

Annual Joy Hoffman event brings rings back in focus

Ringette is alive and well in Prince George, and a growing concern. Registration in the P.G. Ringette Association has climbed from 122 last season to the current 138. In all but two divisions, there are enough players to form two local teams, and that has PGRA director Lyn Hall convinced the future is indeed in good hands.

"We're pleasantly surprised with our enrollment and we're quite happy with the way it's developed," said Hall, who will be busy this weekend overseeing the Joy Hoffman Memorial Tournament, which starts today at the Coliseum and Kin Centre.

"We're seeing a greater interest in it because the

players and the association as a whole are out in the community, and more people are wanting to find out about ringette. We wanted to achieve a 10 per cent increase in players and we've achieved that. We've got a strong younger player division that we hope will create a good foundation and they'll continue through the entire program. We're seeing more girls staying in the game and going to those next levels."

The 26-team weekend tournament will feature 138 local players in their annual showcase event. The Joy Hoffman Tournament is the second of four tournaments on the schedule for the Northern Ringette League,

which also includes Terrace, Houston and Quesnel.

Because of the relative isolation of most of the teams in north central B.C., Hall said the Prince George association is always looking to add more cities to the Northern league to help fill in the gaps in the schedule.

"We've talked about showcasing the sport in Williams Lake, Mackenzie, Dawson Creek and Fort St. John just to get other communities interested in it," Hall said. "There's huge support now out of Houston and Terrace and it would be nice to get Vanderhoof and Fraser Lake involved. We don't get enough games, and our primary competition is these tournaments."