



JCC Maccabi Games: History

The JCC Maccabi Games is an Olympic-style sporting competition held each summer in North America and is the largest organized sports program for Jewish teenagers in the world. The Maccabi Movement began in 1895 when the first all-Jewish sports club was formed in Constantinople. The first world Maccabiah Games were held in Israel in 1932. Now, this two week competition takes place every four years and has featured many world class Jewish athletes including: Mark Spitz (swimming), Mitch Gaylord (gymnastics), Ernie Grunfeld and Danny Schayes (basketball), Brad Gilbert and Dick Savitt (tennis).

The first North American JCC Maccabi Games were held in 1982 with 300 athletes. Due to overwhelming interest, Regional Games were added in 1985 to augment the even-year Continental Games. 1997 marked the first time that the JCC Maccabi Games were held simultaneously in six American cities with 4,400 participating athletes. Since their inception in 1982, the JCC Maccabi Games has grown from a small pilot project in one host community to an Olympic-style sporting competition held each summer in multiple sites throughout North America. The combined Games are the largest organized sports program for Jewish teenagers in the world.

Today, over 6,000 teens, ranging from 13 to 16 years of age, participate in the JCC Maccabi Games each summer. The Games are co-sponsored by the Jewish Community Center Association of North America, Maccabi World Union, Maccabi Canada, and Maccabi USA/Sports for Israel.

--source: JCC Maccabi Games