

MANITOBA RUNNERS' ASSOCIATION
2026 Annual General Meeting
President's Report
Monday, April 13, 2026

Looking back, looking ahead

As is our tradition at MRA, I leave it to our Executive Director to recap the year that was. Please see Kathy's [excellent report](#) for highlights of MRA's busy 2025.

It is my job to talk about the year ahead, and to highlight themes and plans that we will be addressing in 2026 (and beyond).

Every runner. Every event. Every step of the way: A new vision for MRA

Even though it will be a year of major change for the running community (more on two big changes below), I am excited for 2026. We started the year at MRA by presenting the budget in Appendix A—a budget that the Board accepted only conditionally. Specifically, the Board agreed to accept the budget only if we used some of the planned surplus to complete the strategic plan that we have been talking about for years.

To this end, last week on April 7 & 8, the MRA Board worked with a consultant to kick off our efforts. We met for eight hours over two days, looking at the last three years in detail, talking about our successes and challenges, considering opportunities and threats in the external environment, and thinking about our objectives for the next three years. We came away with a new vision:

Every runner. Every event. Every step of the way.

Every runner means the gamut: From those just starting out, to those looking to join a national team; current MRA members and MRA members to be. *Every event* means the 61 currently on our calendar, plus all those yet to sanction with us. *Every step of the way* means the entire journey, for both runners and Race Directors.

In my mind, this vision confirms MRA's growth from the last three years, and directs us to keep going. And it is worth highlighting that our growth has been impressive. Some successes that the Board highlighted during our review:

- ▶ Finances: Revenue has grown from 2022 to 2025 by 2.8x, from \$62K to \$176K; our yearly returns from a deficit of \$11K to a surplus of \$7K; our assets from \$88K to \$109K.
- ▶ Events: From 36 in 2022 to 61 in 2025 (1.7x).
- ▶ Members: From 468 in 2022 to 1,033 in 2025 (2.2x).
- ▶ Programs: Timing Service (2022), Track Club (2022), TrackTastic (2023), Online Coaching (2025), Strength Club (2025), Celebration Series (67→138), Ice Cream Runs (2→6).

Tweaking our mission

At the session, the Board reviewed our mission statement—our reason for being, and why we do what we do. We made a few tweaks, but generally affirmed the old mission: namely, that we love running and the important role it plays in health, fun, and fitness for life.

Our new mission:

*Promote health, fun, and achievement through running.
Support those who create opportunities to run.*

Where the old mission emphasized running itself, we now focus on outcomes—why we run, and what we gain from it. We affirm our commitment to competition and excellence through achievement. And we close a big gap by highlighting the important work we do with events and Race Directors. Subtle changes, perhaps, but important ones (I believe) as we speak with major stakeholders, potential sponsors, and possible granting agencies.

Four strategic priorities

As we continue to grow over the next three years, the Board settled on four (4) strategic priorities. We will use these priorities to guide our plans and direct our activities. We expressed these priorities as future-oriented statements, namely that:

- 1) MRA has deep relationships with its members, and there are many of them.
- 2) Events of all sizes value the MRA and look to us for guidance, sanctioning, and advice.
- 3) MRA's operations are smooth and efficient, and other organizations look to us as a model of effectiveness.
- 4) MRA has the financial resources to innovate, support our operations, and grow.

Next steps for MRA's strategic plan

During our planning, we further subdivided each of these priority areas into 19 strategic objectives. Our next steps involve developing targets and measures for each of these objectives, and then identifying the specific initiatives and activities needed to move those measures. We will continue that work over the summer, and indeed over the next three years as we move from strategy formulation, into implementation, and through evaluation. As one of our Board members commented during our wrap-up session last week, the work is just beginning.

And as we work, we need to be incredibly mindful that we ask a lot of our volunteers, and that we ask even more of our Executive Director and Equipment/Timing Manager. That we need to support our people is one of the challenges we highlighted and kept coming back to over-and-over again. Over the next three years, expect this to be a theme as important as growing our membership.

In the meantime, change is the only constant

While MRA works over the summer to flesh out and implement our strategic plan, we also need to consider two important changes in our environment.

Change #1: Safe Sport in Manitoba

On April 1, 2026, Manitoba enacted the [Protecting Youth in Sports Act](#). Among other changes, it requires that all Provincial Sport Organizations (PSOs) adopt Sport Manitoba's [Safe Sport Policy Manual](#), including its six (6) policies related to conduct, discipline, dispute resolution, appeals, respect, and coach screening. These policies outline critical information for all stakeholders including, but not limited to, behaviour expectations for participants, procedures for handling complaints of maltreatment, disciplinary measures for those guilty of maltreatment, and coach education and screening requirements.

Safe Sport also introduces an Independent Third Party (ITP) mechanism for receiving, investigating, managing, and disciplining cases related to [maltreatment](#).

Finally, the Act also requires PSOs to make [safe sport information](#) available to parents and young athletes.

Through our affiliation agreement with Athletics Manitoba, MRA is bound by the Act, the Safe Sport manual, the ITP process, the education campaign, and all the other sundry requirements. *And so, in turn, are all of our sanctioned events.*

For the average runner, little if anything changes in the Safe Sport world. But for MRA and event organizers, work is needed to revisit and align our policies, implement new procedures, and develop educational materials. Stay tuned for more information as we work through our obligations and help Race Directors adapt to the new environment.

Change #2: In 2027, sanctioning will imply Athletics Canada membership

Sanctioning is the process whereby we ensure events are conducted in a fair, safe, and responsible manner according to applicable rules and standards. The process is governed by Athletics Canada and implemented by the provincial/territorial athletics bodies. Through our affiliation agreement, Athletics Manitoba has established MRA as the sanctioning body for road and trail running in Manitoba.

Next year, Athletics Canada is introducing major changes to the sanctioning model. These changes will affect both runners and Race Directors. Beginning in 2027, all participants in a sanctioned road or trail race will be required to hold either:

- ▶ A valid Athletics Canada membership, or
- ▶ A new Athletics Canada 1-Day Participant License

By implication, this also means that an event looking for sanctioning must ensure *all of its participants* are Athletics Canada members, or have purchased a one-day license. Practically, this means every time you register for a race in 2027, you will see a place to enter your Athletics Canada membership or buy a day license. (Currently, Athletics Canada is proposing the fee for day licenses at \$5.00.)

Today, there are two ways to become an Athletics Canada member:

- ▶ Purchase an Athletics Canada's [Community Road & Trail Membership](#) for \$15, or
- ▶ Purchase an [Athletics Manitoba membership](#) (from \$65 to \$105, depending on age)

MRA is working with Athletics Canada and Athletics Manitoba to better understand the implications of the new policy and to implement it in Manitoba. For example, we are looking at ways to facilitate cross-registration and to minimize the impact of the additional fees on our members. We are also re-examining our own sanctioning fees to lessen the impact on events.

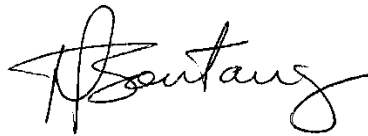
Again, stay tuned for more information as we work through the details, both for runners and for Race Directors.

Signing off

This is my fourth Report to the membership, which means I am starting my fifth year as President and Chair of the Manitoba Runners' Association. While every year has seen change (from 2022's pandemic to 2025's launch of Strength Club), it feels like 2026 and 2027 may just take the cake.

Nevertheless, what I said above is true—I am excited for 2026 and the challenges ahead. To my understanding, MRA has never been stronger. I believe we are well positioned for the future.

On behalf of the Board of Directors, thank you for trusting us with the privilege of leading this incredible organization and for allowing us to represent you. I look forward to 2026 and the year ahead!



Derek Boutang
President, Manitoba Runners' Association
2022-present
president@mraweb.ca

Our Vision: *Every runner. Every event. Every step of the way.*

Our Mission: *Promote health, fun, and achievement through running.
Support those who create opportunities to run.*

Appendix A: 2026 MRA Budget

Manitoba Runners' Association Budget 2026					2026 Budget versus...		
	2026 Budget	2025 Actual	2024 Actual	2023 Actual	2025 ACTUAL	2024 ACTUAL	2023 ACTUAL
SURPLUS (Deficit)	17,117	7,833	20,672	12,610	119%	-17%	36%
CURRENT ASSETS OVER RESERVE (Deficit)	(4,059)	(33,408)	(18,902)				
Revenue							
<i>Operating Revenue</i>							
Membership Fees (Subtotal)	32,600	29,699	23,781	14,987	10%	37%	118%
Sanctioning Fees (Subtotal)	30,500	28,902	24,010	18,190	6%	27%	68%
Events & Programs (Subtotal)	48,700	52,366	42,602	21,764	-7%	14%	124%
MRA Timing Services (Subtotal)	32,462	20,164	14,356	13,006	61%	126%	150%
Series & Awards (Subtotal)	4,500	2,530	0	0	78%	-	-
MRA Clothing & Accessories (Subtotal)	2,475	6,301	1,760	0	-61%	41%	-
Race Supplies (Subtotal)	1,424	0	599	0	-	138%	-
Equipment (Subtotal)	200	591	853	1,374	-66%	-77%	-85%
<i>Operating Revenue (Subtotal)</i>	<i>152,860</i>	<i>140,553</i>	<i>107,961</i>	<i>69,321</i>	<i>9%</i>	<i>42%</i>	<i>121%</i>
<i>Non-Operating Revenue</i>							
Grants (Subtotal)	3,250	12,174	42,879	9,447	-73%	-92%	-66%
Sponsorships (Subtotal)	21,950	16,947	12,858	9,022	30%	71%	143%
Fundraising & Donations (Subtotal)	3,600	6,082	3,413	3,903	-41%	5%	-8%
Other Revenue (Subtotal)	450	464	955	3,576	-3%	-53%	-87%
<i>Non-Operating Revenue (Subtotal)</i>	<i>29,250</i>	<i>35,667</i>	<i>60,105</i>	<i>25,948</i>	<i>-18%</i>	<i>-51%</i>	<i>13%</i>
Revenue (Subtotal)	182,110	176,220	168,066	95,269	3%	8%	91%
Expenses							
Employee Salaries & Benefits (Subtotal)	(51,094)	(63,263)	(70,182)	(36,921)	-19%	-27%	38%
Events & Programs (Subtotal)	(36,522)	(35,532)	(30,934)	(18,461)	3%	18%	98%
MRA Timing Services (Subtotal)	(37,006)	(27,021)	(12,154)	(6,947)	37%	204%	433%
Office Expenses (Subtotal)	(7,555)	(8,907)	(8,657)	(4,517)	-15%	-13%	67%
Event Equipment (Subtotal)	(11,065)	(9,750)	(9,547)	(3,619)	13%	16%	206%
Series & Awards (Subtotal)	(10,172)	(7,925)	(6,204)	(5,448)	28%	64%	87%
Athletics Manitoba Fees	(6,800)	(6,640)	(6,140)	(3,800)	2%	11%	79%
Marketing & Promotion (Subtotal)	(1,752)	(3,141)	(1,686)	(1,303)	-44%	4%	34%
Fundraising Expenses (Subtotal)	(1,300)	(1,977)	0	0	-34%	-	-
MRA Clothing & Accessories (Subtotal)	(1,070)	(4,231)	(1,432)	0	-	-25%	-
Race Supplies (Subtotal)	(658)	0	(456)	0	-	44%	-
Other Expenses (Subtotal)	0	0	0	(1,643)	-	-	-100%
Expenses (Subtotal)	(164,993)	(168,387)	(147,394)	(82,659)	-2%	12%	100%
SURPLUS (Deficit)	17,117	7,833	20,672	12,610	119%	-17%	36%