

https://greensboro.com/news/local/aau-junior-olympics-kickoffs-greensboro-coliseum/article_aa878ea8-4911-11ef-9ee7-0ba96651ec56.html

FEATURED | TOP STORY

Let the games begin. The AAU Junior Olympic Games in Greensboro, that is.

Caroline Wills

Jul 24, 2024

GREENSBORO — For the first time since 2022, the city will roll out the red carpet to welcome young athletes, families and spectators to the first events of the AAU Junior Olympic Games.

Swimming, trampoline and tumbling will headline the first day of competition for an event that is expected to bring a welcome economic infusion to the city. Some 19,000 athletes are expected to touch down in Greensboro for the competitions, which will last from today to Aug. 3 — next Saturday.

The city is anticipating around 40,000 guests over the 10-day period, who will stay in hotels, shop at businesses and stop by restaurants.

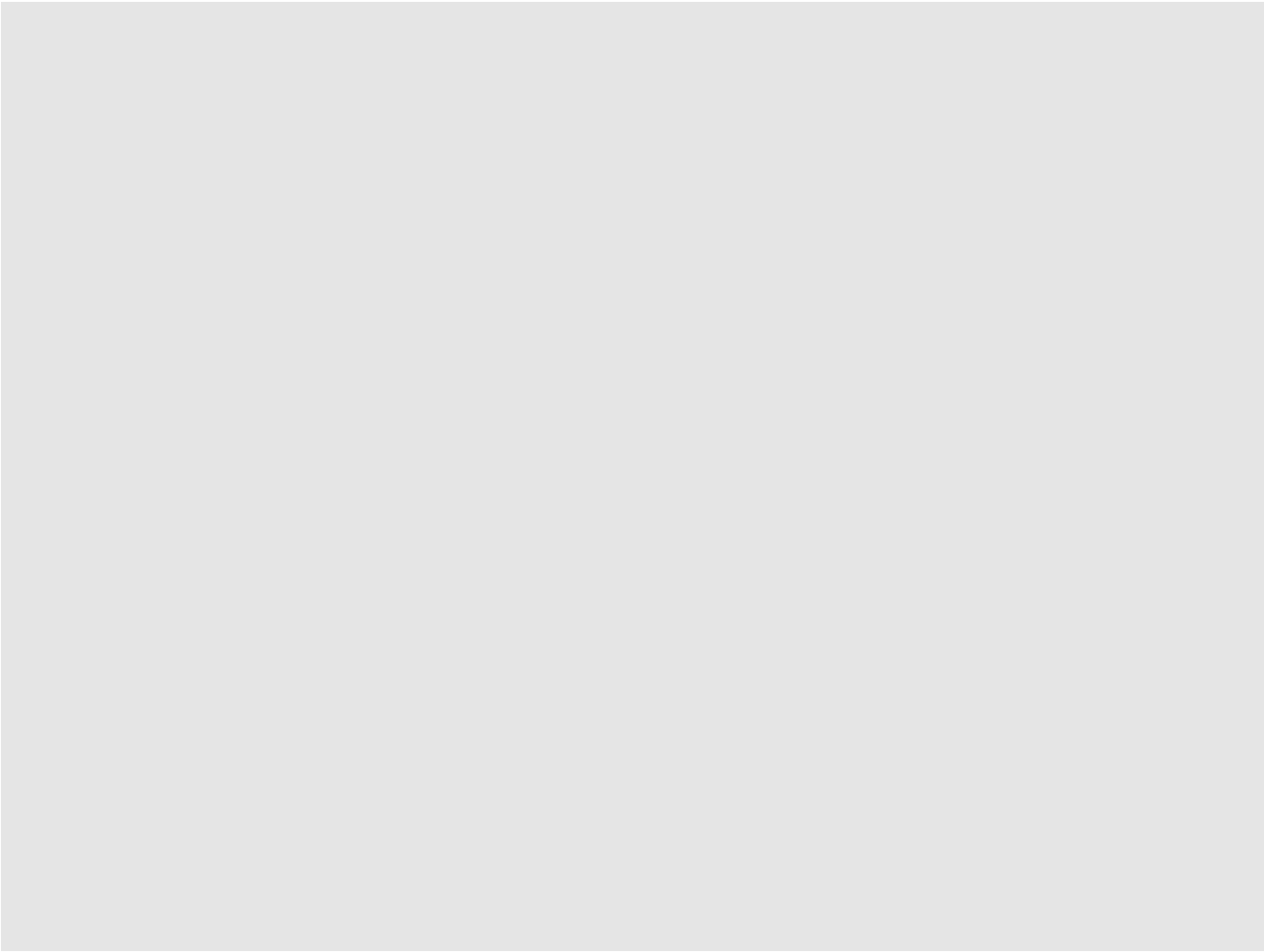
Beyond the economic impact — expected to be \$49 million — one tourism official said an event like the AAU Games puts Greensboro “on the map” and shows off its versatile facilities.

“This is for the whole community,” said Sarah Lanse, the director of marketing for the Greensboro Convention & Visitors Bureau. “It’s not just for athletes and their families. We want everybody in the Triad to be involved.”

People are also reading...

- 1 Former boyfriend, who attorney said "exploded into a jealous rage," convicted in strangling death of HPU student**
- 2 Berger explains Summerfield deannexation vote, says Rockingham casino is a 'dead issue'**
- 3 Kernersville Food Lion evacuated after report of possible shooting**
- 4 High Point University still under warning on accreditation, for second year**

On Tuesday, volunteers and the Greensboro Convention & Visitors Bureau prepared for arriving athletes.



Athletes check in at the AAU Junior Olympics registration desk in the Special Events Center at the Greensboro Coliseum Complex in Greensboro on Tuesday.

WOODY MARSHALL, NEWS & RECORD

Carter Blum, an intern with the Greensboro Sports Foundation, said he and the other volunteers spent their time working to set up the track for competition day, putting up windscreens. Then, it was off to the registration room.

As arriving coaches and families proceeded through the lines, they grabbed credentials and their complimentary swag. AAU-branded T-shirts were immediately slipped over the heads of excited athletes in tow.

In total, Blum said 500 people are volunteering to help pull off the event.

“There’s a lot of sports that aren’t televised or mainstream going on here, so getting to see new sports, it’s very exciting,” he said. “So long as nothing goes wrong and we can kind of avoid stress as much as we can.”

Outside the registration room, beaming kids posed for their parents beside red and white AAU signage and sporting matching T-shirts. Some did cartwheels in the hallway — perhaps as a sneak peek for Wednesday’s tumbling event.

“Coming to these games gives you the opportunity to potentially see the athletes who will be participating in the Olympics in four years and eight years from now at the ground level,” Lanse said. “You get to see them before they’re the next Katie Ledecky, before they’re the next Simone Biles, before they’re the next Sha’Carri Richardson.”

One of those young athletes, Kase Lemley, is a swimmer who will compete in the 50, 100 and 200-meter races. Lemley said he is excited to compete in an event like this because of the level of competition.

Still, he admitted he was a little nervous. So was his mom.

“I’m really excited for them,” Serena Lemley said. “They worked so hard this year to get here and it’s pretty awesome.”

cwills@wsjournal.com

WANT TO GO?

Single-day tickets are \$20 or \$50 for all events for the duration of the games. Both can be purchased at visitgreensboronc.com. For events at the Coliseum, parking is \$5 per day or \$20 for the duration of the games with a free shuttle provided to transport visitors to the track-and-field competitions.

By Caroline Wills

Staff Writer
