

Athletes to arrive Friday for Special Olympic games

by JEFF RUD

This weekend is the one more than 250 athletes and mission staff have been waiting for—and countless local volunteers have been planning for—since last year.

The Saskatchewan Special Olympics meet comes to Yorkton and Zone 4 for the first time, beginning Friday afternoon.

That's when the busloads of athletes from eight zones will begin arriving for the games, making themselves at home at the Corona Motor Hotel which will serve as the games village.

The games are designed to give mentally handicapped athletes a special chance to participate in sports and

generally enjoy themselves.

"It is treated as much as possible as an able-bodied games," says games chairman Len Bode of Yorkton.

"The events themselves are not changed that much."

Bowling, the first event of the games, is scheduled to get underway Friday at 2 p.m.

Athletes will be bowling most of the afternoon and early evening with the exception of a supper break and a synchronized swimming demonstration by the Parkland Synchro Club at the Agriplex Pool, beginning at 7 p.m.

Swimming events will begin at 8 p.m. Friday. A group sing-a-long is also scheduled for that evening, beginning at 9 p.m. at the Imperial Room of

SPECIAL OLYMPICS

the Corona.

After an early breakfast Saturday morning, the athletes and mission staff will take part in a parade and the official games opening at Century Field, beginning at 8:30 a.m.

Track and field competition will get underway at 9 a.m. and last all day.

Highlighting the track and field portion of the games will be a Super Star competition, beginning at 12 noon.

In this event, each zone's celebrity athlete will be paired with a Special Olympic athlete from the same zone. There will then be a quadrathlon competition (50-metres, standing long jump and shuttle relay) between the teams from all eight zones.

Zone celebrity athletes will include professional hockey

players Dennis Polonich (Zone 4) and Doug Wickenheiser as well as six others.

Games chairman Len Bode of Yorkton says the Super Star event will probably help create more interest in the games amongst the general public.

"We're trying to drum up the idea of people coming out and watching the games," he says.

Other special guests for the games will be Saskatchewan lieutenant governor, Irwin McIntosh, MLA for Yorkton Lorne McLaren, and culture and recreation minister Paul Schoenhals.

Former Saskatchewan Roughrider great George Reed, the Special Olympics honorary coach, will also be here for the meet.

Bode says local support for the games has been excellent, especially from service clubs which have donated their time as well as money.

"It's just been great—no problem at all," he says.

An awards banquet at the Agriplex Convention Centre will follow Saturday's track events. The banquet is scheduled to begin at 7 p.m. with a dance to be held afterwards.

Fourteen separate awards, for outstanding performances during the games, will be presented to athletes at the banquet. Linus Westberg will serve as master of ceremonies for this and all the other games events.

An ecumenical church service for all athletes and staff will be held in the Imperial Room Sunday at 7:30 a.m. Breakfast will be held after that at the Regional High School.

After breakfast, the athletes will begin packing up and heading home.

A windup for Special Olympics volunteers will be held Monday evening at the Legion Hall.

Fourth annual Golden Duck on