



Gymnasium ready for use

The \$630,000 air support gymnasium at Malaspina College is all but ready for use. Delayed by construction problems earlier in the summer, the 24,000 square foot structure will be run by a

full time staff of two, coordinator Trudy Sorenson and technician, Mike Armstrong. Future plans call for the new building to be open for community use, but for

the first six months, it will be available only for teaching purposes and college sporting and intramural events. This will give the staff an opportunity to iron out any

early teething problems — almost inevitable in a new structure of this nature — and will allow them to assess community needs for the 1978 summer and fall periods.

Malaspina Gets New Gymnasium

Malaspina College's new gymnasium has been blown up.

A statement such as that is usually accompanied by a picture of destruction costing hundreds of thousands of dollars, but not in this case.

The gymnasium was blown up because it is an inflatable "bubble". Inflated during the last week of February, the "bubble" will give the college an all-purpose gymnasium complete with indoor jogging track for a cost of only \$628,000. A conventional gymnasium would have cost about \$1.5 million.

In common language the new structure is a second-generation, free-standing, air support structure. It differs from the conventional "bubble" in that it has rigid end walls. It is believed to be the only building of its kind in Canada.

Manufactured by Cidair of Chicago, the bubble is inflated by a mere five pounds of

pressure, which is enough to keep the 40-foot high structure from collapsing even if the skin should puncture or if the doors are opened for an extended period of time. Twenty-two half-inch steel cables keep the skin anchored to the two-foot concrete retaining wall which surrounds the 24,000 square foot floor.

The fabric, which is translucent, has a five year guarantee and a life-expectancy of 15 years, according to architect Allen Price, of Thompson Berwick Pratt and Partners of Vancouver. The translucent skin and the fact that all lighting will be indirect, will give the gymnasium lighting superior to that found in conventional gyms, Price claims.

With the bubble inflated, construction crews expected to spend from now until the end of April completing the interior of the building which will include change rooms, showers and offices.