

Charlotte Cowen

From: Florida Sports Foundation <ngandy@flsports.com>
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2018 Sunshine State Games Online Registration Available for Upcoming Events

TALLAHASSEE - Registration is now open for sports of the 2018 Sunshine State Games sports taking place between April and June at www.sunshinestategames.com. Now in its 39th year of providing Floridians amateur sports opportunities, the Sunshine State Games are the longest continuously-running State Games in the U.S.

First on the calendar of Florida's Olympic-style Sports Festival is the AAU Volleyball Super Regional, being contested in Lee County at the Estero Recreation Center and the Wa-Ka-Hatchee Recreation Center on Saturday, April 14 and Sunday, April 15.

Winning teams in age divisions with 12 or more teams will receive a free entry fee to the AAU Junior National Volleyball Championships in Orlando, the West Coast AAU Championships in Las Vegas, or the Volleyball Festival in Phoenix. Register online by April 7, 2018.

The 32nd Annual Sunshine State Games Figure Skating Championships will be held at Florida Hospital Center Ice in Wesley Chapel, May 18-20. The 2018 Figure Skating Championships marks the first time the event will be held in the Pasco County facility.

Florida Hospital Center Ice began operations in Wesley Chapel in February 2017 and is the largest ice rink sports complex in the Southeast United States. The state-of-the-art ice arena is a 150,000 square foot, four-rink complex with three NHL rinks and one Olympic rink, with the option to convert any NHL rink to dry floor to accommodate basketball, soccer, lacrosse, volleyball and events such as corporate meetings, and parties. The facility also includes a wide range of amenities and services including a mini-rink.

The SSG Figure Skating event annually draws more than 300 skaters from around the state and is an anticipated event on the yearly figure skating calendar, according to Sport Director Betty Stark.

"It's a good event," she said. "It's well run and well organized and the skaters look forward to attending when you have such good competition at so many levels. Now having it at a new arena, I think skaters are looking forward to see it as well."

The event began with 58 skaters in 1986, according to Stark, who has been the sport director for the duration of Figure Skating in the Sunshine State Games.

Entry fees vary by the number of events entered and the registration deadline is Sunday, April 22.

Also being held the weekend of May 19-20 is the Sunshine State Games Basketball Championships in Alachua County. The event features Boy's and Girl's Age Divisions beginning at the 3rd Grade Level and running through High School. The entry fee is \$335 per team and the registration deadline is May 9.

June is the busiest month of the year for the Sunshine State Games calendar with 17 sports being contested each weekend in June in eight different communities. Online registration is now available at www.sunshinestategames.com for the following events.

June 2-3, 2018

Manatee –Sarasota County Festival, *Manatee-Sarasota County, Florida*
Sports offered: Paddling Marathon, Paddling Sprint, Ultimate, Weightlifting

June 8-10, 2018

Alachua County Festival, *Alachua County, Florida*
Sports offered: Archery, Swimming

June 8-10, 2018

SSG Synchronized Swimming Championships, *Gandy Pool, Lakeland, Florida*

June 16-17, 2018

Summer Games, *Charlotte County, Florida*
Sports offered: Baton Twirling, Judo, Karate, Taekwondo, and Track & Field

June 16-17, 2018

SSG Fencing Championships, *The Long Center, Clearwater, Florida*

June 16-17, 2018

SSG Powerlifting Championships, *Highland Recreation Center, Largo, Florida*

June 16-17, 2018

SSG Table Tennis Championships, *Simpson Recreation Center, Lakeland, Florida*

June 22-24, 2018

SSG Water Polo Championships, *Broward County, Florida*

June 30- July 1, 2018

SSG Badminton Championships, *Shula's Athletic Club, Miami Lakes, Florida*

The Table Tennis in Lakeland will serve as a qualifier for the 2018 Florida Senior Games and the Badminton Championships will serve as a qualifier for the 2019 National Senior Games.

Visit www.sunshinestategames.com for additional events after the month of June including the SSG International Beach Games, to be held at the Sheraton Sand Key on Clearwater Beach in September, a variety of SSG Sport Shooting events, held between September and November and SSG Fall Lacrosse Championships in November.

The Sunshine State Games are presented annually by the Florida Sports Foundation (FSF), the state's lead sports promotion and development organization, and a division of Enterprise Florida, Inc. The FSF works in conjunction with a variety of local sports industry partners to present the different competitions. The Sunshine State Games, an annual amateur sports tradition in Florida, is part of the state's \$57.3 billion sports industry that accounts for 580,000 jobs statewide.

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