

# Special Olympians, organizers ready to go

By **DARREN OLEKSYN**  
of the Herald

Enthusiastic, energetic athletes are taking over Prime Ministers' Park this weekend.

The Saskatchewan Special Olympics Summer Games will bring more than 450 athletes from across the province to Prince Albert for fun and competition, says event chairman Phil Fredette.

"In Special Olympics the athletes just have fun. Some are very competitive, but for others it's a time for them to have fun, to reacquire themselves with their friends. They just have a ball," said Fredette.

"The goal is to ensure the athletes have a great competition and have fun."

The top finishers at the Games will qualify for the Canadian Special Olympics Summer Games in Sudbury, Ont. next year.

The winners at nationals will, in turn, advance to the world championships in North Carolina in 1999.

"The Saskatchewan Special Olympics mandate is to provide training and competition for persons with mental disabilities," said Pat Stellek, executive director with the organization. "However, it is their abilities that qualify

them on their competitive journey, along with training on a regular basis."

In Prince Albert the Games will feature bowling, swimming, athletics, softball and power lifting. The events will be held at Prime Ministers' Park; Harry Jerome Track, Carlton Comprehensive High School, Frank Dunn Pool and the Minto Bowl.

All the events begin on Saturday at 9 a.m. except for power lifting which starts at noon.

All the competitions wind up on Saturday.

The event officially starts with the opening ceremony on Friday at 5:30 p.m. at Prime Ministers' Park.

The highlight of the ceremony will be the lighting of the Games' Flame of Hope.

Six athletes holding torches will light the



## WHERE IT'S ALL HAPPENING

**Opening ceremonies:** Friday, 5:30 p.m., Prime Ministers' Park

**Bowling:** Saturday, 9 a.m., Minto Bowl

**Swimming:** Saturday, 9 a.m., Frank Dunn Pool

**Athletics:** Saturday, 9 a.m., Prime Ministers' Park

**Softball:** Saturday, 9 a.m., Prime Ministers' Park

**Power lifting:** Saturday, 12 p.m., Carlton Comprehensive High School

**Closing ceremonies:** Sunday, 8:30 a.m., Exhibition Centre

The Games' website: [www.entex-bus.com/specialo](http://www.entex-bus.com/specialo)

symbolic flame.

The flame for the torches has been carried around the province by law enforcement officers as part of their annual fund-raising run.

Fredette, who is afraid of heights, will raise the Special Olympics flag during a ride in a SaskTel hot air balloon during the opening ceremony.

A breakfast banquet will close the Games on Sunday at 8:30 a.m.

at the Exhibition Centre.

Lt. Gov. Jack Wiebe will be a special guest at the breakfast.

As well, NHL players Dave Manson and Rich Pilon will serve as honorary coaches during the Games.

Fredette said the two years of planning for the event went extremely well. More than 200 volunteers have, or will, be helping with the Games.

"It went very, very smoothly. The committee heads are wonderful people. They are so capable and did a wonderful job. I don't have a worry in the world about this weekend and that's a great feeling."

Anyone interested in the Games can keep up to date on all the happenings by logging onto the Games' official website at: [www.entex-bus.com/specialo](http://www.entex-bus.com/specialo).

The site will feature results and also has links for anyone wishing to make a donation to Special Olympics.