

Coaches share special times

By Darron Kloster
L-P Sports Writer

Carol Arsenault described her involvement with Special Olympics as an emotional high.

The Special Olympians she coaches from Zone 7, on the other hand, preferred to call it just plain fun.



Either way, it was a chemistry that clicked Friday night as over 300 athletes and coaches got the 1986 Special Olympics Society's summer games underway in Regina with swimming and bowling competitions.

Inside the Lawson Aquatic Centre, amid shouts of encouragement, laughter and the splash of water, there were heart-warming smiles. There were sparkling eyes, faces that glowed and bodies that shook from pure exhilaration. And there was love. A hug or a kiss in victory or in defeat.

"Special Olympics have a way of bringing out the affection," said Arsenault, a native of North Battleford and just one of several coaches with the 30-member Zone 7 team.

"There are athletes here that otherwise would never get the chance to meet people like themselves from other zones and compete if it weren't for these games," said Arsenault. "We do keep all our athletes active at home. In fact there are only two days out of every week where we don't have activities planned. But there is something about going out of town. It's exciting for everyone."

Arsenault said besides providing the athletes with a flavor of true competition and a chance for gradual integration into society, the games are also opening the eyes and minds of the general public, who, up until a few years ago, looked upon the mentally hand-

icapped as defections to society's norm.

"You learn how to give of yourself when you work with the mentally retarded," said Arsenault. "You grow by helping these people."

Over at Prairie Lanes, where more than 100 special athletes were having the time of their lives bowling, Special Olympics chairman of sports services Scott Lawson was echoing similar sentiments.

"I coached track and field for years and I thought I was a good coach," said Lawson. "But I wanted to be a complete coach, not just an able-bodied coach. If a guy came up to me in a wheel chair and asked me to teach him how to become a good track competitor, I wouldn't have a clue where to start. I was the one who was handicapped, so I joined the (Special Olympics) society in 1978. It was the only way I could honestly become a coach in every sense of the word."

"The integration process (of the mentally handicapped into society) doesn't exist if the impact isn't felt by non-disabled people," added Lawson. "We are not a society unto ourselves, there is no set of rules that say they should be another society that is separated. They have a place in our society along with our own and the sooner we are willing to accept that, the sooner those barriers will come down."

"The games aren't a trial on their part but on our's," he said. "A trial to start destroying the stereotypes of the mentally handicapped and start giving them the place in society they rightly deserve."

The games continue today at Douglas Park starting at 9:45 a.m. with track and field events. Horseshoe competitions got under way at 10:15 a.m. at Kiwanis Park.

More results in Scoreboard Section.

Super athletes help out

By Darron Kloster
L-P Sports Writer

National Hockey League players Brad McCrimmon, Brent Ashton and Al Tuer are among the 'super athletes' scheduled to team up with a host of Special Olympics participants in a super athlete event at Douglas Park today at 12:30 p.m.

Kurt Wickenheiser of the Moose Jaw Generals, Len Nielsen of the Regina Pats, John Miner of the Nova Scotia Oilers and Saskatchewan Roughriders Joe Paopao and Ray Elgaard will also be on hand.

The event is one of the highlights of the

Special Olympics summer games being held in Regina all weekend.

The super athlete event involves a professional athlete from each of the province's eight zones and a Regina media personality teaming up with eight Special Olympics athletes in a triathlon event. It will include standing long jump, a relay race and a 50-metre dash.

The media team members are Brian Rohseiser, Gord Vizzutti, Rob Middleton and Dave Bellerive of CKCK, Ed Willes of The Leader-Post, Steve Ruddick of CBC, and Dave Ferguson and Dave Mitchell of CJME.