

## **USA Team Handball Partners with Georgia State Games Commission to Host Largest Youth Team Handball Tournament in U.S.**

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**ATLANTA, GA– (May 7, 2002)** – USA Team Handball has partnered with the Georgia State Games Commission to host the largest team handball youth tournament in the U.S. on May 11-12 at Life University.

Last year the Cobb Cup was the largest with 118 teams and over 1,000 participants.

USA Team Handball and the GA State Games of Commission have partnered this year to host the Cobb Cup with the goal of establishing a high level tournament for the athletes in the metro Atlanta area

“This is an exciting opportunity to partner with the Georgia State Games an organization that has success in providing athletes of all ages and skill levels a meaningful opportunity to participate in a true amateur sports competition.” Lindalisa Severo, USA Team Handball Program Director

In 1995 USA Team Handball, the National Governing Body for the Olympic sport, developed a grassroots school program in Atlanta to promote the sport to students and educators. With the 1996 Olympic Games in Atlanta programs were established to promote Olympic Sports in the community. The goal of the school program was to create a model for other school districts throughout the United States. USA Team Handball assisted teachers in Cobb County to implement team handball in their schools by having athletes and coaches conduct clinics and demonstrations. After initial introduction to the sport, teachers started team handball intramural leagues at their school. The Cobb Cup was a culmination of the intramural program to provide schools with the opportunity to compete against each other. Since 1995 the tournament has grown from 200 participants to over 1,500.

The Cobb Cup has been successful in creating a grassroots level of athletes. There are numerous athletes that began playing team handball at the Cobb Cup that have now been selected to the Women’s and Men’s National Team Select pool.

“We at USA Team Handball are faced with challenges within the United States, and it is logical then to establish and nurture a partnership with existing organizations with commonality and similar philosophies. Through the GA State Games we have an opportunity to create some synergy in existing NGB developed youth event with the Cobb Cup. The ultimate goal is to create a model development program that involves schools, State Games and the NGB in a true win-win-win situation” Mike Cavanaugh, USA Team Handball Executive Director

USA Team Handball is excited about the partnership to build for the future and expand these types of program on a national level.

“With over 500,000 athletes nationally, the National Congress of State Games has access to a tremendous numbers of athletes on the grassroots level. In 2002, USA Team Handball and the Georgia State Games have partnered to continue the legacy of the Cobb Cup. The National Congress of State Games and the Georgia Games involvement with USA Team Handball combine to give us a model for NGB cooperation while simultaneously building a vital promotional and development element for an underdeveloped Olympic sport.” Jim Vanden Heuvel , President/CEO Silver State Games and MSO Board Representative, USA Team Handball.

The Cobb Cup will be held on May 11-12, 2002 at Life University featuring teams from elementary to high school levels.

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