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GOVERNOR BUSH ANNOUNCES MIAMI-DADE COUNTY AS HOST FOR 2006 SUNSHINE STATE GAMES

TALLAHASSEE - Governor Jeb Bush announces Florida's Sunshine State Games will be held in Miami in the summer of 2006. The Games, which are an Olympic-style sports festival led annually by the Florida Sports Foundation, will be hosted by the Miami-Dade Sports Commission.

"The Sunshine State Games provide Florida's amateur athletes with the ideal opportunity to participate in a wide array of events while promoting sportsmanship, fitness, and the spirit of competition," said Governor Bush. "The Games also afford our talented youth an arena to refine their athletic talents prior to national and international competitions while making new friends in the process."

The 2006 Summer Games mark the first time the Olympic-style festival has been held in Miami-Dade County since 1990. South Florida has played host to the Sunshine State Games five times since its inception in 1980. Palm Beach County has hosted two Sunshine State Games (1992, 2002) and Broward County will host the 2005 Games.

Tamiami Park, Miami-Dade County Fair & Exposition, Florida International University in West Dade County will serve as major hubs and most activities will be clustered in those areas. The Miami Fair Expo will be home to the Games Headquarters, Athlete Check-in and will have an interactive games area for athletes, their families and spectators.

Thousands of athletes and their families travel to participate in the annual sports competition, making the Sunshine State Games an economic boon for the communities that host them. As many as 9,000 amateur athletes will compete in 25 sports at the 2006 Summer Games. Sports with traditional large participation base from Miami area include Track & Field and Water Polo.

"We are excited to be hosting this event in Miami," said Miami-Dade County Sports Commission Executive Director Mike Sophia. "It's a great opportunity to welcome athletes from around the state and offer the youth of our community the chance to experience the Games."

The Sunshine State Games are part of the National Congress of State Games that boasts competition in over 40 state games throughout the nation.

Some of the more recognizable athletes from Florida who have made their way to Olympic competition through the Sunshine State Games include Roy Jones, Jr. and Antonio Tarver

(Boxing), Brandy Johnson (Gymnastics), Nicole Haislett, Nancy Hogshead, and Brooke Bennett (Swimming), and Dennis Mitchell and Jearl Miles (Track & Field).

Sunshine State Games sites through the years:

1980-82	Gainesville
1983-84	Orlando
1985-86	Tampa
1987	St.Petersburg/Clearwater
1988	Jacksonville
1989	Gainesville
1990	Miami
1991	Bradenton
1992	West Palm Beach
1993-94	Tallahassee
1995-96	Gainesville
1997-98	Kissimmee/St. Cloud
1999	Tampa
2000	Lakeland (spring); Gainesville (summer)
2001	Lakeland (spring); Orlando (summer)
2002	Lakeland (spring); Palm Beach County (summer)
2003	Lakeland (spring); Tampa Bay area (summer)
2004	Tallahassee
2005	Broward County

Overseen by the Governor's Office of Tourism, Trade, and Economic Development, the Florida Sports Foundation was founded in 1992 as the state's lead organization in promoting and developing both amateur and professional sports. For more information about the Florida Sports Foundation and the Sunshine State Games, please visit www.flasports.com or call (850) 488-8347.