

The HISTORY of PAN AM

XIII Pan American Games

July 23 - August 8, 1999

When 5000 of the Western Hemisphere's best athletes arrive in Winnipeg in July 1999, they will be set to compete in the 13th version of the Pan American Games—Games that are second in size only to the Summer Olympics. When the Games begin on July 23, 1999, Winnipeg will become only the second city to host this event twice. The city first held the Pan Ams in Canada's centennial year, 1967; Mexico City hosted them in 1955 and 1975.

The first Pan American Games were held in 1951, but their history dates back two decades earlier. In 1932, the South American delegation of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) proposed the formation of an organization to promote amateur sport in the Americas. The idea developed and led to the first Pan American Sports Congress in Buenos Aires, Argentina, in 1940. The 16 countries represented at the meeting formed the Pan American Sports Committee.

The first Pan American Games were to take place in 1942 in Buenos Aires, but World War Two forced their postponement. The idea stayed alive, and at the 1948 Olympics in London, a second congress was held, renewing the commitment to hold the Games. The first Pan American Games opened on February 25, 1951, in Buenos Aires, featuring 2,513 athletes from 21 countries.

The organization governing the Games was renamed the Pan American Sports Organization (PASO) in 1955. It is currently made up of 42 nations of North, Central and South America and the Caribbean. PASO is headquartered in Mexico City, and its official languages are Spanish and English.

The PASO emblem is a torch superimposed over five concentric circles colored green, yellow, white, red and blue. At least one of these colors appears on every national flag of the Americas. PASO's motto "America, Espirito, Sport, Fraternité" incorporates four of the languages in common use in the Americas: Spanish, Portuguese, English and French.

Approximately 80 per cent of the sports of the Pan American Games are sports found at the Olympics. The Pan Ams are held every four years during the summer preceding the Olympic Games; this often means that Pan Am athletes are future Olympians. Winnipeg's Games will feature many competitors striving for the 2000 Olympics in Sydney, Australia.

Pan American Games Host Cities

Games	Year	City	Country	#Nations	#Sports	#Athletes
I	1951	BUENOS AIRES	ARG	21	19	2 513
II	1955	MEXICO CITY	MEX	22	17	2 583
III	1959	CHICAGO	USA	24	18	2 263
IV	1963	SAO PAULO	BRA	22	19	1 665
V	1967	WINNIPEG	CAN	29	19	2 361
VI	1971	CALI	COL	32	17	2 935
VII	1975	MEXICO CITY	MEX	33	19	3 146
VIII	1979	SAN JUAN	PUR	34	22	3 700
IX	1983	CARACAS	VEN	36	25	3 426
X	1987	INDIANAPOLIS	USA	38	27	4 453
XI	1991	HAVANA	CUB	39	31	4 519
XII	1995	MAR DEL PLATA	ARG	42	34	5 144
XIII	1999	WINNIPEG	CAN	42	41	5 000