

## **Aurora Games to return to Albany in 2021 and 2023**

*Organizers make announcement during closing ceremonies for six-day, six-sport event that drew more than 100 world-class athletes to the Times Union Center*

**ALBANY, N.Y.; August 25, 2019** – The Aurora Games, a first-of-its-kind, international all-women’s multi-sport competition and entertainment festival featuring world-class athletes from across the globe, will return to the Times Union Center in Albany, NY, in 2021 and 2023.

Albany County Executive Daniel P. McCoy joined Jerry Solomon, founder and executive producer of the Aurora Games, to make the announcement after Sunday’s final competition in the inaugural six-sport event that drew more than 100 professional athletes to the downtown arena between August 20-25.

"I am so thrilled that the Aurora Games will return to Albany in 2021 and 2023," said Albany County Executive Daniel P. McCoy. "These inaugural games have served as an inspiration to our young women and there were history-making moments like 14-year-old figure skater Alysa Liu completing a quadruple Lutz, the first U.S. woman to successfully do so in a competition. The Aurora Games have gotten off to a great start and I look forward to them growing in the future."

"The women who competed here in Albany showed why they’re some of the best athletes in the world and demonstrated why they deserve an exclusive platform to showcase their outstanding talents," Solomon said. "They put the Aurora Games on the map nationally and internationally. The athletes also took the time to participate in youth sports clinics and workshops on women’s empowerment, giving young girls and women the opportunity to meet their sports idols and Olympic legends one-on-one. We will take the learnings from this inaugural event to continue to grow the Aurora Games in future years."

Sunday’s closing ceremonies included the awarding to Team Americas of the Babe Didrikson Zaharias Trophy, the official trophy of the Aurora Games. Didrikson Zaharias was named the "Greatest Female Athlete of the First Half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century" by the Associated Press for her achievements in multiple sports, including golf, basketball, baseball and track and field.

Team Americas, consisting of athletes from North and South America, won five of the event’s six competitions to claim the trophy. Team Americas won the tennis, gymnastics, ice hockey, figure skating and beach volleyball competitions, while Team World won the basketball game. The Aurora Games served as a unique showcase for the athletic talents of Olympians and national and world champions from more than 20 countries.

"On behalf of our SMG staff who worked tirelessly to change over the arena from each sport to the next overnight for six days, we could not be more honored to hear that the Aurora Games owners and producers have announced that the games will return to Albany in 2021 and 2023," said Bob Belber, SMG general manager of the Times Union Center. "This year was the first time this event was held and we will work to make improvements and enhance the experience for the participants as well as the patrons when it returns in 2021."

Competition highlights included former University of California, Los Angeles gymnastics star Katelyn Ohashi turning in a perfect 10.0 effort in the artistic floor exercises; 14-year-old 2019 U.S. figure skating national champion Alysa Liu nailing a quadruple Lutz, becoming the first U.S. woman figure skater to accomplish this unprecedented achievement in competition; Bianca Andreescu, who won the Rogers Cup in her hometown of Toronto earlier this month, rallying from being down 2-1 to win the last five games and clinch the tennis competition victory for Team America; and the hockey game utilizing a two-point goal line similar to the three-point line used in basketball.

The Aurora Games also featured “Conversations with Champions,” a 12-part series of workshops on women’s sports and empowerment that was held in the Albany Capital Center. The keynote speaker was Judge Rosemarie Aquilina, who gained international attention while presiding over the sentencing of former USA Gymnastics team doctor Larry Nassar.

Other featured speakers included Jackie Joyner-Kersey, Team Americas honorary captain and six-time Olympic medalist; Team World honorary captain and nine-time Olympic gymnastics medalist Nadia Comaneci; Aurora Games gymnastics chairwoman Shannon Miller, winner of seven Olympic medals in gymnastics; Aurora Games Athletes Advisory Board chairwoman and two-time Olympic gold medal swimmer Donna de Varona; and Aurora Games figure skating chairwoman Nancy Kerrigan, a two-time Olympic figure skating medalist.

Total attendance for the six-day event was 20,423.

The landmark Aurora Games was aired live on ESPNU and ESPN3 throughout the week.

The Women’s Sports Foundation (WSF) is the official charity partner of the Aurora Games. The results of the Aurora Games competitions:

**TENNIS:** Tuesday, August 20

The tennis competition, presented by HFactor Hydrogen Infused Water, featured six players ranked among the world’s top 50 players. Team Americas won the event by taking 23 total games to Team World’s 21, with Bianca Andreescu (Canada) defeating Victoria Azarenka (Belarus) 6-2 in the night’s final match.