

NORTHERN B.C. WINTER GAMES

Only the Olympics were bigger

Get ready Prince George for the second largest athletic event ever held in North America — after the Montreal Olympics.

That's the Northern B.C. Winter Games, to be held here Feb. 2-5. And if you think someone's exaggerating, talk to Games manager John Furlong.

Sitting in the civic properties office, wearing his official Games suit and tie, Furlong breathes enthusiasm into the event.

The 38 events include everything from hang gliding to chess and provide an opportunity for athletes from eight to 80 to get involved. And there are events such as skiing and bowling for the handicapped.

Spectators will be able to watch tiny gymnasts and heavy-weight wrestlers, water polo or "rugby in the water" and basketball and volleyball which Furlong says will be the main sports of the three-day event.

Participation is stressed over competition, says Furlong, though the estimated 5,600 participants will compete for gold, silver and bronze medals in the 38 events. "The Northern Games are for everybody," he stressed.

Why is it the highest number of competitors ever in British Columbia? "Because we're trying to develop the emotional contact. Everybody's a winner."

"I played in the Olympics twice and I can't hold that experience over just competing for fun. I can't side with the elitism."

The Games will be kicked off with an opening ceremony program that Furlong calls "super spectacular." It will include the Olympic style march-in, the lighting of the Games flame, a pipe band and dignitaries.

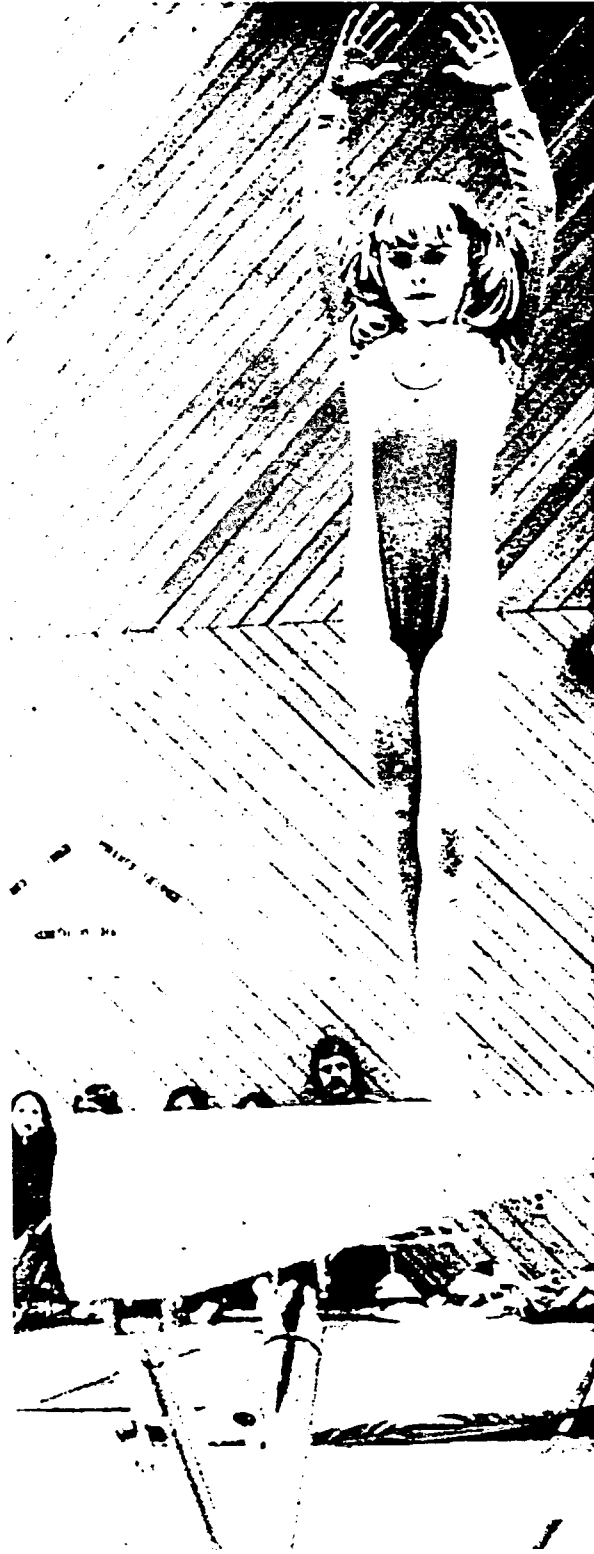
"The idea of the opening ceremony is to generate the spirit of the Games," an enthusiastic Furlong says.

And he promises too that the closing ceremonies will also be a highlight with the emphasis being put on "putting something back into sport."

Some of the other highlights include wrestling, which Furlong calls the "fairy tale story" of the Games. The event began four years ago with only six competitors and has blossomed to the point where 200 wrestlers will take part this year.

A "super spectacle to watch" will be the hang gliding event. And the Games Society president promises it will be "an example of a very safety-oriented sport."

Hockey will take a new twist at the Games as the tournament will consist of teams made up of all the



Gymnastics will be held at Kelly Road Secondary School.

most sportsman-like players in the north.

Names of players and coaches will be drawn from a hat and the usual competitiveness will be played down, says Furlong.

A fast variation of soccer played indoors will be played at the Livestock Arena. Six-a-side soccer is played without any real positions and is becoming a popular winter sport.

Water polo, a fiercely competitive game, will be a favorite with spectators as will the wrestling, basketball and volleyball. Included in the highly spectator-oriented sports is gymnastics.

"The standard of gymnastics is improving every year because of the Games. The style is still at a basic stage but it is definitely improving."

And for star-gazers there will be a volleyball or basketball match between the government ministers pre-

sent and the local Games committee. The former team will include the likes of Iona Campagnolo, MP for Skeena, and fitness minister in the federal cabinet.

"This is going to be a tremendous community effort with 200 or 300 volunteers involved including people taking billets. It can only happen if it is a team effort and that's what we're ready to try and get out of this town."

For those whose interest can't be pinned down to one of the 38 events, not the snowshoeing or the duplicate bridge, there will be a number of dances, dinners and other social events held during the games.

But for those 800 Prince George athletes, participation is the word.

Otherwise you'll have to satisfy yourself with a glimpse at Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau as he visits the Games.

Best of Luck Competitors

From the Offroad Specialists

Interior OffRoad

EQUIPMENT LIMITED

1757 Nicholson Street 562-6760

In the Nicholson Centre

GRAHAM'S MOVING & STORAGE



Welcome all Participants to the Northern B.C. Winter Games

BUD DONDALE OR DOUG COURTYCE OR GORD CRUICKSHANK

564-5855
or 563-8484
Telex 047-8795

2053 Ogilvie Pr. George 

The GENTLEmen of the Moving Industry


SUNRISE RENTALS

1625 Nicholson Street

WELCOME ATHLETES to the NORTHERN B.C. WINTER GAMES

"May the Sun always shine on your back"