

NIAGARA 2022 CANADA SUMMER GAMES

Tennis officials impressed with local volunteers

Penny Coles
The Local

Canada Summer Games tennis competitions began at the Memorial Park courts Sunday, and will wrap up with finals Saturday, Aug. 13.

It's taken a mammoth effort and two years of planning, says tennis club member Rosemary Goodwin, who is in charge of sports operations, one of 18 committees ensuring the games run smoothly. She has the largest contingent of volunteers required, with 25 to 30 needed to cover two daily shifts.

When she's not run-

ning home to wash and dry much-needed towels for the players, she's ensuring there is lots of ice and water and electrolytes for them, and that everything "is perfect for them on the courts. Heat mitigation is the biggest issue. We make sure there is a cooler for them court-side. They're out there playing in incredible heat for an hour and a half. Those supplies have to be replenished every 10 to 15 minutes."

Marilyn Francis, vice-president of the tennis club has also been a "brilliant organizer" of the games, she says, doing an amazing job of all the adminis-

trative details.

Goodwin says she's been "dreaming about this event, and working toward it" for a long time. But also worrying about it — there is no roadmap to follow, and so many details to be sure are looked after.

But it's all worth it. "This is something so special," she says. "This is the Canada Games."

The tennis officials have been very complimentary of the volunteers, she says. Their job is to make sure it's the best possible competition experience for the young athletes, who are excited to be competing at this level, but who can also be emotional, es-

pecially when their games don't go well.

"Our volunteers are very respectful of the athletes. The officials keep telling us they've travelled across the country and to international events, attending many competitions, and without exception, they say our volunteers are amazing."

Leading up to the start of the games, in the midst of preparing for Sunday, Goodwin was invited to last Friday's Hall of Honour ceremony, where she represented her husband, the late Don Goodwin, who was one of the inductees.

The long-time sports

broadcaster was instrumental in the early days of the Canada Games, playing an active role in getting the inaugural event off the ground in 1967.

Tennis is a huge part of Rosemary's life, and she candidly says everything she has learned about the game, her involvement, the people she has met and the friends she made, would never have happened if she hadn't met and married Don.

Friday night was an example of what he brought into her life, she says. There on his behalf, "I was on the receiving end of so much kindness, and so much warmth, beyond anything I've

ever experienced. So many people came up to me Friday night, and at the opening ceremony Saturday night, and were so kind — I feel very fortunate. I have a wonderful life," she says. "It's been a deluge of kindness and graciousness, all because of Don."

She says he strived for excellence in everything he did, and she has tried to follow his example, especially for the summer games.

"This event is about creating experiences for peoples' lives. Don was the supremo of that. He would have loved this event. His voice, his manner, he could have taken it to another level."



Rosemary Goodwin was overwhelmed at the kindness she was shown during and after the Hall of Honour ceremony, which she attended on behalf of her husband, the late Don Goodwin. The ceremony was emceed by sports broadcaster Ron MacLean. (Tim McKenna)



In their matches Sunday, Ontario team members, which included Ray Xie (left) and Anna Raphaelle Serghi (right), played Alberta and beat them four matches to two. There are games morning and afternoon, sometimes going into the evening, and lots of tickets left for spectators to watch. Volunteer Rosemary Goodwin says she has seen some amazing matches on the courts. (Mike Balsom)

