

28th Annual Sunshine State Games — 2007 Summer Games June 9-10 & 15-17 — Polk County



Polk County hosts largest annual Amateur Sports Day in Florida

Saturday, June 16 was the biggest and busiest amateur sports day of the year in Florida as thousands of amateur athletes competed in 22 sports of Florida's Sunshine State Games at 23 Polk County venues.

The Saturday of the Sunshine State Games is always the busiest day of Florida's only Olympic-style Sports Festival with competition in the water (Swimming, Synchronized Swimming, Rowing, Canoe/Kayak), sports using a ball (Baseball, Basketball, Racquetball, Rugby, Fast-Pitch Softball, Table Tennis, Tennis), martial arts sports (Judo, Karate, Taekwondo), sports showcasing great strength (Weightlifting, Powerlifting) and sports utilizing quickness and agility (Boxing, Fencing, Badminton, Track & Field, Ultimate, Wrestling). 2007 marks the 28th year of Sunshine State Games competition.

"There may be some single sport events in Florida that have more participants on a certain day," said Florida Sports Foundation Director of Amateur Sports, Stephen Rodriguez. "But as far as multi-sport events in Florida, nothing matches the variety of sports and the and levels of participation offered by the Sunshine State Games."

Pokers play up in Varsity Baseball and win Gold

The Florida Pokers 16 and under team, from Plantation, won the Varsity Baseball division winning six games over the course of the weekend and won the Championship Game 8-4 over the Boy's and Girl's Club of Tampa Bay.

Pokers pitcher Adam Cam, a junior-to-be at Parkland's Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School, retired the side in the bottom of the fourth inning at Henley Field and the Pokers entered the fifth inning down 2-1.

Cam's momentum led the way for the Pokers to score five runs in the fifth and a 6-2 lead.



Following a scoreless sixth inning, the Pokers heated up again in the seventh inning, scoring two more runs for an 8-4 win. Cam earned the team's Most Valuable Player Award and after the game celebrated his win and award with his father on Father's Day (Cam and father, pictured at left).

"Adam pitched well in the championship game and is hitting over .500 for us this summer when playing first and third base," said Pokers head coach Pete Colabella. "Tito Mendoza also had a good tournament for us in the Sunshine State Games, hitting over .500 with a home run in the championship game."

The Pokers 16 and under team played in the varsity level team with a team made up of mostly juniors-to-be in the upcoming year. Playing up a level would prepare the team better for other upcoming competitions this summer, according to Colabella. The Pokers also played in a Junior Olympic Qualifier at Roger Dean Stadium in Jupiter and a National Tournament in Cobb County, Georgia during the summer of 2007.

FP Softball 18U final

The Miami Stingrays bounced back from a loss to the Tampa Mustangs-Holle and won an if necessary game to win the 17-team 18 and under division of the Fast Pitch Softball competition at the Winter Haven Diamondplex. The Stingrays scored seven runs in the second inning, highlighted by a three-run home run by First Team All-6A selection from Palmetto High School, Kelly Saco, and held on for a 7-4 win.

Over the course of three days, the Stingrays played eight games en route to the championship. Shortstop Lauren Guzman, a senior to be at Palmetto High School and a second team Class 6A All State selection, averaged “two or three hits a game and was a machine all weekend,” according to Stingrays Head Coach Gator Rebhan. Ali Pardo picked up the Championship Game win for the Stingrays going seven innings. Rebhan said the Stingrays used five pitchers over the course of the weekend.

The Mustangs fell into the losers bracket after falling 6-1 to the Stingrays in the second round of championship play. They won four games to get back to the final two games against the Stingrays. The Mustangs won the first game 3-2.

The Sarasota Heat won the 16 and under division advancing through the championship bracket undefeated winning the final game 1-0 over the Gainesville Warriors.

Former Athletes of Year participation

Six former Sunshine State Games Athletes of the Year returned to action in the 2007 Summer Games.

Larry Parzynski, the 2002 Male Athlete of the Year won a gold medal in the Canoe/Kayak K-1 Olympic Men’s Open Division with a time of 1:56.22. He defeated the second place finisher Robert Mirlenbrink, of Dunedin, by more than 12 seconds in the 500 meter sprint race.



The 2003 Male Athlete of the Year, Sammy Valentin, a 12-year old boxer from Tampa, won his Junior Olympic 101 lb weight class bout against Antonio Ojeada, of Fort Myers PAL. The Summer of 2007 finds Valentin (*pictured at right with family*) traveling to box in national competitions in Las Vegas and the Ringside National Worldwide Tournament in Kansas City.

Susan Pfahler, the 2005 Female Athlete of the Year, from Atlantic Beach won the Mixed Open Doubles competition along with her partner Bruce Middleton, of Belleair Beach. Pfahler and Mary Lyons, of Neptune Beach, were recently inducted in the USA Racquetball Hall of Fame for their success as a Women’s Open Doubles team.

Tyler Wolfe, the 2004 Female Athlete of the Year, won a pair of gold medals in the Kumite 14-15 year old Advanced Division and the Kata 14-17 Year Old Female Advanced Division.



Alex Forbes, the 2000 Male Athlete of the Year and a member of Central Florida Aquatics, won four gold medals in the swimming competition. Forbes, now 19 and swimming for the University of Kentucky, won the Boys 100 Yard Backstroke with a time of 52.47, the Boys 50 Yard Freestyle with a 20.56, the Boys 100 Yard Freestyle with 45.57 and the Boys 100 Yard Butterfly with a time of 50.50.

Gertrude Zint (*pictured at left*), the 2003 Female Athlete of the Year and member of the Halifax Rowing Club in Daytona Beach, won a bronze medal in the Women’s Veteran 1X (55+) with a time of 8:15.2.

Tampa's Shut 'Em Down beats the top three seeds to win Flag Football Championships

10th-ranked Shut 'Em Down, from Tampa, defeated the top three seeds in the A Division, including two wins over top-ranked Apocalypse, from Pompano Beach.

Shut 'Em Down (*pictured below*) opened the first day of competition with a win over seventh-ranked Domino's, 33-13, followed by wins over second-ranked Coalition, of Seminole, 39-13, and the third-ranked Leatherbacks, of Largo, 32-0.



"We're a team that's been around for a long time," said longtime Shut "Em Down team member Tom Delikat. "This is the first year we put our focus playing on the state level. A lot of our guys play in fall leagues so playing in the spring was very beneficial. We had a lot of different combinations during the SRT season and finally had a consistent group in Lakeland for the championships."

Following a 26-6 loss, Apocalypse stayed alive in the loser's bracket with a win over Coalition, but fell in the final game 21-12.

"Our quarterback Troy Moore was an integral part of winning the state championship tournament," said Delikat. "Might have thrown an interception on a two point conversion but not during regular drive. Our defense worked incredibly well as a unit. It was pretty amazing to us."

In the B Division, Tropical Breeze Inspectors, from Cocoa, went through the bracket undefeated and beat the Bodysnatchers 27-12 in the Championship Game.

Hard Knox, from Seminole, won four C Division games en route to the championship and defeated 25-12 in the final.

Nu-Yu Taekwondo of Dunnellon wins team award

The 18 Taekwondo students from Nu Yu Taekwondo in Dunnellon combined to win 35 medals in the 2007 Sunshine State Games Taekwondo competition and earn the Inaugural Team Award in Polk County, on Saturday, June 16.

Of the 35 medals won, Nu Yu Taekwondo brought 14 gold, 15 silver and six bronze medals back to Dunnellon. Alex LaBlanc, Kyle Marrero and Kevin Riley won medals in all three events they entered.

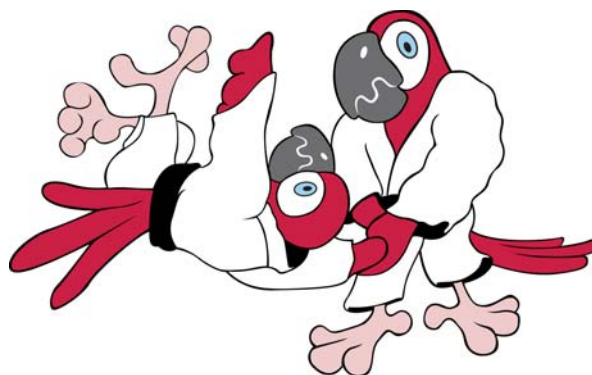
"Hard work and discipline was key to winning," said Master Danny Williams. "We didn't think we would win the overall trophy and were very surprised when it happened. We knew our kids were winning a lot of golds and silvers. We're very pleased with their performances."

Prior to the Sunshine State Games competition, long-time Nu Yu Master Simmons, passed away on May 25. Under the direction of Masters Danny Williams, Kevin Dewitt, Butch Gallion and Jeff LaBlanc, the team traveled to the Sunshine State Games stressing the Taekwondo core values of courtesy, integrity, perseverance, self control, humility and the indomitable spirit.

The Nu Yu Taekwondo School has 42 current students. Of the 18 who attended the 2007 Sunshine State Games, athletes ranged in age from five years old to adults.

Judo awards top Junior and Senior competitors

Following the annual Sunshine State Games Judo competition, Outstanding Junior and Senior Athletes are chosen. The 2007 recipients were 10-year old Nadine Fiege, of Jacksonville for the Most Outstanding Junior Female and 15-year old Tylor Ferry, of Riverview, for the Most Outstanding Junior Male. In Senior competition, Heidi Arias was named the Most Outstanding Female and Marius Pavydis earned the Most Outstanding Male honors.



Fiege, a member of Judory Jax, won the gold medal in the Girl's 9-10 year old , Middleweight division in Lakeland. Prior to the Sunshine State Games competition, Fiege won a gold medal in the Junior Division at the Judo State Championships on May 5 in Boca Raton. She also won the gold medal in the Girls Intermediate Division, 34 KG at the 2006 USJF Junior Nationals, July 22-23, 2006 in Fort Lauderdale.

Ferry, a Riverview High School freshman, has been part of the Florida School of Judo training program since he was eight years old. His dad, Scott, is his personal trainer and a coach for the program. Ferry also won a gold medal in the 2006 Sunshine State Games Judo competition.

A member of Panther Judo, 17-year old Arias, of Hialeah Gardens, took the gold medal in the Women 60kg+ division in Lakeland. She also won the Female, Senior, 63kg at the Florida Judo State Championships in Boca Raton, May 5. Arias has been competing in Sunshine State Games Judo since 1999 when she won a bronze medal at the 9-10 year old level.

An instructor at Orlando Judo, 33-year old Pavydis, won four bouts in the Senior Men 81kg division, emerging out of a bracket that included 10 other competitors, and collected a Sunshine State Games Judo medal for the third consecutive year.



Track & Field winning Team

36 members of the Running Tigers Track & Field Team of Tampa, combined to win the first Youth Track & Field Team Trophy. The Tigers compiled 380 points, topping the Seffner Track Club by 35 points. Running Tigers Girls compiled 212 points while the Boys had 168 points.

The Tigers won 18 gold medals, 14 in running events and four in field events. The most prosperous event for the Running Tigers was the 400 meter dash, with seven gold medals. Taking 400 meter dash gold were, eight-year old Kailiece Harris (1:19.37 in Primary Girls), nine-year old Savannah Sanders (1:14.16 in Sub-Bantam Girls), 10-year old Sydeera Martin (1:16.34 in Bantam Girls); 12-year old Jasmine Perry (1:04.25 in Midget Girls); 14-year old Amber Brooks (1:03.92 in Youth Girls); 12-year old Alex Gionis, (1:13.74, in Bantam Boys) and 13-year old Cassell Brown (1:03.47 in Sub-Youth Boys). Savannah Sanders, Sydeera Martin and Amber Brooks also won gold medals in the 800 meter run.

Lenroy Thompson working his way to Olympic Boxing Team

A handful of Sunshine State Games boxers had a chance for two bouts at The Lakeland Center over the Summer Games weekend. One of them, Lenroy Thompson, of Fort Pierce, picked up a pair of wins as a primer for the U.S. Olympic Team Trials to be held, August 20-26 in Houston. The winner of the double-elimination tournament will represent the U.S. and the runner up will serve as the alternate.



Thompson (*pictured at left*) scored Sunshine State Games decisions in the Senior Open Division – 201 lbs+, over Steve Victor and Augustana Emmanuel, from the Hollywood PAL to run his amateur record to 28-4.

Prior to the Sunshine State Games, the 6-2, 205 lb. Thompson won a state tournament in Palm Bay and a regional tournament in South Carolina to qualify for the U.S. Championships in Colorado Springs, where he won three bouts to advance to the semifinals. He lost to the eventual 201+lb champion, Michael Hunter.

“He was unseeded and literally came out of nowhere to advance through the bracket as far as he did,” said Sunshine State Games Boxing Sport Director, Frank Filiberto.

Patton family features dual sport athletes

Carly Patton, of Zephyrhills, had a busy weekend at the 2007 Summer Games winning a Judo Gold medal and three Track & Field gold medals. Patton took the Judo gold in the Girl’s 13-14 Heavy class winning three matches at The Lakeland Center.

At Winter Haven High School’s Denison Stadium, Patton won the Sub-Youth Girls Javelin Throw (24.10m), Shot Put (9.13m) and Discus Throw (22.45m). Her gold medal winning discus throw was more than 10 meters farther than the second place finisher in her age group.

Patton, 13, was named the Most Outstanding Youth Female Judo Player at the 2004 and 2005 Sunshine State Games, and has won gold medals each year since 2002. Once she began middle school she started participating with the track & field team. Her sisters, Kate, 15, and Liza Patton, 9, who have also won Sunshine State Games judo medals, won track & field gold medals in Winter Haven. Together with Carly, the Patton sisters combined for seven track & field medals. “The officials let Carly compete early so she could make it to Judo,” said her mom Amy Patton. “If I would have known all three girls could do that, they would have been in Judo also.”

Bill Becker wins 51st and 52nd Fencing medals

The total number of Sunshine State Games fencers has increased dramatically over the last few years going from under 100 in 2001 to 188 in 2007. But through the years, one fencing athlete has been quietly winning medals.

At the 2007 Summer Games, Bill Becker (*pictured at right*), of Sunrise won his 51st and 52nd Sunshine State Games Fencing Gold medals in the Men’s and Veteran’s Sabre competition. Becker advanced through the 14 other participants in the Men’s Sabre bracket to win another of his Sunshine State Games medals.

Besides his talents on the fencing strips, Becker is an accomplished coach guiding students to national rankings, a nationally ranked referee holding an esteemed ranking of a 3 in sabre and epee and a 4 in foil and fencing administrator assisting with the 2006 Southeast Sports Festival in Shelby County, Alabama.



Paralympian competes in Masters Track & Field meet

Tampa Paralympian Robyn Stawski threw the javelin, shot put and discus at the 2007 Sunshine State Games Open and Masters Track & Field to prepare for the 2007 U.S. Paralympic Track & Field National Championships in Marietta, Georgia. Further down the road, she plans on competing in the 2007 Para Pan American Games in Brazil and the 2008 Paralympics in Beijing, China.



Using a "field chair," designed by students of the University of South Florida College of Engineering's Rehabilitation Engineering and Technology Program, for assistance, Stawski threw the shot put 5.48m, the discus 12.12m and the javelin a personal best 10.20m. She has competed in many international disabled athletic competitions, including placing 4th in the discus at the International Paralympic Committee's 2002 World Athletic Championships in Lille, France. Robyn currently holds national records for the shot put, discus and javelin.

Besides her goals of competing on a national and international level, Stawski said she participated in the 2007 Summer Games, "to increase awareness of the paralympians and special needs athletes."



Beau Moore attempts Powerlifting State Record at Summer Games

The 567 pounds on the bench press was literally bending the bar. Beau Moore, of St. Petersburg, had just cleared 529 pounds on his previous lift, and was now looking to break his own Super Heavyweight state record of 562 pounds.

He didn't make it. But there will be another day for Moore, whose Raw Dogs team won the Open Division team championship at the Sunshine State Games. Moore did have the best lifts of the day's competition with his 529 pound bench press, 738 pound squat and 765 pound

deadlift for a total of 2,032 pounds or 922 kg. His total was almost 200kg more than the second overall finisher, Larry Wallen, of Jacksonville, whose three lifts combined for 1,664 pounds or 755 kg.

The High School Boys Team award went to Team Elite from Lakeland and the High School Girls Team award went to Timber Creek High School from Lakeland.

Summer Games return to Polk in 2008

Look for more Summer Games competition when the Sunshine State Games return to Polk County June, 2008. Athletes will have the opportunity to qualify for 11 sports of the Southeast Sports Festival, August 1-3, 2008 in Tallahassee.

Baseball, Basketball, Flag Football, Lacrosse and Soccer teams from Florida as well as athletes from Fencing, Gymnastics, Taekwondo, Tennis and Track & Field have a chance to compete against amateur athletes from 11 Southeastern U.S. states.

The 11 states involved in the 2nd Southeast Sports Festival are Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee and West Virginia. Any athlete or team participating in their local 2008 State Games event is eligible for the 2008 Southeast Sports Festival.