

Troop wants Games to leave a legacy

By **ROBIN INSCOE**
Metroland Media Group

Pan Am Games Chief Executive Officer Ian Troop is aiming high for the festivities set for the summer of 2015 in the Greater Toronto and surrounding areas.

And the Georgetown resident is hoping that the Games will leave a legacy that will long be remembered in Toronto, Ontario and Canada and one that he hopes might pave the way for a future Olympic Games for this area.

"We haven't had anything like this in this area since the British Empire Games in the 1930s," said Troop as he addressed Metroland South editorial staff (including *The Independent & Free Press*) last week.

"We want these games to be a celebration of sport and culture. We want them to be accessible and affordable."

And while the Games committee has come under some recent scrutiny over its spending habits recently, Troop said things are currently \$57 million under budget— and he expects that number to rise over the next 18 months as the July 10, 2015 opening nears.

As for the negative effect the recent controversy had, Troop doesn't feel there has been any.

"It was a bit of a reality check," admitted Troop. "It's a volatile political environment but we've got to keep showing positive progress."

And Troop assures that the Pan Am Games are right on track with construction moving on all fronts, including the athletes village, which is about 65 per cent complete.

Currently the Games Committee is in the process of building 10 new venues and upgrading 15 others. They are expecting 41 countries to invade the GTA to participate in 36 sports. To put it in perspective, these Games will involve 50 per cent more athletes than participated in the 2010 Winter Olympic Games in Vancouver. And 20,000 volunteers will be needed to make things run smoothly.

According to Troop, new venues are being built in partnerships with private enterprise, with the government kicking in 56 per cent of cost and partners contributing 44 per cent— and plenty of expertise.

Troop is hoping the new facilities will benefit the GTA the same way the Calgary and Vancouver Olympics benefited their cities.

The Pan Am Games CEO used neighbouring Milton as an example where a new cycling velodrome is taking shape and will be one of two active facilities in North America.

"We're meeting a community need there," said Troop, noting that when the Games are complete, the Town of Milton will have a state-of-the-art facility, but it won't be just for cycling. According to Troop, the infield is big enough to house three basketball courts and trade shows while there will also be a fitness facility.

"And that might be the best example," said Troop. "But it isn't the only one. These venues will all be self-sustaining."

Troop has set the bar high, for his organizing committee and the Canadian athletes that will participate, saying the goal is for Canadian athletes to finish in the top two in the medal haul.

"But it's not just about sport," he said. "It's about more than that, it's about different cultures coming together. This has to be the People's Games."

With just 18 months to get everything in place, Troop knows there will be obstacles to overcome, like transportation issues. They are working on the logistics of moving athletes, fans and volunteers around the GTA and all the way to Welland for events.

Halton Hills and larger municipalities such as Brampton and Mississauga won't play host to any events since they didn't express interest in doing so, but Troop said there are other ways for communities in the area to get involved.

"There may be some training opportunities," he added.

Troop, an all-star football player at Wilfrid Laurier University whose corporate background includes leading roles with Procter & Gamble, ConAgra Foods and the OMERS \$42-billion pension fund, was also the catalyst in helping raise \$2.1 million for the Field of Dreams project at Georgetown District High School.

He said that having spent much of his professional career on the other side of the boardroom table has prepared him well for public sector positions as Field of Dreams chairman and CEO of the Pan-Am Games.

"We as human beings tend to make decisions emotionally, so you have to make sure you check the box on the rational business aspect of it, but you also have to get people thinking what this can do for our community, what this can do for Ontario, what this can do for Canada," he said.

"I think I'd be remiss if you didn't work at both levels. With the Field of Dreams, the Kiwanis Club came in because they thought it was going to make a big difference in Georgetown and that was a big part of our approach."

—With files from Eamonn Maher, staff writer



PAN AM GAMES CEO IAN TROOP



REBEL SWEEP: Jake MacNeil (left) of the Georgetown Rebels showed finesse and power at the net against the Oakville-Trafalgar Red Devils during the Halton Secondary School Athletic Association's Tier I senior boys' volleyball championship match Tuesday at Sheridan College in Oakville. The Rebels swept the contest 25-13, 25-20 and 25-22 and will travel to Hamilton today (Thursday) to take on Cardinal Newman for the GHAC final, with the winner advancing to next week's provincial championship tournament in Mississauga. Meanwhile, Tuesday's HSSAA Tier I junior boys' final at Sheridan College was an all-Georgetown affair, with Christ the King pulling off a bit of an upset by taking two straight sets from the top-seeded Rebels. Photo by Reg Vertolli

Nurse a golden girl

Georgetown's Cristy Nurse teamed up with Victoria, B.C.'s Christine Roper to earn gold medals in the senior women's pairs' event at the National Rowing Championships in Welland this past weekend.

The 26-year-old Nurse and Roper, fellow national team members, raced to a convincing win in the 23-boat field, finishing three seconds ahead of the runners-up, London's Susanne Grainger and Lauren Wilkinson of North Vancouver, B.C. in a time of seven minutes, 41.42 seconds over the 2km distance.

The national championships conclude the competitive season for Nurse, who collected silver and bronze medals in the fours and eights events at the World Championships in South Korea in September.

It's the second gold medal at the Canadian championships for Nurse after taking top spot in 2009 in the under-23 category.

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