

## **Selective Timeline of LGBT Sports Movement**

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### **1982 – Gay Games I – San Francisco**

World's first large-scale multi-sport LGBT event, following scattered LGBT sports teams established in the 1970s in North America and Europe. Athletes from several sports met during the week to discuss how to improve event logistics at a second Gay Games. Aims: dispel stereotypes; support participation of athletes of all abilities; encourage top level athletes to come out; create global focus on LGBT sports issues every four years.

### **1986 – Gay Games II – San Francisco**

It is not an overstatement to say that, due to the success of Gay Games I, every LGBT group in the Bay Area wanted a piece of the Gay Games II pie – and the “Procession of the Arts” was a significant result. Non-athletes joined the SFAA board, encouraging odd concepts such as sports events that were “noncompetitive.” Athletes who'd been to Gay Games I noticed a change in emphasis, with the sports message now sharing time with arts and political messages not related to sports. Still, there was progress when several sports events were sanctioned by regional/national governing bodies for Masters competitions.

### **1986-1990**

Key international LGBT sports groups formed, many establishing international championships every year between Gay Games. Most were primarily North America based, but each year their membership broadened to other parts of the world. SFAA transitioned into the Federation of Gay Games, to become a global governing body.

### **1990 – Gay Games III - Vancouver**

Vancouver's organizing committee made a unilateral decision to make culture the equal to sport and, until objections were raised, initially produced merchandise without the words “Gay Games.” Athletes questioned yet again what direction the quadrennial event was taking. International sports organizations sought roles administering their sports, including obtaining mainstream sports event sanctions. Significantly, this was the first Gay Games to lose money (CAN\$110k).

### **EGLSF/Eurogames**

EGLSF was founded in 1989 and the first Eurogames was held in 1992, to be held during each year between Gay Games. Existing international sports organizations, with memberships now including Australia/New Zealand, were surprised to encounter resistance among continental European groups who believed they did not need to belong

to LGBT sports organizations other than EGLSF. Pockets of Europeans also resisted sanctioning events by mainstream governing bodies.

### **1993 Site Selection for Gay Games V**

First true competitive bidding for a quadrennial event. Sports organizations in the FGG did not constitute a majority of votes, and selection ultimately based more on location than on sports plans.

### **1994 – Gay Games IV – New York**

International LGBT sports organizations had an active role in the running their events; athletes were largely very satisfied with sports event logistics. Cost overruns largely attributable to ceremonies and cultural events produced directly by the NY in 94 organizing committee (final loss was US\$350k; 20 years later some local NY vendors are still upset that they were not paid in full). Mayor's office estimated US\$300 million economic benefit from the combined Stonewall 25/Gay Games IV events, drawing the attention of tourism event planners around the world.

### **1997 Site Selection for Gay Games VI**

Five cities in the running, with Sydney prevailing on its second, sports-oriented bid. Toronto was runner-up, with Montreal bid team vocally angry at the back of the room. Cultural Committee's motion to have culture the equal of sport in all FGG activities withdrawn following objections from officers and the sports groups, who now comprised a majority of votes.

### **1998 – Gay Games V – Amsterdam**

First Gay Games held using the Internet. Organizers initially declared cultural events would share the stage equally with sports. In their post-games evaluation, however, the Dutch reps declared much of the arts festival to be too much work for too little result. Human rights conference had also been added. Local TV coverage not sports-focused. GALA Choruses groups questioned attending an event in which their performances were not the focus. Loss of 3.5m guilders equaled approx. US\$1.5 million, adding to calls within sports groups and the LGBT press that the Gay Games stop losing money.

### **1998 FGG Annual Meeting – Late 1998**

Sydney 2002 group had to renegotiate contract with FGG as advance government funding proved impossible to obtain. Little other business was accomplished, necessitating a special meeting several months later. Groups from Berlin and Montreal, anticipating hosting

next two Gay Games, volunteered to host next two FGG meetings. Further, Montreal's tourism board offered free lodging during meeting in April 1999. FGG accepted this offer because of the expense of holding two meetings in one year, but later decided the conflict of interest was unacceptable and forbade future such arrangements. Site selection and legal matters were coming to dominate meetings far more than sports-related issues.

### **1999-2000**

World economy took a downturn, due to the collapse of dot.com speculation. Relevant in that predictions of continued exponential growth in LGBT event activity and tourism proved to have limits.

### **2001**

Gay Games VII site selection had four finalists, all from North America – Atlanta, Chicago, Los Angeles and Montreal. All pledged that sports came first and that losses at the last three Gay Games would not be repeated. Site selection proceeded just weeks after 9/11, with Montreal selected in its second attempt. However, contract negotiations between the FGG and Montreal 2006 dragged out with differences regarding the size of initial plans – Montreal hoped for 25,000 participants – in connection with cash on hand.

### **2002 - Gay Games VI - Sydney**

The sports events were highly successful, but an expensive opening ceremony, venue rentals, personnel expenses, and several thousand fewer participants than anticipated resulted in another loss, this time almost AUS\$2 m (US\$1.2m). Sydney 2002 reps counseled Montreal 2006 to scale back certain plans. Montreal insisted events in Sydney did not apply to North America and Canada and continued to negotiate with the FGG.

### **2003 FGG Meeting in Chicago**

Montreal 2006 reps had been attending international sports groups' events with increasing questions as to why contract negotiations were taking so long. Disagreements over event direction began appearing in the LGBT press. Final contract negotiations planned for FGG annual meeting, with teams on both sides working around the clock for more than a day. Montreal 2006 ultimately decided not to scale back its initial bid plans and left the meeting, announcing the next morning in Montreal that they would hold their own multi-sport event in 2006. FGG continued its annual meeting, with all members staying for discussions except Equipe Montreal, whose rep was Daniel Vaudrin. FGG announced rebidding would take place for 2006. Chicago and Los Angeles agreed to rebid; Atlanta declined. Separately, FGG approved an "Image of the Gay Games" paper calling for sound financial planning and renewed emphasis on sports.

### **2004-2006**

Chicago selected as the new Gay Games VII host, with organizers prominent in local LGBT sports groups. Montreal 2006 announced its event would be called Outgames. Aided by key individuals in EGLSF, M2006 held a meeting to found a new international sports organization, eventually named GLISA, to compete with the FGG and as a governing body for the Outgames. As in 1999, Montreal offered to reimburse attendees for certain travel-related expenses; several people notably declined to accept as a conflict of interest. International sports groups largely neutral in support of Outgames (exception: rowing); most groups continued historical support of Gay Games. Certain individuals' plans for Berlin to succeed Montreal as host of large-scale event collapsed when Vorpriel and Berlin's city hall withheld support. Cologne stepped forward to bid for the 2010 Gay Games VIII and was selected over Paris and Johannesburg.

### **2006 Gay Games and Outgames**

Sports generally run very well but several groups were vocally unhappy with their events in Montreal. Chicago had limited cultural events that were outsourced to other producers, and held a small conference focused on sports-related issues. Montreal scaled back very little from original plans, and hosted a large, prominently advertised human rights conference. Chicago broke even. Montreal lost CAN\$5.2 million – the equivalent of all losses at Gay Games III-VI plus another \$1.5 million. Nevertheless, EGLSF continued its verbal and organizational support for GLISA and Outgames.

### **2007 to Present Day**

GLISA moved World Outgames off the same year as Gay Games, adding scheduling dilemmas for international sports organizations' championships and Eurogames. First South American LGBT sports championships (IGLFA in Buenos Aires). Wonderful Copenhagen became the producing partner for World Outgames II. GLISA's regional organizations hosted local events. European participation at events outside the continent notably small. North Americans continued to travel to international sports events, including Gay Games, wherever held. Cologne's Gay Games was deemed successful with athletes. GLISA found a third World Outgames partner in Antwerp municipal government – widely understood not to have been GLISA's first choice; participation numbers lower than hoped. The potential of tourism corruption was evident in the Cleveland Synergy fiasco. World Outgames found a second North American host/partner in Miami tourism officials. Paris prevailed in competitive bidding over London and Limerick for Gay Games X. Sports groups have been unhappy with proliferation of competing events but have yet to make hard choices on a collective basis to end it. Attempts at IQE not yet successful; new meetings in Las Vegas and Ljubljana.