

LANARKSHIRE

The Real Games





The Real Games

Lanarkshire is to host the 2011 International Children's Games.

From 3 to 7 August 2011, some 1,500 young athletes aged 12-15 [along with 500 games officials and coaches and a host of visitors] will head to Lanarkshire for the 45th ICG Games.

They will come from almost 70 countries and from every continent for the biggest-ever international event held in Lanarkshire.

The young sporting stars will compete in the International Olympic Committee-recognised games at venues throughout the county, from East Kilbride's John Wright Sports Centre to the new multi-million pound sports complex at Ravenscraig.

And sports and leisure centres throughout Lanarkshire, from Cumbernauld to Lanark, will provide the very best training facilities.

For Lanarkshire, it will be a chance to show its friendly, progressive face to the world.

For the Games will be the focus of international media attention.

From the star-studded opening ceremony at Fir Park to the closing extravaganza at Strathclyde Park, the Lanarkshire 2011 International Children's Games will be an historic event

You can keep up to date with news about the Games by visiting our website: www.ICG-Lanarkshire2011.com.

Plans are already underway to create a spectacle worthy of such an important international event, one that will excite and entertain visiting athletes and delegates, as well as the local community.

More than 10,000 people are expected to enjoy the spectacular opening ceremony at Motherwell's Fir Park that will feature an exciting fireworks display, pipe bands, dance and headline artists, as well as the traditional parade of athletes and exchange of flags.

And the closing ceremony at Strathclyde Park will be a fitting salute to what will be one of the biggest events ever staged in Lanarkshire.

But it is the people of Lanarkshire that are the 2011's Games unique selling point and will help make them one of the best and most memorable in the movement's history.

The warmth of our hospitality and our generosity of spirit will guarantee a great reception and a memorable experience for the many visitors from 50 countries that will descend on the region.

In addition to the many Scottish athletes taking part in the Games, hundreds of other school children will demonstrate the strength and depth of talent in Lanarkshire by acting as ambassadors, translators, liaison officers, buddies and guides.

Our modern network of schools will provide top-class accommodation for competitors and our state-of-the-art sports venues fitting backdrops for the seven sporting disciplines, while our central location and modern roads network will provide easy access to Lanarkshire's and Scotland's major attractions.

It will be a great occasion for everyone as young people from all over the world strive to fulfil their sporting dreams and ambitions in an atmosphere of solidarity and fair play.

And the warmth of our welcome will be long remembered.

United Councils

That Lanarkshire is playing host to such a prestigious youth event is thanks to North and South Lanarkshire councils, who had the vision both to see the potential benefits the Games could deliver and, equally importantly, what Lanarkshire could, in turn, deliver to the International Children's Games movement.

The joint authorities are funding Lanarkshire 2011 to the tune of £1million each in the knowledge that the event will showcase the region's many strengths and achievements before a global audience.

Influential support for Lanarkshire 2011 has come from everyone from First Minister Alex Salmond, Scottish Secretary Jim Murphy, Health and Sports Minister Shona Robison, MPs, educationalists and health experts, as well as triple Olympic hero Sir Chris Hoy, and track stars Yvonne Murray and Liz McColgan, to mention but a few.

This level of support hugely boosts the power and impact of the message of the Games and is a massive boost for the organising committee as they start preparing the groundwork for what will be a major logistical exercise in terms of accommodating, transporting, feeding and providing security for the 2,000 athletes and delegates and countless visitors over the five-day event.

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World Class Games

“Overwhelmed” was the word that was most used by International Children’s Games President, Torsten Rasch and Secretary General Richard Smith when they made a whistle-stop tour of the facilities for the Lanarkshire 2011 Games.



The International Olympic Committee-recognised Games' top two met with members of the Lanarkshire Organising Committee for an update on preparations for the 2011 Games. And Games President Torsten Rasch was unstinting in his praise for just how far the local committee have come in their planning for the 2011 Games.

“I can honestly say that in all the Games I have been involved with, no country has been so far along the road with their arrangements two years ahead of the event.

“And I would have to say that no other country has had such outstanding pre publicity for Games that have had such venues as the USA, Canada, Greece, Iceland and all over Europe.

“The drive and professionalism that is being shown by the local committee, so well led by joint chairs Councillor Michael McCann and Councillor Jim Smith could well become a yard-stick for others.

“We will be leaving Lanarkshire not just well pleased with what we have seen of the venues and of the preparations, but with the belief the Lanarkshire 2011 Games is set to become one of the best ever.”

For 2011 joint chair Michael McCann the praise from the senior members of the ICG was really a reflection of all the work that has taken place since Lanarkshire won the right to host the games. “I recall the ICG Executive Committee at the time we made the Lanarkshire presentation in San Francisco saying that it was the best they had ever seen, and that our logo was the most memorable Games logo that had been produced.

“Since then, both north and south councils have set up a comprehensive structure to look at all aspects of a project that will be the biggest international event ever held in Lanarkshire.”

The 2011 games will see some 2,000 young athletes along with coaches and officials head to Lanarkshire for what will be the 45th ICG Games.

For Lanarkshire it will be a chance to show its friendly progressive face to the world.

For the Games are set to become the focus of international media attention.

“From the star-studded opening at Fir Park to the closing extravaganza at Strathclyde Park, the 2011 International Children’s Games will be an historic event,” said Councillor McCann. “And I know that every one in Lanarkshire will want to become a part of it.”

CASE STUDY: Creating the winning formula

As one of the world’s elite athletes, Yvonne Murray knows what goes into the mix to create a winning formula. And she’s sure Lanarkshire has it in bucket loads to make the 2011 International Children’s Games a runaway success.

The former World, European and Commonwealth champion now works as the senior athletics development and events officer with North Lanarkshire Leisure. Her job is to nurture new sporting talent, creating pathways helping them to achieve their ambitions within their sport. She also gives her expert advice and support to top athletes, including some of the young rising stars who took part in last year’s International Children’s Games in Athens.

Yvonne knows the 2011 Lanarkshire ICG will not just be a fantastic international showcase for the county and its premier sporting facilities, but also a way of inspiring youngsters across Central Scotland to get involved in sport. “This is a tremendously exciting time to be working in sports development and events, as so much is going on in Lanarkshire,” said Yvonne. “Never again in my lifetime will three such important international sporting events be in the UK and so closely together.

“Firstly, it’s the International Children’s Games in Lanarkshire, followed by the 2012 London Olympics and the Commonwealth Games in Glasgow in 2014. What better opportunities to motivate young people to get involved in all sports? I love my job. Just as running was my passion, now my job is my passion.

“Seb Coe became interested in athletics after watching the Olympics on telly. I was the same. I watched Alan Wells win gold in Moscow in 1980. I turned to my mum and said ‘I will do that one day’ and I did. At that time, I was 14 and I’d only been running for a few months.”

Yvonne is positive that some of the young Lanarkshire athletes competing in the International Children’s Games in 2011 will go on to represent Scotland at the Commonwealth Games.

“There is so much rising talent in Lanarkshire,” Yvonne added. “The county has always been blessed with top-flight athletes – from footballers like Jimmy Johnstone to runners like Tom McKean.

“And, thanks to the continuing investment in sports facilities in Lanarkshire, it will make my job easier to encourage youngsters to get involved. Soon, we’ll have the regional sports facility at Ravenscraig which will be invaluable in helping develop athletes from grass roots through to the elite level.”

Across Lanarkshire, she added, support is in place to make sure young people can get into all kinds of sport. “I am currently developing pathways in athletics, starting

with junior jog, to taster sessions, to community run, jump and throw clubs, which lead on to athletics clubs... all the way up to Scottish and UK level,” said Yvonne, who makes regular visits to schools armed with her medals. “I tell the kids that when I first ran, the furthest I could go was 100 yards. They don’t believe me, but it’s true, and shows that everyone has to start somewhere.”

It was an inspirational teacher, Meg Ritchie, who first spotted Yvonne’s talent as a runner. Three years later, at just 17, Yvonne was in her first Scottish Commonwealth squad, running for her country in Brisbane, Australia. She came 10th but when she heard Scotland the Brave being played for the same Meg Ritchie winning discus gold, Yvonne’s competitive steel was forged. She was determined to go for athletics gold.

The medals followed regularly: bronze when Edinburgh hosted the Commonwealth Games in 1986, silver in 1990 in Auckland, New Zealand. “Finally, I got gold in 1994, in Victoria in Canada,” said Yvonne. “Despite all the other medals, the Olympics and everything else, that’s the one that stands out. It stands out because it was the only victory for Scotland.”

Yvonne married her running partner, Tom Mooney, and the couple live in Motherwell with daughter, Laura. Although her competitive days are over, Yvonne recently took part in a 1k run with Laura in Cumbernauld. She could see that steely determination in Laura, the competitive edge. “Her best friend, Ryan, was running with my husband, and I could see that Laura wanted to beat Ryan. She didn’t, and that didn’t go down well with my daughter.”

In her new role as senior athletics development and events officer with North Lanarkshire Leisure, part of Yvonne’s job is to promote Lanarkshire as a venue for international teams looking for training facilities in the lead-up to the London 2012 Olympics and the 2014 Glasgow Commonwealth Games.

Yvonne said: “There’s not just the regional sports facility at Ravenscraig, other exciting developments are ongoing, such as the new community sports facility at Broadwood Stadium in Cumbernauld. Then there’s Strathclyde Park and its world class watersports facilities, plus Wishaw Sports Centre and its floodlit eight-lane running track.”

Sporting Ambitions

For a small country, Scotland has always had the ability to think big. And this enterprising, perhaps gallus attitude couldn't be more evident than in the ambitious sporting events we've successfully bid for in the coming years.

Perhaps our young sportsmen and women don't quite appreciate it yet, but they have never had it so good. It took time, effort and money – as well as considerable blood, sweat and tears – on the part of the bid teams to get even this far, but over the next four years, Scotland will have its chance to shine on the world sporting stage at a triumvirate of massive events. And, with the West of Scotland hosting two of them, the opportunities to encourage youngsters to get involved in physical activity couldn't be clearer.

First on the schedule is the International Children's Games (ICG), which will take place here in Lanarkshire in 2011, beating off initial competition from the likes of Singapore and South Korea in the process. With around 2,000 young athletes and officials flying in from around the world, along with a host of visitors, it's going to be the biggest sporting event the county has ever seen.

Then, just a year later, the Olympic Games rolls into London.

In 2014, meanwhile, Glasgow will take centre stage with the Commonwealth Games, the first in Scotland for almost 30 years, giving our elite athletes a unique chance to compete and win in front of a home crowd.

Though each of the three events will obviously be different in scale, they all share one common goal – inspiring young people to participate in sport. And according to organisers, it's important that they work together to make the most of what could and should be a golden era for Scottish sport.

The team organising Glasgow 2014 couldn't be more supportive of all three events, and believe the ICG will be a key moment.

"The next few years ahead really will be immensely exciting for Scottish sport and it is a fantastic coincidence that the 2011 ICG are being held in Lanarkshire," says the organisation's spokesman, Gordon Arthur. "All the young people from Lanarkshire who take part will do so in the knowledge that Glasgow 2014 is just three short years away.

"Some of the best, who will be 14 or 15 in 2011, may even be competing in front of their home crowd in 2014. This is an amazing opportunity.

"The ICG will give young athletes a positive focus. They'll also be given a fantastic opportunity to mix with other athletes from all over the world, which is hugely important on both a performance and social level.

"But it's not just those actually participating in competition that will benefit. Many young people will be involved in the organisation, or will be supporting their peers, and many more will hopefully be inspired to take up sport in the future. We also share the wider challenge of how to improve the overall health of our young people. The potential reach of the ICG is immense."

However, Mr Arthur points out that the quality of facilities for both Lanarkshire 2011 and Glasgow 2014 will be key to their success – and indeed their legacy.

"Many young people who participate in sport do so out of school hours, and it is absolutely vital that we have the best possible facilities for them to train at. Those who want to take up a new sport for the first time will also be encouraged by good facilities. Hopefully this will be one of the key legacies of both games."

Indeed, according to the Lanarkshire 2011 ICG committee, the legacy of the Games is as important as the competition itself, especially when viewed alongside the Olympics and the Commonwealth Games.

In a joint statement, Councillors Eddie McAvoy and Jim McCabe, leaders of North and South Lanarkshire Councils respectively, said: "We are absolutely committed to staging the best ICG yet. But we also want to make sure that the Games act as a springboard for all our young people to continue their participation in sport and take it to the next level, whatever that may be.

"Having the Olympics in the UK just one year later is hugely exciting. And, of course, Glasgow 2014 is already a very real inspiration for so many of our young

athletes. We are confident that some of the young people who will represent us at the ICG in 2011 will aspire to go on to do so again in 2014 at Commonwealth level.

"For others, the ICG will have been the event that helped them make physical activity a fun part of their life. The opportunities are tremendous."

Securing the International Children's Games was a key moment in Lanarkshire's future, in terms of both sport participation and tourism. And its capacity to inspire young people from all over the world is already being recognised by key stakeholders.

Louise Martin, CBE, chair of Sport Scotland, believes the benefits of hosting the event will be felt nationally. "I would like to congratulate North and South Lanarkshire Councils on securing the International Children's Games for Scotland," she said. "Events like this provide a fantastic opportunity to engage young people in sport, and as the National Agency for Sport, we welcome any initiative which promotes participation in sport and encourages children to make physical activity a regular part of their lives, now and in the future."

She added: "I wish the organisers the very best of luck as they work on their preparations for welcoming the young international athletes to Scotland for a fantastic festival of sport."

Meanwhile Paul Bush, OBE, Chief Operating Officer at EventScotland, the national agency which brings some of the world's biggest events to Scotland, said the Games would be a unique opportunity to put Lanarkshire and Scotland on the world stage. "The International Children's Games will add yet another prestigious world class sporting event to Scotland's portfolio and will bring a significant profile to Lanarkshire and indeed Scotland," he said. "The Games are also a prime example of how we as a country can inspire our young people to take up a sport, improve their health and strive to be the best that they can be."

Interactive bus to raise awareness of the Games across Scotland

Following the successful bid to host the International Children's Games in 2011, preparations are well underway as Lanarkshire aims to deliver the most successful ever Games.



North and South Lanarkshire Councils are determined to host an event showcasing Lanarkshire to the world and leaving a lasting sporting legacy for young people throughout the area.

An information bus, with its eye-catching Lanarkshire 2011 livery, will be touring Scotland over the next two years raising public awareness of the Games. The bus will visit schools, major events and groups interested in learning more about the Games and how they can get involved.

The bus is equipped with a large screen, projector, PCs with broadband connection and will carry a wide range of literature on the Lanarkshire 2011 Games.

Mhairi Hendry – a gold medal winner in the girls 4x100m relay at the 2009 Athens Games – is featured prominently on the bus with her medal. As a successful member of the Lanarkshire team in Athens, Mhairi is proud to be featured on the bus and serve as a role model for aspiring athletes in the area.

Mhairi said: "Athens was a great experience and it was an amazing experience to win a gold medal. I'm really

[Hosting the International Children's Games in 2011 gives Lanarkshire the perfect opportunity to showcase our strengths and talents to a global audience]

proud to be featured on the Lanarkshire 2011 information bus and I think it's a great idea. Hopefully, it will really raise interest in the games and encourage young people to get involved in sport."

Councillor Jim Smith, co-chair of the Lanarkshire 2011 Organising Committee, said: "Hosting the International Children's Games in 2011 gives Lanarkshire the perfect opportunity to showcase our strengths and talents to a global audience.

"Between now and the Games we want as many people as possible to have an awareness of the Games and the information bus will enable us to reach a great number of people and spread the word about the Games and the legacy they will leave for young people throughout Lanarkshire for years to come."

Councillor Michael McCann, co-chair of the Lanarkshire 2011 Organising Committee, said: "Mhairi is the perfect choice to feature on the information bus. She is a role model for our young sports people and is the perfect example of what can be achieved through hard work and dedication.

"She acts as an inspiration to young people to get involved in sports at grassroots level and enjoy all of the associated benefits this involves – improving health, boosting confidence and self-belief and motivating them to achieve their ambitions."

Up to 1,500 competitors aged 12 to 15, along with coaches, administrators and delegates from more than 70 countries will head to Lanarkshire for the International Olympic Committee-recognised event in August 2011.

Lanarkshire 2011 gives the area the opportunity to organise cultural programmes and ensure the Games are a truly community led experience. This vision will give people – young and old – the prospect of becoming part of the biggest international event ever held in Lanarkshire.

