



AURORA GAMES ANNOUNCES SPORTS LEGENDS JACKIE JOYNER-KERSEE AND NADIA COMANECI AS HONORARY TEAM CAPTAINS OF INAUGURAL EVENT.

All-women's sports and entertainment festival to be held at the Times Union Center in Albany, NY, August 20-25, 2019

ALBANY, N.Y.; January 23, 2019 – Aurora Games organizers today announced that three-time Olympic gold medalist Jackie Joyner-Kersey and five-time Olympic gold medalist Nadia Comaneci will serve as honorary captains of the inaugural all-women's sports and entertainment festival, which will be held at the Times Union Center in Albany, NY, on August 20-25, 2019.

The internationally-renowned sports figures today appeared in Albany in celebration of the upcoming Aurora Games, which will welcome professional athletes, coaches and trainers representing more than 15 countries to compete in a six-day event that will include team and individual competitions in basketball, tennis, figure skating, gymnastics, ice hockey and beach volleyball.

As honorary captains, Joyner-Kersey, an American track and field icon, will lead the athletes representing Team Americas. Comaneci, the legendary Romanian gymnast, will guide those competing for Team World.

"We are tremendously honored to have Jackie and Nadia leading Team Americas and Team World during the inaugural Aurora Games, which are designed to showcase the tremendous skill, sportsmanship and dedication of women in sports. I cannot think of a better example of those attributes than these sports legends," said Aurora Games Executive Producer and Creator Jerry Solomon. "Recognized as the greatest athletes of their generation, Jackie and Nadia will offer unparalleled expertise, guidance and perspective to our athletes. We are thrilled to have them as a part of this historic event."

State and local leaders welcomed the pair to Albany during a special event at the Times Union Center.

"New York State's capital city is an ideal location for the inaugural Aurora Games," said New York State Office of General Services Commissioner RoAnn Destito. "Governor Cuomo has made the Women's Equality Agenda a top priority, knowing that when women succeed, New York succeeds. We are honored that talented women from around the world will be here in Albany this summer to showcase women's sports."

Albany County Executive Daniel P. McCoy issued official proclamations to honor both women for their outstanding careers and many philanthropic endeavors.

"For too long, men's sports teams have dominated airtime and taken up the vast majority of sponsorship dollars. With this all-women sports and entertainment festival, we are changing that dynamic and who better to help us to do that than two of the most iconic athletes of all time," said McCoy. "I cannot thank Jackie and Nadia enough for being part of this historic event that will not only spur further economic development in Albany County, but also inspire more and more women out there to strive for greatness."

Named by Sports Illustrated as the "Greatest Female Athlete of the 20th Century," Joyner-Kersey dominated the Olympic heptathlon and long jump events throughout her illustrious career, which spanned four Olympic games and totaled six Olympic medals, three of them gold. She was the first woman in history to earn more than 7,000 points in the heptathlon and still holds the world heptathlon record she set more than 30 years ago at the 1988 Olympics in Seoul. She is a member of the board of directors for USA Track and Field, the national governing body of the sport.

"I am thrilled to be named as the honorary captain of Team Americas for the inaugural Aurora Games. This is an idea that is timely and an important development for showcasing women's sports. To lead the team against Nadia and Team World makes it that much more exciting," said Joyner-Kersey.

Comaneci first rose to fame at 14 years of age when competing for Romania at the 1976 Olympics in Montreal. She went on to win a total of nine Olympic medals, five of them gold, and was the first gymnast to score a perfect 10 at the Olympic Games. Widely credited with popularizing the sport of gymnastics around the world, Comaneci was inducted into the International Gymnastics Hall of Fame in 1996 and was named as one of the "Top 10 Female Athletes of the 20th Century" by Sports Illustrated.

"The Aurora Games is an event we never could have imagined when I was competing. To be part of the inaugural event as an honorary captain will be special and to be competing against Team Americas led by Jackie will be an honor," said Comaneci.

Today's event also included the announcement that the official trophy of the Aurora Games will be named in honor of Babe Didrikson Zaharias. Recognized as one of the greatest female athletes of all time, Didrikson Zaharias excelled in multiple sports, including golf, basketball, baseball and track and field. She won two gold medals in track and field at the 1932 Olympics before turning to professional golf and winning 10 LPGA Championships. The Associated Press named her the "Greatest Female Athlete of the First Half of the 20th Century" and named her "Female Athlete of the Year" six times – once for track and field and five times for golf. She was also recognized as second on Sport Illustrated's list of the "Top 10 Female Athletes of the 20th Century."

"While most people can tell you who Babe Ruth was, I would wager that very few recognize the name Babe Didrikson Zaharias even though she is one of the most accomplished athletes of all time," said Solomon. "Her talents extended across numerous disciplines in sports, and we are pleased to recognize her accomplishments and contributions by naming the official Aurora Games trophy in her honor."

The Aurora Games is the first sports festival created with the specific goal of providing a platform to celebrate women in sports and entertainment. All individual session tickets to the Aurora Games will go on sale to the general public beginning Friday, March 8 to coincide with International Women's Day. Daily tickets will range in price from \$25 to \$150 through Ticketmaster. Group sales and VIP Experiences can be reserved immediately by calling Alyssa Shane at (201) 926-8078.

For sponsorship information, contact Karen Scott Happer atkaren@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).