



Aurora Games set to feature world's top female athletes and bring exciting lineup of events and activities to Albany

Nearly 150 athletes from all corners of the globe will compete in the all-women's event being held August 20-25 at Times Union Center in Albany, NY

Aurora Games Fan Zone is free to the public and features workshops, athlete meet-and-greets and other entertainment activities at the Albany Capital Center

ALBANY, N.Y.; August 16, 2019 - The Aurora Games, a first-of-its-kind, international all-women's multi-sport competition and entertainment festival, is set to showcase approximately 150 world-class athletes from nearly two dozen countries when the event comes to the Times Union Center in downtown Albany, NY, August 20-25.

Collegiate gymnastics champion Katelyn Ohashi, tennis phenom and 2019 Rogers Cup and Indian Wells winner Bianca Andreescu, U.S. figure skating champion Alysa Liu, and 2019 beach volleyball world champions Melissa Humana-Paredes and Sarah Pavan are just some of the stellar athletes who will compete for Team Americas and Team World during the six-day, six-sport event.

Individual session tickets for the Aurora Games are on-sale now at [Ticketmaster.com](https://www.ticketmaster.com) and start at just \$15. Children may qualify for half-price tickets based on seating selection. Group sales can be reserved by contacting Carrie Berger at (617) 688-6128.

“This is an important moment in sports and we are excited to bring an event to Albany which empowers female athletes and celebrates their unique contributions and accomplishments both through athletic competition and within our culture,” said Jerry Solomon, creator and executive producer of the Aurora Games. “Fans have a rare in-person opportunity to witness some of today's top international athletes display the type of skills and dedication that propelled them to the championship level. The Aurora Games are also a great opportunity for fans to join the growing global movement in support of women's sports at all levels of competition.”

The event will include team and individual competitions in tennis, gymnastics, basketball, ice hockey, figure skating, and beach volleyball. Fans will also enjoy sports clinics, autograph sessions, seminars, and a table tennis exhibition in the Aurora Games Fan Zone at the Albany Capital Center throughout the week-long celebration. The Fan Zone is free to attend.

The Fan Zone will also feature “Conversations with Champions,” a series of workshops led by world-renowned female champions and empowerment role models. The seminars will take place in the lower level of the Albany Capital Center and will be free and open to the public. Seating will be available on a first-come, first-served basis.

The Women’s Sports Foundation is the official charity partner of the Aurora Games.

The Aurora Games will include the following events and activities during its six-day run:

AURORA GAMES NY KICKOFF AT THE PLAZA: Monday, August 19

The Aurora Games and New York State Office of General Services will kick off the week’s festivities with a free community celebration featuring numerous Olympians, musical performances, a movie screening and fireworks at the Empire State Plaza beginning at 5:30 p.m.

More than 40 competitors and sports legends will participate in a March of Athletes during the kickoff event, including some of the biggest names in international sports. The march will be followed by a meet-and-greet and autograph session featuring five-time Olympic gold medalist Nadia Comaneci, two-time Olympic medalist Nancy Kerrigan and two-time Olympic gold medalist Donna de Varona, amongst others.

The celebration will continue with special musical performances by "American Idol" star Madison Vandenburg and Amanda Mena of “America’s Got Talent” at 6:15 p.m.

The official Aurora Games kickoff ceremony will take place at 7:15 p.m., followed by a screening of the sports classic film “A League of Their Own.” The evening will conclude with a fireworks display.

OPENING CEREMONIES AND TENNIS COMPETITION: Tuesday, August 20

Tuesday evening will feature the Opening Ceremonies that will usher in the start of the Aurora Games with a “parade of flags” representing more than 20 countries with participating athletes. The evening will also include musical performances, a presentation of the Aurora Games Athletes’ Bill of Rights, and the unveiling of the Babe Didrikson Zaharias Trophy, the official trophy of the Aurora Games.

The Opening Ceremonies will lead into the tennis competition, presented by HFactor Water, which will feature three singles and two doubles matches utilizing fast-paced “no ad” scoring.

Tennis competitors include some of the most accomplished athletes in the sport, including: Monica Puig (Puerto Rico), Garbine Muguruza (Spain), Belinda Bencic (Switzerland), Bianca Andreescu (Canada), Sofia Kenin (United States) and Victoria Azarenka (Belarus).

The Aurora Games Fan Zone will host a “Conversations with Champions” seminar featuring legendary women’s hockey coach Digit Murphy, who will discuss how to coach young women and bring out the inner champion in female athletes. The discussion will begin at 2 p.m. and will be followed by an additional presentation at 3:30 p.m. featuring three-time luge Olympian Erin Hamlin and Olympic swimming bronze medalist Kim Vandenburg.

GYMNASTICS COMPETITION: Wednesday, August 21

Viral sensation and recent ESPY award winner Katelyn Ohashi will headline the gymnastics event along with McKenna Kelley, daughter of 1984 Summer Olympics gold medalist Mary Lou Retton. Presented by Dunkin', the gymnastics competition will take place at the Times Union Center at 7 p.m.

Ohashi and Kelley will be joined by other world-class gymnasts, including former UCLA star Danusia Francis. The gymnastics competition will feature five separate events: power tumbling, balance beam, parkour, aesthetic gymnastics, and artistic floor exercises.

The gymnastics competition will conclude with a group number choreographed by Valorie Kondos Field, the longtime University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) gymnastics coach who recently announced her retirement after nearly three decades. She will also oversee the competition.

Judge Rosemarie Aquilina, who gained international attention while presiding over the sentencing of former USA Gymnastics team doctor Larry Nassar, will serve as the keynote speaker during a "Conversations with Champions" event at 5 p.m. at the Albany Capital Center. During the talk, Judge Aquilina will discuss how athletes have the right to be protected from emotional, physical and sexual abuse.

BASKETBALL COMPETITION: Thursday, August 22

Some of the world's best women basketball players will take to the hardwood at the Times Union Center when Team Americas plays Team World in the Aurora Games at 7 p.m.

Lindsay Whalen, a former University of Minnesota star who is the coach of her alma mater's women's team, will play and coach for Team Americas, whose roster includes Barbara Turner, a former Women's National Basketball Association (WNBA) star and two-time national champion at the University of Connecticut.

The roster for Team World includes European stars Laia Palau, a longtime member of Spain's national team who helped her squad win a silver medal at the 2016 Olympic Games; and Julie Vanloo of Belgium, a member of her country's national team. Michele Timms, a member of the Women's Basketball Hall of Fame, will coach Team World.

Fans will also have the opportunity to get up close to the players during an open basketball practice in the Fan Zone on the second floor of the Albany Capital Center. Team Americas will practice Tuesday, August 20 at 12 p.m. and on Wednesday, August 21 at 2:15 p.m.; while Team World's practices will be held at 2:15 p.m. on Tuesday and at noon on Wednesday.

The Aurora Games Fan Zone will feature several "Conversations with Champions" workshops throughout the afternoon, including topical discussions with Team Americas honorary captain and six-time Olympic medalist Jackie Joyner-Kersey at 2 p.m.; seven-time Olympic medalist Shannon Miller at 3:30 p.m.; and two-time Olympic gold medalist Donna de Varona at 5 p.m.

ICE HOCKEY COMPETITION: Friday, August 23

The best hockey players from around the world will take center ice at the Times Union Center when Team Americas plays Team World during the ice hockey competition starting at 7 p.m. The Team Americas roster includes Olympic gold medalist and National Women's Hockey League (NWHL) all-star Haley Skarupa, whose teammates include Blake Bolden, Hannah Brandt and Lisa Chesson.

The Team World roster includes Germany native Tanja Eisenschmid, who was part of the Minnesota Whitecaps team that won the 2019 NWHL Championship. She will be joined by Jennifer Harss, Susanna Tapani, Haruka Toko and several other international players.

Team America will be led by 20-year veteran women's hockey coach Digit Murphy, the first female head coach at Brown University who retired as one of the longest-tenured coaches in collegiate women's hockey. Former South Korea women's national ice hockey team coach and two-time NCAA Division I National Champion Sarah Murray will lead Team World.

Earlier in the week, fans are invited to see the teams practice and scrimmage at the Cool Insuring Arena in Glens Falls, NY. The teams will practice from 9 a.m. to noon on Wednesday, August 21 and Thursday, August 22; and will scrimmage at 7 p.m. on Thursday.

The Aurora Games Fan Zone will conclude the "Conversations with Champions" seminar series on Friday afternoon with several discussions, including Aurora Games figure skating chairwoman and two-time Olympic figure skating medalist Nancy Kerrigan at 2 p.m. and Team World honorary captain and five-time Olympic gold medalist Nadia Comaneci at 3:30 p.m.

FIGURE SKATING COMPETITION: Saturday, August 24

Figure skating will take the Aurora Games spotlight as former Olympians and world and national champions display their skills on the ice throughout the afternoon. The figure skating competition, presented by Musselman's, will take place at the Times Union Center at 1 p.m.

Team Americas' roster includes Mirai Nagasu, the first American woman to land a triple axel at the Olympics; Alysa Liu, who became the youngest U.S. women's figure skating champion in history when she won the title last January at 13-years-old; and three-time U.S. champion Ashley Wagner. Team World's roster is led by Mae Berenice Meite, a five-time French national champion and member of France's Olympic teams at the 2014 and 2018 Winter Games.

The Fan Zone will feature a two-day table tennis exhibition starting at noon Saturday and 11:30 a.m. Sunday at the Albany Capital Center. Representing Team Americas is Lily Zhang and Yue "Jennifer" Wu of the U.S. They will face Sophia Klee (Germany) and Izabela Lupulesku (Serbia) during the competition.

BEACH VOLLEYBALL COMPETITION AND CLOSING CEREMONIES: Sunday, August 25

The beach volleyball competition, presented by Stuyvesant Plaza, will feature four of the world's top-ranked doubles teams to close out the competition portion of the Aurora Games at the Times Union Center.

Team Americas and Team World will play semifinal matches starting at 11 a.m. followed by a bronze medal match and a gold medal match, which could potentially decide the overall winner of the Aurora Games.

The Team Americas' squad consists of April Ross and Alix Klineman of the United States, the world's top-ranked team; and Melissa Humana-Paredes and Sarah Pavan of Canada, winners of the 2019 World Championship and currently ranked second on the international circuit.

They will face a Team World roster that includes Nina Betschart and Tanja Huberli of Switzerland, and Barbora Hermannova and Marketa Slukova from the Czech Republic.

Closing Ceremonies will be held at the Times Union Center following the beach volleyball competition and will include the official presentation of the Babe Didrikson Zaharias Trophy. Didrikson Zaharias was named the "Greatest Female Athlete of the First Half of the 20th Century" by the Associated Press for her achievements in multiple sports, including golf, basketball, baseball and track and field.

Overseeing Team Americas and Team World will be three-time Olympic gold medalist Jackie Joyner-Kersey and five-time Olympic gold medalist Nadia Comaneci, who will serve as honorary team 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.

Fans nationwide will have the opportunity to enjoy all six nights of the all-women's competition on ESPN, the exclusive broadcaster of the inaugural Aurora Games Festival. The landmark event will air on ESPNU and ESPN3 throughout the week.

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).

ABOUT THE WOMEN'S SPORTS FOUNDATION

The Women's Sports Foundation (WSF) is a powerful voice, catalyst and convener dedicated to ensuring all girls and women have equal access to sports and physical activity and the tremendous life-long benefits they provide. Founded by Billie Jean King in 1974, we seek to strengthen and expand opportunities for all girls and women to participate in all sports at all levels through research, advocacy, community impact and a wide variety of collaborative partnerships. WSF has relationships with more than 1,000 of the world's elite female athletes and has positively shaped the lives of more than 3 million youth, high school and collegiate student-athletes.