



Road to the Games – July 22, 2019

So Many Reasons to Come to the Games

It's hard to believe that we are less than two weeks away from one of the most anticipated events of the summer. Everyone waits all July for the Games to arrive eager to don their tartan and famed Games logo T-shirt, meet friends and family from near and far, eat some haggis, watch some of the top heavyweight athletes from across North America, dance the night away, cheer on the tug of war teams and stand in awe as the massed bands perform.

Heavyweights Always Attract A Crowd

One of the biggest attractions of the Glengarry Highland Games is always the heavyweight events. The Games present the entire gamut of competitions including Professional Men's and Women's, Masters, Amateurs, Intermediates and even, the Juniors. Each competition will see champions both at the national, provincial and local levels. In the Pro Men's, athletes are coming from both ends of the country and right here at home with Jason Baines from Dalkeith. The Masters are a real favourite as past champions show that they still have what it takes. Kevin Fast from Cobourg will be one to watch as he goes up against home favourites Lee MacKinnon of Alexandria and Ron Graham from Apple Hill. The Pros are all day Saturday and the Masters are Friday afternoon. In the Women's Pros, perennial favourite Josee Morneau from Winnipeg will certainly be ready to take on Canadian Champion Susie Lajoie from Nova Scotia. Lisa MacDonald of Alexandria is ready to give a good showing against these two Games champions when they take to field starting at 10 am Friday morning. The Amateur Heavyweights start the events off first on Friday morning at 8:15 and feature the best in local talent hoping to one day move up to the Pros.

For those watching the Heavyweight events, the events are not like any others. Here is a very brief and simple guide to the most popular events.

The most popular viewing event is the caber toss. The competitor must "pick" (pick up) the caber, run, and toss it so it lands straight out from him/her at a 12 o'clock position. The caber is tossed for accuracy, not distance. The Caber can be any size, and can range between 18'-26', and weigh from (approximately) 100 lbs.- 150 lbs.

With the stone throw, a field stone weighing between 16 and 26 lb. is used. The stone is measured to where the stone first hits the ground.

In the hammer throw, hammers come in various sizes, and are tossed similarly to the Olympic style. The difference is mostly in the hammer itself - the Scottish hammer is heavier (weighing either 12, 16, or 22 lbs) with the hammer head made of lead, and the handle made of wicker/rattan, which is strong and can

flex on impact. The competitor vigorously rotates the hammer to gain momentum, and releases it into the air. The throw is measured for distance to where the hammer hits the ground.

The sheaf toss derives from the farming traditions of Scotland, and grew out of a competition to see who could toss a sheaf of wheat the highest. Today the sheaf is a 16 or 20 lb. bag of twine and burlap, (Women competitors throw a 10lb. sheaf) and a standard pitch fork is used to toss it over a horizontal bar.

The heavyweight events take place in the infield all day Friday and Saturday and keep everyone enthralled with the strength and skill of the athletes who give their all to set a record or become Games champion.