

# Local SPORTS

## NOTL to host tennis, sailing competitions for 2022 games

### Mike Balsom Special to The Local

The country's finest young sailors and tennis players will be descending upon Niagara-on-the-Lake next August for the Niagara 2022 Canada Summer Games.

The town, along with the Niagara Host Society, announced Monday that the Niagara-on-the-Lake Sailing Club, located on Melville Street, will play host to the sailing competition, while the six tennis courts at Memorial Park will be the site of the majority of the action in that sport next summer.

"I am delighted two of our local clubs are being awarded this great opportunity, although I never doubted that both the Niagara-on-the-Lake Tennis Club and Sailing Club operate at a high calibre worthy of such a platform," said Lord Mayor Betty Disero in a press release. "I know they will make our community proud when they host the 2022 Canada Summer Games, and show the world how special our town is."

Tennis club president Hugh Dow told The Local they were approached a few weeks ago by the 2021 Canada Games Host Society about holding the matches here. "We reviewed it at our club's board, and it had unanimous support and endorsement. This is a once-in-a-lifetime

opportunity to participate in what is Canada's largest multi-sport event, and to showcase the town, the club, and some of the unique features of where we live."

With just over a year to prepare, Dow said there will be a lot to do to get ready to play host to the events, which will feature Olympic hopefuls and potential future professional tennis players. In the past, pros such as Eugenie Bouchard (2009) and Niagara Falls' own Frank Dancevic (2001) played in the Canada Summer Games early in their careers.

"The way I understand it, each province or territory can send a team of eight of their top athletes for tennis," Dow says. "We could have from 80 to 100 of the best amateur players in Canada participating. It will be a wonderful opportunity to see some of these athletes at the top of their game."

Members of the club's volunteer board will be assuming some specific roles over the next year and during the competition. Treasurer Marilyn Francis will be heading up the venue committee, organizing physical aspects such as hospitality tents, parking and other necessary details. And director Rosemary Goodwin will be involved in scheduling of the singles, doubles and mixed doubles matches.

"Other directors will be

involved in various capacities," Dow added. "And this will provide volunteer opportunities for many of our members and other people in town. At previous games they've had up to 4,000 volunteers, so we'll certainly be looking for volunteers to assist."

Jaime Day, NOTL Sailing Club commodore, says the re-scheduling of the games, originally set for summer, 2021, was a factor in the town being chosen as the host. "Originally Buffalo Canoe Club in Fort Erie was awarded the games, but with the new schedule they had conflicting regattas going on. Venue chair Harvey Haggerty approached us back in November 2020, and I was excited right from the get-go."

The other members of the sailing club's board share Day's enthusiasm.

"I first brought it to the membership at our annual general meeting in the spring," he says. "I was just flabbergasted at the excitement from not only new members, but old members, founding members. Everyone had nothing but excitement in their voices and their faces."

As with tennis, the sailing club will be playing host to young Olympic hopefuls. He tells The Local there should be little disruption to the club's members, as the boats

for the regatta are all one- and two-person dinghies.

As well, Day says there is very little to be done in the way of infrastructure improvements between now and next August. Club members Maureen Shantz and Donna Genge will take on the roles of venue leads, ensuring the grounds and gardens are presentable and inviting for the national event.

As for spectators, Day adds that Ryerson Park will provide the best vantage point on land for people to watch the regatta, though it will not be designated as an official location for sailing events. Volunteer club members will also be around with their own boats to take fans a bit closer to the action.

Kevin Turcotte, the town's manager of parks and recreation, says staff hope to complete a few improvements to the tennis courts and surrounding areas of Memorial Park, pending council's review and approval of their recommendations this June. The existing bleachers already on site will be used for spectators, while there is a possibility that temporary seating might be brought in if needed.

He adds that the Host Society will be providing the town with approximately \$40,000 for any changes, ad-



Jaime Day, a huge Olympics fan and commodore of the NOTL Sailing Club, says other than a bit of sprucing up the grounds, there is little to be done to accommodate the 2022 Summer Games (Photo supplied)



Hugh Dow says tennis club members are excited to be hosting the 2022 Summer Games tennis competitions. (Mike Balsom)

ditions or improvements to Memorial Park, while additional town resources may be allotted for the project pending approval by council.

The Niagara 2022 Canada Summer Games are scheduled for Aug. 6 to 21, with venues throughout the region.



## Auchterlonie on Astrology