

2025 DFA Vice President Report (prepared by Julie Herndier)

It was an exhilarating season, marked by growth in numbers, development, and a lot of fun on the field. In my first year as Vice President of DFA, I was humbled by and thankful for the amount of work done by our executive, coordinators, coaches, and volunteers. As we grow, so too do our expenses, our costs and our demand for more helping hands. We strive to provide a place for every girl to play softball, while keeping it affordable for families in Delta, without going into a financial deficit.

City of Delta Partnership with DFA

2025 saw continued strong support and partnership with the City of Delta. Examples of this include collaboration around the planning of the new Hawthorne building (see below), upgrades to the drainage at NDCP (see below), preparing NDCP for the Canada Cup, and input on the proposed development of John Oliver Park.

Ongoing areas of opportunity and discussion with the City include the need to upgrade at least one of our parks to be a four diamond park (four full-size diamonds at a park that has facilities and field availability for our older age divisions), continued support in gaining better field maintenance for the fields we rely on in the school district, and, overall infrastructure support and planning as we continue to grow our membership.

Brandrith - D2 & D3 closed due to the beetle

For the second consecutive season, diamonds two and three (as the DFA names them) continue to be closed due to challenges with the beetle. The school district is responsible for these fields, even though we book the permits through the City. It comes as no surprise that the school district lacks the personnel and funding to put the work into rehabilitating these fields.

One of the goals of the 2026 season is to establish a clear path for reintroducing Brandrith D2 and D3 to use. This would dramatically improve field availability for DFA teams.

Volunteerism

Difficulty in identifying, scheduling, and communicating volunteer opportunities to distribute the volunteer load suggests the need for more effective volunteer coordination and assistance for the 2026 season.

Music at Hawthorne

This year saw challenges with our neighbours at Hawthorne Park. In truth, in many instances of the complaints, the music was at an unnecessarily high bass and volume, and DFA went to great lengths to prevent fines from being written against teams playing in Delta or Delta teams.

That said, the request not to play music at Hawthorne was also unpopular, and many complained that they would rather play music and face the fines.

DFA will post signs making it clear that playing of loud music, that is deemed too noisy for a residential area (at any time of day), may result in that team (not DFA) being fined by the City of Delta.

New Building at Hawthorne

DFA offered input on the proposed new building at Hawthorne. We are pleased that a much-needed building is going in. The current plans include gender washrooms, universal washrooms, a small concession and equipment storage for DFA to have access to. As of this time, the plans do not include a batting cage, nor a second level for a meeting room or viewing space, despite these suggestions from DFA. It's unclear whether there will be umpire changing rooms.

North Delta Community Park Drainage Upgrades

In the fall of 2025, the City upgraded the drainage of diamond one at NDCP. As it happens, work will commence on diamond 2 any day now. Once complete, all three of the 'large' diamonds (D1, D2, and D3) will have updated drainage to handle water more effectively.

Buildings, structures and spaces leased from the City by DFA

Currently, DFA leases many spaces from the City to support our membership. In recent years, there has been minimal use of the 'tower' at Brandrith. 2026 will bring continued changes to our spaces, and therefore, we will benefit from an audit or reassessment of the space we lease from the City. This effort will be an opportunity for DFA volunteerism. More to come over the coming months!

Umpire Recruitment, Retention and Treatment

Since joining the executive, I have been a sponsor of the DFA umpire program, working alongside Jeffery and the rest of the executive, to help recruit, retain and (sadly) protect umpires.

While our UIC Jeffery's report will handle the numbers aspect, I wanted to comment that I continue to see Delta umpires reduced to tears either during or after a game.

Having been one of the teams affected by an umpire shortage in the 2024 season, I urge every coach, player, parent, grandparent, and super fan to pay close attention to how we treat our umpires. I've provided an excerpt from the BC Provincial UIC to share some quotes directly from our young umpires:

Excerpt from the Provincial UIC Report presented at the Softball BC AGM UIC 2025 Report:

"Retention still struggles most notably, with only 53% of first-year umpires returning for a second season.

Key factors identified in the year-end survey of 1st year Umpires included:

"Some parents can be very hurtful to new umpires and it can make them not want to ump." "If I get a different job at a restaurant or something then I will probably not return."

"Push back from coaches and parents on decisions I made. It sometimes felt really disrespectful and intimidating."

81% of comments regarding "your Biggest Challenge in Year 1" specifically involved Coaches and/or Parents being difficult.

Ultimately... "It would be nice if the coaches and parents were told we were just learning too because some were very hard on us and we could hear the insults and making fun of us from the stands."

DFA in The Barn at Cromie Park

In 2025, the Barn at Cromie Park, a private facility managed by the Ladner Minor Baseball Association, opened its doors.. All bookings for DFA teams must be booked through president@deltafastpitch.com. Please do not contact them directly; this is the request of LMBA.

Teams are responsible for paying the facility rental fees themselves. Currently, the price is \$260 per hour for the whole facility and \$140 per hour for half the facility. Unfortunately, this price point means that any DFA events or clinics hosted in this facility will be more expensive than in previous years.

Fall Ball

This year marked the first time DFA offered Fall Ball since I've been an active member. Programs like these only come to life when volunteers come forward to run them: a big thank you to Stefanie Vandermeer for coordinating and to the coaches who took on a team.

As a pilot, it was run for U13 only in 2025. If you are eager to see fall ball teams, games and practices for a particular age division, please feel free to email info@deltafastpitch.com. DFA is keen to support initiatives like this but needs the humanpower to run them!

Field Crew

This year, DFA had some growing pains with a new field crew, following the retirement of long-time Field Crew boss Neil Malesku. The executive is grateful to the coaches, parents, and executive members who stepped in to assist with field preparation needs as they arose.

As of this time, the field crew plans for 2026 are unconfirmed.