



American beach volleyball stars April Ross and Alix Klineman commit to Aurora Games

Top-ranked U.S. team to return to New York in August after winning major AVP tournament in New York City

Internationally ranked duos from Canada, Czech Republic and Switzerland also set for Times Union Center in Albany, NY

ALBANY, N.Y.; June 13, 2019 – Beach volleyball stars April Ross and Alix Klineman, the No. 1 ranked women’s team on the U.S. tour and fifth overall in the world, will represent Team Americas in the Aurora Games, the inaugural all-women’s sports and entertainment festival to be held at the Times Union Center in Albany, NY, on August 20-25, 2019.

Aurora Games organizers announced today that Ross and Klineman will compete against teams from Canada, the Czech Republic and Switzerland in a straight knockout format that will close the six-day event on Sunday, August 25. Tons of sand will be hauled into the Times Union Center to build a temporary court and provide fans with an indoor beach party atmosphere.

The beach volleyball competition will feature two semifinal matches starting at 11 a.m. followed by a bronze medal match and a gold medal match, which could potentially decide whether Team Americas or Team World will take home the Babe Didrikson Zaharias Trophy, the official trophy of the Aurora Games.

“We’re very excited to have four of the world’s top beach volleyball teams coming to Albany for the first Aurora Games,” said Aurora Games Executive Producer Jerry Solomon. “Beach volleyball will bring a unique atmosphere to the Times Union Center and is great way to close the inaugural Games. That will be a session not to be missed.”

This past Sunday, the American team of Ross and Klineman defeated Kelly Claes and Sarah Sponcil 21-19 and 22-20 to take the best-of-3 championship match at the Association of Volleyball Professionals (AVP) Gold Series New York City Open at Hudson River Park in Manhattan.

“Playing in New York is always exciting and winning the AVP NY Open gives us momentum going into the rest of the season. We look forward to returning to the Empire State for the Aurora Games in Albany where we hope to complete a New York double,” said Ross, of Costa Mesa, CA. “Being part of the Aurora Games is important for us as we look to help increase the visibility of women’s sports around the world. We can’t wait to be part of this historic event,” said Klineman, of Manhattan Beach, CA.

Ross and Klineman join a growing list of approximately 150 world-class athletes, including Olympic medalists and national champions from around the globe, set to compete for Team Americas versus Team World in the Aurora Games. The event also will feature competition in women's tennis, gymnastics, basketball, ice hockey and figure skating.

Ross, who helped lead the University of Southern California to back-to-back indoor championships in 2002 and 2003, won a silver medal in beach volleyball with Jennifer Kessy at the 2012 London Olympics. She followed that up four years later by winning a bronze medal with Kerri Walsh-Jennings at the Rio Games.

Klineman, an indoor volleyball standout at Stanford University, joined the AVP tour in 2017 and earned Rookie of the Year honors. She and Ross teamed up for the 2018 AVP season and finished with four tournament wins.

Rounding out Team Americas for the beach volleyball competition are Melissa Humana-Paredes and Sarah Pavan, of Canada, currently ranked sixth in the world. Humana-Paredes and Pavan have three first-place finishes at Fédération Internationale de Volleyball (FIVB) tournaments and defeated Ross and Klineman at the AVP's Huntington Beach Open in early May.

Team World will be represented by Barbora Hermannova and Marketa Slukova, of the Czech Republic, the world's No. 2 ranked team; and Nina Betschart and Tanja Huberli, of Switzerland, ranked No. 14.

Hermannova and Slukova have won four tournaments on the international circuit since teaming up in 2015, including a first-place finish at the FIVB event held last month in Malaysia. Betschart and Huberli, partners since the 2016 season, are seeking their first championships on the FIVB circuit after two third-place finishes at international tournaments during the 2018 season.

Three-time Olympic gold medalist Jackie Joyner-Kersey and five-time Olympic gold medalist Nadia Comaneci will serve as honorary team captains for the Aurora Games. 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.

Individual session tickets for the Aurora Games are on-sale now at www.Ticketmaster.com. Tickets range in price from \$15 to \$129 and include access to the Aurora Games FanZone featuring music, athlete meet and greets, food and entertainment. Children may qualify for half-price tickets based on seating selection.

All-session ticket packages, which provide a seat for all six days of the multi-sport competition, are also available at www.Ticketmaster.com.

Group sales and VIP Experiences can be reserved by contacting Carrie Berger at (617) 688-6128.

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

The official hotel of the Aurora Games is Hilton Albany, located approximately .2 miles from the Times Union Center at 40 Lodge Street in downtown Albany. Aurora Games guests can save on overnight stays by using code 5AGCB when securing reservations by phone at 1-866-691-1183 or online at <https://bit.ly/2U2n1mC>.

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 THE AURORA GAMES

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. The Aurora Games, named in honor of the Roman goddess of the dawn, will be held every two years beginning with the inaugural edition at the Times Union Center in Albany, NY, August 20-25, 2019. 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. For up-to-date information about the Aurora Games, visit AuroraGamesFestival.com or follow the Games on Twitter [@AuroraGamesFest](https://twitter.com/AuroraGamesFest).