



# Virginia Amateur Sports, INC

711 5<sup>th</sup> Street NE, Suite C  
Roanoke, Virginia 24016  
Telephone: (540) 343-0987

[www.CommonwealthGames.org](http://www.CommonwealthGames.org)  
#VAComGames

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Contact: Charity E. Waldron  
Director of Operations & Media Relations  
[cwaldron@commonwealthgames.org](mailto:cwaldron@commonwealthgames.org)  
(434) 515-0549 - direct

## 2021 VA Commonwealth Games Announces Plans & Olympian

Virginia Amateur Sports (VAS) announced today some exciting news for the 2021 Virginia Commonwealth Games. Summer 2021 has presented an opportunity for the transition of a return to a little bit of normalcy, as well as the return of a special guest and past participant.

We are pleased and excited to announce the return of our special guest, Olympic Gold Medalist for 2021 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. Francena was our torch bearer for the 2020 Opening Ceremonies, but is returning this year to handle some unfinished business in addressing the crowd and inspiring our athletes and families.

There are 3 new sports this year – All Star Softball, Team Volleyball, and Outdoor Soccer. There are also 2 sports returning to the Games after a couple years – Figure Skating and Paddleboarding, both were held in June. Also in June we were able to partner with USA Triathlon to host their State Championship in Jamestown, this event was a record high for the Triathlon event in the Games – with over 800 participants. Chess will remain in a virtual format and the Air Rifle and BB Gun competitions will be occurring in a “postal” format. These additions, as well as unique 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. Again this year, we will have Live Streaming of the All Star Baseball Tournament games and adding the All Star Softball Tournament Games as well (provided by Liberty University). Both All Star Tournaments start this weekend – July 16-18, and the link for viewing those Games, as well as the team rosters are on our website.

There are 6 events kicking off this weekend – Adult Softball (Peaksview Park), Pickleball (Liberty University), Racquetball (Liberty University), Adult Rugby (Peaksview Park), All Star Softball (Liberty University and All Star Baseball (Liberty University). Main Games weekend (July 23-25), is bringing some sports records as well, with 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.

“In an Olympic year, we are thrilled to have the spirit of the Commonwealth Games alive and well once again at Liberty University, and we’re excited to welcome the athletes and their families to campus. Liberty has enjoyed the partnership with Virginia Amateur Sports over the past five summers and we look forward to continuing to encourage these athletes of all ages as they pursue their dreams.” - President Prevo, Liberty University

The Tailgate Party and Opening Ceremonies are each getting a return to a little normalcy for 2021, the Tailgate party will be back in the LU Indoor Football Practice Facility and surrounding fields - athletes will receive their complimentary food with their Games wristband, as well as some extra goodies. There will be lots of games, activities and so much more! This will take place from 5:30-7:45pm on Friday, July 23<sup>rd</sup>. More information will be on our website as the details evolve. Opening Ceremonies will begin at 8pm in Williams Stadium, it will be streamed live with ABC13 on Friday, July 23<sup>rd</sup> from 8-8:30 with music, Miss VA – Tatum Sheppard and Olympic Gold Medalist – Francena McCorory. Lighting the cauldron and kicking off the Games will be some area first responders, that we are excited to highlight. There will be a fireworks show at 8:30pm. Both events Friday evening are free to the public and open to the community.

“We are proud to partner with Liberty University and Virginia Amateur Sports to host the 2021 Commonwealth Games and, most importantly, to welcome all of the athletes, families and friends to our City,” said City of Lynchburg Mayor Mary Jane Dolan.

We are proud to partner with the Blue Ridge Area Food Bank again this year, in an effort to Torch Hunger. We launched a text to donate campaign, with a goal of providing 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 32 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, Molina Complete Care, Liberty University, 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 32 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)*