

Report of the Federation of Gay Games Delegates

The past year has been both busy and productive for the Federation of Gay Games, and for your two International Frontrunners delegates, and we are pleased to provide you with this report.

Foremost on our agenda has been ensuring all preparations are on track for Gay Games VII – which will take place in July 2006 – and we are pleased to report they most definitely are! The Federation and the local host organization, Chicago Games, Inc., have put in place a highly cooperative and professional relationship, which we know is indispensable for the event to be successful. Our mutual goal is to make Gay Games VII the best ever, so that all participants have the time of their lives, the event is financially self-sustaining, and a solid footing is established for the Gay Games tradition to continue for future generations.

As many of you know, the Federation faced one of the most serious challenges in its history last November when, at the conclusion of its Annual Meeting, representatives of the Montreal, Canada group which had tentatively been selected to host Gay Games VII, broke off negotiations and withdrew their interest, preferring to launch a new event independent of the Gay Games sanction. Within weeks, however, a new bid process was underway, and in March of this year the Federation announced the selection of Chicago as the Gay Games VII host.

By way of background, the first Gay Games took place in 1982 in San Francisco, and the week-long event has been held every four years ever since. In 1989, the Federation of Gay Games was formed to provide continuity in the management of the event. Promoting the principles of inclusion, participation, and personal best, Gay Games has developed into one of the world's largest sports festivals, and a multi-million dollar business. It is an achievement in which the entire GLBT community can and should rightly take pride.

International Frontrunners joined the Federation in 2000, and our participation has been both welcomed and valued. And so it should, as athletes competing in the running events – road races, the marathon and track and field – make up one of the largest contingents in every Gay Games. In response to decisions taken at the International Frontrunners Annual General Meeting last year, a number of changes have been put in place for Gay Games VII which will significantly improve the experience for runners in particular:

- In addition to the traditional sports categories of "Track & Field" and "Marathon," a new one has been added, "Road Races".
- The "Road Race" event features 5K and 10K races, on the roads, each race on a separate day, and early in the week.

- The "Marathon" event features both a marathon and half-marathon road race, and following longstanding custom, will take place on the final day of competition.
- So, at Gay Games VII, an athlete will be able to compete in the 5K road race, the 10K road race, and either the full marathon or half-marathon. And if that's not enough, more races will be available on the track!
- Awards will be made according to 5-year age categories, and athletes will have the option of competing either in their own actual age group, or in any younger age group – a change that is especially significant for running since, as many of us know, in our sport the fastest times aren't necessarily those of the youngest athletes.

The Chicago organizers have put together an extremely well thought-through plan to make the most of all that Chicago has to offer. Opening ceremonies will take place in the newly-renovated Soldier Field, one of America's most impressive sporting venues. The focal point for the week will be the Millennium Park Lakefront Village in downtown Chicago, where, every evening, a variety of entertainment will be offered and the medal ceremonies will be held, Olympic-style. The road races will take place on running paths bordering Lake Michigan: pancake-flat; taking full advantage of the cool breezes off the lake; and sure to be lined with throngs of enthusiastic spectators from the adjoining residential neighborhoods. Track & Field will be held at the world-class University of Chicago athletic facilities.

Registration for Gay Games VII began earlier this month. Already, registrations have been received from more than 20 U.S. states and countries around the world, and at least one sport has already sold-out! A discount is being offered for registrations received before the end of this year, so our best advice to everyone is to register without delay in order to take advantage of the savings and avoid the risk of events selling-out. Just visit the web site, <http://www.chicago2006.org>, to get all the information, to see some great pictures, and to register on-line.

While we are very excited about the excellent progress made in a very short time in launching the plans for Gay Games VII in Chicago, the Federation has also started to lay the groundwork for Gay Games VIII, which will be held in 2010. An extensive "Request for Proposals" (RFP) has been compiled and made available to interested parties, and information sessions are being scheduled with prospective bidders during the Federation's upcoming Annual Meeting, which will take place in November 2004 in Cologne, Germany. Bids will be due in March 2005, to be followed by extensive vetting of the applications. In addition, other committees of the Federation Board are continuously dealing with a range of issues, such as ensuring the standards for Gay Games sports competitions conform to the requirements for a world-class event, that the latest thinking on such matters as drug testing and gender identity are reflected in the Gay Games

protocols, and that business decisions are made so as to enhance the value of the Gay Games brand and ensure its future prosperity.

We thank all of you for the opportunity to have served as your Delegates to the Federation of Gay Games Board during the past year. We are confident that the Federation is on the right path to a promising future, offering memorable Gay Games experiences for all of us in the years to come.

Respectfully,

Des Sullivan
David Short

International Frontrunners Delegates
to the Federation of Gay Games