

SOPEI Board of Directors Athlete Leadership - 2025 AGM Report

My name is Ellen MacNearney and I am the athlete representative on the SOPEI Board and have just finished my term as the PEI athlete representative on the Canadian Athlete Leadership Council (CALC). This is my Athlete Leadership Report for the 2024-2025 year.

I'm going to start by sharing some important notes from the CALC. The CALC meets once every three months, usually over Zoom with one in-person meeting every fall in Toronto. Being a representative on the CALC is an important part of my role, and I get to represent PEI at a national level.

An exciting topic for the CALC recently is that in March of 2026 there will be a NALC congress taking place in Michigan, USA. There will be a number of athlete leaders from the CALC and other representatives from Canada who will be attending the congress on behalf of Special Olympics Canada and their chapters. This will be a great opportunity for these leaders to use their leadership skills and to learn how to be stronger leaders as well.

Two members of the CALC have been working on a T-shirt exchange project where athletes will be able to exchange T-shirts at games. They are hoping to have this in place at the next National Games in Medicine Hat.

Next, I would like to talk about our Athlete Leadership Academy here in PEI. This year we did not have any new graduates from the Academy, and we did not train any new athlete leaders in workshops. While we would love to get more athletes involved in the Academy, it has been difficult to convince new leaders to take workshops and get them excited about the Academy. This year we offered an intro to Athlete Leadership, but there was not enough interest to host the event.

Although we didn't train any new leaders this year, our current group of 5 active athlete leaders are still very involved in different events and activities across the Island. They are still completing their quarterly reports, which get reviewed for credit towards their involvement in the Academy. They will graduate from their current terms in the Academy at our annual awards next month.

Some examples of what our athlete leaders have been involved with this year include:

- SOPEI Annual Awards – athletes were involved as speakers and presenters,
- Co-emceeing the pep-rally for SOPEI's Special Olympics Team Canada members,
- Athlete speaker at the Gala,
- Speakers were involved in a number of different LETR Events – Polar Plunge, Truck Convoy, & May Fun Run,
- Promoting Special Olympics at different fundraising events throughout the year.

- Home Show
 - Shed Draw
 - Tim Horton's
 - Empire Campaign – I was also featured in this campaign as a Special Olympics athlete who also works at Sobeys
- Shared Healthy Meals/Recipes

I have been on this board for three years and this month my term has come to an end. I have learned a lot about leadership during my time on this board and I would like to welcome Emily Craig who will be taking over my spot on CALC and SOPEI board. Thank you for making it possible for me to have this experience.

Ellen MacNearney