the Canadian Association of Freediving and Apnea to continue to be the AIDA National for Canada.

Sincerely,

Matt Charlton

President;

The Canadian Association of Freediving and Apnea

president@freedivecanada.com

+1.613.878.3483

