

THE HISTORY OF THE LOS ANGELES SPORTS COUNCIL

The stunning success of the 1984 Olympic Games, the first ever to be financed by the private sector, changed event management, sports marketing, and Los Angeles.

That sports and events could be an economic catalyst in the region was not lost on the Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce, which established a volunteer committee in 1986 to take advantage of the city's now pre-eminent status. The L.A. Olympic Organizing Committee's head of government relations, David Simon, was now the Chamber's Senior Vice President and recruited John C. Argue, the head of the L.A. bid for the 1984 Games, to lead the group.

The first target was, suitably, an Olympic-related event. The U.S. Olympic Festival was the United States Olympic Committee's domestic showcase event, gathering more than 2,800 athletes from across the nation for 10 days of competitions, in 37 sports. Bringing it to Los Angeles was the first step in a planned-for campaign to bring the Olympic Games back in 2004.

An initial bid from the City of Los Angeles was revamped and the USOC was impressed, selecting Los Angeles in 1987 to host the event in 1991, with a separate organizing committee formed to stage it.

At the same time, the National Football League was considering where to place the 1991 Super Bowl. Three L.A.-area facilities – the Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum, Rose Bowl and Anaheim Stadium – all bid for the game separately, assuring that none would be selected. The game was handed to Tampa, Florida. Somehow, the area had to come together to win.

The Los Angeles Sports Council was incorporated as a stand-alone entity in 1988, and was immediately able to create a unified bid for the 1993 Super Bowl, offering the NFL an unheard-of choice of the three sites to pick from. The game was held at the Rose Bowl, with a stand-alone Host Committee that created a first-time "Touchdown for Youth" program to allow some 700 inner-city youth to attend the game. The game created \$182 million in economic impact for the area.

Now the Sports Council was in high gear, looking for more events to bring to the L.A. area.

Over the next quarter-century, the Sports Council worked tirelessly to bring events – large and small – to Los Angeles and Orange County, the most significant of which include:

- FIFA World Cup (group, playoff and final games) in 1994
- FIFA Women's World Cup (group, playoff and final games) in 1999
- NCAA Women's Basketball Final Four (1992)
- NCAA Men's Basketball Western Regional (1994)
- NCAA "Frozen Four" – the men's ice hockey championship – in 1999
- MLS Cup championship game (1998)

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- Special Olympics World Games (2015)
- U.S. Olympic Trials in gymnastics and swimming (2004)
- U.S. Olympic Marathon Trials (2016)
- World Badminton Championships (2005)
- World Baseball Classic (semifinals and final) in 2009
- World Figure Skating Championships (2009)
- World Gymnastics Championships (2003)

The Sports Council also worked in cooperation with the Southern California Committee for the Olympic Games to create the Los Angeles bids to the USOC for the American candidate city designation for the 2012 and 2016 Olympic Games; although unsuccessful, these efforts laid the foundation for the area's winning bid for the 2028 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

The Sports Council also brought major conferences to the area, notably the International Olympic Committee's 2012 World Conference on Women and Sport.

The combined economic impact of these events and others totals more than \$1.1 billion, contributing to the area's enormous sports industry. Recognizing this, the Sports Council also pioneered the first comprehensive studies of the total impact of the Los Angeles-area's sports infrastructure and operations. Working in conjunction with the UCLA Anderson School, studies were completed in 1993, 1996, 2000, 2004, 2006, 2008, 2010 and 2013. An even deeper study was announced in 2019, compiled by the Los Angeles Economic Development Corporation and announced at the first L.A. Sports Summit. It showed \$6.2 billion in annual economic impact, including 39,000 jobs, in a growing sector of the regional economy.

The Sports Council's signature event, the Los Angeles Sports Awards, grew out of a 1995 partnership with Towery Publishing, with the publication of "Unforgettable: The 100 Greatest Moments in Los Angeles Sports History." Covering L.A.'s glorious sports history in a way never before approached, the most important events were cataloged, considered and finally revealed in order at a gala dinner and televised awards program at UCLA's Pauley Pavilion, hosted by Hall of Fame Dodgers broadcaster Vin Scully.

That was the catalyst for an annual salute to the area's greatest moments and top performers, and in December 2005, the first Los Angeles Sports Awards was held. It's been annual fixture since, held in the first quarter of each year and celebrating the year prior, before a live audience with a delayed broadcast on regional networks West and Prime Ticket. Superstars such as Clayton Kershaw, Jerry West, Aaron Donald, Luc Robitaille, Allyson Felix and many others have appeared, with awards presented by legendary hosts including Scully and Al Michaels.

The Sports Council expanded its programming in 2019 with its first Los Angeles Sports Summit, a two-day conference exploring the L.A. sports industry, with an opening address by Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti.

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After conceiving the Sports Council concept, Simon retired in 2018 and was succeeded by Dave Siegel, following a 22-year marketing and sales career with the Los Angeles Dodgers. The Sports Council continues to expand its programming and bring new energy to sports in Los Angeles, continuing its service to the community.

Los Angeles Sports Council Board Chairs

1988-2003 John C. Argue

2003-2011 Alan Rothenberg

2011-2013 Scott London

2013-2013 Alan Rothenberg

2013-2017 Karen Brodtkin

2017-2019 Tony Sciarrino

2019-present Dave Klewan

Los Angeles Sports Council Presidents

1988-2018 David Simon

2018-Present David Siegel