



# Virginia Amateur Sports, INC

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#VAComGames

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## 2020 VA Commonwealth Games Announces Plans & Olympian

Virginia Amateur Sports (VAS) announced today some exciting news for the 2020 Virginia Commonwealth Games. 2020 has presented an opportunity for some unique and exciting twists to the Games, as well as a very special guest and past participant.

We are pleased and excited to announce our special guest, Olympic Gold Medalist for 2020 is – Francena McCorory. Francena is a Virginia native and past participant of the Virginia Commonwealth Games. A graduate of Bethel High School and Hampton University, she represents Team USA in Track & Field. McCorory earned gold medals in 2012 and 2016 for while competing in the Women’s 4x400m relay. She also set the NCAA Division I Indoor Track & Field 400m record in 2010.

There are 2 new sports this year – Adult Kickball and Esports. Esports will not be the only virtual event happening as part of the 2020 Games, we are excited to offer Chess in a virtual format and the Air Rifle and BB Gun competitions will be occurring in a “postal” format. These unique and innovative changes are allowing athletes to compete from wherever they are and provide chances for those that may not be able to participate under regular formats due to travel. Another exciting addition for this year, is the Live Streaming of the All Star Baseball Tournament games on Saturday and Sunday (provided by Liberty University). The All Star Baseball Showcase Tournament starts this weekend – July 17-19, and the link for viewing those Games, as well as the team rosters are on our website.

There are 3 events kicking off this weekend – Adult Softball (Peakview Park), Pickleball (Liberty University) and All Star Baseball (Liberty University). A record number of Adult Softball teams will be vying for those Gold medals. Main Games weekend (July 24-26), is bringing some sports records as well, with 98 Youth Softball teams set to play around the greater Lynchburg area and a record number of High School baseball teams playing in Lynchburg and Roanoke as well. It is sure to be a great weekend of competition.

The Tailgate Party and Opening Ceremonies are each getting a new format for 2020, the Tailgate party will be a fun Drive-Thru format - athletes will still receive their complimentary food with their Games wristband, as well as some extra goodies. This will take place from 6-8pm on Friday, July 24<sup>th</sup> near the Liberty Indoor Track Complex. More information will be on our website as the details evolve. Opening Ceremonies is going virtual, it will be streaming via Facebook Live on Friday, July 24<sup>th</sup> from 8-8:30 with music, Miss VA – Dot Kelly and Olympic Gold Medalist – Francena McCorory lighting the cauldron and kicking off the Games. There will be a fireworks show at 8:30pm, we are encouraging everyone to position their vehicles safely distanced in a couple of locations around campus, the fireworks will go off from Williams Stadium.

As with everything in 2020 thus far, safety is of the highest priority, in regards to not only our athletes, officials, coordinators, spectators and volunteers, but also the greater community as a whole. The safety recommendations for each sport as well as the guidelines from the CDC and the Governor’s office can be found on our website – [CommonwealthGames.org/covid19](http://CommonwealthGames.org/covid19) – it is being constantly updated as recommendations shift and sports adjust. There will also be plenty of signage related to safety at all of our venues, throughout the competitions and events.

We are proud to partner with the Blue Ridge Area Food Bank again this year, in an effort to Torch Hunger. Last week we launched a text to donate campaign, with a goal of providing 60,000 meals to area families in need. You can learn more about the campaign by texting BRFOODBANK to 44-321.

Main Games weekend upholds a positive reputation with the community for bolstering tourism and serving as an economic engine to the host city each year. For 31 years the Virginia Commonwealth Games have provided excellent opportunities for thousands of Virginians to develop and foster new relationships, establish new goals and personal bests, while at the same time learning teamwork, sportsmanship, as well as individual team responsibilities.

The Games are presented by Centra, ABC 13, Construction Management Associates, Ford, and the City of Lynchburg.

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About Virginia Amateur Sports (VAS): The rights holder for the Virginia Commonwealth Games at Liberty University – this event is modeled after the Olympics, the Games welcomes athletes regardless of age or skill level. The Games embody the values of participation, sportsmanship and healthy living amongst residents of Virginia and surrounding eligible states. VAS has been organizing the event for 31 years and it is truly a grassroots effort that relies on the dedication of thousands of volunteers and support from local sponsors and organizations across the Commonwealth. VAS is a member of the National Congress of State Games.

About the National Congress of State Games: The National Congress of State Games (NCSG) is a membership organization comprised of 34 Summer State Games and 9 Winter State Games organizations and a member of the United States Olympic Committee's Multi Sports Organizational Council. The mission of the NCSG is to support State Games member organizations in the promotion of health, fitness and character building through Olympic – style competitions and physical activities.

For more information on the Games, including a digital press kit and images for download, visit: [www.CommonwealthGames.org/vasnews](http://www.CommonwealthGames.org/vasnews)

*Member of the National Congress of State Games – learn more at [www.stategames.org](http://www.stategames.org)*