

## A Letter from Jill Dearden - Women in Coaching Apprentice 2009 Canada Games



Between the humidity and the jet lag the 2009 Canada Summer Games in PEI were quite the experience. As a young apprentice coach tagging along with Chuck, Danielle, Paul, Martin, and the Team BC rowing team I had a real eye-opener and a story to tell. This past August was also my first time as a participant of any kind in a multi sport event. Sure, I've hung around various multi sport events when my brother was an athlete, but it is completely different when you are taking part.

We arrived on August 13<sup>th</sup> in the evening, were ushered into a tent to have a brief check up for the possibility of bringing H1N1 into the athletes' village and then set free to enjoy the Games. The first few nights, when competitions were still getting under way the different schedules of the various sports sharing dorms meant that some of the athletes who were not competing first thing in the morning kept the ones who were (such as my rowers) awake until late. With a curfew of midnight, a co-ed village, and many young people from all over the country in all sorts of sports, that is to be expected. Add into this the frenzy of pin trading and the focus was not on the competitions for many of the athletes and even some of the coaches.

There were a few hiccups in the village as can be expected at the beginning of the first week, but working with the mission staff and the admin of the Games things like earlier breakfast times, buffet-style food instead of one-at-a-time service sped things up for the cafeteria, and the busses driven by volunteers worked out more flexible schedules to make things easier on the athletes.

I will sign off with a quick note on the regatta site. For a province that barely knows the sport of rowing as we practice it (the PEI team consisted of two men – cheered on whole-heartedly by Team BC!) they did an excellent job of accommodating some 30 athletes/provincial team for four days of competition. They had length of row-able water and sea lettuce to deal with and they did very well with that. The course was the clearest marked course I have seen, making for the competition to be rather enjoyable.

The event was a great experience for someone in my position as a participant of the Women in Coaching Apprenticeship Program. I learned how to deal with the unexpected and how to keep my mind on the competition while there are other sports going through their own motions. I had a chance to pick the brains of many knowledgeable coaches, and work with high-class athletes. Thank you to the province of PEI for making the Games a great experience for Team BC Rowing!