

Local SPORTS

Tennis club members excited about summer games

Mike Balsom
The Local

With the 2022 Niagara Canada Summer Games just a month away, Rosemary Goodwin is buzzing with excitement, as are many members of the Niagara-on-the-Lake Tennis Club.

"We have lots of volunteers lined up," Goodwin, past-president of the club and a current board member, says. "They're just starting their training, picking up their accreditation and their uniforms now. It's starting to feel real."

Goodwin is co-lead of sport operations for the tennis competition for the games, along with Marianne Groat. The six courts in NOTL as well as four in Welland will host all of the tennis matches running from Aug. 7 to 13. The finals, including the bronze and gold medal matches, are scheduled in NOTL for Aug. 13.

"Twenty-one Tennis Canada officials are coming," says Goodwin, who is also the Southwest Region chair on the Ontario Tennis Association board of directors. "They're coming from all

over the country. They have a choice between the National Bank Open, which happens the same week, or the Summer Games."

As Goodwin explains, the officials receive an honorarium for working the National Bank Open, while participation in Niagara is strictly on a volunteer basis.

"They choose it usually because they've done it in the past," she explains. The chief of officials, she adds, "said that everybody raves about Niagara and he can hardly wait to see it. The pressure is on."

Goodwin predicts that Memorial Park will draw a large number of last-minute spectators looking to catch some sports action while on holiday.

Visitors will ask, 'what's on today,' she says, and when they learn there's tennis to watch in NOTL, "they will want to come here to see our beautiful town."

Despite the excitement, there's still a bit of work to be done.

"We thought the courts would be resurfaced by now," Goodwin tells The Local. "We thought the new lights would be up and the pavilion would

be painted by now too."

Goodwin expects the court refinishing to begin later this week.

Also this week each province will be sending its list of athletes to Tennis Canada, says Goodwin. She adds that for Team Ontario, some of the best players may opt instead to enter the qualifying matches for the National Bank Open in hopes of competing in that tournament.

"Generally speaking, though, both Tennis Canada and the provincial association are giving the Canada Summer Games a higher priority this time than they have in other years," she adds. "Whoever ends up competing here will be high-level players."

Past athletes to compete in tennis at the Canada Summer Games include Rebeca Marino (2005), Brayden Schnur (2013) and Eugenie Bouchard and Gabriela Dabrowski (both 2009). Welland's Stacey Allaster, the former chair and CEO of the Women's Tennis Association (WTA), recently named a Companion of the Order of Canada for her involvement in the sport, competed in 1989.

Goodwin has a personal



The NOTL Tennis Club held its annual mixed doubles tournament earlier than usual to accommodate preparations for the Summer Games. The A division title was captured by Gerry McIlhone and Carmen Bowron (top photo), and the B division by Ross Robinson and Karen Rhind.

Victory celebration



Stewart Friesen's Halmar Friesen team celebrated their Monday night victory in the Short Track Super Series Firecracker 50 at Fonda Speedway in Fonda, New York. It was a busy long weekend for the NOTL native, with four races in his #44 Modified. He placed fifth Friday at Land of Legends Raceway in Canandaigua, NY, and followed that up Saturday with a big win at Utica-Rome Speedway. On Sunday, it was on to Orange County Fair Speedway in Middletown, NY, where he finished third. (Photo supplied by Halmar Friesen Racing)

connection to past Canada Summer Games, though it wasn't as a tennis competitor. Her late husband Don, an on-air personality and executive at the CBC, was involved in the 1967 Canada Winter Games in Quebec City. Two years later, he was able to draw the first Canada Summer Games to Halifax, where he was living and working at the time.

Don Goodwin went on

to act as deputy Chef de Mission (along with St. Catharines native Dick Pound, the longest-serving member of the International Olympic Committee) for the Canadian team at the 1972 Summer Olympics in Munich, Germany, and led the team as Chef de Mission for the 1976 Winter Olympics in Innsbruck, Austria.

In 1996, Don was the

master of ceremonies for the

opening and closing ceremonies at the Atlanta Olympics, and he also served as MC at tennis' Rogers Cup for more than 35 years. Don passed away in Niagara-on-the-Lake following a battle with pancreatic cancer in 2018.

The club has recently held its annual mixed doubles tournament, earlier than usual to accommodate the planned preparations for the Summer Games. The A division title was captured by Carmen Bowron and Gerry McIlhone, who beat the pairing of Lynda Morley and Jerzy Gorski. Nicole Marsh-Burke and Ken McGilvray were the consolation winners.

In the B division, Karen Rhind and Ross Robinson, took top honours over Amanda and Jim Thackray. Mary Townsend and Peter Rider won the consolation title.

Local WORSHIP

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