



Registration open for Massachusetts Amateur Sports Foundation's Kids Fitness Challenge

Fri Oct 23, 2009

The Massachusetts Amateur Sports Foundation has opened registration for the 2009 fall edition of the Kids Fitness Challenge. Principals, physical education and health teachers at elementary and middle schools across the commonwealth are encouraged to sign up to take part in the Challenge as valuable cash grants will be awarded to selected participating schools.

In April, almost 10,000 kids from schools across the commonwealth took part in the spring edition of the Kids Fitness Challenge. Along with the more than 13,000 students who participated in the fall edition of the Challenge in 2008, in excess of 23,000 kids learned the lessons of a healthy, active lifestyle last school year through the Challenge. Hundreds of schools from all regions of Massachusetts have taken advantage of the program, making it a true statewide event.

The Kids Fitness Challenge, presented by the Bay State Games with contributing funds from the Boston Bruins Foundation, is a free program designed exclusively for Massachusetts elementary and middle school students. Participating schools and students engage in a 30-minute segment of physical activity from Nov. 16-20.

After the schools complete their activity with 100 percent student participation and have contacted the Bay State Games office, each will be entered into a drawing to win one of four \$500 grants. The grant is awarded to the winning school to support health and physical education programs.

Since November of 2006, the Kids Fitness Challenge has attracted nearly 75,000 elementary and middle school students with \$10,000 in cash grants distributed to participating schools.

To register, to receive a brochure or for more general information about the Kids Fitness Challenge, please visit www.baystategames.org, call the Bay State Games office at 781-932-6555 or e-mail Peter Cohenno at peter@baystategames.org.



SPORTS BRIEFS

Bay State Winter Games dates announced

Thu Nov 12, 2009

The Massachusetts Amateur Sports Foundation announces the competition dates for the 2010 Bay State Winter Games. The 25th anniversary of the annual Olympic-style amateur sporting event takes place Jan. 22 to 24, 2010, in the Northern Berkshire region of Massachusetts.

"We are very pleased to be returning to the Northern Berkshires, host of every Winter Games since its inception," said Kevin Cummings, Bay State Games executive director. Registration for the Winter Games

opened on Oct. 26. The games features individual competitions in alpine skiing and figure skating, and team competition in masters ice hockey. The figure skating competition will take place at the Lansing Chapman Rink on the campus of Williams College in Williamstown and features both ISI and UFSF competition for males and females. Masters ice hockey will be played in two divisions, 40 plus and 50 plus, at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Skating Arena in North Adams. Alpine skiing, with open and masters divisions for athletes 19 to 35, and 36 and older, respectively, as well as a scholastic division for participants in grades nine through 12 as of the 2009 to 2010 academic year, will be hosted at Bousquet Ski Area in Pittsfield.

Since its inception, the Berkshires have played host for all events in the Bay State Winter Games. Athletes participating in the games represent over 200 Massachusetts communities, and range in age from 8 to 60.

For more information, visit baystategames.org or call the Bay State Games' office at 781-932-6555.



Registration open for 25th annual Bay State Winter Games

Mon Nov 02, 2009, 02:59 PM EST

Boston - Registration for the 2010 Bay State Winter Games is now open, as the annual Olympic-style amateur sporting event celebrates its 25th year in Northern Berkshire County. From Friday, Jan. 22-24, 2010, individual competitions in alpine skiing and figure skating and team competition in masters ice hockey will take place.

Since its inception, the Berkshires have played host to all the events in the Bay State Winter Games. Athletes participating in the Winter Games represent over 200 Massachusetts communities, and range in age from 8 to over 60.

"We are very excited about celebrating the silver anniversary of the Winter Games in 2010," said Kevin Cummings, Bay State Games Executive Director. "Since 1985, the Winter Games have showcased thousands of winter sports enthusiasts from Massachusetts; some of whom have gone on to compete in the Winter Olympics, including figure skaters Nancy Kerrigan, Paul Wylie and Tiffany Scott, and alpine skiers Krista Schmidinger and Nikki Stone."

The 2010 figure skating competition will take place at the Lansing Chapman Rink on the campus of Williams College in Williamstown, and features both ISI and UFSF competition for males and females.

Masters ice hockey will be played in two divisions, age 40-plus and 50-plus, at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Skating Arena in North Adams. Alpine Skiing, with scholastic, open and masters divisions, will be held at Bousquet Ski Area in Pittsfield.

On Saturday, Jan. 23 at 7:30 p.m., the Bay State Skate Figure Skating Show will take place at Williams College. The show will feature Bay State Games gold medal winners, regional figure skating champions and a special feature skater. Tickets for the event are \$10 and can be purchased at local Berkshire businesses or by contacting the Bay State Games' office. All other skating competitions are free of charge for spectators.

For more information regarding the Bay State Winter Games including schedule of events, how to become a volunteer, and to register, please visit www.baystategames.org, e-mail info@baystategames.org or call the Bay State Games' office at 781-932-6555.



Wildcats swept in D-III final

By Derek Gentile, Berkshire Eagle Staff
11/14/2009

HOLYOKE -- The perfect record of the Lee volleyball team came to a jarring halt in Saturday's Western Mass. Division III finals, as four-time defending champion Frontier swept the Wildcats, 25-23, 25-17, 25-17 for their fifth consecutive title.

Paced by the diminutive (5-foot-6) but dominant freshman hitter, Cassidy Stankowski, the top seeds ran their record to 21-0 before a large crowd of more than 450 at Holyoke Community College. Lee ends its season at 20-1.

"You've got to have an answer to Stankowski, and for most of the game, we didn't," said Lee coach John Warner. "She's a dominant hitter and they set her up well. Without her, we're competitive with them.

"Still, our goal was to get to the Western Mass. finals, and we did that," said Warner.

Stankowski finished with 24 kills, nine aces and six assists. But Frontier was not a one-person team. Coach Sean MacDonald rotated Kelsey Abramson, Marie Wheeler and Courtney Parent along the front line, putting at least two players in position to block Lee's outstanding hitter, Julia Warner at all times. They didn't stop Warner, who still ended up with 13 kills, but it was enough to give the top seeds an edge.

"Julia is a fantastic player," said MacDonald. "I coached her in the Bay State Games, and I knew what she could do.

"I thought Lee played a very nice match," he said. "They gave us a battle. We had to beat Monument [Mountain] in the [Division III]

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semis and Lee today. I think that speaks very well of how Berkshire County volleyball has progressed."

The closest game was the first. Frontier jumped out to an 18-10 lead, led by Stankowski's seven kills and two service aces. But keyed by Warner, Alex MacDonald and Sam Daoust, Lee went on a 7-1 run to climb back into the contest at 19-17.

Frontier's lead stayed between two and four for the next several points, but two Warner kills sandwiched around a service ace by Ashley Raftery cut the margin to 24-23, sending a ripple of excitement through the 200 or so Lee fans. But Frontier won the game-winning point on an unforced Lee error, 25-23.

The Wildcats jumped out to a 4-1 lead in the second contest, and led as late as 12-10 on a nice return by Warner. But Frontier's Angelica Perfido turned the game around. Her knuckleball serve, which comes over the net like a bundle of wet clothing -- and is about as easy to return -- sparked an eight-point run that gave the lead to Frontier, 18-12. Lee never got closer than that.

"She gave us a big lift off the bench," said MacDonald of Perfido. "We were struggling a little at that point."

In the third tilt, Frontier took a 6-2 lead, and pushed the margin to 12-6, 16-9 and 21-14 before closing out the game.



Dover-Sherborn Sports Notes (Nov. 26)

Tue Nov 24, 2009, 01:24 PM EST

Bay State Winter Games dates announced

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"We are very pleased to be returning to the Northern Berkshires, host of every Winter Games since its inception," said Kevin Cummings, Bay State Games executive director. Registration for the Winter Games opened on Oct. 26. The games features individual competitions in alpine skiing and figure skating, and team competition in masters ice hockey. The figure skating competition will take place at the Lansing Chapman Rink on the campus of Williams College in Williamstown, and features both ISI and UFSF competition for males and females. Masters ice hockey will be played in two divisions, 40 plus and 50 plus, at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Skating Arena in North Adams. Alpine skiing, with open and masters divisions for athletes 19 to 35, and 36 and older, respectively, as well as a scholastic division for participants in grades nine through 12 as of the 2009 to 2010 academic year, will be hosted at Bousquet Ski Area in Pittsfield.

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For more information, visit www.baystategames.org or call the Bay State Games' office at 781-932-6555.



Registration open for 25th annual Bay State Winter Games

Mon Nov 02, 2009, 02:27 PM EST

Swampscott - Registration for the 2010 Bay State Winter Games is now open, as the annual Olympic-style amateur sporting event celebrates its 25th year in Northern Berkshire County. From Friday, Jan. 22-24, 2010, individual competitions in alpine skiing and figure skating and team competition in masters ice hockey will take place.

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Bump, set, success

Local coach honored for long-time service

By Caroline Keras

Hundreds of girls have learned the finer points of the game of volleyball from Murray over his 25-year coaching career at Fitchburg State College, St. Bernard's Central Catholic High School, and at the Bay State Games.

Murray was recently honored for his longtime service to these programs when he was inducted into the Massachusetts Girls' Volleyball Coaches Association Hall of Fame, during a ceremony in Boston.

"To me, I never thought I stood out to be recognized. I did it because I love it," said Murray. "I guess they decided that I was a worthy candidate."

Murray began his love for volleyball at an early age.

"When I grew up in West Fitchburg, we would go to the Moran playground and play volleyball with the summer recreation program," said Murray.

He continued to play while serving during World War II in the United States Army Air Corps, and for various recreational teams when he returned from his tour of duty.

In the mid-1970s, Murray was asked to help coach the newly formed Fitchburg State College women's volleyball team.

A few years later, Murray was asked to be the head coach of the team, which at that time played such schools as Boston College.

As the gender equalizing Title IX started take affect around the same time, many women began to earn scholarships to play volleyball with high profile programs, and they soon began to drop FSC from their schedule.

"We got dropped out of playing the big time. When we started, we played all of the biggies," said Murray.

Despite these issues, the teams were very successful under Murray, earning two Massachusetts State College Athletic Conference championships in four years. That success earned Murray a spot in the FSC Hall of Fame in 2000.

Also around the turn of the millennium, Murray was asked to coach a team that a student at St. Bernard's was interested in starting.

Even though that student did not end up attending the school that year, the school had many other interested students, and that request was the start of Murray's nine-year career at St. Bernard's.

The first challenge that he faced in his new position was to teach many of his players the general rules of the game.

"Out here, most people don't know the basics of the game," said Murray. "There was always a vacuum in the central part of the state that there was no high school volleyball."

The mid-1990s started to signal a turning point in high school volleyball in central Massachusetts, however.

"Once Worcester started volleyball, everyone else in central Mass. picked it up," said Murray.

After St. Bernard's jumped on board with the trend, he had to fight many people's perceptions that volleyball simply involved spiking the ball.

"Spiking is the glory part of the game," said Murray. "Defense is a big part of the game."

He said that the basic concept of the game is still pretty simple, though.

"The ultimate goal is to bump, set, and spike, and to deliver that spike where a player can't return it," said Murray.

Part of the learning process also included Murray using his connection with FSC.

"I remember that we always went about once a year to see college games," said Jessica Couture, a former player of Murray.

Once he had a number of returning players who had secured these fundamentals, he was able to also establish a junior varsity program at the school. This allowed the students who were new to the sport to be able to learn without the pressure of a high-level game.

Each player was able to develop at their own pace, something that is hard with a joint team, according to Murray.

"There are no drills that I have seen that you can have new players and advanced players involved, and everyone gets something from it," said Murray.

The formation of the JV program allowed those advanced players, in turn, to finally be able to implement the skills that they have acquired in two district tournament runs over those nine years that Murray was their coach.

Even those players who were still learning the game had a spot on Murray's team, however.

"I always tried to fit kids to their strengths," he said.

Regardless of the success, Murray always wanted his teams simply to enjoy playing the game.

"If you don't enjoy what you are doing, you wouldn't put your best effort forth," said Murray.

Many of his former players remember practices and games always being enjoyable.

"He always made the sport really fun," said Couture.

Part of that job is making sure that all of his players are enjoying themselves.

"That's the hardest part of coaching, to keep your bench happy," said Murray. "A happy bench is a happy team."

Despite officially retiring at the end of last season, Murray said that he would still offer his help to the team if needed.

"It's not my team anymore, so I will help when asked, but I still support the team," said Murray.

He hopes that all of his players will use the knowledge and support that he has given them, and keep playing volleyball long after they have graduated.

"That's what's nice about the game, you can play it at any level," said Murray.

Murray also still likes to play volleyball himself, although not as much as he would like to.

"If I am coaching, I will get out there, but to keep it up everyday would be too much," said Murray.