

# Press Box

## Sports Organizations

**Dan Payne** has been named CEO of USA Rugby. He most recently served as athletic director for Life University in Marietta, Georgia, where he added 10 varsity sports programs. Payne also served as the university's director of rugby.



DAN PAYNE

Los Angeles 2024, the group bidding to host the Olympic Summer Games, has appointed **Bob Iger**, chairman and CEO of The Walt Disney Company, as vice-chair of its board of directors. Iger previously served as president and chief operating officer of The Walt Disney Company. He also served as chairman of the ABC Group and as president of Walt Disney International.

**Nick Raffaele** has been named executive director of the CareerBuilder Challenge Golf Tournament in La Quinta, California, and CEO of Desert Classic Charities. A golf industry veteran, Raffaele previously was vice-president of global sports marketing at Callaway Golf, where he managed relationships with players on the PGA Tour, Champions Tour and LPGA.



NICK RAFFAELE

**Kevin Penn** has been appointed chief of business operations at the United States Olympic Committee. In this newly created position, Penn will provide direct oversight for USOC corporate departments. He most recently served as senior vice-president of strategy and administration at Highwoods Properties, a publicly traded real estate investment trust headquartered in Raleigh, North Carolina.

The **National Hockey League** has awarded Las Vegas an expansion

## Senior Games Selects Albuquerque

The National Senior Games Association will stage its 2019 Senior Games in a city that proves to be a perfect match



Albuquerque, New Mexico, has long had a vibrant senior sports scene. In addition to the New Mexico Senior Olympics, the state organizes nearly 30 local senior sports events, including 19 held on pueblos and reservations. So when the city was awarded the **National Senior Games** for 2019, the pairing made perfect sense.

"It is definitely a community buy-in—a statewide buy-in—that they just believe in the importance of providing those opportunities in health and wellness services to seniors," said Marc Riker, CEO of the National Senior Games Association, which announced the location in July. "It's quite remarkable what they've done for their senior population."

While the exact dates have yet to be announced, events are expected to be held at the Albuquerque Convention Center, the University of New Mexico and other locations around the city. The city called upon a wide range of agencies in assembling its bid, including Visit Albuquerque, the city's departments of senior affairs, parks and recreation, and police, as well as the university and various state agencies. "This national event will produce a great public-private partnership," said Jorja Armijo-Brasher, director of the city's Department of Senior Affairs. "We are thrilled to have been selected."

The National Senior Games has been held every two years since 1987 and is the largest multisport festival in the world for people 50 and older. More than 10,000 athletes are expected to compete in 19 medal sports. ■

—Jason Gewirtz

franchise, the city's first major professional franchise. The team will begin play in the 2017–2018 season and will play its home games in the recently opened T-Mobile Arena on the Las Vegas Strip.

**WME-IMG** has acquired **UFC** for a reported \$4 billion. Silver Lake Partners and KKR will join WME-IMG as strategic investors, along with MSD Capital, L.P., and MSD Partners, L.P., which will provide preferred equity financing. Upon closing of the deal, UFC owner Lorenzo Fertitta will step down from day-to-day operations, but he and his brother, Frank Fertitta III, will retain a minority interest in the organization. The Fertitta brothers purchased UFC in 2001 for \$2 million and have built it into one of the largest sports organizations in the world.

The **National Football League**, National Football League Players Association and Cirque du Soleil have announced plans for an NFL attraction in New York's Times Square. Spanning 40,000 square feet, the four-story exhibit will include a 350-seat theater, educational programming, on-site retail, food and beverage offerings and artifacts on display. The multimedia attraction is scheduled to open the fall of 2017.

The **International Olympic Committee** and the **International Paralympic Committee** have signed a long-term agreement supporting the Paralympic movement. The agreement will run through 2032 and will build on the current partnerships and cooperation agreements that were signed prior to the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

The Amateur Softball Association (ASA) of America/USA Softball, the national governing body for softball in the United States, will be known as just **USA Softball**, effective January 1, 2017. The rename and rebrand also includes a new logo, shaped like home plate.



Additionally, the **Amateur Softball Association/USA Softball** has partnered with **Major League Baseball** in support of the "Play Ball" initiative. ASA/USA Softball will help promote "Play Ball" throughout the 70 local associations across the United States and will assist MLB and its baseball clubs in conducting Softball Series events.

**USA Baseball** and **Major League Baseball** have announced a five-year extension to their longstanding partnership agreement. The agreement will continue support of national team programs and create a sport development department, which will be a cooperative effort between the two organizations to grow the game of baseball as well as provide educational resources for coaches, players, parents and umpires. The original partnership was announced in 2006.

**Brent Giles**, chief sustainability officer of Powdr, has announced his retirement after 40 years with the adventure lifestyle company. During his tenure, Powdr invested more than \$7 million in energy and sustainability initiatives and reduced its overall carbon footprint by 63 percent.

## Hosts & Suppliers



**Don Schumacher**, executive director of the National Association of Sports Commissions, will step down in 2017 after having served as the association's only executive director for 23 years. A search committee has been formed and is expected to name a successor by March 2017.

The International Association of Venue Managers has appointed **Brad Mayne** as its new president and CEO. He will also serve as president and CEO of the IAVM Foundation. Both organizations are based in Coppell, Texas. Mayne formerly was president and CEO of MetLife Stadium in East Rutherford, New Jersey.

**Arlan J. (A.J.) Frels** has been named executive director of the La Crosse County (Wisconsin) Convention & Visitors Bureau. Frels most recently led the Carson Valley (Nevada) Visitors Authority, which encompasses four communities within the Great Basin area of Lake Tahoe.

Traverse City Tourism (Michigan) has selected **Trevor Tkach**, executive director of the National Cherry Festival, to serve as its new president and CEO. Tkach has worked for the National Cherry Festival since 2007, serving as business development manager and interim executive director before being

## THE LEADERSHIP COACH

# Setting the Tone

There are many leaders these days who allow poor standards of service and who have a separate set of policies for themselves. Recently I ran into the president of a resort at a corporate function. One of our managers had been trying to reach this gentleman's general manager for many months. When I told the president about his general manager's negligence, he said, "That's too bad." And that was it.



I couldn't believe his answer. If that had been me, I would have written everything down and followed up right away. A lot of leaders talk

about providing quality service but don't provide it themselves. They ask their employees to give great service, but they don't provide that service to their own employees.

Think of how many leaders you know who give sincere service to their employees. Now think of how many places you go where you leave the premises saying, "Wow, that was great service." Within five minutes of checking into a hotel, you can pretty much tell what the general manager is like as a leader. A leader's personality comes forth in the manner in which his or her team serves customers. ■

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named as its permanent executive director in 2012.

**Hank Abate** has been appointed executive vice-president of venue management at Madison Square Garden Co. With more than three decades in the entertainment facilities management industry, Abate most recently served as senior vice-president of Spectra venue management at Comcast Spectacor.



**Dale Adams** has been appointed general manager of Gila River Arena, the 18,300-seat arena that is home to the National Hockey League's Arizona Coyotes. Adams will retain his role as vice-president of content development at AEG Facilities. Prior to starting at AEG Facilities in 2007, Adams served as vice-president of sales and touring at Premier Exhibitions.

## GOVERNING BODY DOSSIER

### Kansas Community Tries For Rare Double Feature

In golf, it's rare to see an event organizer return to the same city in consecutive weeks for a tournament. In recent years, the only major group to try it was the U.S. Golf Association, which staged the men's and women's U.S. Open in Pinehurst, North Carolina, on consecutive weekends in 2014.

That is one of the factors that makes the partnership between the Symetra Tour, which serves as the feeder tour to the LPGA, and Garden City, Kansas, so unusual. In June, the Symetra Tour announced that it will play events on two courses on consecutive weekends in September in the city of 27,000 people. The Garden City Charity Classic at Buffalo Dunes, a municipal course, will be staged September 8–11, while the Garden City Charity Classic at Southwind, a private course, will be played September 15–17.

Mike Nichols, chief business officer for the Symetra Tour, said he was surprised when the tour was approached with the concept by officials in Garden City, which has hosted a tour event at Buffalo Dunes since 2014. "Not only would I not consider it realistic for a larger city, but for a small community like Garden City that has less than 30,000 residents—for them to take on all this responsibility in hosting an event, it was unexpected to say the least," he said. "But at the same time, it was exciting to give it a go."

**Challenges.** A city attempting two events on two courses in consecutive weeks must find enough local volunteers to work both events, secure housing for the players (about half of whom stay with host families), and find a sponsor willing to pay for the costs involved in hosting the events,

Nichols said. The first tournament will have a \$150,000 purse, while the second will have a \$100,000 purse.

But Roxanne Morgan, executive director of the Finney County Convention & Visitors Bureau, said the community saw an opportunity when an event in Topeka was taken off the schedule. Another factor working in its favor was the Mariah Fund, which

takes 1 percent of revenues from the Boot Hill Casino in Dodge City and directs it toward tourism programs in 22 western Kansas counties. The Mariah Fund will be the presenting sponsor of both tournaments.

Morgan said that when players

from 23 countries competed in earlier Symetra events in the city, the exposure for the community was considerable. "A lot of times when people think of Kansas, they think of Kansas City or they think of Wichita," she said. "For southwest Kansas to have those 23 countries exposed to us—our traffic to our website has increased dramatically from countries around the world."

**Future model?** Nichols said time will tell if the model can be replicated. But the experiment comes at a time of growth both for the Symetra Tour and the LPGA. The Symetra Tour has 23 tournaments this season, the most in a single year since 1988. And the amount of money available for players has risen dramatically. In 1988, purses averaged \$22,000 per tournament, compared with \$140,000 this season.

Nichols said Garden City is making the most of the opportunity. "Based on how well the first two events have gone there," he said, "I have confidence in the community's ability to run two first-class events for us." ■

—Jason Gewirtz



Garden City, Kansas, will host two Symetra Tour events on consecutive weekends at two area golf courses.

**Kerri Kapich** has been named to the newly created position of chief operating officer for the San Diego Tourism Authority. Kapich previously was senior vice-president of marketing and strategic partnerships. She is currently the chair of Visit California's Research Committee and is a member of its Marketing Advisory Board.

The **Louisville Convention & Visitors Bureau** has unveiled a new brand platform, logo and creative for



marketing the city's tourism initiatives, which will include a new website going live this month to replace *GoToLouisville.com*. The new Louisville brand platform features a logo that includes a fleur-de-lis and the date of the city's founding in 1778. The city had been using its previous logo and branding since 2007.

**Rick Shahum** has been appointed senior account executive at GES, a global, full-service provider for live events. Shahum previously directed business development for TBA Global.

**CAA Premium Experience**, a division of entertainment and sports agency Creative Artists Agency, has entered a long-term partnership with Major League Baseball. CAA Premium Experience will serve as the league's official event and hospitality partner starting with the 2016 MLB All-Star Week.

**Learfield Sports**, the exclusive multimedia rights holder for 120 collegiate properties, has acquired GoVision, a provider of large-scale LED video displays and related services. GoVision will continue to operate under its name and brand and all current employees will remain with the firm.

### Sites & Venues

ESPN has chosen **Minneapolis** as the North American host city for the X Games for 2017 and 2018. The event will be staged at U.S. Bank Stadium

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July 13–16, 2017, and July 19–22, 2018. Minneapolis was one of several cities bidding for the event after ESPN announced it would leave Austin, Texas, where the games have been staged since 2014.

The U.S. Men's National Soccer Team will play an international friendly against Cuba at **Estadio Pedro Marrero** in Havana, Cuba, marking the United States' second visit to Cuba in the last 69 years. The match will be broadcast live on the ESPN and Univision networks on October 7.

The United States Olympic Committee, in partnership with USA Hockey, USA Luge and the U.S. Ski and Snowboard Association, has announced the lineup of the first Team USA Winter Championships Series. The single-day television event will feature a snowboard big air competition in **Copper Mountain, Colorado**; women's hockey in **Plymouth, Michigan**; and the FIL Luge World Cup in **Park City, Utah**. The event will be broadcast on NBC and NBCSN on December 17.

**Oakmont Country Club** in Oakmont, Pennsylvania, and **Shinnecock Hills Golf Club** in Southampton, New York, have been selected to host the 2025 and 2026 U.S. Opens, respectively. The 2025 U.S. Open at Oakmont will be held June 12–15. The 2026 U.S. Open at Shinnecock Hills will take place June 18–21.

The Hampton Roads (Virginia) Sports Commission has announced the launch of the Hampton Roads Hero Games, a new event created to recognize the law enforcement, fire, EMT and EMS "heroes" of the region. The games, scheduled for October 5–8, will feature eight sporting events that will take place at locations including the **Virginia Beach Fire Training Center, River Crest Community Center, Ocean View Golf Course, Indian River Community Center, C2 Shooting Center** and the **Virginia Beach Sportsplex**.

The 2017 Major Series of Putting will make its debut in **Las Vegas** next March. The putting championship will be held at a 20,000-square-foot, 18-hole putting course created by Nicklaus Design. The event will offer a variety of putting tourna-

ments with prize money expected to exceed \$10 million.

**Squaw Valley**, site of the 1960 Olympic Winter Games, has been selected to host an Audi FIS World Cup in March 2017, marking the first return of World Cup ski racing to the resort since 1969. The 2017 event will consist of women's giant slalom on March 10 and women's slalom on March 11. **Killington, Vermont**, has also been named as a host for the women's giant slalom and slalom, November 25–26, 2016.

The Fort Worth Convention & Visitors Bureau and Trident Sports have announced the launch of the inaugural Tri Fort Worth triathlon, with the first event to be held May 7, 2017. The one-day event will include 140.6- and 70.3-mile routes that start at Marine Creek Lake, span across the city and finish in the heart of downtown **Fort Worth**.

The 2017 Minor League Baseball Triple-A All-Star Game will be held at **Cheney Stadium** in Tacoma, Washington. Hosted by the Tacoma Rainiers, the game will be held July 12, 2017, and will be televised nationally on MLB Network.

In an effort to take on the issue of childhood obesity, the **Children's Museum of Indianapolis** has announced plans for the creation of Riley Children's Health Sports Legends Experience, a new exhibit that is scheduled to open in the spring of 2018. The \$35 million, 7.5-acre project will feature components including an Indianapolis Colts football experience, the Sports Legends Pavilion and Plaza and a family fitness path.

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## Sponsors & Licensing

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**Olympic Channel Services** has partnered with 27 international sports federations to collaborate on content for the Olympic Channel. The channel—which will be headquartered in Madrid—will broadcast live sports events, news and athlete stories, historical Olympic footage and official film from the International Olympic Committee's archives.

**Thorne Research**, a personalized health solutions company, has recently

partnered with a number of national governing bodies including **USA Gymnastics, USA Triathlon** and **USA Taekwondo**. Thorne Research will provide national-team members with nutritional supplements, nutritional testing and educational materials, among other offerings.

**Rawlings Sporting Goods Co.** has entered a five-year agreement with the



**NCAA**. In addition to serving as the official softball of the NCAA Championships for the 2017–2021 seasons, Rawlings will have

exclusive rights to promote, market and sell the NCAA Championship softball through its retail channels.

**Rio 2016** has partnered with **Off!**, resulting in the Olympic Games' first official insect repellent sponsorship. The company, based under the SC Johnson umbrella, will distribute free bottles of insect repellent to athletes and volunteers at the Olympic Summer Games in Rio de Janeiro beginning August 5.

**Eckrich** has announced a partnership with the **College Football Playoff** to become the official smoked sausage and deli meat sponsor of the 2017 College Football Playoff. As part of the sponsorship, Eckrich will launch the Road to the National Championship sweepstakes where 14 fans around the country will have the chance to throw for \$1 million at some of the biggest college football games of the year.

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## And Finally...

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The **National Football Foundation** and the **College Football Hall of Fame & Chick-fil-A Fan Experience** have announced a new program that will grant active duty and retired service men and women free admission to the Hall of Fame. Located in downtown Atlanta, the College Football Hall of Fame has recognized 48 combined inductees from the United States Military Academy, the United States Naval Academy and the United States Air Force Academy. ■

—Edited by Jennifer Lee