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“Building Bridges for the Future of LGBT Sports” Conference Announced

February conference in London will air concerns of international of LGBT sports community

(SAN FRANCISCO – 19 January 2005) The international Federation of Gay Games (FGG) today confirmed plans to hold a conference this February in London designed to allow representatives throughout the LGBT sports community to meet and talk about the opportunities and challenges for the future.

Titled “Building Bridges for the Future of LGBT Sports,” the conference, hosted by London-based Out For Sport, will be held the second weekend of February (12-13 February) and moderated by a professional facilitator.

Plans for the conference were first announced at the conclusion of the Federation’s annual meeting in November 2004.

“Our international Board of Directors, representing many longstanding LGBT sports organisations that have contributed for years to the growth and development of the global LGBT sports movement, made their feelings very well known at our recent annual meeting,” said Roger Brigham, Director of Communications. “After more than 20 years of unprecedented growth in LGBT sports, and some confusion because of two major multi-sport events set for 2006, they felt now was the time to have an open, candid discussion among representatives from throughout the LGBT sports community to address the needs and the direction the community should take to build the future after 2006.”

Offers to host the conference came from London, Berlin, Munich and Washington, D.C. The international FGG Board believed it important that the event take place in a city with no previously expressed intent to bid for a global multi-sport event after 2006. With the subsequent withdrawal of the offer by Munich and the 2010 Gay Games VIII bidding process already under way, the FGG Executive Committee chose London as the conference site, given its accessibility for European and North American participants.

The conference is open to any interested member of the LGBT sports community; no invitation is necessary. Conference registration details will be available at www.outforsport.org – interested participants and others are encouraged to check back frequently for updates. E-mail inquiries can be sent to LondonSport@gmail.com.

Invitations were extended to many organisations including the two dozen groups serving on the international FGG Board of Directors as well as the European Gay and Lesbian Sports Federation (EGLSF), the Gay and Lesbian International Sports Association (GLISA), and the Gay and Lesbian Sports Foundation (GLAF). EGLSF and GLISA were contacted regarding the meeting dates and asked to submit issues for the agenda, which will be finalised by the facilitator.

The FGG is pleased with the responses to date stating commitment to healing the divisions in the global LGBT sports community and willingness to participate in the conference toward that goal.

During the past few months, the FGG received many requests from the international LGBT sports community for open discussions regarding the future of the LGBT sports movement. In discussing the requests, the FGG Board noted the numerous LGBT sports organisations with long histories and remarkable track records, solid and proven governance structures, large representation, and which have produced successful multi-sport events in the past or will do so in the future.

The FGG Board also noted there are many people around the world who could provide valuable input but are part of smaller groups dealing with localised issues. Thus, an open-invitation conference has been planned to best ensure that all such groups and individuals have their voices heard and play a strategic role in planning for the future. The international FGG Board of Directors hopes that the conference proves to be the first step in building a stronger, more unified community for the future.

“The FGG values the contributions of all members of the global LGBT sports community regarding how its leaders should move forward after 2006,” said FGG Co-President Roberto Mantaci. “Indeed, the scope of the future of the international LGBT sports movement goes well beyond global quadrennial event production. Even with the FGG’s 25 year history of service to LGBT sports and culture and our pioneering role in the global LGBT sports movement, we have continued to learn from and work with other LGBT organisations to better serve our constituents. We believe it is important that their voices be heard.”

Those who cannot attend the conference are encouraged to provide input by sending comments and suggestions to LondonSport@gmail.com. These comments will be forwarded to the meeting facilitator for consideration in the agenda.

For information about how to sponsor or participate in Gay Games VII in Chicago, visit www.gaygameschicago.org, e-mail to info@gaygameschicago.org, or phone (773) 907-2006. For information about the Federation of Gay Games, go to www.gaygames.com.

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About The Federation of Gay Games:

The Federation of Gay Games is the international governing body that perpetuates the quadrennial Gay Games and promotes the event's founding principles of inclusion, participation and personal best. The Gay Games was conceived by Dr. Tom Waddell, an Olympic decathlete, and was first held in San Francisco in 1982 with 1,350 participants. Subsequent Gay Games were held in San Francisco (1986; 3,500 participants), Vancouver (1990; 7,300 participants), New York (1994; 12,500 participants), Amsterdam (1998; 13,000 participants), and Sydney (2002; 11,000 participants).

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