

THE FREE PRESS SPORTS

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PHONE 564-0005

SPORTSBRIEF

► AA Zones here

The AA High School Volleyball Zone Championships are set to go this Thursday at Duchess Park Secondary, the College of New Caledonia and PGSS.

Thirteen teams including the top ranked Duchess Park Condorettes and local teams O'Grady and DP Todd will be competing.

Burns Lake comes into the tourney ranked second while the Fort St. James squad are third ranked.

Round Robin play begins at noon on Thursday and continues until Friday afternoon with the playoffs beginning on Friday evening.

The finals are scheduled for Saturday at 7:30 p.m. at the Duchess Park Gym.

► Hobson gets the axe

Doug Hobson's days as head coach of the Prince George Cougars are over.

Hobson was fired as coach of the Cougars on Friday by president and General Manager Rick Brodsky.

Brodsky says he agonized over the decision for some time and has offered Hobson another position within the organization.

Dale Marquette will be the interim head coach until a replacement is announced.

► Valentine's day

Carl Valentine, head coach of the Vancouver 86ers, will be in Prince George this week for a soccer skills tour of four local elementary schools.

The 86ers, partnered with B.C. Hydro, will give free soccer clinics to elementary school students from Prince George. The Hydro Soccertron Tour features Valentine, who will not only teach the children the finer points of kicking a soccer ball but will inform them on the value of education, self esteem and sportsmanship.

Each clinic will be about one hour in length with each child receiving an authentic 86er team poster.

The tour will start at Lakewood Elementary at 11 a.m. on November 6 before moving on to Vanway Elementary at 1:30. Valentine will be at Hart Highlands Elementary at 8:45 a.m. November 7 and he will finish his tour with a 1 p.m. engagement at Ron Brent.



Carl Valentine

World class triathlete

By CHRIS SIMNETT

Free Press staff writer

Ginnette St-Arnaud wants to prove she is one of the best triathletes in the world in her age group.

St-Arnaud, a teacher at Prince George's King George V Elementary, left Friday for Cancun, Mexico where she will compete in the 35-39 age group class at the World Triathlon Championships on Remembrance Day.

St-Arnaud qualified for the Worlds by winning the Canadian Championships in Fort McMurray, Alberta in August.

The native of Trois-Rivieres, Quebec has only been competing in triathlon for the past two years. Before that she was into cross-country skiing and back-country skiing. She wasn't a competitive athlete, but rather was one of the thousands of weekend warriors who pushed herself to the limit every time she went out.

"I just wanted to stay in shape for the weekends," says St-Arnaud, explaining how she got into triathlon. "Right now for me it's a passion, I really like it. I'm going to keep doing it until I can't get any faster."

Speed isn't paramount in the sport, but it is nice to have. Because St-Arnaud only competes in Olympic distance triathlons, which feature a 1.5 kilometre swim, 40-kilometre bike ride and 10-kilometre run, she says being fast is just as important as having the endurance to finish.

St-Arnaud has no idea how she will do in Mexico, but his hoping to run the course in two-hours and 15-minutes or less.

"If I can do it in that time, I'll be happy," she says in her thick French accent.

She is paying her own way to Mexico and is going there to win, but she admits to a few nerves.

"You've got all the best age groupers in the world there," she says. "I've never been in such a big competition. I'm starting to get a little bit nervous."

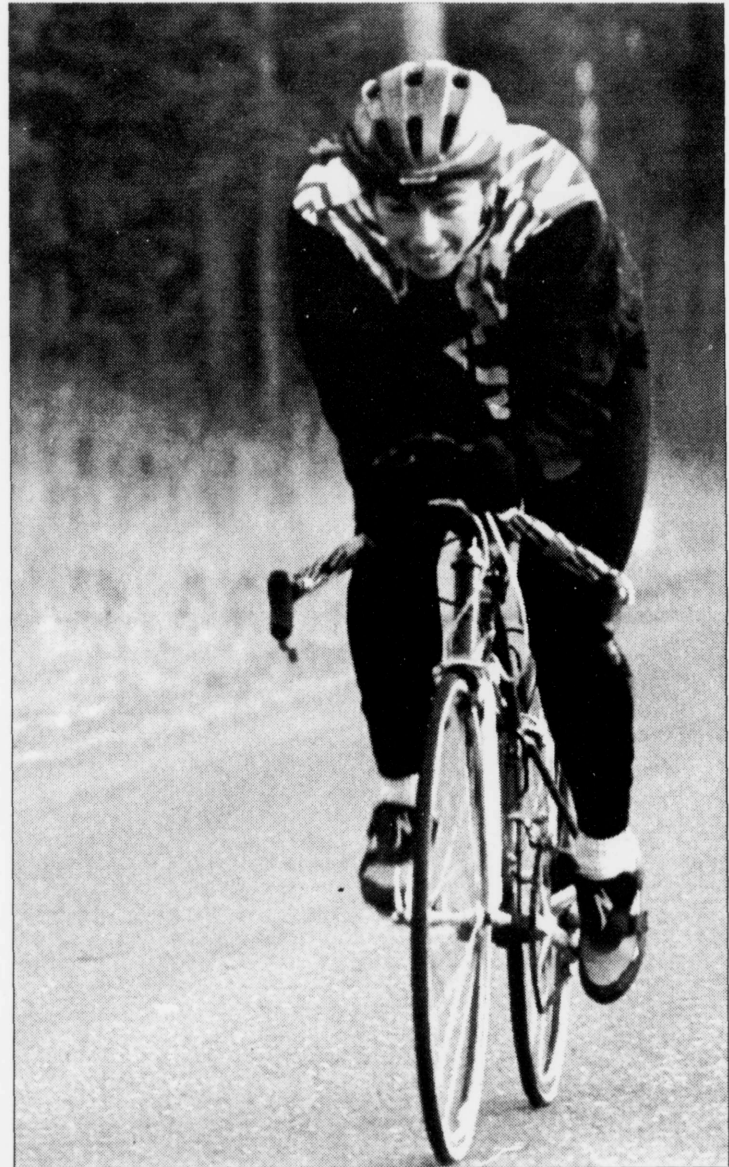
She knows that the odds are against her. First, she will be competing in hot and humid Mexico. Second, she will be swimming competitively in salt water for the first time.

"It's going to be tough," she says. "It will be very hot and humid, hotter than any weather I've trained in here in Prince George. I've also never swam in the ocean, that will be interesting."

Because of the recent cold snap, St-Arnaud hasn't been able to get out and train on her bike as often as she'd like to. She says that will hurt her in Mexico too.

St-Arnaud has been training for the Worlds since last winter. She trains six days a week for at least two hours each day. She usually works on two of the three triathlon disciplines during every training session, rotating through them so she never gets bored.

Running is her favourite and best disci-



Ginnette St-Arnaud has been training six days a week, running, swimming and biking, for the past year to prepare for the World Triathlon Championships, which are set for Nov. 11 in Cancun, Mexico.

CHRIS SIMNETT/FREE PRESS

pline.

"Running is my strongest event right now," she says. "Running seems to be where I catch the most time and catch up to the most people. I'm not a great runner, but compared to most other triathletes I do all right."

If St-Arnaud is ahead after the bike portion of an event, she usually doesn't lose. She's just that confident in her ability to put a race away in the run.

"It's my favourite event. It's the end," she says. "I feel really good. I'm on my own and it's just me and my body and my head and

that's it. The bike could break and there's just so many people in the water during the swim that anything could happen."

St-Arnaud would like to thank Norm at Ultrasport for looking after her bike and making sure it won't break when she's in Mexico. She would also like to thank Norman Schmitz, a local Certified General Accountant who donated plane tickets to Vancouver.

St-Arnaud will get one day of holiday after the event and plans to return home to Prince George on November 14.