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## Youth head to Indigenous Games

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LIIDLII KUE/FORT SIMPSON - Around the Deh Cho athletes are getting in their final practices before travelling to the North American Indigenous Games (NAIG).

The competition will be held in the Cowichan Valley on Vancouver Island in B.C., Aug. 3-10. Athletes and youth from the Deh Cho will be part of the delegation of 320 NWT residents who are attending the games.

In Fort Providence Erin Kate Sullivan has been making good use of the community's aquatic centre in the lead up to the games.

To prepare for the competition she'll face in the swimming event, Sullivan has been swimming 50 laps of the pool every third day.

This will be the first time Sullivan has competed in a sports even of this size.

"I'm scared and excited at the same time," she said.

While lacing up his shoes before soccer practice in Fort Simpson, Dakota Burrill said he's looking forward to the games and the competition.

"I'm pretty excited," he said.

To prepare for NAIG, soccer players in the village have been practising two to three times a week. The athletes are also personally responsible for running or biking at least three times a week for a minimum of 45 minutes.

Burrill, who chose the running option, said the practices have been good and are preparing him to play on the U16 boys team.

Thinking about the upcoming Games, Burrill said he's excited about winning.

All of the athletes are excited about the games, said Shane Thompson, coach of the U19 girls' soccer team.

"They've been counting how many sleeps they have to go," he said.

The soccer players are leaving for British Columbia on Aug. 2.

With a team of 15 girls from six communities in the territory, Thompson had to be innovative with practice plans.

All of the players on the U19 team were sent training plans. In their own communities they've all been playing with other soccer teams for practice, said Thompson.

The team will include four players from Fort Simpson: Jackie and Jenny Thompson, Amanda Bradbury and Nicole Cholette.

As an incentive to keep them practising, each player knows that as soon as they arrive in Victoria they're being sent on a 45-minute run. It will show who kept to the schedule, said Thompson.

Athletes aren't the only people attending the Games.

Five people from the Deh Cho are attending NAIG as youth ambassadors who will work with the host society. Josh Baton from Wrigley is attending as a junior radio reporter. Calvin Loman from Fort Liard and Beatrice Antoine from Wrigley were both scheduled to be part of the 15-member group that's paddling a 29-foot canoe from Port Hardy, B.C., on the northern tip of Vancouver Island to the south end of the island to launch the games.

- with files from Herb Mathisen

Deh Cho Participants:



Joshua Lafferty completes a ball handling drill in Fort Simpson as part of the training leading up to the North American Indigenous Games. - Roxanna Thompson/NNSL photo

Fort Liard

Riley McLeod, soccer

Adrien Tremblay, soccer

Calvin Loman, tribal journey

Tyson McLeod, youth ambassador

Cheryl Bertrand, youth ambassador

Fort Providence

Adeline Landry, 3D archery

Lindsey Landry, 3D archery

Cameron Sapp, soccer

Shawna McLeod, swimming

Erin Kate Sullivan, swimming

Andrea Elleze, youth ambassador

Fort Simpson

Tanis Browning, basketball

Calen Hardisty, basketball

Vince Tsetso, basketball

Teyen Menicoche, basketball

Keyna Norwegian, golf

Steven Thompson, soccer

Devon Cli, soccer

Alex Roche, soccer

Rylan MacLeod, soccer

Jenny Thompson, soccer

Amanda Bradbury, soccer

Nicole Cholette, soccer

Jackie Thompson, soccer

Anthony Roche, soccer

Thomas Roche, soccer

Lief Amundson, soccer

Logan Donovan, soccer

Godron Thompson, soccer

Dakota Burrill, soccer

Jasmyn Douglas Schmitz, youth ambassador

Wrigley

Josh Lafferty, soccer

Josh Baton, junior radio reporter

Beatrice Antoine, tribal journey

Trout Lake

Cody Punch, youth ambassador

Jean Marie River

Mathew Gauthier, soccer

Nahanni Butte

Melvin Vital, 3D archery

Bhreagh Ingarfield, youth ambassador

