

The North American Indigenous Games continue to move in an eastward direction across Canada.



Team Nova Scotia shows its spirit during the opening ceremony of NAIG 2017 in Toronto, Ontario. The 2020 Games will be held in Halifax, Nova Scotia. (Kevin Johnson)

After being held in British Columbia (2008), Saskatchewan (2014) and Ontario (2017), the Games will head to the scenic Atlantic coastal province of Nova Scotia in two years.

Halifax, the capital of Nova Scotia, won the bid to host the 2020 Games. The announcement was made May 3 in Montreal.

“We are honored the North American Indigenous Games Council has selected Nova Scotia to host the 2020 games and look forward to welcoming the participants,” said Norman Bernard, chief of Wagmatcook and president of Mi’kmaq Sport Council of Nova Scotia, in a press release. “I am confident the Games will provide opportunities for all Nova Scotians to learn more about the contributions of our Mi’kmaq and Indigenous culture across the province and North America.”

The Mi’Kmaq are a First Nations people who are among the original inhabitants of Canada’s Atlantic provinces. Nova Scotia’s government website mentions the Mi’Kmaq are the founding people of Nova Scotia and remain the predominant Aboriginal group in the province.

“This is a very proud moment for the Mi’kmaq Sport Council, our Mi’kmaq communities and all Nova Scotians,” said Premier Stephen McNeil, who is also Minister of Aboriginal Affairs. “The games will be an exciting opportunity to showcase our province and celebrate Mi’kmaq culture and heritage as we cheer on the athletes.”

NAIG features thousands of Indigenous athletes about ages 12 to 18 from throughout Canada and the U.S., including from the Seminole Tribe of Florida. The Tribe’s Aubee Billie, Santiago “Echo” Billie, Sammy Micco Sanchez and Connor Thomas won medals for Team Florida at the 2017 Games.

Nova Scotia’s bid was prepared by the Mi’kmaq Sport Council of Nova Scotia with the support from Nova Scotia’s 13 Mi’kmaq communities, the Department of Communities, Culture and Heritage, Halifax Regional Municipality, Discover Halifax, Dalhousie University, Saint Mary’s University, Sport

Nova Scotia, the Halifax Stanfield International Airport and several community supporters.

“It is an honour for Halifax to help make the 2020 NAIG the biggest sporting event our municipality has ever experienced,” Halifax Mayor Mike Savage said. “Hosting NAIG will showcase Mi’kmaq culture and strengthen our understanding of the vibrant Indigenous cultures across North America, while offering excellent sports entertainment and bringing significant economic activity to the region.”

Halifax, population of 400,000, served as a major recovery post when the Titanic sank in 1912 about 700 miles from the city. The bodies of 150 victims from the Titanic are buried in Halifax cemeteries.

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