



Snuneymuxw Chief Mike Wyse, left, and Coun. Paul Wyse-Seward greet Aaron Vanderhorst, Nanaimo Timbermen representative, on Snuneymuxw territory at Sway' A' Lana Lagoon on Sunday as part of opening ceremonies for the Presidents Cup senior B lacrosse national championships. GREG SAKAKI/The News Bulletin

Teams come ashore to play for lacrosse championship in Nanaimo

Welcoming from Snuneymuxw First Nation part of Presidents Cup opening ceremonies Sunday

GREG SAKAKI / Aug. 26, 2018 12:10 p.m. / [LOCAL SPORTS](#) / [SPORTS](#) / [VIDEO](#)

All the teams have been welcomed to Nanaimo and to Snuneymuxw territory, and now the lacrosse can begin.

The Presidents Cup senior B lacrosse national championship tournament started this morning, Aug. 26, and the first of two opening ceremonies was held at Sway' A' Lana Lagoon at Maffeo Sutton Park.

One representative from each of the participating teams paddled from Newcastle Island-Saysutshun to the lagoon, where they were granted permission to come ashore from Snuneymuxw chief and council.

“We’re honoured to be asked to co-host and we wanted to do it in a good way,” said Chief Mike Wyse. “Traditionally we always welcomed our guests into our territory. This is one of the areas of our ancient people, where we received them today.”

The last time the Presidents Cup was contested in Nanaimo was 1989 and Wyse was a member of that team, which finished as runner-up. He said he’s been thinking about the good times from back then and looks forward to this year’s tournament. He talked about what the sport continues to mean to the Snuneymuxw people.

“It’s a such a good game...” the chief said. “There’s a big history out here in the west with our ancestors playing lacrosse. It was brought here years ago and they grasped onto the game in a good way and shared that and brought that down to our younger people. So we have a true love for the game.”

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Tanner Fetch, who represented the Saskatoon Brewers, said the opening ceremony on the ocean was “something really special,” especially coming from a land-locked province, and said it set the tone for a good tournament to come.

“This is going to be some top-notch lacrosse, the best lacrosse,” said Fetch. “There’s going to be pros and a mixture of high-calibre athletes from across the nation that are competing for one goal and one cup.”

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Aaron Vanderhorst was the Timbermen representative at opening ceremonies and he said it was a good showcase for the city and also reinforced that the T-men are representing Nanaimo and Snuneymuxw.

The ceremonies brought together all the teams in kinship and sportsmanship before they face off in rough and tough lacrosse action.

“It’s all kind of in the name of battle and there’s no hard feelings,” Vanderhorst said. “It’s like a little brother of war. That’s what one of the translations is. This is like a practice war.”

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Vanderhorst remembers watching the 1989 Presidents Cup as a 10-year-old, so it’s special to be right in the midst of this one, he said.

“That tournament really cemented my love of lacrosse. I remember being there as a little kid and I dreamed to be one those guys and now I am,” he said.

Games are already underway at Frank Crane Arena and there will be a second opening ceremony there this afternoon before the evening’s feature game between the Timbermen and the Caughnawaga Indians.

“Just to be a participant is a lot of work, just to qualify for this tournament,” Wyse said. “So hat’s off to every team that’s qualified. We wish them the best of luck.”

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

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