

CPKC Open 2025: Final Report – Marshal Committee

Our overall goal was to provide an enjoyable experience and a safe environment and for all participants by building effective marshal volunteers on all holes at the golf club. This involved recruiting and training 440 marshals (target was 550) and identifying competent hole captains for each hole.

In addition, we coordinated with Golf Canada to develop a workable roping plan and with their security team to develop how best to move players efficiently and safely between holes, while maximizing opportunities for spectator movement around the course

The Marshal Committee was composed of six co-chairs and two area captains. Specific responsibilities were assigned as follows:

- Two people were given the responsibility of working with Golf Canada to develop a roping plan that would efficiently move players and spectators around the course.
- One person took on the responsibility of the “Adopt-A-Hole” program
- One person was given responsibility for the Marshal Registration desk in the volunteer centre
- Two people were to work on recruitment, assigning volunteers to specific holes and communicating to the volunteer base
- The Area Hole Captains were assigned to Holes 1 to 10 and Holes 11 to 18. This was due to starting times on Thursday and Friday on Holes 1 and 11. Hole 10 (a short par 3) was the Rink Hole.

In October of 2024, we met with Golf Canada and toured the course to start a preliminary roping plan. This included suggested placement for marshals on each hole. When finalizing a roping plan, ensure that it makes sense. The players and caddies will take the shortest route from point to point.

We also started the ball rolling on our Adopt-A-Hole program. A detailed report from our Chair in charge of this initiative is attached to this report. Golf Canada’s Adopt-A-Hole program is a unique opportunity to build the volunteer base but does have some short comings. Regardless we still recruited approximately 50% of our marshals through this program.

Once the registration portal was opened, volunteers started registering and the workload increased dramatically. Every marshal volunteer’s information had to be read. Especially critical was the past experience information. We used this information to create a pool of possible hole captains. They were then approached to see if they would be interested in taking on a leadership role at the tournament.

Recruitment of sufficient volunteers was an issue that really developed in the last couple of months after it became apparent that six of the potential Adopt-A-Hole clubs were not going to succeed in meeting their goal of twenty marshal volunteers. A plan to include alternate sources of volunteers and ways to recruit should be developed six to eight months prior to the tournament. One thing we did learn throughout our process is that posters and notices in club's and other organization's newsletters and are not the most effective way of garnering volunteers. For an organization to succeed in recruiting volunteers, there needs to be an effective salesperson and/or recruiting committee to explore various options. The personal touch of one-on-one recruitment seemed to be the most effective at this tournament.

What Went Well

- All Hole Captains chosen did an exemplary job. It is critical to recruit this position with careful consideration for experience and communication skills.
- Adopt-A-Hole was successful in obtaining commitment from fourteen clubs and associations – in the end, only eight made it to the benchmark of twenty marshal volunteers.
- Assigning volunteers to holes resulted in a good blend of experience versus rookies. This is best done by two people – one reading the experience and deciding which hole to place them on and the other person placing them on the hole. This eliminates a lot of flipping back and forth in Trust Events if there is only one person doing this task.
- We organized a tour of the course for Hole Captains prior to tournament week. This allowed them to appreciate the geography and potential issues of each hole and also gave them an opportunity to meet other hole captains, especially those working on adjacent holes.
- We knew months before the tournament that there would be no spectators on Tuesday of tournament week, thus eliminating the need for marshals. We held a meet and greet and a training session for all hole captains on Tuesday of tournament week. At this meeting, we had a presentation from the Communication Chair regarding walkie-talkie use and protocols. The Tournament Chair of Security also made a presentation and answered many questions. An experienced Hole Captain gave an overview of the use of the marshal equipment and outlined some of the key responsibilities of a marshal. This was helpful to ensure all Hole Captains had the same information and could use it in training the marshal volunteers on their particular hole.
- Prior to the tournament, the bridge on Holes 13/15 was believed to be our worst problem and two very experienced Hole Captains certainly made the transition between these holes work effectively. This bridge did not prove to be a major concern during tournament week, except on the final day with the crowds following Brooke.

- Four very experienced Hole Captains were identified through their registration information and they were assigned to our 4 most difficult holes.
- Marshal performance improved over the days of the tournament from an initial base of many rookie volunteers to polished and capable execution of marshal responsibilities.

What Could Have Been Better

- There was not enough equipment such as QUIET signs for all holes. The paddles were not well-put together and most had no handles after the second day.
- There was a crossroad approximately 50 yards in front of the first tee. On Thursday and Friday, the shuttles with players and caddies had to take this route from the practice facility to the 11th Tee. In addition, this road was used by spectators and many other carts. It was very difficult controlling the crossing and several players came close to missing their starting tee time on Hole 11. We innovated “on the fly” and created an express line for carts with players and caddies. As soon as the last player had teed off on the first hole, we let carts cross for twenty seconds or so until players and caddies reached the road. This innovation ensured that no player missed a tee time on Hole 11. After the players and caddies playing Hole One cleared the road, spectators and other carts were allowed access. This was a good example of adjusting to unanticipated problems and clearly demonstrated the ingenuity and leadership of our Committee Chairs.
- Water was a big issue during the week for both volunteers and spectators. If security will not let spectators bring containers of water in in a personal water bottle, then there must be a better system for filling water bottles once through the gates. There were not enough water filling stations and the Yeti stations on Hole 10 and Hole 15 had foul tasting water – this comment was made by many spectators and volunteers who refused to drink this water.
- There was a Members Only area at the halfway house – between the ninth green and the tenth tee. We did not anticipate the noise level from this area, as well as the noise from the Rink Hole 10. It often made it difficult for players putting on Hole 9 and created extra stress for marshals on that hole to manage.
- During the tournament, our Rover team worked well. It is important that Rovers have good mobility and strong communication skills. They need to be assertive in situations, yet pleasant to spectators. Rovers tend to be in busy locations and interact with security, players and fans. As they come up to a hole, they need to check in with the Hole Captain, as they are allowed inside the ropes – we did not stress this enough initially.

- After starting to assign shifts there were several situations where Hole Captains were limited by a maximum allowable value in Trust Events which limited the number of volunteers that could be entered for a shift for that hole. Golf Canada quickly changed this maximum value but perhaps there needs to be a review of all these maximum values for each new tournament.
- While the Marshals Committee was searching for additional volunteers it came to light that several of the other committees had too many volunteers. So many that some could only assign 2 shifts for some of their volunteers. There needs to be a review of the various committee registration cut off values.
- For the clubs/organizations who were able to meet the criteria for the Adopt-A-Hole program, the placement of the signage indicating the name of their club that was marshalling was very, very disappointing. One of the major selling points for Adopt-A-Hole was the recognition they would receive from spectators on their particular hole. In all cases the signs were placed where no cameras could see them, which meant no-one else could see them as well. This certainly has to be rectified in future tournaments.

Unique Issues

- Road in front of Hole One: Neither Golf Canada nor this committee realized the difficulty that would be caused by having so many carts and spectators crossing at this point.
- Holes 6, 7 and 8 were far away from washrooms and food. One of the captains ended up taking a food order from the group of marshal volunteers and went in to the food concessions and returned with food for everyone. The availability of boxed lunches would have alleviated this issue.
- Washrooms proved to be problematic for volunteers on distant holes (Holes 6, 7, 8 and Holes 13, 14, 15). After the first day, some additional portable toilets were placed on the course to address these areas after we expressed our concern with Golf Canada. A comprehensive plan for the location of washrooms needs to be developed to ensure there are adequate facilities for volunteer use.
- One bridge on Holes 13, 14, 15. This only was a major problem on Saturday and Sunday when the last groups were going through these holes.
- Crossover on Hole 18: This proved to be too far back towards the tee. The preliminary roping plan had a crosswalk up closer to the green. The spectators should have been able to come up a service road and cross 18 just passed the landing area.
- Proximity of The Rink Hole to other holes and the noise factor.

Suggestions for Future

- Create an overall recruitment committee to connect closely with schools and other clubs and organizations, as well as the club membership. This committee

can create a strong plan for the recruitment of volunteers for all committees, not just Marshals.

- Have a dedicated technical person or two. This can be from Golf Canada but preferably from the Golf Club. This person can get ahead of the learning curve necessary to effectively navigate Trust Event and assist Hole Captains with the scheduling of volunteers. This person could also provide individual, on-site support and assistance.
- Golf Canada needs to give the host club more notice for extra activities/expectations. Measuring the length of drives on Holes 11 and 12 came as a complete surprise to us shortly before the tournament. They were very busy holes, but luckily staffed with very experienced Hole Captains who were able to manage this request.
- Golf Canada should change their requirements for volunteers from 4 days to 4 shifts. There was a lot of feedback from potential volunteers that they could not commit to four days/four shift requirement.

What do you wish you could have known prior to tournament week?

- Player Movement: It took a day or so to understand that some players and caddies are perfectly happy to walk outside the ropes between holes, while others want to be inside the ropes. We had to make sure our marshal volunteers knew this and not to stop players or caddies from stepping over / under the ropes if they wished to.
- A definition of people who were allowed to be “inside the ropes” and where they were permitted to locate themselves. We were told they had to be within one arm’s length of the ropes. When we tried to enforce this, we found out that some of these people were undercover police officers and these restrictions did not apply to them.

What is your favourite memory?

- While the victory for Brooke is hard to beat, we will also remember how the marshalling of the course turned out to be a success. There has been so much positive feedback on a job well done.

- The opportunity to work together with other club members and other committee Chairs in ensuring a successful experience for players, spectators and all involved.

Respectfully Submitted By Marshal Committee Co-Chairs:

Bob and Mandi Buckner, Roman and Luba Pankiw, Bruce Martin, Donna Scully

Attachment: Adopt-A-Hole Report