



A truly "Island" Games

It was Day 1 of the 2009 Canada Games and the City of Summerside was alive, brimming with excitement. Inside Credit Union Place, the packed house was on its feet already... waiting for the first athletes and participants to file into the arena.

Finally, after years of preparation and planning, the waiting was over. The 2009 Canada Games, the first province-wide Games ever, had officially landed on PEI.

From that moment, the rest of the Games seemed to fly by on fast-forward – a blur of smiles, cheers, and accomplishments.

In all, the 2009 Canada Games consisted of 4,445 participants including 74 athletes with disabilities during the two-week event, which was bolstered by the help of 6,006 volunteers and although all official figures are not yet available, the Games had eclipsed its targeted ticket revenue by the end of the first week of competition.

Week 1's action centred in the western part of the Island and spectators soaked in the action during the hottest stretch of weather the Island saw all summer – absolutely perfect conditions to take in the beach volleyball and canoe/kayak events.

Ticket sales were strong as families, friends and fans swarmed Summerside and its surrounding areas for the entire first week and they didn't slow up a bit after the Games survived a bit of a scare from Hurricane Bill and the H1N1 virus.

Fortunately, the weather held up during Week 2, the Host Society's H1N1 risk plan worked to a tee, and the action at the highly-praised sporting venues went off without any cancellations.

Meanwhile, visitors from across the country explored communities throughout PEI, taking in Island-born-and raised acts like Lennie Gallant, and the Grass Mountain Hobos and sampling Island-favorite recipes during the Cultural Arts Festival.

The spirit of the Games was everywhere you turned with pin collectors milling about, provincial flags waving, cheers spilling out of stadiums day after day. It was a truly “Island” experience for everyone involved and an event which will continue to live on in the memories of everyone it touched.