



FLORIDA'S SUNSHINE STATE GAMES

Headlines

Archery welcomes Olympian to competition

The Sunshine State Games archery competition had a well-known on-site entry in Vic Wunderle, a two-time Olympian (2000 individual silver and team bronze medalist). Wunderle is currently ranked number one in the U.S. for the Senior Male Recurve Division and is a member of the 2005 United States Archery Team (USAT).

Wunderle, who grew up in Mason City, Illinois but also has a residence in Florida, won a Sunshine State Games gold medal in the Adult Male Olympic Recurve division of the FITA Round with a score of 1311 (out of a possible 1440), the highest score of all participants in the event. He is a four-time U.S. Archery Male Athlete of the Year honor, winning the award in 1994, 1999, 2000 and 2005.

Matt Greener puts on power display in Varsity Baseball

Playing for the All American Prospects Varsity team, Jupiter's Matt Greener slugged six home runs in five games as the Prospects won three and lost two. In 14 at bats, Greener hit .500 with seven hits, while scoring nine runs and collecting 13 RBIs. Three of his home runs came in a 17-3 win over the Miami Cobras in the opening game of pool play.

Greener, the South Florida Sun-Sentinel 4-5A-6A Player of the Year in Palm Beach County, has signed a letter of intent to play at Florida Atlantic University. In the semi-final game against the Florida Pipers, a pitch hit him on his hand. Greener stayed in the game and homered in his last at bat of the Games. The next day it was found out his pinky finger was broken in multiple places putting him in a cast for approximately six weeks.

Max Groebe's three point shooting leads Miami Tropics to Gold Medal

Scoring an average of 19.6 points per game in six wins, guard Max Groebe was a key member of the Miami Tropics gold medal winning performance. Connecting on a total of 24 three pointers, Groebe scored 118 points, including a tournament high of 37 in a 96-54 win over Lake Placid. Among his 37 points in the Lake Placid game, was eight three point field goals.

In the Tropics' 69-67 championship game win over the Broward Blazers, Groebe scored 16 points. He will be a senior at Michael Krop High School in 2007 along with Tropics teammates, Eric Rodriguez and Orin Chin. The coach of the Tropics, Marcos "Shaky" Rodriguez, is also the head coach at Krop High School.

In women's Junior Varsity play, Chelsea McMillian, of the Lady Superfriends was named the MVP of the division and capped the weekend in Miami with a dominating performance in the championship game. She scored 31 points, grabbed 14 rebounds and blocked four shots as the Lady Superfriends defeated the Wellington Wolves, 63-54.

"Other teams were calling her 'Baby Shaq,' " said Tim Brown, the coach of the Lady Superfriends, a team comprised of players from East Gadsden and Sneads high schools. "All the other teams wanted her to be in their team photos."

Close races in Kayak competition

While the Sunshine State Games features races on the track and in the pool, open water sports also have a place in Florida's Olympic-style Sports Festival. The closest finishes of the Kayak competition were between Jupiter's Peter Gimple and Angel Santaren, of Doral.

In the 200 and 500 meter sprints of the K-1 competition, Gimple topped Santaren in the 200 meter by just over one second and five seconds in the 500 meter. Santaren, teaming with Lee Soto won the 200 meter K-2 by .002 and the 500 meter K-2 by just over one second. In the 200 meter K-2, Santaren and Soto finished with a time of 51.83 and Gimple, teaming with Bruce Gipson, crossed the finish line in 52.03 in the closest race of the competition.

Many sports of the Sunshine State Games feature a majority of youth athletes, but the Canoe/Kayak competition is the opposite, with only one entry under the age of 20. Competing in four events was 11-year old Andrew Hebert of Lauderdale-by-the-Sea.

Frey sisters make the most of a long trip

Logging the most miles to reach the competition in Miami, Rachel, Nicole and Claire Frey, of the small North Florida city of Monticello, returned home with six Sunshine State Games medals. 17-year old Nicole won the silver medal in the Women's Epee. 15-year old Rachel won a gold medal in Women's Foil competition, silver in D and under Foil and a bronze in D and under Epee competition. 12-year old Claire won a pair of gold medals in the Women's 14 and under Foil competition and Girl's 12 and under Foil.

The Frey family began competing in Sunshine State Games fencing in the 2002 Spring Games in Lakeland and won medals in 2002, 2004 and 2005.

Top Judo athletes compete at Sunshine State Games

Among the over 100 entries in Sunshine State Games Judo competition, several have seen action on a national and international level.

Angelica Delgado, of North Lauderdale, was a silver medalist at the 2006 Pan Am Juvenile Championships, in San Jose, Costa Rica, at 57kg, earned the Outstanding Senior Female award for winning both the Juvenile C and the Senior 63kg divisions.

Delgado's North Miami Judo Club Teammate Bobby Lee, of Lauderhill, earned his second consecutive Sunshine State Games Outstanding Senior Male honor for winning the 81kg division. A Senior Nationals bronze medalist at 73kg, Lee fought in a field that included Phillip Spano, of Tampa, a bronze

medalist at last year's Junior British Open at 73kg, and 33-year-old Marius Pavydis, of Orlando, originally of Lithuania. Lee won each of his five matches by ippon (instant win), including two victories over Spano.

Ronnie Talledo, of North Lauderdale, and Juan Roman, a member of the Puerto Rican National Team, had a rematch of this year's New York Open final. Although both athletes traditionally compete in the 60kg division, they each fought up to 66kg with Talledo prevailing again.

From Las Vegas to Miami for Sunshine State Games Karate athletes

Three Sunshine State Games medal winners traveled to Las Vegas for the US Open Karate National Championships, April 15-16. The competition, held at Caesar's Palace, saw all three win their Kumite (sparring) divisions.

In Miami at the Sunshine State Games, Matthew Tamayo, of Gainesville, won the gold medal in the 8-9 year old advanced division. Presley Lynch, of Cape Coral, won the 10-11 year old female intermediate class and Tyler Wolfe, the 2004 Sunshine State Games Female Athlete of the Year, won the 12-13 year old advanced division.

En route to his Kumite gold medal, Tamayo won three matches in 9-11 year old advanced division. He also won the 10-11 year old advanced Kata division, advancing past three opponents.

Father's Day on the Racquetball Courts

It had the makings of high drama on Father's Day. Rick Bernstein, 44, advancing through the top half of the Men's C singles racquetball bracket and son, Michael Bernstein, 18, advancing through the lower half of the bracket. The championship match was scheduled for Father's Day morning at 10AM. Grandfather, Harvey, who took home a silver medal in the 70+ singles competition would have a front row seat.

Both men advanced to the semi-final round nearing the storybook ending. Michael defeated Oscar Cruz in three games but Rick lost to the eventual gold medal winner Tony Colon in two games. Colon defeated Michael 15-10, 15-5 in the gold medal matchup.

"I started playing paddleball with my dad back in the day," said Rick. "I picked up racquetball six or eight years ago as a way to get out and exercise and soon, Michael and my dad started to join in. Michael played in his first tournament at the 2005 Sunshine State Games and got really good, really quick. Now he is getting sponsors and we travel around the state playing in tournaments."

The Bernstein's totaled five medals over the course of the weekend with a big contingent of family members and friends in the audience. Rick won bronze medals in Men's C Singles and Men's C Doubles. Michael won a pair of Silver medals in the Men's C Singles and Men's 18 singles, while Harvey won a Silver medal in the Men's 70+ singles.

Best of compliments come from your peers

Ed Connor, of the Halifax Rowing Club, had this to say about his teammate, 89-year old Gertrude Zint, the most experienced athlete of the 2006 Sunshine State Games.

“Gertrude Zint is the national treasure of Halifax Rowing, just a few months shy of her 90th birthday. She has won the Head of the Charles (the world’s oldest two-day rowing event) five times, holds multiple national age group swimming records, climbed in the Grand Tetons with people who have been deceased for fifty years and have routes named after them, won 19 medals in the New Smyrna Beach Senior Games last year in events such as the shot put, sprints and long jump, rowed with Hitler's Youth Corps in 1936 when the Olympics were in Berlin, Snow skied every winter up until turning 87 and rowed the single in the Florida Sunshine State Games in Miami this past weekend. The single is the most difficult to row because of balance.”

“Gertrude still drives and lives on her own. She can't seem to understand why our children are getting obese and getting their exercise from video games. Next time you get out of bed feeling a little sore or tired, think about Gertrude.”

Zint is well deserving of the praise of her teammate, in the weekend’s leading up to the Sunshine State Games, she won seven first-place medals at the U.S. Masters Swimming Championships in South Florida. She followed up the next weekend with 10 more first-and-second place medals at a Sarasota swim meet. Following her participation in the 2003 Sunshine State Games, Zint was named the Female Athlete of the Year. She holds the Senior-Veteran Women’s Singles (70+) Head of the Charles course record with a time of 25:59.40 in 1990.

Team FLA rolls toward National Tournament

The 16 and under Team FLA softball squad from Palm Harbor won its division in convincing fashion outscoring opponents 25-4 in four wins. Its closest call came in the second round when Team FLA battled back from a 3-0 deficit against the Gainesville Gold to win 4-3. With the tournament victory, Team FLA earned a berth to the USA/ASA National Championship 16 and Under Finals in Seattle the last weekend in July.

Team FLA won the gold medal defeating the Tampa Mustangs 10-1 in the championship, highlighted by a two-run home run by Mary Kate Smith. In the game prior, Team FLA defeated the Mustangs 8-0 behind two-hit pitching from Katie Forbes, who also posted a shutout win over the West Pines Diamond Dusters. Team FLA, coached by Brett Hazzard, repeated as champions in the 16 and under division defeating the Miami Stingrays for the 2005 Championship.

11 players from the Team FLA 18 and under teams signed letters of intent to play collegiate softball for such universities as UCLA, Michigan, Florida, North Carolina State and South Florida.

Victoria Rossinsky is a young swimming veteran

Swimming for the AK Sharks, 10-year old Victoria Rossinsky brought home six gold medals and a bronze, the most medals of any female swimmer. Just because she swims in the 10 and under division, it doesn’t make her a newcomer to the sport.

Rossinsky has been swimming competitively since she was in the 6 and under division. As early as November, 2002, she has been winning swim races in 25 yard lengths. At the 2006 Sunshine State Games, Rossinsky won gold medals in the 50, 100 and 200 Freestyle, 50 Breast, 100 Back and 200 IM to lead the AK Sharks to a convincing team championship. The Sharks amassed 884 points, more than 550 ahead of the second place finisher, The Heritage Aquatic Team.

Her gold medal winning performances were nail-biters as four of the six first place finishes came less than one second ahead of the silver medalist. Kristina Brennan and Kristina Estoesta of The Heritage Aquatic Team were the hard luck second place finishers in four of Rossinsky's gold medal winning performances.

Barrett outdistances the Shot Put competition

If the competition was not aware of the hometown entry of Kimberli Barrett in the Open and Masters Track & Field competition, it only took a few warm ups with the shot put to learn of her talents.

Barrett, the 2005 NCAA Outdoor Women's Shot Put Champion, posted the top result of all 20 participants with a throw of 17.13 meters (56.2 feet). The closest throw came from 27-year old Joil Bergeron, of Miami, at 13.17 meters (43.2 feet). It was the longest throw, male or female, of the Open and Masters Track & Field competition since 2000.

Barrett suited up for the University of Miami track & field team and is the school record holder in the Indoor shot put, Outdoor shot put, Weight and Hammer throw. She was the 2005 ACC Indoor and Outdoor Shot Put Champion and the 2005 ACC Outdoor Hammer Throw Champion. She was also a member of the 2004 Jamaican Olympic Team.

Robin Reynolds wins three gold, extends streak of medal winning to four years

Although only 12 years old, Robin Reynolds, of the Miami Northwest Track Club, has won gold medals in Sunshine State Games competitions for four consecutive years. She has traveled the country extensively running in track meets in California, Indianapolis, Oregon, Georgia, Tennessee and Nebraska.

She holds the USA Track & Field bantam girls 200 meter national record running a 26.50 seconds in 2004 and the midget girls 400 meter national record with a time of 55.01 in 2005.

With three gold medals in the Midget Girls 200, 400 and 800 meter runs at the 2006 Sunshine State Games, she has now taken top honors in her division for the last four years dating back to the 2003 Games. Her 55.91 in this year's Midget Girls 400 meter dash is the fastest Sunshine State Games time since 2000. Dating back to the 2003 Games, Reynolds has now won nine Sunshine State Games gold medals in track & field competition.

Wigo twins end Sunshine State Games Water Polo careers same way as High School

After winning their second consecutive FHSAA State Championship as members of the Northeast High School Water Polo team, Drac and Janson Wigo won their second consecutive Sunshine State Games gold medals as members of the South Florida Water Polo Club.

The twin brothers were members of the 2005 Men's 20 and under South Florida club that went 4-0 in Sunshine State Games play and members of the 2006 Men's Open team that also went 4-0. In 2006, the South Florida Water Polo Men's Open team dominated the competition in its first three games outscoring opponents 44-6, before winning the championship game 10-9 over Florida International University.

Drac and Janson, two of the top water polo playing high school seniors in the U.S., have signed national letters of intent to play at Stanford next fall. Their older brother, former Cardinal Wolf Wigo, earned All-America honors all four years at Stanford and helped lead the Cardinal to two NCAA championships during his junior and senior campaigns. He went on to compete for the U.S. National Team and is a three-time U.S. Olympian (1996, 2000, 2004).

"Janson and Drac have it all; size, speed and an uncanny awareness of the ball," said Stanford head coach John Vargas. "They will have an immediate impact on our program. They are a very unique 1-2 combination. Janson is left handed and Drac is right handed."

Polk County to host 2007-08 Sunshine State Games

Florida's Olympic-style Sports Festival, the Sunshine State Games, returns to Polk County – Destination of Champions – for the 2007 and 2008 Summer Games, as the Florida Sports Foundation and Polk County Sports Marketing present the annual event for Florida's finest amateur athletes.

Polk County hosted Sunshine State Games competition from 2000-2003 when Spring Games events were contested in the Lakeland Center and various other venues. The four years of Spring Games featured popular Sunshine State Games events such as Figure Skating, Taekwondo, Fencing, Judo and others. Polk County Sports Marketing also worked with the FSF to present the 2001 and 2002 Florida Senior Games State Championships in Lakeland and surrounding communities.

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

The Lakeland Center, anchored by the 10,000 seat Jenkins Arena and 100,000 square feet of convention space for sports venues, will serve as the major hub of the 2007 and 2008 Sunshine State Games. Other facilities planned for use in the area include Joker Marchant Stadium and Tigertown, the Auburndale Softball Complex, Florida Southern College, Webber College and Polk Community College. The Lakeland Center will be home to the Games Headquarters, Athlete Check-in and will have an interactive games area for athletes, their families and spectators.

"Polk County is proud to bring this tremendous event back to our community and not only showcase our first class venues, but host Florida's finest athletes in our area," said Mark Jackson, Polk County Director of Tourism and Sports Marketing. "The Sunshine State Games is a premiere event in the state of Florida and we are honored to be selected as the host for the next two years. We are committed to providing the coaches, athletes and their families a first-class experience," said Jackson.

The Sunshine State Games are part of the National Congress of State Games that boasts competition in 32 state games throughout the nation.

Some information from this 2006 Sunshine State Games review was taken from news reports and sports-related websites.