

SPOKANE TO HOST '72 AAU JUNIOR OLYMPICS

The city of Spokane, Washington, has been selected as the site for the 1972 National AAU Junior Olympic Championships. The announcement was made jointly by Richard G. Kline, National Junior Olympic Chairman, and Jack Zappone, President of the Inland Empire Association of the AAU at the national convention of this oldest amateur sports bodies in the United States.

“We are most gratified at the prospect of holding our national championships in the Spokane area,” add Kline. One of the factors which influenced our decision in favor of this city was that we wish to bring these young competitors to various parts of the country and we had to hold the event in the Pacific Northwest.”

The AAU Junior Olympic program was inaugurated 1949 through an agreement between the ages six and eighteen in some thirteen Junior Olympic sports including basketball, boxing, swimming, diving, gymnastic, judo, luge, synchronized swimming, track and field, trampoline, water polo, weight lifting and wrestling. In 1966 the program was given needed financial input through sponsorship of the Quaker Oats Company.

Competition at the Sixth Annual AAU junior Olympic Championships will be held at several locations in the northwest community of 300,000. Competitors will be housed for the early August event at Gonzaga University, which will also be the site of the diving, gymnastics judo and judo competition.

Witter Pool in the City of Spokane will host swimming, and the track and field competition will be held at the facilities on the campus of Spokane Falls Community College.

The bid on half of Spokane was presented by the Inland Empire Association of the AAU and awarded to the Greater Spokane Sports Association, an affiliate of the Spokane Chamber of Commerce. Other cities presenting bids were Long Beach, California; Austin, Texas; Washington D.C. and Honolulu, Hawaii.

Plans for the conduct of the AAU Junior Olympic Championships are flexible at this time, according to George Reitemeier, General Manager of the Spokane Chamber of Commerce. Reitemeier was instrumental in preparing and presenting Spokane's bid.

Dr. George Werner, Athletic Administrator for the Spokane School District, has been named general chairman for the Sixth Annual National AAU Junior Olympic Championships.

The bid is contingent upon the renewal of the AAU/Quaker Oats contract, which will be decided at the AAU's 1971 National Convention in Lake Placid, New York.

“The Quaker Oats Company is again pleased with the selection of the site for AAU Junior Olympic Championships,” said William P. Long, National Sales Promotion manager of the company. “On the basis of the bid we can look forward to an outstanding event.”

Former Junior Olympic Champions who have achieved international status include Rafer Johnson, gold medalist in the decathlon at the Rome Olympics; Don Schollander, winner of six Olympic medals in Tokyo and Mexico City; John Pennel, first man to vault seventeen feet.