



Senior B Nanaimo Timbermen celebrate a goal against the Ladner Pioneers in playoff action last week. The two teams will be participating in the Presidents Cup national championship tournament starting Sunday, Aug. 26. NEWS BULLETIN file photo

Presidents Cup nationals will be non-stop lacrosse

Canadian senior B championship tournament in Nanaimo starts this Sunday, Aug. 26

GREG SAKAKI / Aug. 24, 2018 6:00 a.m. / LOCAL SPORTS / SPORTS

Nanaimo lacrosse fans are about to be treated to a one-of-a-kind championship tournament.

The Presidents Cup senior B nationals begin this Sunday, Aug. 26.

Whereas lacrosse finals are usually determined in a series, the Presidents Cup is a nine-team battle royal.

“The round robin, where everybody plays each other, there’s no real tournaments like this, especially in the lacrosse world, so it’s unique in that,” said Kyle Couling, coach of the Re/Max T-men.

“You’ve got to be dialled in and ready to go every game.”

In a long-term sense, the Timbermen are ready. As hosts, they qualified for nationals before they ever took the floor in 2018, so they sought to build a championship-calibre squad and proved their worth with regular-season and provincial titles.

“As coaches it’s an easier progression. We know what’s coming so we’re prepared for it,” Couling said. “We’ve designed our practices to get harder and more technical as we go along.”

The Timbermen say they’re ready to take their game to the level that will be necessary at nationals, while staying true to their proven game plan.

“We shouldn’t have to really change that much,” said Corey Shires, T-men forward. “It’s been successful sticking to it all year, so I think if we just keep doing that, we should be all right.”

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Graham Palmer, alternate captain, had a similar view, suggesting that especially since the Timbermen don’t know much about the opposing teams, they need to play their own game, and execute that well.

“We’ve got to bring our top game every shift, every period in order to have success in this tournament,” he said. “It’s a grind, so we’ve just got to keep our focus and battle on.”

It will be a physical challenge. The Timbermen will be playing every day, and on one of the days, they’ll play two games. Lacrosse is always a rough sport; the Presidents Cup, more so, as the eastern Canadian teams tend to play physical, Couling said. What’s more, the rules of nationals allow old-fashioned wooden sticks, which make the cross-checks and slashes more bruising. Also, officiating could be unpredictable.

“We have to adjust quickly,” Couling said. “All of a sudden, you get a couple whistles for something you’re not sure [about], well, as a team, you’ve got to figure that out and adjust.”

If the Presidents Cup is different, that’s part of what could make it special for the Timbermen. They have lots of veterans who have made it this far before, but it’s still a rare opportunity. Nanaimo’s last Presidents Cup victory came in 1969. Notably, the Nanaimo

Luckies beat the Caughnawaga Indians that year and coincidentally, that matchup is the feature game on the first day of the tournament this Sunday, Aug. 26. Taking the ceremonial faceoff will be Shires, whose grandfather played on the '69 Luckies, and a Caughnawaga player whose grandfather played in that same final.

"My grandpa played in it, he won, my dad's played in a whole bunch and now it's my turn," Shires said. "So that's pretty cool ... I've never been, and I know it's probably going to be tough to get back to another one."

GAME ON ... The Timbermen and Indians play at 5 p.m. Sunday at Frank Crane Arena. There will be games involving other teams at 10 a.m. and 1 p.m. that day, with opening ceremonies at 3:30 p.m. Nanaimo then plays two games in one day Monday, facing the Onondaga Redhawks at 8 a.m. and the Saskatoon Brewers at 8 p.m. The Presidents Cup champion will be determined Sept. 2. For more schedule information, visit www.2018presidentcuplacrosse.com. For ticket information, [click here](#).

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