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Aurora Games announces Albany as host site of inaugural all-women international sports competition and festival

Aurora Games to be held at the Times Union Center August 20-25, 2019

ALBANY, N.Y.; October 15, 2018 – The City of Albany was today named as the official host site of the inaugural Aurora Games, an international, world-class, all-women’s multi-sport competition and entertainment festival. The first-of-its-kind event will be held at the Times Union Center in downtown Albany, NY, August 20-25, 2019.

The Aurora Games, named in honor of the Roman goddess of the dawn, will be held every two years beginning with the inaugural edition in Albany.

Designed to celebrate the best in women’s sports, entertainment and culture, the Aurora Games will welcome all-star athletes, as well as coaches and trainers, representing more than 15 countries to downtown Albany to compete in an international competition of teams comprised of the Americas vs. the World.

The six-day event will include team and individual competitions in basketball, tennis, figure skating, gymnastics, ice hockey and beach volleyball. Fans will also enjoy musical performances, food tastings, sports clinics, autograph sessions and seminars in the Aurora Games Fan Zone at the Albany Capital Center.

“This is an important cultural moment and we are excited to create an event that empowers female athletes and celebrates their unique contributions and accomplishments. As an all-women’s sporting competition, the Aurora Games will showcase the tremendous skill, sportsmanship and dedication these athletes possess,” said Jerry Solomon, creator and executive producer of the Aurora Games. “We are thrilled to host our inaugural event in Albany. The Aurora Games will establish a bold vision for the future of women’s sports. I thank our local partners for embracing this vision and helping us bring it to life.”

Solomon was joined Monday morning by local officials and Aurora Games advisory board members at the Times Union Center to make the site selection announcement and share their enthusiasm for the Aurora Games.

“I am very excited that Albany has been selected to host the inaugural Aurora Games Festival. This event will highlight the athletic, entertainment, and cultural achievements of women from all over the world,” said U.S. Senator Kirsten Gillibrand. “As the birthplace of the women’s rights movement, New York has always been a leader in women’s social, political, and economic advancement. Albany is the perfect location for this first-of-its-kind event, which will attract people from all over the world to the Capital Region. I was proud to support Albany’s bid to host the games and I look forward to its success.”

“Today’s announcement that the inaugural Aurora Games will be held in Albany County is a proud day for all parties involved. I could not be more excited for this women-only

event celebrating athletics, arts, entertainment and culture to call our Times Union Center home. This is a tremendous win for our region, as thousands of competitors and visitors from around the world will visit Albany County, in addition to the millions who will view the event through media coverage. I know the competitors will be impressed with our Albany County facilities, and I look forward to cheering them on," said Albany County Executive Daniel P. McCoy.

"I am honored Albany has been selected as the host city of the inaugural Aurora Games," said Albany Mayor Kathy Sheehan. "We are proud to have the opportunity to showcase our vibrant Downtown and the recently-revitalized Times Union Center, and we look forward to welcoming hundreds of all-star female athletes, coaches, trainers, and their fans to New York's Capital City."

Albany County tourism and event officials also proclaimed their excitement for the event, which is expected to draw 50,000 fans and both national and international media to downtown Albany over the course of its six-day run.

"Albany is proud to be the site of the inaugural Aurora Games. This world-class women's sports competition presents a new opportunity for Albany and shows that our destination can be a place where women take center stage," said Discover Albany President and CEO Jill Delaney.

"The Times Union Center and Albany Capital Center are thrilled to be a part of this moment in sports by hosting the inaugural Aurora Games. Our facilities are a great fit for this all-star competition and fan festival," said SMG/Times Union Center General Manager Bob Belber. "We look forward to hosting these outstanding athletes and providing a stage for them to showcase their tremendous talents."

The high-profile advisory board for the Aurora Games includes such iconic athletes as nine-time Olympic medalist Nadia Comaneci; 18-time Grand Slam champion Chris Evert; six-time Olympic medalist Jackie Joyner-Kersey; two-time Olympic medalist Nancy Kerrigan; and seven-time Olympic medalist Shannon Miller. These women are amongst more than 30 high-profile sports, entertainment and business figures who have lent their support to the Aurora Games.

The event today featured a special appearance from two-time Olympic gold medalist Donna de Varona, who serves as a consultant for the Games and is the chair of the athlete advisory board. She rose to fame when at only 13 years old, de Varona became the youngest member of the U.S. team at the 1960 Rome Olympics. In 1964, after breaking 18 world records in swimming, she was named the "Most Outstanding Woman Athlete in the World" by the Associated Press and United Press International.

Heralded as a pioneer in women's sports, de Varona became the first female sports broadcaster on national network television in 1965. She served five terms on the President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports and worked to promote the landmark Title IX legislation, which prohibits sex discrimination in educational programs that receive federal funding. In the mid-1970s, she joined tennis superstar Billie Jean King in establishing the Women's Sports Foundation and served as the organization's first president.

"When I first competed in the Olympics, no one would have considered the idea of an event like the Aurora Games as there were so many obstacles that we were facing. But through the hard work of so many people we have arrived at a watershed moment for women in and out of sports. The Aurora Games has the potential to become a real game changer for women's sports and I am excited to play a role in its creation," said de Varona.

Individual tickets will be available to the general public beginning Friday, March 8, 2019 via Ticketmaster.com. Group sales packages and VIP experiences are currently available and can be purchased by calling Alyssa Shane at 201-926-8078.

For sponsorship information, contact Karen Scott Happer at karen@champagnetenis.com.

For up-to-date information about the Aurora Games, visit AuroraGamesFestival.com or follow the Games on Twitter [@AuroraGamesFest](https://twitter.com/AuroraGamesFest).

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ABOUT AURORA GAMES FESTIVAL, LLC

Aurora Games Festival, LLC owns and operates the Aurora Games and holds all of the rights and intellectual property associated with the Games. The Aurora Games were conceived of and created by Jerry Solomon. Mr. Solomon has been one of America's top sports marketing executives for more than 30 years. Following his graduation from Columbia University in 1978 with a master's degree in International Business, Solomon was recruited by the Colgate-Palmolive Company to serve as its liaison to the men's and women's professional tennis tours. In 1980, he moved to Washington D.C. and joined ProServ, the second largest sports marketing and management company in the world, where he represented Ivan Lendl, Janet Evans, Karch Kiraly, Michael Chang, Nancy Kerrigan (his wife) and Shannon Miller. Mr. Solomon was named Chief Operating Officer and a member of the Board of Directors of ProServ in 1987 and was elected President in 1990. He left ProServ in 1994 and moved to Boston to launch StarGames, a sports and entertainment marketing, management and production agency.

As founder and CEO at StarGames, Solomon is responsible for bringing back tennis to Madison Square Garden with the annual BNP Paribas Showdown and World Tennis Day, which spawned sister events in Hong Kong and London. In addition to the Showdown, Mr. Solomon has been the creative force behind a long list of live entertainment properties including Halloween on Ice, the Caesars Tribute, A Salute to the Golden Age of American Skating, the King of the Beach Invitational, A Tribute the Ladies of the Ice, Colors of Winter, A Tennis Redezvous and more.

Mr. Solomon has been named one of the "Top 100 Most Powerful People in Sports" by The Sporting News and one of the "Top 25 Most Influential People in Figure Skating" by Figure Skating International magazine. He was responsible for helping to found the Karch Kiraly Scholarship Fund, the KidSport Foundation and the Nancy Kerrigan Foundation. He also taught sports marketing at the University of New Hampshire and UCLA's Anderson School of Business. He is the author of "An Insider's Guide to Managing Sports Events," which was published by Human Kinetics and re-released by Gray Malkin. Mr. Solomon was inducted into the National Jewish Sports Hall of Fame (in 2014) and Personal Managers Hall of Fame (in 2016).

