Getting down to the sporting details

The directors of sports and sports facilities say that it's all looking good for a smooth and steady Games

Erika Sherk
For Ulu News

With just over a month left to the Games, the sports side of things is pretty well in order, says Marty Tingstad, director of Sport Technical.

Tingstad is in charge of overseeing the 19 sports chairs – those co-ordinating all the competitions and scheduling for each sport. With 21 different sports, including the Arctic Sports and Dene Games, Tingstad could have his hands precariously full.

Instead, he says that his experienced crew of co-ordinators have everything well in hand. "The good thing has been that most of our sport chairs are already involved in their sport, so they've already been involved with putting on competitions, tournaments."

Meetings started a full two years ago, with all the chairs gathering once a month. Now they are meeting once every two weeks.

"We've been going over everything with them to make sure they're prepared," Tingstad says, "Working with them on their schedules, working with them on their budgets, making sure they understand their responsibilities during the week."

Tingstad has reason to be calm. He's been at four of the last five Arctic Winter Games as mission staff for Team Alberta North.

"When the movement started to bring the Games to Grande Prairie I was involved right from the start," he said.

Tingstad intended to volunteer as Chair of Officials, he said, but was asked by Games president Debbie Reid if he would take the Sports Director role instead.

"It certainly is a lot more work and responsibility than I'd thought I'd be doing but I didn't hesitate," he says, "It was a good opportunity, a good chance to make a contribution to the games, so here I am."

The best achievement for him so far has been adding freestyle skiing to the sports roster, he says. "That was a big thing for sure, getting freestyle skiing in. I know it's been tried before, but it's never happened, so to me it's a bit of a feather in our cap."

With 2,047 participants – athletes, coaches and mission staff – signed up for 21 different sports, that means a lot of ice rinks, gymnasiums and ski hills. Lucky for those 2,000-odd people, Monty Haughian, director of facilities, is also calmly confident. Haughian hasn't done an official count, but with a ski hill, curling club, college and multiple ice rinks, gymnasiums and schools under his co-ordination – to name just a few – he's been kept busy getting them organized.

"We're actually building a building for the Dene Games," says Haughian, "It's my latest challenge." He and a team of volunteers will be erecting the 110 by 72-foot heated, energized tent at Muskoseepi Park.

Otherwise, Grande Prairie is well kitted-out in terms of its sports infrastructure. "We've got world class facilities," he says, adding it's partly due to the legacy from the 1995 Canada Winter Games. When the Arctic Winter Games International Committee came to tour Grande Prairie in 2007, Haughian says it was "a jaw-dropping experience," for them.

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ERIKA SHERK For Ulu New

Marty Tingstad says he and his team of sports chairs are ready for the Games

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