

**FRONTIER GAMES TABLE TENNIS CHAMPIONSHIPS**  
**FEBRUARY 27-MARCH 2, 2013**  
**HELEN BETTY OSBOURNE ININIW EDUCATION & RESOURCE CENTRE**  
**NORWAY HOUSE**

This year's Frontier Games were the 39<sup>th</sup> year in a row for these games that are a celebration of sport and friendship for the athletes and coaches and teachers of the Frontier School Division. The Frontier School Division is the largest school division in Canada in geographic terms. It stretches from the south east corner of Manitoba (Falcon Beach School), runs up the East side of Lake Manitoba (Wanipigow/ Beren's River/ God's Lake/ Gillam/ Thicket Portage etc.) to Churchill, then cuts across the top to Brochet (covering South Indian Lake/ Snow Lake etc. along the way) and then drops down south as far south as Birdtail Sioux School in Beulah, Parkland Region. In sporting terms, it covers off athletes from five of Manitoba's seven sport regions: Norman, Parkland, Eastman, Westman and Interlake.

The school division is broken into six Regions and the schools in each Region contest eight sporting events on an annual basis: table tennis, trap setting, badminton, archery, snow-shoeing, cross-country skiing and indoor soccer with volley ball...these last two sports alternate with basketball and floor hockey. The Regional winners in each of these sporting events then come together for these Divisional Games which alternate back and forth between Norway House and Cranberry Portage. The Divisionals usually have between 450-500 athletes and coaches in attendance and in all over 2,000 people participate annually in these games making them by far the largest annual multi-sport event in Manitoba!

The M.T.T.A. has been involved with these games now for over 20 years! We provide equipment for many remote schools such as used tables and net sets and balls and paddles. We have also distributed over 100 of Table Tennis Canada's "TOPS: Table Tennis In Schools" coaching manuals. Myself with numerous helpers over the years have travelled to almost every nook and cranny to help run Regional events and to deliver skill clinics at the same time. Over the years players from Norway House and Wabowden have been selected to represent Manitoba at the Canadian Junior Championships. Up here in the Frontier, table tennis is the second most contested sport behind hockey...but I am told that often more kids play "round-the-world" than even hockey.

The level of play is steadily increasing. This year's Divisionals had more 5 set matches than any other Games..."ping-pong" parity is becoming the norm across the Division. I say "ping-pong" rather than table tennis, because up here a lot of players still use hard pimped paddles rather than the inverted smooth rubber bats. This translates to matches of will and strategy that include depth of the shots, side to side, fast-slow etc. but without much variation in spin. This year's boy's champion-Lawrence Cook of Wanipigow-plays with a inverted paddle and this adds spin variation to his game. It proved too much for the other players. I honestly believe that players up here in the Frontier School Division actually have a much better grasp of basic tactics than kids in the south (read Winnipeg) do. Kids in Winnipeg do tons of training drills and are used to "robotic" type styles of play. I really hope to be able to get table tennis back into the Manitoba Games to see how the "southern table tennis robots" would do against the "northern-round-the-world-ping-pong masters". Hopefully some of the teachers and coaches will be able to make it down to the coaching course in April.

**RESULTS:**

**GIRLS UNDER 14 YEARS:**

Kirsten Dixon, H.B.O./ Norway House def. Sheila Baker, South Indian Lake 11-5,4-11,11-4,11-5,12-10.

**BOYS UNDER 14 YEARS:**

Lawrence Cook, Wanipigow def. Dudley Halcrow, H.B.O./ Norway House 11-8,11-7,11-4,11-6.

**GIRLS UNDER 15 YEARS:**

Ciara Chartrand, Frontier Mosakhkien School/ Moose Lake def. Camilla Catcheway, Skownan 11-5,7-11,9-11,11-7,11-6.

**BOYS UNDER 15 YEARS:**

Gold to Dion Hapa, Birdtail Sioux School/ Beulah, default win.

Congratulations to all players for their fine performances.

Next up are the Frontier High School Games to be held in Snow Lake April 10-12.

**Ron Edwards Reporting**

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