



## PRESS RELEASE

**Contact:** Kim Skeltis, APR: (616) 419-8385, kim@blueblazepr.com

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### **GRAND RAPIDS HOSTS USA MASTERS GAMES JUNE 24-27 AS THIRD HOST IN HISTORY; NATIONAL EVENT IN CONJUNCTION WITH MEIJER STATE GAMES OF MICHIGAN**

#### ***Rescheduled 2020 Games Attracts Athletes from 35 States Competing in 24 Events in 20 Sports***

*Grand Rapids, Mich.*, June 16, 2021 – Good things come to those who wait – like the opportunity to host the rescheduled [2020 USA Masters Games](#), now June 24-27, 2021 in West Michigan.

The USA Masters Games is a multisport, Olympic-style event for athletes 21 and older, featuring athletes from 35 states competing in 24 events in 20 sports at 20 venues across West Michigan. Only the third edition of the USA Masters Games since it started in 2016, the 2020 Masters Games\* was awarded to Grand Rapids initially to host it June 19-28, 2020. It was postponed due to COVID-19 restrictions and safety precautions.

“Hosting the Masters Games is a shot in the arm for West Michigan and an important signal that sporting events are back,” said Mike Guswiler, president of the West Michigan Sports Commission (WMSC), the local event organizer with the Meijer State Games of Michigan. “Just as the 2020 Olympics were postponed until 2021, we made a similar call to postpone the Master Games until pandemic restrictions were lifted, vaccines were available, and athlete and spectator safety could be managed easier. This is an exciting time to celebrate the resurgence of sport, both nationally and across Michigan.”

The USA Masters Games will be held in conjunction with the [Meijer State Games - Summer Games](#) whose main weekend also is June 24-27. For most sports, athletes 21 and older registering for the Summer Games will automatically be registered to compete in the USA Masters Games (a few sports such as Water Skiing and Rowing let athletes 21 and older select in which event they prefer to register). Similar to the State Games, no qualification is necessary to compete in the USA Masters Games, and all athletes 21 and older are welcome regardless of ability. Event winners who compete in both categories will receive medals from the USA Masters Games for most sports events, with a few sports also issuing medals for the State Games.

“It is an honor to host the third USA Masters Games in the event’s history,” said Eric Engelbarts, executive director of the Meijer State Games of Michigan, the local event organizer with the WMSC. “Our track record in hosting multi-sport games events – from our annual Meijer State Games over the past decade to the 2017 State Games of America – makes this a natural fit for our region and another feather in our cap for hosting the top national multisport events.”

USA Masters Games sports include 5K, Archery (3D and FITA), Basketball, Bocce Ball, Bowling, Cornhole, Cycling, Disc Golf, Figure Skating (USFS), Footgolf, Golf, Pickleball, Rowing, Rugby, Shooting Sports (Air Rifle and Air Pistol, SBR, Skeet), Swimming, Taekwondo (virtual), Tennis, Track & Field and Waterskiing. While the main weekend is June 24-27, Pickleball and Cycling events are done, with 320 Pickleball athletes alone participating.

*\*NOTE: Similar to branding of the 2020 Tokyo Olympic Games, which likewise was postponed until this year, the USA Masters Games in 2021 is still referred to as the **2020 USA Masters Games** when it was to be held originally, and competition medals and other event-related items reflect such branding.*

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"We are thrilled to be at this point of holding the long-awaited USA Masters Games in West Michigan," said Hill Carrow, CEO of the USA Masters Games. "We have great partners in the West Michigan Sports Commission and State Games of Michigan, who have demonstrated their organizational experience through hosting other multi-sport events. Plus Grand Rapids' excellent venues and hotel proximity make the region a natural fit."

The inaugural USA Masters Games was held in Greensboro, N.C., in 2016, with athletes competing in 24 sports. The second USA Masters Games was held in 2017 in San Diego. The 2021 Masters Games in Grand Rapids has added its own twist, adding new events like Bocce Ball, Cornhole, Footgolf, Rowing, Shooting Sports, Taekwondo and Water Skiing. Despite COVID-19 indoor event restrictions until July 1, the 2020 Masters Games only had to cancel a few events – Judo, Wrestling, and Figure Skating (ISI) – it also converted Taekwondo to a virtual event.

### **Athlete and Visitor Information**

Athletes can register for most USA Masters Games events until the day of the event, with registration here: [usamastersgames.com/registration](https://usamastersgames.com/registration). Athletes can participate in the [Opening Ceremony](#) Friday, June 25, 7:30 to 8:30 p.m. at the Meijer Sports Complex in addition to a Saturday evening social at LMCU Ballpark to watch the West Michigan Whitecaps. Sporting events are free to watch, and spectators can consult the individual sporting event listings for times, dates and locations at [usamastersgames.com/sports-lineup](https://usamastersgames.com/sports-lineup). For more information about the USA Masters Games, visit [usamastersgames.com](https://usamastersgames.com).

### **MEDIA NOTE**

*Media are welcome to cover the USA Masters Games and should contact Kim Skeltis ([kim@blueblazepr.com](mailto:kim@blueblazepr.com)) in advance to coordinate interviews. Suggested media visuals include:*

- **Athlete Check-In** – Friday, June 25, 6:30-7:30 p.m. at the Meijer Sports Complex
- **Opening Ceremony** – Friday, June 25, 7:30-8:30 p.m. at the Meijer Sports Complex, featuring athlete parade, torch relay/cauldron lighting, and entertainment by human cannonball David "The Bullet" Smith
- **Individual events** – suggested events for most impact/number of athletes:
  - **Track & Field** – Saturday, June 26, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. at Comstock Park High School
  - **Swimming** – Saturday, June 26, 2 p.m. at Northview High School Aquatic Center
- **Interviews** (by appointment) – Hill Carrow, CEO, USA Masters Games; Eric Engelbarts, executive director, Meijer State Games of Michigan and local organizer, USA Masters Games

### **About the USA Masters Games**

*The USA Masters Games is a national multi-sport festival for adult athletes, ages 21 and over. The Games feature 20 sports, an Opening Ceremony and social activities for the athletes. The inaugural USA Masters Games was in 2016 in Greensboro, N.C. The second USA Masters Games was in 2017 in San Diego. For more information, visit [usamastersgames.com](https://usamastersgames.com).*

### **About the Meijer State Games of Michigan**

*Modeled after the Olympics, the Meijer State Games of Michigan welcomes athletes regardless of age or ability level and embodies the values of participation, sportsmanship and healthy living among Michigan residents. A signature event of the West Michigan Sports Commission, the Meijer State Games of Michigan is a grassroots organization that relies on the dedication of thousands of volunteers and the support of corporate partners. Since 2010, Meijer State Games of Michigan has hosted more than 65,000+ athletes and contributed more than \$25 million in estimated economic impact to cities throughout West Michigan. For more information, visit [stategamesofmichigan.com](https://stategamesofmichigan.com).*

### **About the West Michigan Sports Commission**

*The non-profit [West Michigan Sports Commission](https://westmichigansports.com) (WMSC) identifies, secures and hosts youth and amateur sporting events to positively impact the economy and quality of life in the region. Since its inception in 2007, the WMSC has booked 882 events attracting more than 1.4 million athletes and visitors, generating \$410 million in direct visitor spending. Visit [westmichigansports.com](https://westmichigansports.com), [Facebook.com/WestMichiganSportsCommission](https://facebook.com/WestMichiganSportsCommission) and @westmichigansports on Twitter and Instagram.*

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