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BARRY HILL GETS THE SHOT OFF DURING A RECENT SCRIMMAGE
... while Jamie Riley defends and Brent Moldovan looks on

Scott Anderson Photo

It's hockey time for Special Olympians

By **SCOTT ANDERSON**
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Over 220 athletes from around the province will converge on Moose Jaw this weekend for the Special Olympic Floor Hockey Championship.

The weekend will mark Moose Jaw's first year hosting this provincial Special Olympics event, with all games at Peacock Collegiate.

The city will be represented by the Moose Jaw Bruins, an 18-member team made up of nine Valleyview Centre residents and nine community-based players.

"This is their NHL," coach Mark Gilliland and Moose Jaw community program representative for Special Olympics said. "It's a big weekend for them, some look forward to it all year long."

Teams from Weyburn/Estevan, Regina, Humboldt/Outlook, Waldheim, Prince Albert/Melfort, and the host Moose Jaw team will compete in three pools.

Ranking games will be conducted today beginning at 7:15 p.m., with Saturday's round robin games running from 9 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Gilliland expects the final three games will be held starting at 3:30 p.m. The top two teams in their round robin pools will advance to the finals.

The Bruins floor hockey season began back in Sep-

tember, and the team has been building all year for this weekend.

Moose Jaw's team has played exhibition tournaments in Regina, Saskatoon, and games against the Warriors and volunteer teams. Opening ceremonies will be held at 7 p.m. on Friday to kick off the championship. Marie Holba will be leading the teams in the Special Olympics oath "Let me win. But if I can't win let me be brave in the attempt."

While the whole focus of the event is to have fun, the athletes do take their floor hockey seriously.

Gilliland said the tournament also allows teams to travel away from home, and meet new people from across the province.

The Heritage Inn will serve as a sort of Olympic Village for the competitors, with all travelling teams staying there.

"We've had tremendous support from the Moose Jaw community in hosting the event," Gilliland said. "We have a list of sponsors tremendously long."

He also tipped his hat to the volunteers who have come forward to help in Moose Jaw's first provincial floor hockey championship.

"It's a huge job putting something like this on."

He extended an invitation for anyone to come out and support the Bruins over the weekend. An awards banquet will be held Saturday at 6:30 p.m., and extra tickets are available for \$15.