

**2023 JEUX
AUTOCHTONES**
de l'Amérique du nord
HALIFAX · NOUVELLE ÉCOSSE



North American
**INDIGENOUS
GAMES 2023**
HALIFAX · NOVA SCOTIA

MEDIA RELEASE

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The North American Indigenous Games announce new dates and CEO

The North American Indigenous Games (NAIG) Council and NAIG Host Society are pleased to announce that the 10th games are set to take place July 15 to 23, 2023 in Kjipuktuk (Halifax) and Millbrook First Nation, Nova Scotia. The COVID-19 pandemic forced the postponement of the 2020 edition of the Games. “In light of recent events around the continued history of residential schools, we hope that the announcement of NAIG 2023 and the lead-up to the Games will uplift and inspire youth and families across Turtle Island in a good way, and they can look forward to celebrating their cultures and stories in Kjipuktuk (Halifax)” said Shannon Dunfield, NAIG Council President.

“Despite the unfortunate postponement of the 2020 Games, the priority of our NAIG Host Society over the past year was to work with NAIG Council and our partners to find new dates,” said Fiona Kirkpatrick Parsons, Chair of the 2023 NAIG Host Society. “I am filled with the deepest gratitude for the support of our government funding partners, along with the dedicated and passionate NAIG staff, board of directors, NAIG Council, and supporters whose hard work and positive collaboration has made this all possible. And while the event is two years away, we know the time will fly by, and soon we’ll be hosting the most beautiful event this Territory has ever seen.”

Both the Government of Canada and the Province of Nova Scotia are committing new funding for the hosting of the 2023 North American Indigenous Games. The new funding agreement will see the Government of Canada provide up to an additional \$4.5 million for incremental costs due to the postponement of the Games, in addition to the up to \$3.813 million already committed. The Province of Nova Scotia will be providing an additional \$2.5 million for the Games, in addition to the \$3.5 million already committed. This funding will ensure Indigenous youth are able to celebrate both their sport and culture with this funding.

“The North American Indigenous Games play an important role in the development of young Indigenous athletes, coaches and artists by providing them with valuable training, competition and artistic experiences,” said the Honourable Steven Guilbeault, Minister of Canadian Heritage. “Our government is proud to provide further support to the 2023 NAIG as it showcases the richness of Indigenous sport and culture to all Canadians.”

“Nova Scotia is committed to bringing these games to our province and to making these the best North American Indigenous Games yet. We look forward to working with the NAIG Host Society to host the games in 2023, providing an opportunity for Nova Scotians and Canadians to learn more about the Mi’kmaq people, their language and rich culture,” said Premier Iain Rankin.

“We are excited to welcome a long-awaited NAIG 2023. I know athletes from across North America will be met by enthusiastic spectators and helpful volunteers who will help make this an event to be remembered,” said Halifax Mayor Mike Savage.

“Our government recognizes the importance of major events and has developed the Nova Scotia Event Strategy, to attract, grow and develop more major events. The North American Indigenous Games (NAIG) will bring Nova Scotia significant economic and social opportunities, including cultural awareness training for all 3,000 volunteers of the games, the first of its kind,” added Communities, Culture and Heritage Minister Suzanne Lohnes-Croft.

As we continue to plan for the games, the safety of our athletes and all participants has always been, and will continue to be, our primary focus. Moving toward 2023 provides us with the best opportunity to host a safe and successful Games. This will also allow the Host Society to build toward the original vision of bringing together approximately 5,250 participants from 756 Indigenous nations and to celebrate sport and culture as Atlantic Canada’s largest gathering of Indigenous peoples since contact. “The Mi’kmaq of Nova Scotia are very pleased and honoured to host all Nations of Turtle Island in 2023; the games will inspire our youth to reach goals and dreams that will change their lives forever,” said Chief Norman Bernard, President of Mi’kmaq Sport Council.

NAIG has always been about fostering opportunities for young Indigenous athletes, and the significance sport and culture can bring to their lives. The Games in 2023 will be focused on awakening and preserving diverse Indigenous cultures and creating a safe and inclusive space for all participants to share, learn, and experience all that NAIG has to offer. We look forward to welcoming all to Kijipuktuk (Halifax) and Millbrook First Nation.

Brendon Smithson announced as 2023 North American Indigenous Games CEO.

The 2023 NAIG Host Society Board of Directors is very pleased to announce Brendon Smithson as CEO of the 2023 North American Indigenous Games. Brendon replaces John Rogers, who opted not to renew his contract as CEO with the Host Society when it ended in June 2021.

“We want to thank John for his dedication and leadership of NAIG in the planning for the 2020 Games and through these challenging past few months. His hard work and dedication have truly helped the Society set the stage for 2023,” said George “Tex” Marshall, President of 2023 NAIG Host Society. “We’re also very excited to have Brendon agree to step up and lead the new team. His games experience, combined with his connections to the Mi’kmaq communities, will help to ensure the 2023 Games will be the best yet.”

Brendon is the former Executive Director of Games Delivery for the 2020 North American Indigenous Games Host Society in Kjiptuk (Halifax). He has been an integral part of the team and his leadership skills have been unmatched during his time with the Host Society. Brendon comes to the NAIG from the Province of Nova Scotia, where he has worked as a Sport and Recreation Consultant, supporting the growth of sport, recreation, and physical activity within Mi'kmaw communities. Prior to his time with the Province, Brendon worked in Municipal Recreation for 10 years as a Director, where he focused on creating inclusive environments for all participants.

He was recently appointed to the Board of Directors for the Aboriginal Sport Circle, Canada's governing body and voice for Indigenous Sport throughout Canada. In his free time, he can be found in and around the lacrosse community in Nova Scotia where he is a player, coach, board member and official. Brendon has also been mission staff and coach, as part of Team Mi'kmaw Nova Scotia 2014 and 2017 NAIG delegations.

Please go to www.naig2023.com and follow NAIG Twitter, Facebook and Instagram accounts @naig2023 for updates.

About NAIG 2023: The event will be the largest multi-sport and cultural event ever to be held in Atlantic Canada. More than 5,000 athletes, coaches and team staff from 756 Indigenous nations will take part in cultural celebrations, and compete in 16 sports across 21 venues, with the help of 3,000 volunteers. NAIG 2020 was originally due to take place from July 12 to 18, 2020 in Kjiptuk (Halifax), and Millbrook First Nation, Nova Scotia and has now been set to take place July 15 to 23, 2023.

About North American Indigenous Games (NAIG) Council: The NAIG Council is the International Governing Body for NAIG and helps actualize the collective potential of the bodies, minds, and spirit of our people and their hopes and dreams. The Council oversees all matters pertaining to the Games, including the inclusion of purposes and philosophies during the event that are consistent with the cultural, spiritual and traditional values of the peoples represented in the games. In all activities, the Council ensures the promotion and encouragement of holistic, individual development that assures mental, physical, emotional and spiritual growth.

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