



**Climbing Escalade Canada**  
**National Pandemic-Response Task Force**  
**April 17th, 2020, 2-4pm eastern**  
**MEETING MINUTES**

**1. Introduction & Roll Call**

Christine (CM) introduced the meeting and thanked the participants for joining the task force and the call.

In attendance:

Adam Morgan – Fredericton Bouldering Co-op – Fredericton, NB  
Andrew Coffey – The Hive – Vancouver, BC  
Alexandra Wojcicki – CWA Representative – USA  
Christiane Marceau – CEC lead – Ottawa, ON  
Davis Barton – OCF Representative – Kingston, ON  
Gabriel D'amour – DÉLIRE – Beauport, QC  
Jean-François M. Carrier – Le Crux – Boisbriand, QC  
Jean-Marc De La Plante – Allez up – Montréal, QC  
Jordan Mackay – Regina Climbing Centre – Regina, SK  
Kenneth Cronin – Crag X – Victoria, BC  
Kori Cuthbert – The Hive – Winnipeg, MB  
Lauren Watson – Ground Up Climbing – Squamish, BC  
Mathieu DesRochers – FQME Representative – Montreal, QC  
Matthew Languay – Basecamp Climbing – Toronto, ON  
Michelle Ang – Subject matter expert – Toronto, ON  
Olivier Birot – Subject matter expert – Toronto, ON  
Regan Kennedy – ACA Representative – Calgary, AB  
Silvia McBurney – BOULDERZ Climbing Centre – Toronto, ON  
Stephen Cheung – Subject matter expert – Toronto, ON  
Terry Spurrell – SCBC representative – Vancouver, BC

Sends his regret: Philip Ainslie – Subject matter expert – Vancouver, BC

**2. About CEC**

CM introduced the CEC, funding and memberships in other committees and organizations. CM introduced herself to the group.

**3. How this came to be**

CM introduced the task force and provided background into how the task force developed

- a. CWA meeting occurring previously demonstrated the need for a Canadian group to address local issues related to gym closures due to COVID-19
- b. Common messaging and a standardized approach will lead to confidence in the community that thought has been put into a strategy

#### **4. Mission & Members of Task Force**

CEC emphasized that business advice and expertise is out of scope for this task force. Sharing of resources is encouraged, however CEC will not be the resource for business, health resources, etc.

Subject Matter Experts (SME) on the group can assist the task force in finding the correct information and de-bunk false information in the community, however new information and advice will be linked from broader organizations.

The IFSC is also developing a task force that will connect with the national federations - however Canadian issues show that a national task force is still relevant.

The changing landscape of the COVID-19 response was discussed, and task force members are encouraged to be flexible with any recommendations as needed.

Recreation may be one of the last businesses to open and we will look to provincial and federal recommendations for guidance in this area.

Policies for gyms are not in scope, however guidelines and recommendations can be created to help gyms in this time.

Goal to ensure safety of climbers, volunteers and staff.

CEC will be able to develop recommendations for competitions that are held in the future.

#### **5. Periods, Pillars, Outcomes, Process**

Focus on transition from closed to open will likely be the largest focus of this task force.

We may need to lobby with government institutions to ensure the comfort that gyms can operate safely.

We will also like to focus on the future and prepare for future issues

- o sustainability of measures developed is important to ensure public health in general in the future will be helpful
- o communication and lobbying - Sport Canada has asked what the impacts on our NSO and what is needed to help this task force for communications. Funding and/or support from Sport Canada may be able to be acquired

Deliverables - we need to discuss what outcomes we want to achieve

- o we need to ensure that the end users (e.g. gym owners, climbers) are heard, and feasibility will be ensured
- o SMEs can help fact check and provide reviewed resources, links, and publications
- o A findings report will be developed
- o Communications to the community

#### **6. Questions?**

Jean-Francois: previous meeting with 24/28 gyms in Quebec was organized with IFSC representation. Recommendations will start from international recommendations, then national then provincial.

- a. PSO are beginning to have talks with the government to increase presence and lobbying for recreational businesses

#### **7. Tour de table**

CM lead a group introduction.

**Key elements:**

- Everyone is excited to be on this group.
- Risk management perspective while looking at gym re-opening, not risk elimination. We can't get rid of the risk; we can only manage it.
- Need to find a balance between what the gym owners can do, and what falls on the climbers themselves
- The TF should NOT overburden the gyms with impractical items
- The TF can't impose anything on the gyms. Our goal should be to share good practices and education.
- All recommendations should keep the focus on the business impact (ex: equipment rental is an important source of revenue for the gyms).
- National collaboration and messaging will have more impact on government lobbying
- Provincial conversations are encouraged, as this issue is mostly provincially based and decided
- Could the gyms share their membership practices at this time?
- Consistency in operating would go a long way to avoid the community forcing the gyms against each other.
- Gyms have started looking into online software for booking
- In the current communications, the community may have been left aside. The TF needs to communicate with the climbers to reassure them, to inform them, to educate them.
- Communication must involve all levels – NSO, PSO, Local Gyms, Community.
- Everything produced by the TF must follow and respect government standards and regulations
- Subject Matter Experts
  - University professors on the TF (York University, Brock University, University of BC) will help with demystifying the science and found the proper research to support recommendations
  - Policy writer (Ontario Health) will help with writing finding reports and recommendations. Every guideline will be written in a way to leave place for provincial and local adaptations.
- CEC along with the gym owners could create an education video with clips from the gyms to demonstrate how to behave at each gym - can we put together a nation-wide education piece so that we can all be on the same page
- The TF wonders how other sports will be dealing with the return to normal? How will this issue redefine our sport, as well as participation in general?
- More than just the business side of things, the TF needs to also look into the culture and emotional/social needs of the sport.

**8. Closing**

CM discuss meeting frequency – suggest meeting as needed rather than a regular meeting schedule

CM will post information on CEC website – ask members to promote the TF and its conclusions to their communities.

Kenneth mentions that CWA is offering free membership for everyone right now. He encourages all gyms to join

## **Tour de table – details**

### **Adam Morgan - Fredericton Bouldering Co-op - Fredericton, NB**

Developing a new bouldering gym - less than one year open. Goals to ensure appropriate opening of gym to ensure minimal risk into the gym as possible.

### **Andrew Coffey - The Hive - Vancouver, BC**

Three Gyms owned and in the process of opening two other gyms. Main goal is to find the balance between what can be practically done, and what responsibility falls on the users (climbers). Cannot overburden the gym with impractical items, especially since a burden of responsibility lies in the climbers. A natural behaviour to handwashing prior to doing anything post-climbing that can be helpful. Climbers are averse to cross-contamination, natural good behavior.

### **Alexandra Wojcicki - CWA Representative - USA**

Membership manager with CWA. International trade association representing climbing gyms. primary purpose is to provide assistance and to ensure alignment with international recommendations. Offering free membership at this time. Current CWA activities - two CWA volunteer teams working on advocacy issues (Canada vs US). Working with the small businesses lobbying group for rent abatement (email writing campaign is being launched). Focus group and WG are working with CEC + European groups that are reopening focused groups. primarily US-based but will be translated across borders. Also a hygiene working group. All guidance will be widely shared internationally.

### **Davis Barton - OCF Representative - Kingston, ON**

OCF (PSO) in Ontario. Want to hear what OCF can do to support the gyms during the closing. Sharing information. Over 30 gyms in Ontario, we want to ensure not everyone is reinventing the wheel. OCF wants to return to competition, but it is not the goal at the time. OCF is there to listen.

### **Gabriel D'amour - DÉLIRE - Beauport, QC**

Director of operation for 3 locations. Closed quickly in Québec. Here to listen to determine what their base measures for transition back to operations will be. Want to provide recommendations into what is realistic. Want the Qc gyms to talk to each other and coordinate an approach to talk to the QC gov't

### **Jean-François M. Carrier - Le Crux - Boisbriand, QC**

Co-owner of le Crux. Was opening a gym in Laval on April 10th. No construction allowed. Want to help grow climbing in Québec. He has been working within QC to discuss issues despite competition between the gyms, 24/28 gyms in Québec participated on a call on April 16th. Went very well. Encourage others to do the same in their provinces. they have some information and communication (FQME to gym owner, CEC to gym owner) but we may have been forgetting the client. We should consider communicating with the clients/community to at least tell people that these issues are being discussed, and which organizations are being discussed. This should be communicated with the public as well. The community needs to be reassured in this time. We have been missing this. and the communication should be public.

### **Jean-Marc De La Plante - Allez up - Montréal, QC**

Representing Allez-up, UTB, Joe Rockheads, Boulder House, 7 Bays. Would like to focus on: developing similar policies across the gyms (don't want climbers to pit gym policies against each other) - basic policy agreement will be important. Believe this will be a long process and communication amongst members of the task force is important to continue collaboration in the subsequent phases. Membership phases (opt in, freezing memberships etc. has different amongst the gyms). a survey of community members has shown that other recreational facilities are still charging membership (can we come up with a smart way to deal with the membership so that we don't eliminate the cash flow). Capacity limitations will likely be in place when they open again. Has been looking at computer systems to look into reservations for climbers. But how to do this (priority members first, limit the # of slots/week) - if they all coordinate this, they can approach the RGP systems to ask the company to help incorporate this into their systems. Has asked for input into the reservation systems.

**Jordan Mackay - Regina Climbing Centre - Regina, SK**

Started gym 2 years ago. Learned a lot. Excited to be on the call to stop bouldering in kitchen. Happy to help out.

**Kenneth Cronin - Crag X - Victoria, BC**

Owner of Crag X. Canadian director on CWA Board. Concentrating on the Business side of gyms. Convincing not-climbers to consider the climbing industry. What actions will look like to people that are not climbers (government institutions, rules makers). Careful about recommendations that can't be maintained. Procedures need to be sensible and maintainable (e.g. elimination of rental equipment would result in a reduction in income from this type of revenue). Closed early / proactively. Focus on good

**Kori Cuthbert - The Hive - Winnipeg, MB**

Managing partner for the Hive in Winnipeg - to be opened soon. General construction is still happening in Manitoba. Want to open safely and cost efficiently.

**Lauren Watson - Ground Up Climbing - Squamish, BC**

Co-owner and founder. 4 ½ years old, closed due to relation with Vancouver despite no local cases. Opt-in approach with weekly updates trying to be transparent, how the money is being used, who is still being employed, etc. Communication with members has been well received. Concerns about how to manage distancing is there. How can we keep youth programs and teams running in the transitional period. Importance of education - education of hygiene.

**Mathieu DesRochers - FQME Representative - Montreal, QC**

Representation of FQME - management of special events planning background. He was in charge of the remaining provincial climbing season before it was cancelled. He is now the new sport director. Getting to know the community through this group. PSO rep to ensure link of communication between national committee and the PSO and to transmit the decisions to the rest of the community and to make sure that the decisions respect provincial standards and regulations (gov't as well). Answering questions of the FQME members.

**Matthew Languay - Basecamp Climbing - Toronto, ON**

Had to leave meeting prior to this point.

**Michelle Ang - Subject matter expert - Toronto, ON**

Not a gym owner, recreational climber. Work in health policy development for Ontario Health. Take health care recommendations to develop manageable policies. Want to help develop and write policies. Will help with communication. Can help with lobbying to demonstrate to the government that we can open the gyms. Advocate for our community.

**Olivier Birot - Subject matter expert - Toronto, ON**

He is a scientist/professor at York U, exercise physiology. Has offered services as a scientist, research on the virus on campus. Here to help provide and interpret research and science news. As scientists hopefully they can look into original papers and research to help validate news claims, etc. Help and support for proper practice and communications to the clients from a health and science perspective

**Philip Ainslie - Subject matter expert - Vancouver, BC**

Couldn't make the call.

**Regan Kennedy - ACA Representative - Calgary, AB**

Two hats - ACA board member (communication and education role) and gym owner. Here to collaborate, talk to all. Alberta gym owners had their own task force - alignment on gym closures occurred. closure on same day and time, all froze climbers fees (but with option to opt in). They meet weekly and would like to align on the re-opening. Education will be important to the client. CEC along with the gym owners could create an education video with clips from the gyms to demonstrate how to behave at each gym - can we put together a nation-wide education piece so that we can all be on the same page. Marketing tools and education will be important.

**Silvia McBurney - BOULDERZ Climbing Centre - Toronto, ON**

Co-owner, has been involved with CEC for many years, involved with the NCCP Working group. Would like to see development that has longevity. It would be great to apply this to our day to day. We could say that if a CEC event is hosting an event, we could make recommendations for what is needed to hold an event, and how they can apply this into the daily functions. Rules of engagement in how to participate into the sport would be good. How are other sports handling these issues? we should find out.

**Stephen Cheung - Subject matter expert - Toronto, ON**

Brock University kinesiology department - science advice and similar goals to Olivier. Help with processing of scientific facts coming out, and can help with the research validation. can give the perspective of the client/end users as well

**Terry Spurrell - SCBC representative - Vancouver, BC**

SCBC board of directors. Gym owner. This group has a lot of power, we are all looking for the same goal. The optics of this will be good for the government authorities. Staged guidelines to help manage the risk, not eliminate the risk. Gyms have different budget and strategy. We can't have RULES but instead guidelines that can be adopted into each gym with its own local issues.