

Don McGavern, former Canadian National Technical Director/Coaching Coordinator and Level 4 National Sport Coach/Learning Facilitator, operating from 3 different Canadian locations from 1973-2021 has announced his retirement from his roles in sport training/administration, specifically the sport of diving, and in all aspects of National Coaching Certification Program (NCCP) as of December 31, 2021.

Receiving his Master's degree at the University of Oregon, Don's sport leadership career began in 1964 as a successful Division-1 USA university diving coach and also as an Assistant Professor in the Faculty of Kinesiology at the University of Oregon. During his time in Oregon, Don served as the 2nd President of the newly formed American Diving Coaches Association in addition to being named as a new member of the USA Olympic Diving Committee.

In 1973 Don resigned from his work at the University of Oregon, and along with his wife Maxine, moved to Ottawa to assume the position of the newly created National Technical Director for the Canadian Amateur Diving Association where he would remain until 1979. His move to Canada coincided with a new national program starting in 1972 that would result in the formation of the NCCP Coaching Council and where Don was involved as a Learning Facilitator for the first three General Theory levels. While at the CADA, Don's major responsibility was the development, writing and implementation of a National Learn-to-Dive program, including the training of course conductors and distribution of training materials. A year later, his sport technical work led him to being selected as one of three National Technical Directors to sit on the Coaching Council to develop sport technical packages for the NCCP program.

In 1979 Don moved to Edmonton after being recruited by a provincial group representing diving in Alberta. Here he would lead and develop the diving program based out of the new Kinsmen Aquatic Centre in Edmonton, while assuming the role of the Provincial Technical Director for Diving in Alberta. From Edmonton, Don, Maxine and now two children, daughter Christine and son Ryan, moved to Calgary where he would be the coach of a newly formed program under the title, Dive Calgary. From 1984-87 Don would be a diving coach of this program. In 1987, Don left coaching to become a part-time academic teacher in the Faculty of Physical Education at the University of Calgary. This would also include managing the 50 meter Aquatic Centre with related responsibilities in the management of the facilities programs and the instructional areas related to Campus Recreation.

During all this time, Don continued to facilitate NCCP General Theory courses to Alberta coaches. Don retired from the U of C in 2005, but continued as a NCCP Learning Facilitator in multi-sport modules until his retirement at the end of 2021.

Don's Canadian years in sport, as a coach, educator and administrator within the NCCP program is summarized in 47 years of activities that included over 300 courses presented to over 3000 participating coaches attending. It was a career highlight in 2013 that Don was awarded the first Coach Developer Award in Alberta. This was the first such Provincial award in Canada developed for this category. That award was most significant in that the first national award for the work of Sport Learning Facilitators in the NCCP program had just been created the previous year in the name of the late Alberta/National colleague and friend, Don Watts.

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Don's personal reflection:

The time has now occurred to officially “pass the torch” to others who will continue to add much value from those early days when only the idea of a national coaching educational program was just in infancy needing substance to evolve. It is fulfilling to have been a part of that journey. Seeing the successful results of so many Canadian athletes now representing a variety and depth of sport accomplishments occurring on a regular basis, I think back to those early days of such visions/goals and what has evolved since.

In conclusion, as a personal aside, there are so many faces and memories of colleagues, friends and collaborative experiences that were developed along the way that are too numerous to mention for specific thanks, for fear of failing to include names omitted due to lack of a better memory at this time in my life. For their friendship and work with me in all of the preceding, it was absolutely an exciting and most satisfying set of activities and friendships that more than satisfied any possible goals ever set or imagined at the beginning of my professional career. For those friends and colleagues and of course, all of those coaches who participated in adding value to their coaching expertise through the NCCP network of coach educational opportunities with me, THANKS ALL!

***“Thoughts lead on to purposes; purposes go forth in actions; actions form habits; habits decide character; and character fixes our destiny.” ...Tyron Edwards***