

Team Sask. is pleased with performance

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Team Saskatchewan returned home from the Canada Summer Games in Prince Edward Island on Sunday, but it didn't come back empty handed.

The provincial squad picked up 48 medals (13 gold, 15 silver, 20 bronze), good for sixth place among the 13 provinces and territories -- and the third-highest total ever for Saskatchewan at the Canada Summer Games.

Team Sask., which had 350 athletes from 61 different communities, also finished sixth in total flag points with 158.5, just one behind fifth-place Nova Scotia. Ontario was first with 274, followed by B.C. (256), Quebec (244) and Alberta (212.5).

Saskatchewan finished fifth at the 2005 Games in Regina with 167 points.

"Overall we're pleased with the performance of the teams," said Team Saskatchewan chef de mission Lorne Lasuita.

"Our expectations coming in here are always in that fifth to sixth placing. Some of the teams didn't achieve their objectives and some exceeded (them). The four big provinces are always one, two, three, four. We're in a fairly competitive nature with Nova Scotia, Manitoba, New Brunswick. We're pleased (with the results). That still recognizes what the athletes came here for and that's to do their best."

Saskatchewan had a big week in athletics, winning more medals (17) than any previous Summer Games.

Meanwhile, **Trista Neilly of Loon Lake** was selected as Saskatchewan's flag bearer for the closing ceremonies after winning four gold medals and one bronze in the canoe-kayak events. The team claimed 16 medals on the water (canoe/kayak and rowing) under less-than-ideal circumstances.

"The conditions at the canoeing site were rather challenging," said Lasuita. "We happened to hit about three days of really, really high winds.

"Based on weather and change of time zone, sometimes it's hard to adjust," he added.

"That might have been the case in some of the sports here. The heat of the first week was something we had to adjust to. The second week was almost normal for them in terms of the weather. And the community itself did a fabulous job in terms of co-operating and ensuring that they did provide a Games that was seamless as well as providing the preparation for the athletes that were competing."

Regardless of the final medal count, Lasuita felt that Team Saskatchewan distinguished itself in areas that can't be measured.

"The one thing that we can pride ourselves on is the green and white that they wear really seemed to unify and unite them," added Lasuita.

"I complimented them on their cohesiveness as a team even though they competed as individual sports. Everyone was there to support each other. The parents were there to support other teams. I think they got the feeling that, even though they were representing a sport, they were representing our province and in doing so always attempting to move up the ladder in terms of our points standings. I think they're feeling pretty good about what they achieved and how they achieved it. They were certainly good ambassadors for us."

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