



Maccabi USA

BUILDING JEWISH PRIDE THROUGH SPORTS

sportscene

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF MACCABI USA



SUMMER OF TRIUMPHS

VICTORIOUS ON AND OFF THE FIELD

See story page 3

Editor's Note:

We are excited to bring you our new-look SportScene. We have been preparing this newsletter for several months and in recent weeks we began feeling the impact of the novel coronavirus along with each of you. As we were going to print, we asked our president, Jeff Bukantz, to rewrite his message and help put things into context, which he does beautifully on page 2. We have left the rest of this newsletter largely as originally designed, hoping the look back at this past summer, the look head to the next Maccabiah, and the smiling, proud, and determined faces of our Maccabi community provide you a much-needed respite during this unprecedented time. Wishing you health and wellness.

President's MESSAGE

During our lives, we have all too often heard the term, "Well, as long as you have your health." That term was often said to soften the blow of some other issue you were dealing with in your life, and while heartfelt, came across somewhat matter-of-factly and insincere.

With the emergence of the coronavirus, COVID-19, the term has taken on the most serious tone of our lifetimes. Never have we had to deal with self-quarantining or the forced shutting down of industry. Until a month or so ago, there was no such thing as "social-distancing."

While we can never minimize nor forget 9/11 and Pearl Harbor, we, as Americans, are undoubtedly in the scariest and most challenging time of our lives. And, while the political winds will always blow, even in a crisis like this, it is truly amazing to see our country pull together in these dire times.

We will defeat this plague, which ironically arrived shortly before Passover. We will pray for the health of our family, our friends, and everyone in the Maccabi community. We will pray for all countries in the Diaspora, and we will pray for Israel, which has been hit as hard as any country.

As an organization which Builds Jewish Pride Through Sports, we sometimes lose perspective of

the bigger picture as we focus primarily on those sports. With the complete shutting down of all sports during this crisis, it certainly allowed us to regain that perspective.

Under normal circumstances, the postponement of the Olympics, which has led to the postponement of the 2021 Maccabiah until 2022, would be the lead story. Those postponements are unprecedented, but in the totality of the horrific situation the world is facing, so unimportant.

While postponing the Maccabiah will create all sorts of logistical and financial issues for both Maccabi USA and Maccabi World Union, we will get through it. One way we will get through it is by connecting online. I am proud of how quickly our team of professionals and volunteers launched Maccabi USA @ Home, a virtual community engaging our alumni and the broader Jewish American sports community.

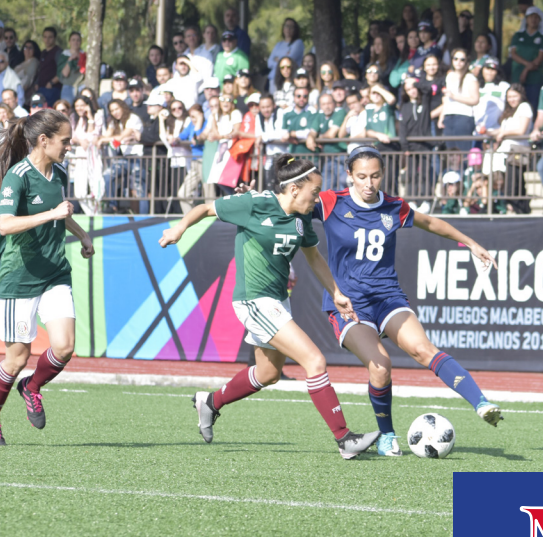
And, while the Maccabiah will be one year further down the road, we will pray for the plague of COVID-19 to be in the rear-view mirror as soon as possible.

So, to everyone in our beloved Maccabi community, I say: God Bless America, Maccabi Chai, and Chazak Ve-ematz! Be Courageous and Strong!

Have a Happy and HEALTHY Passover.



Jeff Bukantz, President (without hat) with Maccabi USA Staff: Mackenzie Mager, Dan Kurtz, Shane Carr



Maccabi USA Community at Play

Maccabi USA completed a rare double this past summer sending delegations only weeks apart to the Pan American Maccabi Games in Mexico City, July 5th – 15th and the European Maccabi Games in Budapest, July 27th – August 7th. While Maccabi USA traditionally sends delegations to both Games in the same calendar year, it had been 20 years since both were held in the same summer. Sending over 600 delegation members to the Games and bringing home over 300 medals, Maccabi USA proved more than up to the challenge! While the results on the court, field, and pool are special, the true victory is how Maccabi USA helped to grow and strengthen the Jewish community at home and around the world. The connections and relationships that our athletes made with each other and with our brothers and sisters throughout the Diaspora and Israel enriches all of us and forms the foundation of a connected, vibrant, and thriving Jewish world! Kol Hakavod (well done) to everyone who helped make this a meaningful and victorious summer. We look forward to the promise of the most impactful and special Maccabiah yet – join us!



CEO's MESSAGE

As I walked through the sprawling DC Convention Center at this year's AIPAC Policy Conference, the questions came flying at me: Which Maccabiah were you in? What sport did you play? Where can I get one of those?

Whether it was my bright red Adidas backpack with the Maccabi USA logo and the Stars and Stripes or my grey Adidas quarter-zip with the Maccabi USA logo, people were excited to see reminders of Maccabi USA (and were perhaps a tad envious of our sporty swag). Athletes, parents, coaches, and grandparents alike came up to me eager for connection.

Maccabi USA has an amazing track record of providing meaningful connection for our athletes, volunteers, and supporters. We know from our surveys that people who experience the Games are deeply impacted. Eighty-nine percent of athletes who hadn't been to Israel before considered the Maccabiah a life-changing experience (plus 82% of those who had prior Israel experience). Ninety-eight percent would recommend participating in the Games to a friend.

And while we don't (yet) have a long-term study of our alumni, we know anecdotally that participation in a Maccabi Games is an experience that sticks with you. Since arriving in July, I have been the recipient of numerous memories and reflections from alumni who represented the US decades ago. They share how deeply the experience impacted their lives and the life-long connections they've made with teammates and competitors.

Given the impact we have on those who join one of our delegations, a key set of questions looms for Maccabi USA: How do we make that experience attainable for more people?

Can we offer opportunities in between the Games that somehow generate similar feelings of connection for new athletes? How do we stay connected with our alumni once they return from their experience?

We know that 43% of athletes applied for need-based scholarship (and another 17% for merit-based) in advance of the 2017 Maccabiah and we were able to give out \$1.2 million in financial support. But what about the people who saw the price tag at the start of the process and didn't apply? Or those whose scholarship wasn't large enough to make the numbers work?

Similar questions could and should be asked for our other delegation members beyond our athletes. We currently require our volunteers – coaches, doctors, and team managers – to pay \$3000 to serve in those critical roles during the Games. How many great volunteers do we lose to other paying (or at least financially neutral) opportunities?

All of these existential questions – and many more! – are being asked as part of the Strategic Planning process Maccabi USA is currently undertaking (see page 5). Embedded in that process is an exploration of our financial model – everything we currently do and all that we aspire to do is predicated upon a strong financial picture. It is clear from conversations and analysis over the last nine months that while we may be able to get by in the short term, our financial model is in need of an overhaul in the long term if we are to be successful in Maccabi USA's next 70 years.

A stronger financial picture would help us answer many of the questions posed above. We could confidently commit to a need-blind application process for our athletes. We could reduce the need for volunteers to pay for the privilege of volunteering their time. We could think creatively and expansively about engaging the American Jewish community through the lens of sport, outside the four Games we participate in every four years. We could invest in a robust alumni network to keep our delegation members connected beyond their participation in one of our events. And more.

We are asking these hard but proactive questions to ensure that at every Jewish conference this century, athletes, alumni, and community members keep asking the most important question for our work: Can I tell you how transformative Maccabi USA has been for me?



Marshall Einhorn, CEO with Stuart Greenberg, Para Chair.

Planning for our Future

The mission and focus of Maccabi USA has evolved over the course of our 70+ years. Founded in 1948 as the United States Committee Sports for Israel to advocate for Israel's inclusion in the Olympics, we have grown to become the official United States Territorial Organization of the global Maccabi Movement. In this role we have successfully organized delegations to international Maccabi events, including the single largest traveling sports delegation (1131 strong!) of any kind to any event ever for the 20th Maccabiah in 2017.

As we continue to look towards the future, our leadership recognized the need to carefully and intentionally prepare for the next phase in our history as we grow to better serve not only our Maccabi community but the American (and global) Jewish communities. To ensure that we shape our organization to both honor our past and position ourselves for future success, we have embarked on a Strategic Planning process in collaboration with an outside consultant to carefully chart the path forward. Chaired by Arnie Fielkow and Toni Wortman, our process has captured feedback and perspective from all stakeholder groups (e.g. athletes, coaches, volunteers, families, funders, board members, and staff) through various data gathering methods. We are currently in the midst of distilling what we learned and charting our direction across four major themes that emerged. We look forward to sharing the resulting Strategic Plan with you later this year!



Maccabiah Chair's MESSAGE

The 21st Maccabiah

Since the establishment of the State of Israel and the 3rd Maccabiah in 1950, the Games have never been cancelled. Now, in the face of a worldwide pandemic, Maccabi World Union has made the difficult decision to postpone the 21st Maccabiah. Although we are disappointed we will have to wait longer to join our Maccabi brothers and sisters in Israel, we will use this extra time to make M21 the most amazing ever. The Games will go on and Maccabi USA will be there, Always!

We have assembled an incredible team that is working hard to make this the most impactful Maccabiah ever! We are focused on every aspect of the experience and looking to enhance what is already a life-changing program.

The Maccabi staff, Vice Chairs Debbie Adams and Tonja Magerman, Sports Commissioners, Chairs and Coaches of each sport and team are all working to build the best USA team on the field of play. Many appointments have been made for coaches, medical and management. We are proud to announce Leon Lifschutz and Matthew Halpern as USA Team Manager and Associate Team Manager to take care of our teams in Israel.

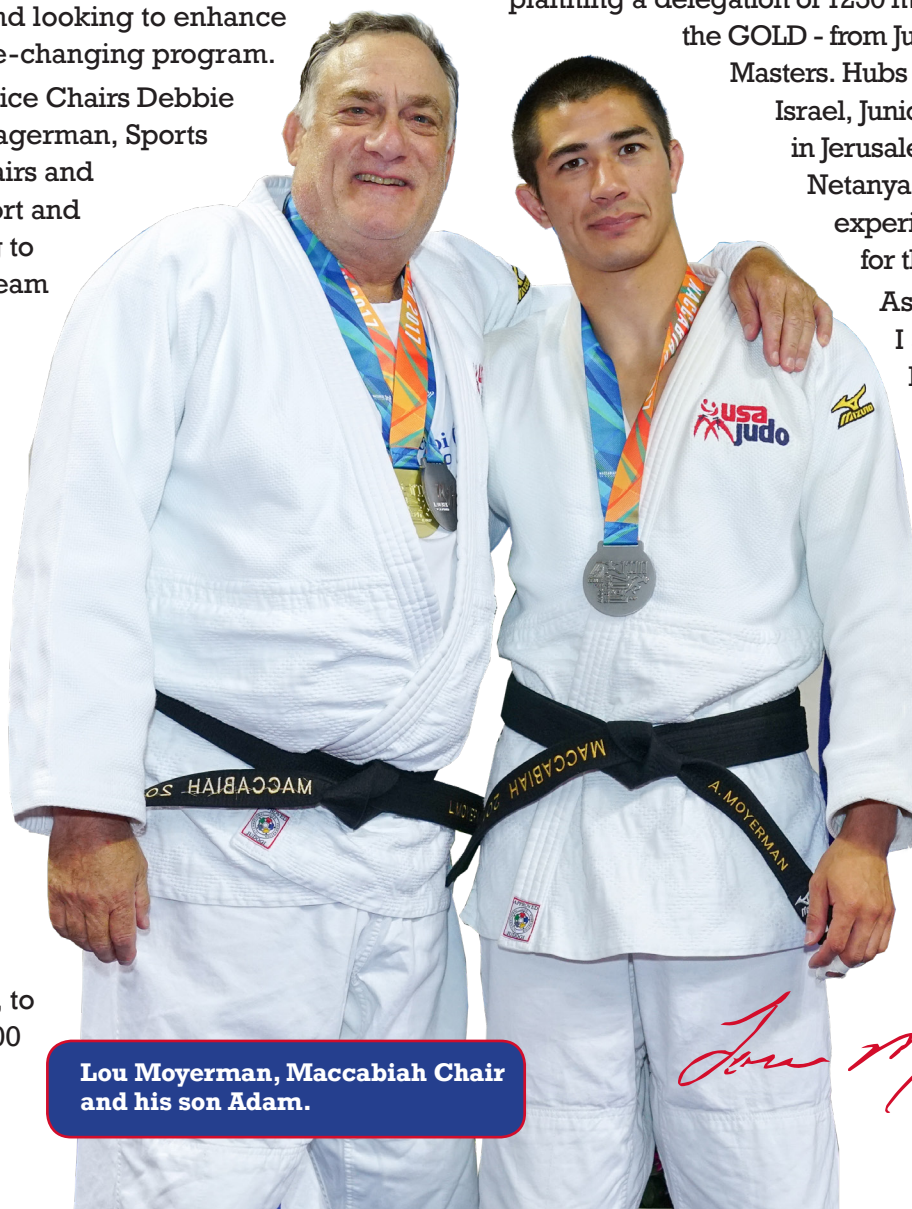
Deb Lichtenfeld, Israel Connect (IC) Chair, is working with a new partner, the iCenter, to implement a \$750,000 grant that will allow

IC to include new ideas and thinking to make this IC program awesome and exciting for our athletes and staff. We expect 1,000 team members to be at the IC and one of our primary goals is to unite team USA with Israeli people of all generations with hands-on activities, programs, and events, making new and lasting friendships. Lev L'Lev (Heart to Heart, our community service project) Co-Chairs Sharon Lifschutz and Michael Monheit are collaborating with the IC planning team on a full delegation day for Lev L'Lev program. And, for the first time ever Master's teams will be invited to join us for the last two days and participate in the Magerman B'nai mitzvah ceremony and our team luncheon.

Our supporters' mission chaired by Shayna Weiss, Stacey Klimchuk and Jeanie Milbauer, will provide programs for all levels of participation amongst our parents and VIP's, spread throughout Israel as our athletes will compete all over the country.

And yes, the Games, the third-largest multi-sport event in the world will be truly special. We are planning a delegation of 1250 members all going for the GOLD - from Juniors through Grand Masters. Hubs established around Israel, Juniors in Haifa, Open in Jerusalem, and Masters in Netanya will make this an experience to remember for their lifetime.

As General Chair I am proud and honored to lead our delegation into Teddy Stadium for the Opening Ceremony. It will be a great moment seeing the USA delegation wrapped around the track as we enter the standing-room-only stadium. Monumental!



Lou Moyerman, Maccabiah Chair
and his son Adam.

Tonja Magerman

Enhanced ISRAEL Connect



Starting as a two-day pre-camp in 1985, Maccabi USA's Israel Connect (IC) grew to become a six-day cultural-educational program in 2001. Over the last 35 years, it has evolved into the educational cornerstone of the Maccabiah experience, enabling our athletes to connect with the history, culture, and people of Israel in the week before the Opening Ceremony.

In 2017, we engaged the Brandeis University Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies to conduct a rigorous program evaluation of the Maccabiah experience to create a data-based approach to program improvements. The great success, as documented in the Brandeis Study, is that Maccabi USA builds powerful and lasting Jewish connections through IC and the Maccabiah. The majority felt that their overall Maccabiah experience was a life-changing encounter with Israel and their Jewish heritage. Feedback consistently indicated that the highlight of the experience is the people they met and the positive relationships they formed. This building of Jewish community is the fundamental strategy towards accomplishing the organizational vision of 'Building Jewish Pride Through Sports'. The study also enabled us to identify ways to enhance IC to make the experience more impactful while still enabling the athletes to prepare for elite competition on the world stage. We are excited to incorporate these changes as we prepare for the next Maccabiah!

One key enhancement is the creation of a Maccabi USA Israel Connect Curriculum developed by experts in the field of Israel education. Starting with the outcome goals of building connections with other participants, to Israel and Israelis, and to overall Jewish peoplehood, experiential venues will be selected to provide a forum in which to facilitate ongoing dialogue. Another key enhancement is the creation of a Maccabi Educator Fellowship Program, a select team of trained professional educators adept at engaging US high school and college students. This cohort of educators will engage athletes during IC itself and continue activities during the two weeks of the Maccabiah.

An important enhancement designed to increase the sense of connection between our delegation and the people of Israel is the expansion of Maccabi USA Lev L'Lev (Heart to Heart) Program, our signature Tikun Olam effort, to include all junior, youth and open athletes during IC.

A final goal is to promote more opportunities for our Masters athletes to engage with our overall delegation. To accomplish this, the 21st Maccabiah IC will include an opportunity for Masters athletes to join the experience and connect meaningfully with the rest of the delegation before the Games begin.

We look forward to rolling out these changes and ushering Israel Connect into the next chapter in its evolution!



Maccabi USA Summer

Thank you for sharing your shoutouts and memorable images from Summer 2019.



Photo by: Todd Rubinstein



Photo by: Todd Rubinstein



Photo by: Shawn Forer

Dahlia Rappaport: The junior tennis team and I would love it if Coach Lonnie could be recognized. He was such an amazing, knowledgeable coach, who taught us valuable life lessons in an engaging manner every day. Lonnie truly cares about others and his Jewish community. Keep Embracing Adversity Lonnie!



Photo by: Sarah Edelson

Mitchell Kurtz: I really do think that these coaches did an outstanding job and should be recognized: Jayson Polykoff-Open Men's Basketball, Alison Ojeda-Open Tennis, Dena Madden-Tennis, Soda Persi-Gymnastics.



Photo by: Emma Dayan

Faith Landau: My daughter played in the USA women's open soccer & as a mom that went on the supporters trip, I thought that Coach Jeff made the entire experience much more meaningful to us. His demeanor throughout the games was sincere and uplifting. Coach Jeff was definitely a highlight of our family's first Maccabi games experience.



SHOUTOUTS

Susana Huaman: Coach Soda Persi made my first Maccabi Games unforgettable. At 13 years old and one of the youngest athletes, heading to Mexico City to compete for the USA as a junior gymnast was overwhelming. Coach Soda helped me believe in myself and told my team that today was our day to do great things, this is what we have been preparing for. She made it fun! Maccabi wouldn't have been great without Coach Soda!



Photo by: Philip Edelstein



Lindsay Rescott: The entire open women's volleyball team in Mexico City! I was the oldest member by 10 years to some and I will never forget my experience and the incredible young women I got to meet!



Photo by: Allison Epstein

Marlene Bruten Oly: My swim team in Mexico. First experience with them and 55 medals won – amazing!

Arielle Schneider:

Sara Messinger: Without you, Budapest wouldn't have been the Maccabi experience I love and cherish.

Photo by: Sarah Edelson



Chad Arthur: Gymnastics team 2019, congrats on the GOLD medal.



Photo by: Donald Kent

Building the Maccabi Community

My dear friends at Maccabi USA!

I have been fortunate to serve as your Israeli Shaliach emissary for the past two-and-a-half years. During this time, I have had the opportunity to be part of Maccabi USA's professional team during Games in Mexico, Budapest, and Israel and to help develop special programs and engagement opportunities for our American Maccabi community.



These programs emphasize our responsibility and obligation to the next generation of Jewish athletes, our athletes with physical disabilities, and our alumni. I'm excited to share with you some of these new ways we are building Jewish pride through sports.

With the help of Maccabi USA's Para-sports chair Stuart Greenberg we launched Maccabi Access. This program was a 10-day sports and educational journey in Israel for Jewish wheelchair basketball players. In May 2019, eight Maccabi players from all over the country traveled with me to Israel to compete against their Israeli counterparts. We played four games against Israeli wheelchair Basketball teams, toured the

country north to south, and enjoyed exceptional hospitality at the various sports centers in Israel. Our athletes came home with a deeper understanding of their Jewish heritage and a feeling of connection to the Israeli Jewish para-basketball community.

In August 2019, following the vision of Maccabi USA's Wrestling chair Chris Feder, we held the first ever international wrestling training camp for Jewish teens in Israel. This program served a new age group that is not a part of the Maccabiah and helps create a community of outstanding Jewish wrestlers for future games. Thanks to our great relationship with the Israeli Wrestling Association and generous support of several individuals we were able to bring together a team of ten teens aged



14-17 to train and compete with their counterparts from Israel, Russia, and Dagestan.

The majority of the time we stayed in the city of Beer-Sheva in the Negev desert but had a great time touring Israel from Rosh-Hanikra to Jerusalem and Sderot. Our young wrestlers also had the opportunity to discover a different side of Israel, volunteering at a remote farm and visiting a thriving Kibbutz. This

trip was so successful that we are already receiving applications for our next camp in 2020!

Lastly, on last President's Day weekend, Maccabi USA's Senior Director of Strategic Initiatives Dan Kurtz and I led the inaugural Alumni Leadership Seminar for 12 of our dynamic and passionate alumni leaders. This gathering provided us an opportunity to create the first of many alumni cohorts who chose to step up their involvement in our organization. Together with these dedicated individuals we designed several projects that will engage additional alumni and produce multiple opportunities to discover and contribute to Maccabi USA.

Although my term as your Shaliach will be over this

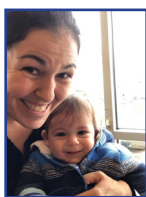
summer, I continue working relentlessly on additional projects for our organization. My goal is to establish a solid foundation for my successor to build on. Thank you for providing me the opportunity to serve!

Daniel Gurevich



Maccabi USA NEWS:

Mazel Tov to **Marcie Kelbanow** (Junior Girls Soccer Coach, 20th Maccabiah) on the birth of a baby boy, Cody.



Mazel Tov to **Jessica Chadwin Hoepfl** (Maccabi USA Junior Girls Lacrosse Coach, 20th Maccabiah) on the birth of a baby boy, Charlie.



Mazel Tov to **Joey Braha** (Masters 35+ Basketball, PanAm 2019) on the birth of a baby boy, Eli.

David Zimmerman's (Junior Boys Basketball, 14th Pan AM) Yavneh Academy basketball team won the state title in Texas.

Mazel Tov to **Jaime Goldberg** (Athletic Trainer) on her marriage to Chris Toldero.

Mazel Tov to **Eric Holtz** (Junior Boys Baseball Coach, Maccabiah 2013, 2017) on coaching Israel Baseball to an Olympic berth for the Tokyo Games.

Mazel Tov to **Logan Spector** (16U basketball, 2019 European Maccabi Games) who was named Defensive Player of the Year on the Varsity Boys Basketball team at The Weber School in Atlanta, GA.

Mazel Tov to **Lou Moyerman** (Maccabi USA Alumni and 21st Maccabiah Chair) on the birth of a grandson, Jack.



Mazel Tov to **Zach Weinberg** (Jr. Girls Volleyball Coach, 13th Pan AM) on the birth of a baby boy, Ian Michael.



Members of the Maccabi USA family we have lost

Jim Lewis (Maccabiah 2009, 2013, EMG 2011) Bowling

Larry Shane (Maccabiah 1985, 1989, 1993) Open Men's Softball Coach

Bill Steerman Long time board member and Maccabiah Organizing Committee 1985, 93, 97, 89 and 2009

Please share your news with us! Send us updates (maccabi@maccabiusa.com) and we will include in our next communication.

THANK YOU TO OUR SUPPORTERS!

21st MACCABIAH as of 3/17/2020

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Maccabi USA

BUILDING JEWISH PRIDE THROUGH SPORTS

United States Committee Sports for Israel

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