

National Challenge Cup soccer championships this weekend

BY DON TURPIN, The Southern Gazette

Mount Pearl and St. Lawrence Laurentians are both ranked 10th heading into this week's national soccer championships in the province.

In Jubilee Trophy action, the female squad from Mount Pearl will play second-seeded Nova Scotia (Thursday, 4 p.m.) and seventh-seeded New Brunswick (Friday, 4 p.m.) before heading into Saturday's playoff placing games.

While this is just the second nationals for Mount Pearl, the same can't be said for the male squad from St. Lawrence.

The provincial powerhouse has represented Newfoundland at the last eight Challenge Cup tournaments. This weekend, the Laurentians will play the second and seventh seeds as well, British Columbia and Quebec, respectively.

Both tournaments run in St. John's, Mount Pearl and Conception Bay South from Thursday to Monday, Oct. 10-14.

Brian Murphy and Doug Redmond are the co-chairs for the event, which will feature entries from all 10 provinces. Forty-four games will be played from Thursday through the gold medal matches Monday.

Murphy is expecting everything to flow smoothly.

"Exceptional co-operation from literally everyone and lots of hard work by committee members has put all the preparations in excellent shape.

"It has been evident from the outset that support for these championships is wide-spread and we are certain every detail will be finalized for the first whistle," Murphy said.

Eight games will be played Thursday and Friday, with the final four round robin games being played Saturday. Following that, four playoff games, if necessary will take place.

Sunday will witness 10 cross-over playoffs, including semi-final matches. The final day of the tournament is reserved for the gold and bronze medal matches, as well as the remaining placing games.

Admission to the games is just \$3. Passes are available for all games, except the medal contests, with a family rate included.

The three minor soccer associations - St. John's, Mount Pearl and CBS - are entering male and female teams in a special Under-12 exhibition tournament to be held in conjunction with the nationals.

Murphy said "the six minor teams will participate in opening ceremonies, play their games around the national games and receive their medals at the closing ceremonies. We think it will be an excellent addition to the nationals while showcasing the young players, boys and girls."

Premier Roger Grimes is scheduled to take the official kick off Thursday night at King George V pitch at 6:30 p.m. Celie Giovannini and Alf Breen, honorary patrons, will also participate in the opening.