DECEMBER 2020 ARTICLE FOR LOCAL MIKE OSWALD

Can you hear what I hear? Special Olympics keeps on ringing on despite the challenges.

The Athlete’s Oath still rings true especially now. We are being brave in our attempts to stay healthy, kind and safe. We are letting ourselves win by doing so.

After consultation with community members and provincial experts, SOBC has approved some in-person sports in Regions 3, 4 & 5 to run until December 18th. In 2021, SOBC will review all current situations and advise by January 7 if programs can reopen.

Although that is true, our Local, SOBC-SC had already halted their activities. Bocce completed its run earlier because of the weather. Head Coach Cathy Verge after a couple of very successful swim sessions, consulted with all appropriate channels and saw fit to wait until January to reassess.

However, this fall saw something brand new for athletes, coaches and volunteers. “Virtual Competition” in bocce, athletics and golf!

58 athletes in BC actually participated in real, live events in their own Locals. They played hard and had fun. The virtual part came when their results were submitted to head office. Each Local’s results were tallied and compared with the results from other Locals in the same event in the same sport. That was the ‘competition’ part. Then all participants were mailed ribbons to mark their efforts.

Virtual opportunities for everyone to stay healthy are just as important and luckily athletes and coaches have that chance as well. Zoom programs in Healthy Hearing, Healthy Lifestyle Coach Development and Women’s Health are offered through the website.

You may have already heard that Hockey Legend, Howie Meeker passed away. Howie, a four-time Stanley Cup winner with the Toronto Maple Leafs and a member of the Hockey Hall of Fame, was also a dedicated supporter of Special Olympics. He spoke about Special O in 2016 upon his induction into The S.O.B.C. Hall of Fame.

Here is an excerpt from that speech:

“I’m very, very excited to become a member of the Special Olympics BC Hall of Fame. For 45 years, people in this wonderful operation at every level coast to coast have made the experience something extra special in our lives. Much of our appreciation of what we have, and how lucky we are to have it, comes from Special Olympics athletes. I think we owe them, they don’t owe us, quite honestly. If you’re thinking there’s something missing in your life, and if you’ve got an extra buck or two, or better still a few hours a week to get involved, guaranteed you’ll hit the motherlode with Special Olympics.”

Thanks to Mr. Meeker for all his support over the years.

Here’s to a New Year ahead and a New Lease on Life.