

B.C. Senior Games Report
For B.C. Square & Round Dance Federation
Annual General Meeting

July 16, 2009
Vernon, B.C.

The BCSRDF worked for several years to get Square Dancing included as an activity at the B.C. Senior games. The games are a place where up to 4000 active people aged 55 and up meet annually to compete in activities from card playing to team sports. It was felt that this was a good place to showcase our activity and could be a promotional asset.

One of the major problems we were facing is that square dancers do not see themselves in a competitive activity and resisted being involved in the games for that reason. In order to be accepted by the B.C. Senior games we had to consider our activity a “sport” and agree to setting some rules of competition in order to determine winners and runners-up.

Using the Huntsman senior games in Utah as an example we determined that the competition process could be a minor part of our activities and that there would be social dancing available for the bulk of our time at the games. We proposed rules, categories and a process for the competition and were eventually accepted by the B.C. Senior games as an activity for 2009 games in Richmond and 2010 games in the Comox Valley. I anticipate that the actual competition will be a minimal part of the dancing activity, perhaps 10%. The balance of the time we have told the Senior Games people would be required for “practising”. Any dancers present can dance while the participants are “practising”.

Competition in the Senior Games is organized between 12 Zones that are similar to the BCSRDF Regions. They are:

SENIOR GAMES ZONES

1. Vancouver Island South
2. Vancouver Island North
3. Fraser Valley
4. Lower Mainland
5. Okanagan Similkameen
6. West Kootenay Boundary
7. East Kootenay
8. South Central
9. North Central
10. North West
11. Bulkley Valley-Lakes district
12. Peace River-Liard

BCSRDF REGIONS

- Vancouver Island South
- Vancouver & Fraser Valley
- Okanagan
- Kootenay
- Northern B.C.

- Vancouver Island North
- Thompson-Shuswap

We attempted to get entries into the Richmond Games from several zones to make a good showing for the activity. The deadline for registrations is this Friday, July 17, 2009 and it

would appear that we are going to fall short of our goal. There will only be two or three zones represented and fewer than 100 dancers registered. If the situation does not improve before the Comox Valley Games it is very likely that we will be dropped as an activity for future games.

One of the difficulties in promoting the Senior Games to square dancers is that they see it as too expensive. In order to participate in the competition you must join the BC Senior Games Society at a cost of \$15 per person and pay a participant fee of \$50 per person. As participants there will be three days of dancing activity.

There are quite a few other things that participants receive for their \$65. This will vary somewhat by zone depending on the zone's budget and administration. All participants will receive two lunches and a banquet. First time participants will get a free T-shirt. In Zone 3 (Fraser Valley) participants will be eligible for a travel allowance of \$50 to either offset the cost of travel to the games or accommodation in the area of the games. Richmond is setting up self-contained RV parking near the sports venues for \$15 per day or \$50 for 3 days. Unfortunately I did not learn enough details about the benefits of the games to be able to properly promote it in Zone 3 prior to the clubs wrapping up their season this Spring.

People who wish to be involved in the Richmond games and have missed the registration deadline can still participate as volunteers. Just go to the B.C. Senior Games website and register as a volunteer stating that you wish to assist with the square dancing activity. Volunteers will be asked to assist with running the competition but will be able to dance during the "practise" sessions. As members of the BCSRDF they will be covered by our liability insurance. It is anticipated that there will be opportunities to get "audience participation" and thereby demonstrating to BC Senior Games participants how much fun our activity is.

Ken Crisp
Zone 3
Square Dance Co-ordinator