

In 1972 Roy Romanow, the Minister then in charge of the Saskatchewan Youth Agency, announced the inauguration of the Saskatchewan Games. This announcement gave Saskatchewan athletes of all ages the opportunity to participate in multi-sport games.

The province was divided into eight zones with Saskatoon and Regina each considered individual zones. Play-downs to select a zone team were held in each zone.

The areas of responsibility then were outlined. The zones were to be responsible for selecting their teams and bringing them to the Games site. The provincial sport governing bodies were to determine the class and rules governing the competition. The Department of Culture and Youth took on the responsibility as the logistical supporter and organizer of the Games. They assisted the various zone committees, sport organizations and the host community with the planning and operating of the Games.

Four Saskatchewan cities submitted bid applications to host the 1972 Saskatchewan Summer Games. To encourage province wide involvement Regina and Saskatoon were declared ineligible to host the Games, as these centers have the ability to host other major events. After much deliberation the Site Selection Committee chose Moose Jaw to be the first community to host a Saskatchewan Games.

From August 31 to September 3, 1972, athletes from all over the province competed in 16 different summer sports. Baseball, canoeing, cycling, diving, field hockey, lacrosse, lawn bowling, rowing, shooting, soccer, softball, swimming, tennis, track and field, water polo and water skiing were the first sports to be played in a Saskatchewan Games.

The inaugural Games were a huge success and set the stage for the first Saskatchewan Winter Games. This time the Site Selection Committee recommended North Battleford as the host community for the 1974 Games. The Saskatchewan Winter Games were held from March 4th to the 9th and involved 14 sports: badminton, fencing, figure skating, gymnastics, handgun, hockey, judo, skiing, speed skating, synchronized swimming, table tennis, volleyball, weightlifting and wrestling. With one cycle of biennial games staged alternately in summer and winter complete, the concept of the Saskatchewan Games was a proven success.

In September 1998 the Government of Saskatchewan provided a special initiatives grant to facilitate a Northern team participating in one complete Saskatchewan Games cycle, the 2000 Saskatchewan Summer Games and the 2002 Saskatchewan Winter Games. In January 1999 the Saskatchewan Games Council formerly approved the Zone 9 Pilot and would reserve its decision on a permanent Zone 9 until after the 2002 Saskatchewan Winter Games.

In December 2002 the Sask Sport Board of Directors endorsed the recommendations of the Saskatchewan Games Council to include Zone 9 in the Saskatchewan Games program.

In May 2004, the Building Better Communities (BBC) was established to develop and implement a process to solicit input from sport, culture and recreation stakeholders on potential enhancements to the delivery system. The BBC was cooperatively established by Sask Sport Inc., SaskCulture Inc. and Saskatchewan Parks and Recreation Association Inc.

In January 2006 the BBC recommended the nine Zone Sport Councils and twenty-three Regional Recreation Associations merge to create nine “District” organizations. These new organizations are to have an overall, common mandate of community development through sport, culture and recreation for people and communities in Saskatchewan. The transition to new “Districts” will be complete, province-wide by March 31, 2009.

The purpose of the Saskatchewan Games has narrowed over the years. Instead of focusing on including athletes of all ages and abilities the Games now work to provide athletes in the “train to train” stage of development with the opportunity to compete in a multi-sport games in preparation for higher levels competition.

For many years the governmental department responsible for sport provided consultative services to the host communities, liaised with the Zone Sport Councils and assumed full responsibility for the games program with the support of the Saskatchewan Games Council. In 2006 the Government of Saskatchewan transferred the responsibility of the Saskatchewan Games program to the Saskatchewan Games Council. The Saskatchewan Games Council then hired a provincial games consultant to compliment the existing staff and ensure the continued success of the Saskatchewan Games program.

The Council and it’s staff continue to work together to ensure the Saskatchewan Games program continues to enable athletes in the “train to train” development stage with their pursuit of higher levels of competition.

Summer Games Host Communities

1972 – Moose Jaw (inaugural games)
1976 – Swift Current
1980 – Estevan
1984 – North Battleford
1988 – Melfort
1992 – Prince Albert
1996 – Moose Jaw
2000 – Yorkton
2004 – Weyburn
2008 – Lloydminster

Winter Games Host Communities

1974 – North Battleford
1978 – Moose Jaw

1982 – Prince Albert
1986 – Yorkton
1990 – Melville/Ituna
1994 – Kindersley
1998 – Nipawin
2002 – Humboldt
2006 – Melfort
2010 – Moose Jaw