



The 2nd Southeast Sports Festival was held August 1-3, 2008 in Tallahassee with more than 1,100 amateur athletes from nine southeast states competing in seven sports over the weekend in Florida's Capital City. The inaugural biennial event was held in Shelby County, Alabama in 2006.

After a Celebration of Athletes featuring athletes marching through Downtown Tallahassee, and a ceremonial torch lighting in downtown Tallahassee on Friday evening, athletes hit the field on Saturday morning for competition.

Over 400 Track & Field athletes congregated at Florida State University's Mike Long Track vying for gold medals. The Tallahassee-Leon County Civic Center hosted the Fencing and Taekwondo competition. Godby and Lincoln High School had full days of basketball games scheduled. Tom Brown Park hosted the Baseball and Tennis competition and Chiles High School saw Lacrosse being played on its athletic fields.

Baseball

The Tallahassee Heat teams won both the 10 and under and 12 and under divisions by 4-2 scores in their respective divisions. The 10 and under Heat team defeated the Tallahassee Lightning and the 12 and under Heat defeated the North Florida Breeze. The 10 and under Lightning defeated the Baker Wildcats 10-6 to advance to the championship game.

In the 12 and under championship game, Heat pitcher Andrew Faulkner worked out of a two-outs, bases-loaded situation in the bottom of the sixth inning by striking out the last batter to secure the win. Gage West started the Heat scoring in the top of the first inning with a solo home run. He also led off the third inning with a double and scored on a single by Logan Smith. Faulkner aided his cause on the mound with an RBI single to score Jarod Barnes.

"It was a total team effort," said Heat Coach David Elsnernd. "We got some quality pitching and key hits and it came down to the last batter of the last inning. Isn't that the way you want it in baseball?"



The 10 and under Heat team (*celebrating in photo at left*) scored three runs in the first inning to build their 4-2 lead and Sean Butscher pitched 4 2/3 strong innings in relief of starting pitcher Max McKinley for the win. Butscher struck out eight and did not allow a run after the third inning. Landon Seymour, Tate Hagen and Will Stone scored runs in the first inning to build a lead the Heat never relinquished.

"This is the first year this team has played together and it's our first championship trophy," said Head Coach Mark McElroy. "We've had our share of second place trophies, so this is a special win today."

Basketball

Peace Be Still, of Opa Locka, outscored Tallahassee Godby High School 10-2 in the overtime period to win the gold medal in the Boy's 18 and under division. Godby missed a shot at the buzzer with the score tied at 43 to send the game into overtime. Peace Be Still, a silver medal winner in the Sunshine State Games, defeated Peace Be Still (2) 71-67, to advance to the championship, while Godby High School defeated Simply Red, of Marietta, GA, 63-55, to reach the gold medal game.

The Alabama Grizzlies, of Mobile, won the 16 and under division going undefeated in four games, including a 96-93 double-overtime win over the Robeson Rockets. The LA Ballers, from Gulf Shores, Alabama defeated the Smiley Court Ballers, of Montgomery, Alabama, 71-67, to win the 14 and under division and avenge a double-overtime pool play loss.



Fencing

Monticello's Wayne Frey (*lighting torch in photo at left*) won a silver and bronze medal at the Fencing competition on Sunday to bring his medal total of the weekend to three, a pair of silver medals and a bronze medal. Frey won silver medals in the Veteran's Mixed Epee and Veteran's Foil and took home a bronze in the Open Epee. Frey and his three daughters, Rachel, Nicole and Claire, who also competed in fencing this weekend, were part of the Ceremonial Torch Lighting at the Friday night opening ceremony in downtown Tallahassee.

The Jacksonville father/daughter duo of Alan and Alise Chernomashentsev each won gold medals in Foil competition. Alan took the gold medal in the Veteran's Mixed Foil event while Alise won the Youth 12 and under event. Both also won Foil events at Florida's Sunshine State Games, in June in Polk County, to qualify for the Southeast Sports Festival.

Lacrosse

The Tallahassee Lacrosse Club defeated the Georgia Copperheads, of Suwanee, Georgia 6-4 in the championship game of the High School Division at Chiles High School. Tallahassee broke a 2-2 tie and built a 6-3 lead before the Copperheads added a late goal. Kyle Blythe, a Lincoln Lacrosse player, led Tallahassee with two goals. Georgia had beaten Tallahassee on Saturday in overtime 9-8.

"Our defense cut off a lot of open shots today," said head coach Layne Smith. "That was the difference between today's game and yesterday." The Tallahassee Lacrosse Club is made up of high school players from Maclay, Lincoln and Chiles High School.



Track & Field

Derrington Abnar, of the Tallahassee-based Capital City Christian Cruisers Track Club, won a total of four gold medals at Mike Long Track, with top times in the Youth Boys Division 100 and 200 meter dashes and the longest leaps in the long and triple jumps. Arrington sprinted to a gold medal in the 100 meter dash with a time of 11.76 and ran a 24.01 in the 200 meter dash. He was one of only two youth track & field athletes to win four gold medals. Three open and masters track & field athletes collected four gold medals. The others included

Raven Diggs, of the Capital City Christian Cruisers Track Club, took gold in the 100, 200 and 400 meter dashes and the long jump. She won the Youth Girls 200 meter dash by one second, the 400 meter dash by four seconds and the long jump by a foot. Brian Hankerson, from Hollywood, Florida, won 100 Meter Dash, Long Jump, Triple Jump and High Jump in his age group and brought home a silver medal in the 200 meter dash and a bronze in the 400 meter dash. Alfred Smith, of Lakeland, Florida, won the 100 meter hurdles, Long Jump, Triple Jump and High Jump in the 60-69 age group. Lydia Woods-Howze, of Smyrna, Georgia, earned gold medals in the Pole Vault, 400, 800 and 1500 meter runs.



Besides the action on the track and in the field, one of the highlights of the Southeast Sports Festival was the medal presentations made special by former Olympic sprinter Walter McCoy (*pictured in photo at left*), who returned to his old stomping grounds at the Florida State University Mike Long Track. A former Seminole athlete and All-America performer, McCoy provided the young medal winners with words of wisdom as he placed their medals around their necks. While proudly wearing his own medal from the 1984 Olympic Games, he also encouraged the athletes to show how excited they were to win the medals when their names were announced.

Winning two sprint medals in the 100 and 200 meter dash open competition was Kevon Pierre, originally from Trinidad and Tobago. Pierre traveled to the 2005 World Championships having set personal bests in both 100 and 200 meters (10.22 and 20.47) two months prior to the meet. He competed in the 200 meters contest, but was knocked out in the heats. In the 4 x 100 meter relay event, however, he and the rest of the Trinidad and Tobago team won a silver medal. Pierre was a member of the Florida International University track & field team in Miami and is currently pursuing a master's degree in biology.

Taekwondo

Two of the Festival's youngest athletes squared off against one another in Taekwondo competition at the Tallahassee-Leon County Civic Center when three-year old Joquez Smith (*left in photo*), of Tampa met five-year old Emma Bruce (*right in photo*), of Tallahassee, in sparring competition. Bruce was declared the bout but both won gold medals. Smith, who turns four in October, also won gold medals in the breaking and forms competition.



The three-year old Smith has been competing in taekwondo competitions for over a year and is a student at Tampa's Mr. White's Taekwondo.

Tennis

Mark Kapusta, of Sarasota, made the most of his trip to Tallahassee for the Southeast Sports Festival Tennis competition winning three matches.



Kapusta (*left in photo*) won a pair of matches on Saturday, August 2, a 7-5, 6-4 victory over Richard Whittaker, of Tallahassee, and beat John Ruhl, 6-3, 6-3. That win set up the championship match against Willard Dudley (*right in photo*).

Kapusta returned to the court on Sunday and came out cold, losing the first set 6-0. He must have filled his mind with good thoughts during the set break because he came back to win the second set 6-0. The tie-breaker was a close one with Kapusta winning 10-7.

The 2nd Southeast Sports Festival was hosted by the Tallahassee Sports Council and the Florida Sports Foundation, the official sports promotion and development organization for the State of Florida. For more information about the Southeast Sports Festival, please visit www.southeastsportsfestival.org.