



Community
Bank N.A.

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2019 Empire State Winter Games
Officially open in Lake Placid
2,100 athletes set to compete in Adirondack region

LAKE PLACID, N.Y. – The 2019 Empire State Winter Games kicked off on Thursday, Jan. 31, as athletes, officials, friends, family and the community all gathered in the Lake Placid Olympic Center for the Opening Ceremony and lighting of the Games' cauldron.

From Friday through Sunday, a record setting 2,100 athletes of all ages, from across the state and beyond, are expected to descend upon Lake Placid's Olympic venues, as well as nearby Whiteface Mountain, Saranac Lake, Tupper Lake, Paul Smiths and Malone.

More than 30 events make up the 2019 Games, presented by Community Bank and supported by I LOVE NY. The sports include Alpine and Nordic skiing, ski jumping, hockey, figure skating, speed skating, freestyle moguls, snowboard cross, skeleton, luge, bobsled and snowshoe. Adaptive athletes will compete in Alpine and Nordic skiing, ski cross, snowboard cross and hockey. New this year, E-Sports and the Titus Ski Festival.

Keynote speaker Nick Fairall, a 1994 Olympian in ski jumping, who suffered serious spinal injuries while training in Bischofshofe, Austria, challenged the athletes, asking them if they wanted to have a "victim or victor mentality?" He shared his experience of not being selected to the 2010 U.S. Olympic Team and his struggles coping with his life-altering injury.

"You are going to face challenges in sports and in your lives that are going to feel like they're extremely difficult to handle and you're going to face challenges and setbacks





that are your own. The challenges that you face will only destroy you if you let them,” he said. “We all have the strength to overcome the challenges that lay before us. When challenges present themselves, I want you to remember that every day you decide, you choose to succumb or overcome, to remain a victim or become a victor.”

Bobsled athlete Joey Meadows and Alpine ski coach William Dewey delivered the Athletes’ Oath and Officials’ Oath, respectively.

As the ceremony drew to a close, 12 year-old Hana Kang, of Long Island, a four-time Empire State Winter Games participant in figure skating, lit the cauldron as the Ceremony’s Emcee Tracey Wilson proclaimed, “Let the Games begin.”

Kang, and all of the other athletes who participated in the Opening Ceremony, marched into the Olympic Center wearing LED bracelets that were timed to music. During the Ceremony the color of each bracelet turned to white, but her bracelet, through a random computer draw, turned red giving Kang the honor of lighting the cauldron, signifying the opening of the Games.

Among the highlights of Friday’s competitions will be adaptive sled hockey in Saranac Lake, boys and girls Super G at Whiteface Mountain in Wilmington, cross country skiing at Mt. Van Hoevenberg figure skating and hockey in the Olympic Center and long track speed skating at the famed Olympic speed skating oval.

Please log on to www.empirestatewintergames.com for the latest information regarding schedules, Opening Ceremony and athlete check-in.

Photos of the 2019 Empire State Winter Games’ Opening Ceremony can be found [HERE](#). **Photos courtesy** of ORDA/Whiteface Lake Placid.

-ESWG-

More about the ESWG

The Empire State Winter Games is a community-driven event, courtesy of a partnership between the Regional Office of Sustainable Tourism (ROOST); the towns of North Elba, Wilmington, Tupper Lake, Harrietstown, Malone, and Brighton; the villages of Lake Placid, Tupper Lake, Paul Smiths, Malone, Wilmington, and Saranac Lake; the counties of Essex and Franklin; the New York State Olympic Regional Development Authority, and New York State Senator Betty Little. Sport venues are located in Lake Placid, Wilmington, Saranac Lake, Tupper Lake, Malone, and Paul Smiths. Venues include: Lake Placid Olympic Center Herb Brooks Arena, Lake Placid Olympic Jumping and Sliding complexes, Mid's Park in Lake Placid, Whiteface Mountain, Paul Smith's College, Paul Smith's College VIC, Saranac Lake Civic Center Ice Rink, Dewey Mountain Recreation Area, Tupper Lake Memorial Civic Center, Olympic Cross Country and Biathlon Center, Titus Mountain, and Mount Pisgah.





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For more information, visit EmpireStateWinterGames.com.

