

Roller Hockey World Championship comes to San Jose one year from now

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SAN JOSE (August 3, 2004) – For the first time since they began in 1931, the Men's Hardball Roller Hockey World Championship will come to the United States when San Jose hosts the event one year from now.

The championships, which occur every two years, will bring the top 16 national teams in the world to the Event Center at San Jose State University beginning Aug. 6, 2005 for a week of competition in a non-contact version of hockey faster than that played on ice or on in-line skates.

"These world championships will be a fantastic event for San Jose, and they continue our city's tradition – established with events such as the men's and women's soccer World Cups – as the focal point for international sports in the Bay Area," said Dean Munro, executive director of the San Jose Sports Authority.

Hardball roller hockey, played in 60 countries worldwide, is usually played on a wood floor. A goaltender and four skaters using traditional roller skates are on the floor at one time. A world championship game consists of two 20-minute halves.

"Roller Hockey teams from around the world have wanted to come to the United States for many years to play in a World Championship," said Ruben Leni, chairman of the 2005 Roller Hockey World Championship Organizing Committee. "Hosting the world in San Jose will give us the opportunity to showcase our sport and to leave a legacy for future roller hockey players."

Although the International Roller Sports Federation is recognized by the International Olympic Committee as the world governing body for all sports occurring on roller skates including figure skating, speed skating, inline hockey and hardball roller hockey, only roller hockey has been included in an Olympics. It was a sold-out exhibition sport in Barcelona in 1992. Portugal is the defending world champion in this sport, defeating Italy 1-0 in the second overtime of the championship game of the tournament played in Oliveira de Azemeis, Portugal. Spain won the bronze medal over Argentina, and the U.S. team finished 13th with a 3-3 record.

"USA Roller Sports is very proud to host this championship," said George Kolibaba, chairman of the board and president of the national federation, which successfully bid for the event. "Hardball hockey is the dominant form of the sport in Europe, and we've had several good U.S. teams, but until now we haven't had the opportunity in our country to display our sport at the highest level. San Jose has given us that opportunity to put on a show."

The 2005 Men's Hardball Roller Hockey World Championship are among more than 120 sports events brought to the city by the San Jose Sports Authority. Visit our website at www.sjsa.org.