

NUUK 2016
Arctic Winter Games



3 – March 7 2016

ULU NEWS



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Let these games outlast the storm

Drum-dancing, modern music and the cheers of eager participants rang in the official start of AWG2016 Sunday evening

By Noah Mølgaard
ulunews@awg2016

Storms never last. Those words were as true four decades ago, when they were first recorded by Dr. Hooks, as they were last night, during the opening ceremony of AWG2016.

For many of those on hand, the storm that kept them from reaching Nuuk on time was already forgotten and the tired look on their faces had been replaced by smiles and expectant eyes when they arrived at Inussivik field house, where the opening ceremony took place.

The evening offered the audience of athletes and other participants, special guests, volunteers and paid spectators a guided tour of Greenlandic music that ranged from drum dancing to pop.

Already in a good mood before the show began, the audience roared to life when the delegations, led by their flag bearers, arrived at Inussivik to be wel-

comed by hosts Maren Louise Poulsen Kristensen and Hans-Henrik Suersaq Poulsen.

Denmark's Crown Prince Frederik, the patron of AWG2016, who had donned a blue Greenlandic anorak for the occasion, joined other special guests attending the ceremony, including the Mayor Asii Chemnitz Narup and Jens Brinch, the president of AWG International Committee.

Addressing the athletes and the cultural participants, Nivi Olsen, Greenland's culture minister, urged them to use the games to make great moments.

Her words echoed those of Maliina Abelsen, the AWG2016 general manager, who recalled how her participation in AWG1992 created lasting memories for her.

As the cauldron was lit, the opening ceremony, like the storm before it, wound down, and the games could finally begin.



Photo: Leifff Josefsen

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Rock band small time giants gets the audience going during the opening ceremony

Photo: Leifff Josefson



Photo: Leifff Josefson

Time for the games to begin

The faces of AWG2016

A big show needs big hosts. The AWG2016 opening ceremony was hosted by the two of the biggest Greenlandic personalities of them all

By Nathan Kreutzmann
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Few outside of Greenland are likely familiar with the names Hans-Henrik Suersaq Poulsen and Maren-Louise Poulsen Kristensen, but after tonight, AWG2016 participants will have experienced a taste of what the country's two most popular personalities have to offer.

Poulsen, an actor, is new to the hosting business, but his partner in crime for the opening ceremony Kristensen is experienced hosting major national events. With eight years of experience as a news anchor and a variety of entertainment shows on TV, she has plenty of advice.

"Don't be stressed and just take it easy," she says.

On the morning of the opening ceremony the air is full of excitement during the rehearsals at Inussivik field house. Even though Kristensen and Poulsen ap-

pear calm and prepared as they stand on the stage, there is also a certain amount of tension. At one point a slip up with the background video got Poulsen out of his rhythm, but he quickly recovers.

Both hosts are dressed in traditional Greenlandic outfits. For Poulsen, that is a white anorak. For Kristensen, is the colorful outfit worn by the women of western Greenland. When the Greenlandic national anthem was played during rehearsal, both hosts spontaneously joined in.

Stepping off the stage after the rehearsal, Poulsen's calm has been replaced by another emotion.

"I'm so excited," he says. "It's going to be a huge show".

Poulsen and Kristensen will also host the closing ceremony on Friday at 7pm.



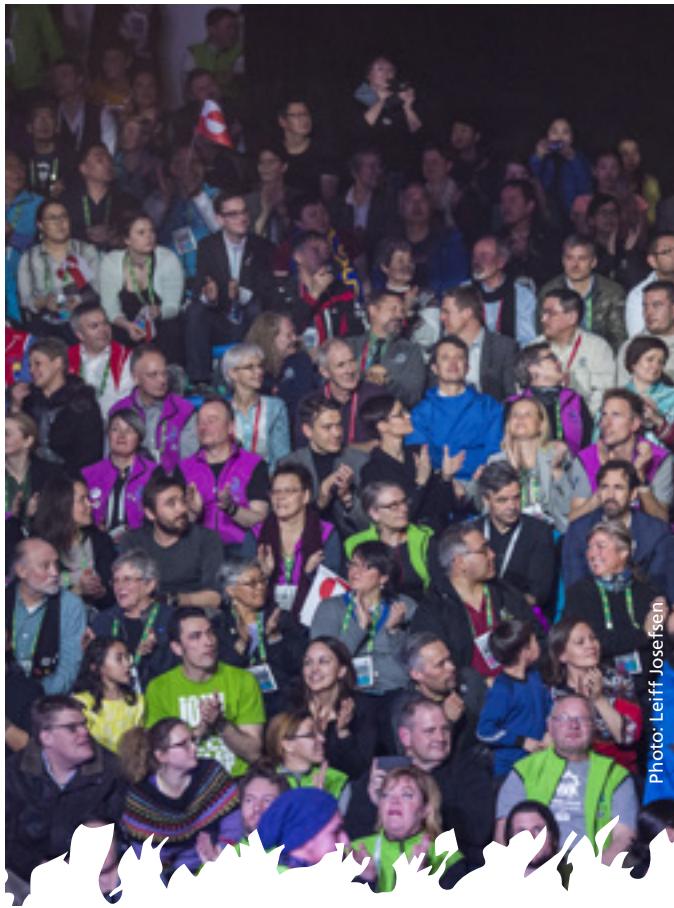


Photo: Leifff Jørgensen

Run on opening-ceremony tickets

The opening and closing ceremonies are an important part of the AWG experience. But for those not involved, getting hold of the hottest ticket in town was all but impossible.

About 3,000 people attended last night's show, thousands of others tuned into KNRs broadcast.

Even though more tickets could have been sold, the number was limited for safety reasons.

"Fewer people this can attend this year than attended during the 2002 AWG because back then there were no seats in the building. Everyone stood, which means more room," said Knud Petersen, who is responsible for safety

at Inussivik field house.

Aviâja Lyberth Lennert, director of sponsorship for AWG2016, confirmed there weren't many tickets for sale to the public.

"The floor will be filled with all the delegations and audience will only be able to use the seated part of the field house. Approximately half of the tickets have been given to special guests from Greenland and abroad, volunteers, our partners and our sponsors," Lennert said.

For the opening ceremony yesterday, 520 tickets were on sale to the public and 580 were reserved for non-paying guests. (AMP)

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Let their games begin (finally)

After nearly two days of delays for some, participants finally arrived in Nuuk on Sunday. Here's what they had to say about getting here – and finally being here

By Ane-Marie Petersen

Photo: Nukaaka Tobiassen

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Evelyn Rose Rush
17, Alaska
Volleyball

What do you think about the delayed arrivals?

I think it was kind of fun and added to the experience. We bonded with our team some more because we are coming from all over Alaska, it's not just one place. So we get to meet our teammates and get to know each other more. I think it helps us and make us a better team.

What are your expectations?

I'm just really excited to meet people. I'm excited to find out how their volleyball skills are and what other people's take is on volleyball.

What's your first impression of Greenland?

Beautiful.



Adam Empson
18, Alaska
Volleyball

What do you think about the delayed arrivals?

It was lot of trouble getting here, but we're finally here. I'm ready to play and I think my team is also ready.

What are your expectations?

I planning to win gold and take it back to Alaska.

What's your first impression of Greenland?

Snow, ice and little cold. But I'm used to it.



Skye Shipgon
18, Alaska
Basketball

What do you think about the delayed arrivals?

It wasn't bad. It was really nice in Kangerlussuaq and really pretty. We went out and explored for a day. And played some soccer.

What are your expectations?

To have fun and play ball with my teammates. Just get to know everybody and meet new people.

What's your first impression of Greenland?

It's really nice. And there is a lot of nice people. It's a nice place



Julia Noriin
17, Alaska
Basketball

What do you think about the delayed arrivals?

First, I was a little disappointed because I wanted to get here and get into the gym and start shooting ball. But just being with my team was kind of a little easier, to hangout and get prepared. It wasn't that bad.

You're finally here, how are you feeling?

It's better that we're here now and I'm feeling a bit better. Being able to have a good night's sleep. I feel good now.

What are your expectations?

It's cold here because I'm from Juneau (in southern Alaska, ed.). It doesn't get that cold where I come from.

What's your first impression of Greenland?

I thought it's beautiful. There are no trees but its beautiful.



Lakeisha Flynn
16, Nunavut
Futsal

What do you think about the delayed arrivals?

I am just happy that we got here.

You're finally here, how are you feeling?

A bit nervous but really excited to be here.

What are your expectations?

To have fun.

What's your first impression of Greenland?

I like it.





Dawson Weir
14, Yukon
Futsal

What do you think about the delayed arrivals?

It kind of sucks that we didn't get here right away. But it was okay, we were met by great hospitality in Kangerlussuaq.

You're finally here, how are you feeling?

It's nice that we arrived before the games begin so we don't have to play immediately.

What are your expectations?

I'm not really expecting anything. I'm just here to see what the event has to offer and hope for the best.



Kimberly Hokanak
13, Nunavut
Table tennis

What do you think about the delayed arrivals?

I'm pretty tired.

You're finally here, how are you feeling?

I feel so glad.

What are your expectations?

Happy and joyful fun.

What's your first impression of Greenland?

It was so amazing, the mountains are so big.

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Photo: Nita Jøl Larsen

Ready to race

Team Sapmi cross-country skiers were out on the course yesterday sizing up the conditions on their first and only day to prepare for competition

By Paninnguaq Steenholdt
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Sunday around noon the storm was finally over, and for Team Sapmi, that meant an afternoon of getting ready for the cross-country skiing competition, which begins tomorrow.

At the Ravnedalen cross-country ski venue team members were concentrating on the hills. The athletes appeared cheerful and relieved to be on the slopes, but there was also a sense of seriousness about the first day of competition.

Before leaving for Nuuk, the team had prepared by using on-line maps of Nuuk to get an overview of what the slopes and tracks look like in the hopes it would improve their chances of winning.

Christer Åstot, team coach, was expecting dry and old snow in Nuuk, but was pleased to be faced with the opposite.

"The snow is just like the snow we have back home in Norway," he said.

Both Åstot and Team Sapmi skier Hans Erik Sandelin, 15, noted, however, that the courses here were different than in Norway.

"In Norway we have more hills, which is harder for the legs," Sandelin said.

Temmade Amalie Tovås, 16, added: "The view is more horizontal than in Norway."

Regardless, Åstot was just excited for the games to begin. "It is a very beautiful landscape and we're ready and optimistic."

The cross-country competition begins at 10am today at Ravnedalen. Medals will be awarded after the last race of the day, which is set to begin at 1pm.



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Photo: TAWG2016/Bo Kristensen

The biathlon course being tested last March 2015

Shorter track for biathletes

Lack of snow earlier this winter forced organizers of the biathlon competition to shorten the course

By Nathan Kreutzmann
ulunews@awg2016

Despite the additional snow that fell on Friday and Saturday, a warm winter this year means that the biathlon course will be shortened to one kilometer, instead of the planned two kilometers.

The biathlon course is Greenland's first. It was set up last year in the Qinngorput area of the city.

Initially, it was hoped that the track could be the full length, and extra snow was trucked in from different parts of the city, but it proved impossible to come up with enough to cover the full length.

Thirty-three participants in the biathlon ski event and 24 in the biathlon snowshoe

event are taking part in AWG2016. Few Greenlanders participate in the sport, but Svend Sværd, the AWG2014 director of sports, said course would likely be well used after the Games are over.

"It means a lot to Greenland that we have our own biathlon track now. Biathlon is not so popular in Greenland yet, but Greenlanders are good at cross-country skiing and we go hunting and know how to shoot. If you combine these two, you can do biathlon," Sværd said.

The biathlon and cross-country ski events begin today at Qinngorput.



Photo: TAWG2016/Bo Kristensen



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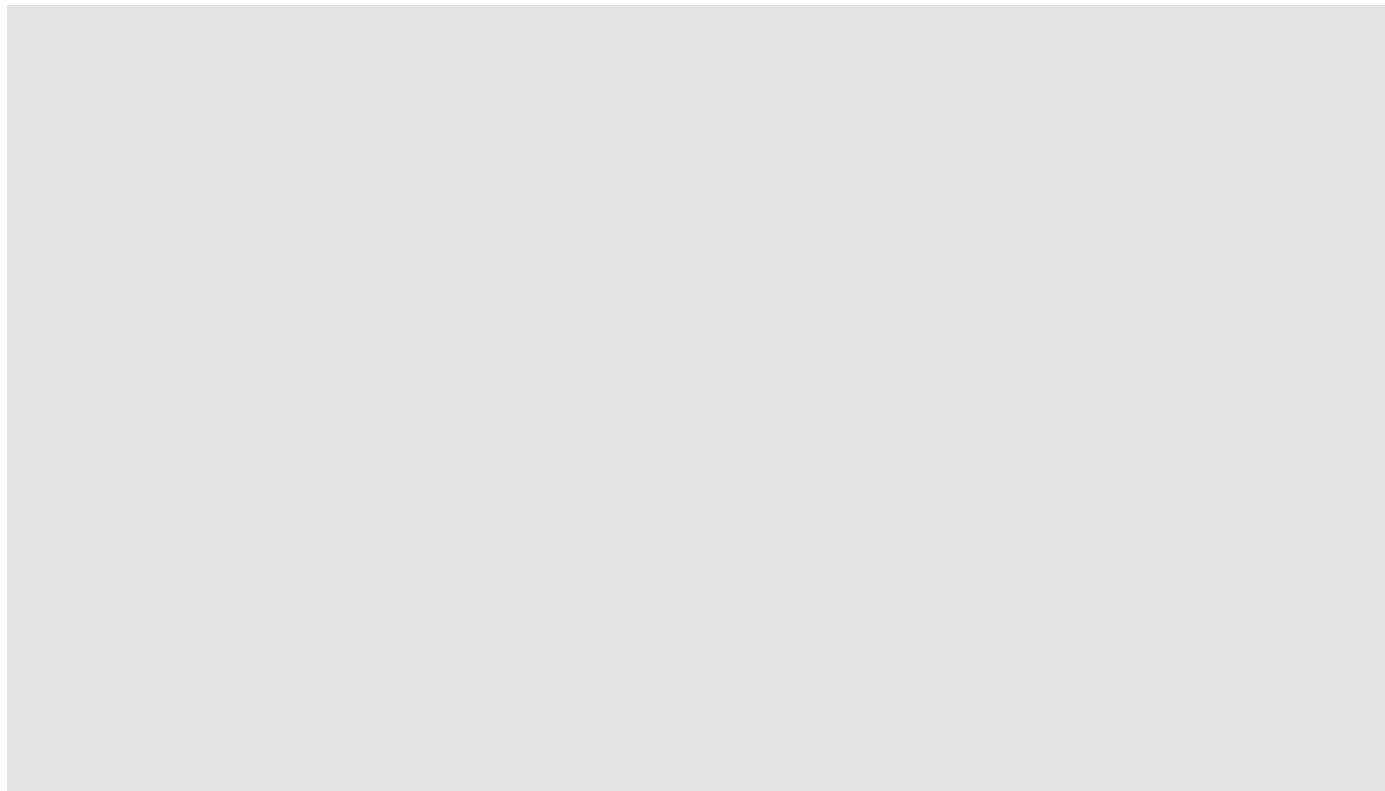
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Greenlandic futsal players practicing

Coming together as a team

AWG is just around the corner. For many of the Greenlandic futsal participants, it is the first time they are meeting each other

By Malu Pedersen
ulunews@awg2016

AWG is just about to start. For those taking part in team events the Games will be as much a test of teamwork as of individual skill.

For the Greenlandic teams, the week leading up to AWG2016 has been a crash course in coming together as a team. Most of the players live far from each other and must train alone.

One of those players is Ivaana Mølgaard Kleist, 14, from Qaqortoq, in southern Greenland.

She plays for one of the three female Greenlandic futsal teams. All her teammates arrived last week in order to practice together before the Games started. Most of them have neither met, let alone played together.

"When we arrived to Nuuk, we started practicing right away. It was great to meet the other players," said Kleist.

She and the other participants had some training programs they were to follow while they were in their hometowns.

Training as a team has also meant finding out which roles everyone had on the court.

"It was hard at first because most of the players was used to playing forward. But we are almost ready and everyone knows which position we have to play," Kleist said.

Since arriving in Nuuk, Kleist and her team have trained every day. She hopes the last minute preparations will be enough to put the team into the medal round.

"I really hope that we take home a medal. I want to win, or at least finish second or third. We haven't seen our contestants yet though, so it's hard to say. But I'm hopeful."



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Photo: Private

When practice is a solitary pursuit

Malik Lars Mølgaard has been preparing for AWG2016 for more than a year. This week, he meets his teammates

By Gaaba Olsen
ulunews@awg2016



AWG2014 was an exciting time for Malik Lars Mølgaard. The competition in Fairbanks was the first time he had ever competed in futsal, a version of indoor soccer.

Mølgaard, 16, is looking forward to taking the court in AWG2016 as a more confident player than he was in Alaska.

"I remember that two years ago I was nervous. Now I'm better prepared. I've practiced a lot more."

Unlike most team-sport players, Mølgaard has been preparing for the Games by himself. His teammates are spread out throughout Greenland so Mølgaard puts in plenty of time on the court with his friends in Qeqertarsuaq instead. Other preparations include running and weight-lifting.

Mølgaard and the rest of the team will gather in Nuuk during the days leading up to the competition for crash preparations in order to learn how to play as a team.

The vast majority of people in Greenland live in isolated towns and settlements along its western coast. Getting together on a regular basis isn't possible,

so, for players on the AWG team, practice is a solitary discipline.

"I played a lot of football in 2014, before taking some time off. I met the national-team coach once in 2015, when he was in town to train with a local men's team. I can't remember precisely what we spoke about, but it's looking forward to the team getting together in Nuuk."

The futsal team has never played together, but Mølgaard knows two of the players from Ilulissat, a nearby town. He too is looking forward to meeting and practicing with the rest of the team.

"As soon as we're all in Nuuk we're going to practice our skills and our tactics," he says.

Football is one of Greenland's most popular sports, and Mølgaard reckons he's been playing since he was seven.

As AWG2016 has approached, he says he's been practicing as much as possible.

"I've practiced a lot more than I did last time. Last time, I didn't know how to practice then. Now I've got a better handle on it, and I can concentrate a lot better during practice."

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Even though AWG 2014 is being held in Nuuk, Team Nunavut will have home-ice advantage

Photo: Troy Bouffard/AWG 2014

Ice hockey in Iqaluit

Nuuk is hosting the Arctic Winter Games this year, but Nunavut's capital is lending a hand too

By Trine Juncher Jørgensen
ulunews@awg2016

Greenland's lack of an indoor ice-skating rink has resulted in a number of events, including figure skating and curling, being left off the AWG2016 program. Initially, ice hockey was left off the programme too, but thanks to an agreement with Iqaluit it will be included after all. The sport is one of the most popular in Canada and Alaska.

In order to get the 200 or so players and their coaches to Iqaluit, they will be flown from Nuuk immediately after the opening ceremony on Saturday. They will be flown back on March 10 in time to attend the closing ceremony.

Boys' and girls' teams compete in the Arctic Winter Games. Normally boys compete in two age groups, midget (ages 14-16) and bantam (16-17). This year, however, there is only one age group. Girls compete in the junior (under 17) age group. Each team is made up 17 players and has two coaches.

Alaska, Yukon, NWT, Alberta North and Nunavut will be competing against each other. A total of 28 games will be played at Iqaluit's two rinks.

Players will stay at Inusuk High School during their stay in Iqaluit.

In 2014, there were 247 ice-hockey players and coaches. Alaska, NWT, Alberta North and Nunavut all entered teams.

North America is the home of ice hockey. The first games were played in

Montréal in 1867. The International Ice Hockey Federation was established in 1908, and today counts 68 countries as members. Ice hockey became an Olympic sport in 1920, and since 1930 there has been an annual world championship.

In ice hockey, two teams of six players try to score against each other by putting the puck in the opponent's goal. A game is three 20-minute periods.

The Canadian national team has racked up more medals and championships than anyone else, including seven Olympic gold and 18 World Championships. Russia, the US, Sweden and Finland are the world's other leading ice-hockey countries.

Skating on home ice, the Alaska delegation swept all three gold medals at AWG2014, winning in boys midget and bantam and girls junior.

Through the years, Alberta has won most ice-hockey gold medals. Alberta's girls' teams have won seven of the nine gold medals available since the Arctic Winter Games began in 1970. The only other girl's team to win gold is Alaska. With eight gold medals, Alberta's bantam boys are also kings of the ice for their age group. Alaska has won three bantam golds and NWT two.

In the midget group, Alaska, has five gold medals, one more than Alberta. NWT and Yukon have both won gold three times.



Team Yukon's girls in action during AWG 2014

Photo: Mark Huffington/AWG 2014



Photo: Mark Huffington/AWG 2014

Stopping a puck coming at you at 120 km an hour takes years of training. The proper equipment doesn't hurt either



Team Alaska's girls' and boys' teams won gold on home ice in 2014

Photo: Jane Tafse/AWG 2014

2014 ice hockey finals

Age group	Gold	Silver	Bronze
Boys, age 14-15 (midget)	Alaska	NWT	Yukon
Boys, age 16-18 (bantam)	Alaska	Alberta North	NWT
Girls, under 17	Alaska	Alberta North	NWT

2012 ice hockey finals

Age group	Gold	Silver	Bronze
Boys, age 14-15 (midget)	Yukon	NWT	Nunavut
Boys, age 16-18 (bantam)	Alberta North	NWT	Alaska
Girls, under 17	Alberta North	Alaska	Yukon



Holly Kubicheck, from Fairbanks, Alaska has played hockey since age 3. She is on her first trip outside Alaska

Ice-hockey teams to miss opening ceremony

The delays caused by the snowstorm in Nuuk will mean that the ice-hockey teams will be flown directly to Iqaluit. The players say they are cool with that, but the coaches worry they'll be missing an important part of the AWG experience

By Martine Lind Krebs
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On Saturday, Alaska's hockey players arrived in Kangerlussuaq Airport with the rest of the Team Alaska contingent. But while the majority of the delegation hunkered down for the night, the ice-hockey team left just a few hours later, bound for Iqaluit.

Iqaluit is hosting the ice-hockey tournament due to a lack of rinks in Nuuk. The athletes didn't seem too disappointed about missing the first visit in Nuuk and the opening ceremony.

"I thought opening ceremonies would be cool, but so is going to Canada," said Holly Kubicheck, 14.

The coaches, though, said they had hoped the players would have had the chance to experience the camaraderie of the opening ceremony.

"We are a little disappointed, especially having been to an opening ceremony

before and knowing what they mean," said Kristin Berenstein, a Team Alaska coach. Berenstein and the other coaches had hoped their players would get to meet the athletes from teams Greenland, Sapmi and Yamal. Now, they will have to wait until after the ice-hockey tournament, when they return to Nuuk for the closing ceremony.

Greenland, Sapmi and Yamal do not participate in hockey.

"I don't think they understand the impact of missing the Opening Ceremonies", said Sean Lungren, another Team Alaska coach. "It's their first time, and they are just excited to be here. They don't realize what they are missing."

The hockey players from Yukon, Alberta North and NWT travelled straight to Iqaluit without stop in Kangerlussuaq Airport.

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Ice-hockey players arrive in Iqaluit without equipment

Improper baggage-handling results in Team Alaska's ice-hockey equipment being left behind in Kangerlussuaq

Team Alaska ice-hockey players arrived in Iqaluit on Saturday in plenty of time to take the ice for their first game on Monday. Their equipment however didn't show up until a day later.

Representatives for Mittarfearfijt, the Greenlandic airport authority, confirmed that some of the equipment had been placed with baggage that was to be sent to Nuuk.

In addition, the team's hockey sticks had been stored with ski poles, which were to be transported to Nuuk aboard a

Danish air-force cargo plane.

Rita Müller, a Mittarfearfijt spokesperson, said the handling error was due to the fact that the equipment had been tagged in a different manner than employees were used to.

The equipment was sent to Iqaluit aboard a First Air flight on Sunday.



Photo: Martine Lind Krabs



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Iana Wrublewska (behind group) and Team Yamal in Kangerlussuaq after almost making it to Nuuk

Photo: Martine Lind Krebs

Team Yamal is the smallest AWG Yamal delegation ever

The Yamal delegation includes 10 people. Practical and financial reasons have resulted in a reduction in the number of participants this year

By Martine Lind Krebs
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In Fairbanks, the Yamal delegation was made up of 101 participants. This year, only Arctic Sports athletes will be participating in the Games, mostly due to a lack of financing in the Russian region.

"This is the smallest Yamal team in AWG history. But travelling to Greenland is difficult, so it would have been a major challenge to bring the entire team. Also, I am sure the athletes who are not here will miss us," said Iana Wrublewska, the team's assistant chef de mission.

Team Yamal left their hometown Salekhard several days ago to go to Moscow. There, it took several days before they could obtain visas. From there they flew to Copenhagen and on then to Kangerlussuaq.

They were supposed to have arrived in Nuuk on the last plane from Kangerlussuaq on Friday. The plane reached Nuuk, but the storm prevented it from landing, they were forced to turn back and spend the next few days at a hotel.

The team consists of four athletes – two female, two male. Also travelling to Nuuk as part of the delegation is Tatiana

Lar, one of the most famous folk singers in the Yamal-Nenet district. She will perform at the music show on Wednesday and Thursday.

Yamal has participated in AWG since 2004, and have come to be among the strongest contenders in the Arctic Sports events. In 2004, they beat the AWG record for sledge jump in all four categories.

The team is also normally does well in cross-country skiing, table tennis, futsal and biathlon, but will not participate in these sports this year.

Wrublewska has attended all of the Games that Team Yamal has participated in.

"It means a lot to us to participate in Arctic Winter Games. We all live in the Arctic region, and it's important to gather together. Also, it is very motivating for our young people to participate and get their first international sporting experience, and to make new friends."

Yamal has yet to host its first winter games, but Wrublewska said it shouldn't be ruled out.

"It's something we dream about. Maybe some day, several years from now."

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Kangerlussuaq, Greenlandic for “a big, extra lunch break”

Even after a 48-hour layover, stranded AWG participants in Kangerlussuaq were still keeping their spirits up

By Martine Lind Krebs, Kangerlussuaq
ulunews@awg2016

The 1,059 stranded participants at Kangerlussuaq Airport, Greenland's main international airport, wound up getting pretty creative in their efforts to kill time while waiting for weather conditions in Nuuk to improve.

Some explored the area, while others practiced futsal in the airport arrival hall.

One of the teams that had the longest layover was Team Alaska. Their plane arrived on Saturday morning at 5:40am. They departed on Sunday mid-morning, about 30 hours later.

Despite the wait, the participants appeared to be enjoying their time in Greenland.

“It’s been super fun,” said Zoë Ratzlaff, who had been exploring the different groceries in the adjacent supermarket and climbing the ridge behind the airport in order to get a glimpse at the icecap.

“This is what we got. We might as well make the most of it,” she said.

Many of the Alaskan athletes figured out how to use the Greenland recycling

system, earning themselves some Danish cash collecting bottles in the airport canteen, said Kelli Boomstra, the Team Alaska show-shoe coach.

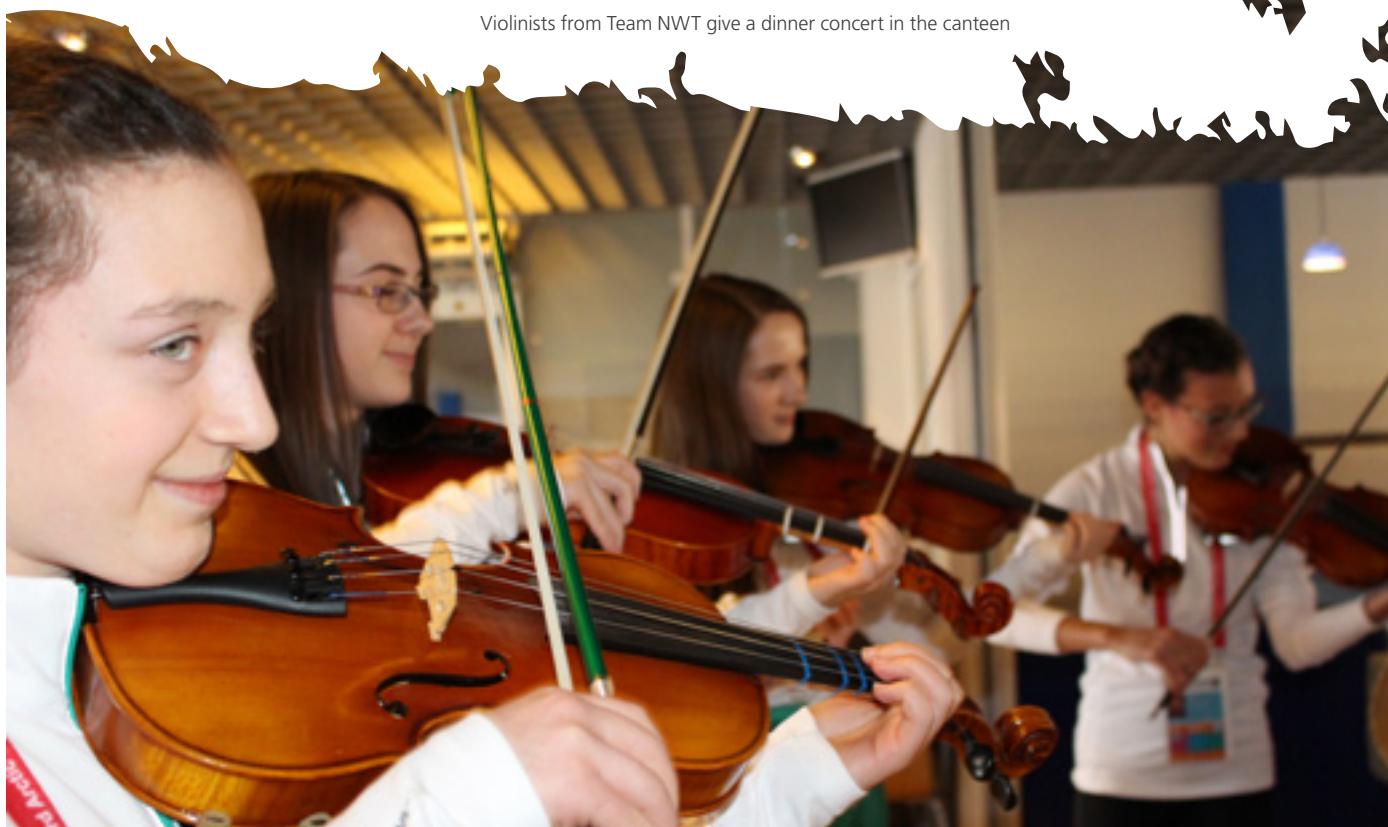
“Being delayed is part of travelling in small communities. It’s similar to the conditions we have back home. You might as well accept it as it is. I’m just glad all our athletes will be in Nuuk in time for the opening,” she said.

Not all athletes share the same luck. Several hundreds participants were scheduled to be on planes that were due to arrive in Nuuk after the 8pm start of the opening ceremony yesterday.

Most of those missing the big show were from Alberta North and NWT. They had been the last to arrive in Kangerlussuaq and were to be among the last to go.

“We’re disappointed, but it is not going to ruin the trip for us,” said Michelle Thorne, a chaperon for the Alberta North Team Culture. “Waiting here is a great bonding opportunity. It’s like a big, extra lunch break.”

Violinists from Team NWT give a dinner concert in the canteen





Emma Jerome, Zoë Ratzlaff, Aubrey LeClair and Mallory Granger,
Team Alaska cross-country skiers, waited for more than 30 hours



Team Nunavik-Quebec used the time to practice their hand-game skills



Alaskan futsal players held an impromptu practice in the arrival hall

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Photo: Trine Juncher Jørgensen

Video journalist Paul Rhys films the blizzards on Friday. He will be sending five reports for Al-Jazeera during AWG2016

Putting Greenland on the map

More than a hundred journalists will be covering AWG2016. Their reasons for coming here vary as greatly as their audiences do

By Trine Juncher Jørgensen
ulunews@awg2016

Paul Rhys is a sport journalist working for Qatar-based Al-Jazeera, which has more than 270 million households in over 140 countries.

"I was asked to go to Greenland to locate stories about the Arctic Winter Games, the athletes and the societies in the north. I look for stories with a social angle and of human interest. I like the Arctic sports and the Dene disciplines, which is totally different from other competitions. I haven't seen anything like that before," Rhys said.

During his six days in Nuuk, he will need to file five reports, each lasting precisely two minutes and 20 seconds. No more, no less.

Another household name of the media

world, National Geographic, is also covering AWG2016. Journalist Andrew Evans just arrived in Nuuk, and he is ready to write stories for the American magazine's website, as well as for Smithsonian magazine.

Evans mostly writes about travel and recently published that ranked Greenland as one of the top destinations for 2016.

"I'm really interested in the Inuit culture here in Greenland. It's one of the strongest indigenous cultures in the world today, and I love the Arctic Winter Games and the symbol of how the culture is unified across national borders and across politics. This very ancient culture is indeed alive and well and has very strong bonds. I want to tell that story to the Americans. >>

The winter games are important for Greenland. It's not just the athletes. It's much bigger. It's about putting Greenland on the map," Evans said

Friendships across borders

Heather Hintze has travelled to Nuuk all the way from Alaska to report for TV station KTVA. The Nuuk Games are her second AWG.

"I covered the Arctic and the Dene sports in Fairbanks two years ago. That's my specialty. I'm probably covering the Arctic sports again. I like seeing how the different cultures come together, and how the kids react to each other and how they pitch in to help. It doesn't matter where you are from, as long as you are striving to do your best and helping others to do there best. That's what I really love about the AWG" Hintze said, adding that her favorite Arctic sports events to cover are the two-foot high-kick and the knuckle hop.

From Greenland to the world

Over 100 journalists are accredited to report from AWG2016. Among the news outlets represented are:

- The Arctic Journal (Greenland)
- CBC News (Canada)
- Monocle (UK)
- Northern News Services (Nunavut)
- NRK Sapmi (Norway)
- Nunatsiaq News (Nunavut)
- Nunavut News North
- Politiken (Denmark)
- Radio Canada International
- Sami Sport Association
- State TV Yamal (Russia)
- SUCH TV News (Pakistan)
- SVT (Sweden)
- Transworld Sport (UK)
- ZDF (Germany)
- 365 Days of Sport (Australia)

A stepping stone for Greenland

The last time the AWG was in Greenland was in 2002. At that time, Nuuk co-hosted with Iqaluit. This time, Greenland and its 56,000 residents are going it alone

By Malu Pedersen
ulunews@awg2016

Fourteen years ago Greenland held the biggest event in its history. AWG 2002 saw 800 participants come to Nuuk, which co-hosted the event together with Iqaluit.

The 2002 Games involved the participation of 900 volunteers. This year, nearly twice as many will help out.

"Planning AWG 2002 took a lot of work. It was the first time Greenland was host, but we had some experience putting on events and we were given guidelines to follow. There are a lot more requirements now, and more security," says Claus Nielsen, the sports director for the 2002 Games and who this year is serving as a committee member for the Dene Games.

Hosting AWG 2002 gave Greenland the opportunity to show the world that it can host major events, according to Nielsen.

"AWG 2002 was the biggest event

Greenland ever had hosted. This year's is even bigger. Putting it on will show that we can host other events, like big conferences," he said.

Noah Mølgaard, a Greenlandic journalist who has reported from every AWG since 1994 explains that the 2002 Games had an impact on Greenland well after the guests returned home.

"Having that many volunteers generated a lot of energy in Nuuk, and after the games we saw youth club get set up. It will be interesting to see what will happen this year. For example, Greenland is starting to play futsal against other countries, so hosting international tournaments is now a possibility," Mølgaard says.

Nielsen, too, reckons that Greenland is now showing that it is capable of hosting big events.

"We are promoting our country and putting it on the map. We're showing that it is not just a land of ice."



Some 500 participants took part in the first AWG in Yellowknife. Participating territories were NWT, Alaska and Yukon

The greatest show in the Arctic

The Arctic Winter Games is closing in on 50 years. What started off as a regional North American competition has grown to encompass nine Arctic territories. Hosting them has become an accomplishment in and of itself

By Trine Juncher Jørgensen
ulunews@awg2016

When the first AWG was held in NWT in 1970, the idea was to give athletes from the region a competition of their own. That year, some 500 participants, coaches and delegation officials, primarily from Alaska, Yukon and NWT, took part. Since then, the number of participants and participating countries has grown continually. Today, nine territories send delegations. In Nuuk, 1,200 athletes will compete in 15 sports. Some 1,700 volunteers will help out during the Games.

AWG is more than just sports. Culture, friendship and regional cooperation are just as important, and during the week there will be plenty of non-sporting events, including art exhibits, dance recitals and other cultural exchanges.

In its early years, AWG was mostly a North American event, but by 1980 it was ready to expand, and Alberta, British Columbia, Greenland, Manitoba and Saskatchewan were invited to take part. The response was lukewarm, and in 1988, the AWG International Committee (AWGIC), which is responsible for putting on the Games, decided to reorganize how they would be held.

One goal was to attract more media and political attention to the games th-

rough better marketing and fundraising. Another way this was done was by including Inuit and Dene games in the competition.

Getting more countries involved was also important. In 1992, the first Russian athletes from Magadan took part, and in 1993, Greenland became a member of AWGIC. In 1994, more Russian athletes, these from Tyumen, took part. Initially, the Russian athletes received funding from the AWGIC to compete in the Games, but it was later decided that territories must pay for their own delegations to take part. In 1996, Nunavut joined the AWGIC, and 2002 saw the first time the Games were hosted by two territories, when Nuuk and Iqaluit co-hosted.

The 18th AWG in Alberta North, in 2004, saw the addition of Sapmi, the Saami area of Norway, Sweden, Finland and Russia, and Yamal, Russia, to the territories taking part. The AWG now included participants stretching from Alaska in the west to Russia in the east and with the growth followed increasing national and international media attention.

Alaska hosted the 23rd AWG, in 2012. This year, Nuuk hosts the games. It will be the biggest event in the country's history.



AWG hosts – past, present, future

1970: Yellowknife, NWT
1972: Whitehorse, Yukon
1974: Anchorage, Alaska
1976: Schefferville, Quebec
1978: Hay River, NWT
1980: Whitehorse, Yukon
1982: Fairbanks, Alaska
1984: Yellowknife, NWT
1986: Whitehorse, Yukon
1988: Fairbanks, Alaska
1990: Yellowknife, NWT
1992: Whitehorse, Yukon
1994: Slave Lake, Alberta
1996: Anchorage, Alaska
1998: Yellowknife, NWT
2000: Whitehorse, Yukon
2002: Nunavut and Nuuk, Canada and Greenland
2004: Wood Buffalo, Alberta
2006: Kenai Peninsula Borough, Alaska
2008: Yellowknife, NWT
2010: Grande Prairie, Alberta
2012: Whitehorse, Yukon
2014: Fairbanks, Alaska
2016: Nuuk, Greenland
2018: Hay River and Fort Smith, NWT

AWGIC

The role of the Arctic Winter Games International Committee (AWGIC) is to establish the guidelines for the Games and to promote the philosophies and principles behind them. The AWGIC's 12 members are also responsible for selecting the host for future games, whether territories should be added and which sports should be on the program. The committee meets four times a year.

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Photo: Leifff Josefsef

Dr Jesper Olesen and his staff are ready to help, should the unexpected occur

Ready to help

Nuuk's hospital will have additional staff on hand during AWG

By Marie Kuitse Kristensen
ulunews@awg2016

Even though AWG athletes are young and healthy, accidents during AWG 2016 are possible. Should something happen, Nuuk's hospital will be ready to help.

"We're going to have more doctors, nurses and physiotherapists on staff during the Games," said

Dr Jesper Olesen, the chief medical officer for the Nuuk region.

There will be 10% more people in the city than normal during AWG. Olesen doesn't expect that will have much of an effect on the hospital, but the additional staffing will ensure the hospital can provide medical assistance if needed.

Especially physiotherapy is something the hospital wants to make sure it can help with.

The hospital doesn't usually have a physiotherapist on duty every day, but given the likelihood of a sports-related injury

occurring during an event that involves the participation of 2,000 athletes, the hospital decided it would be a good idea to have one available all week.

Normally, hospitals in Greenland can only treat residents with a national healthcare number. During their stay here, AWG athletes have been granted a temporary number giving them access to the hospital in Nuuk. For this reason, a special telephone number has been set up that foreigners involved in accident can call should they need emergency-room assistance. If you are a foreigner and need help, call: 34 44 08.

Emergency numbers
Emergency room: 34 44 08
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Fire: 113
Police: 70 14 48

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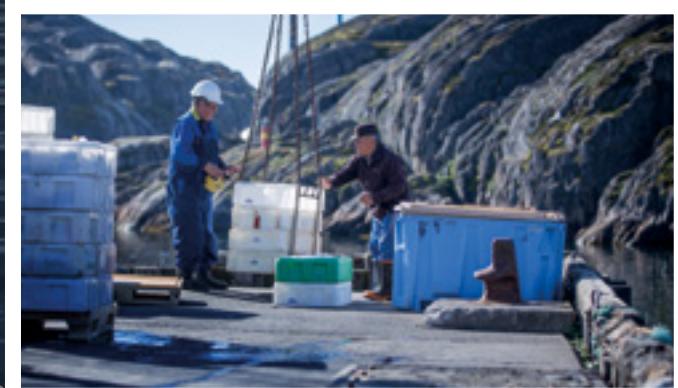
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Photo: Private

Arnaq Johansen will be volunteering at various events

Worth the trip

For volunteers travelling to Nuuk to help out at AWG, the trip is long, but Arnaq Johansen says she is happy to do it

By Gaaba Olsen
ulunews@awg2016

Putting on AWG2016 requires at least 1,700 volunteers. Most of them will come from Nuuk, but even though it is Greenland's largest city, the organisers have appealed to people from other places to help out. For Arnaq Johansen, travelling the 517km to Nuuk from Qasigiannguit requires a 20 minute helicopter ride, followed by two-hour flight.

"When I found out that my daughter was going to be taking part in the futsal competition, I decided that I needed to go to Nuuk to cheer her on. When I found out after that AWG needed volunteers, and I figured that I am there I can help out," Johansen says.

Johansen describes herself as a sports fan, but Greenland's size makes it im-

possible to travel to attend all the events she'd like. AWG, however, was must.

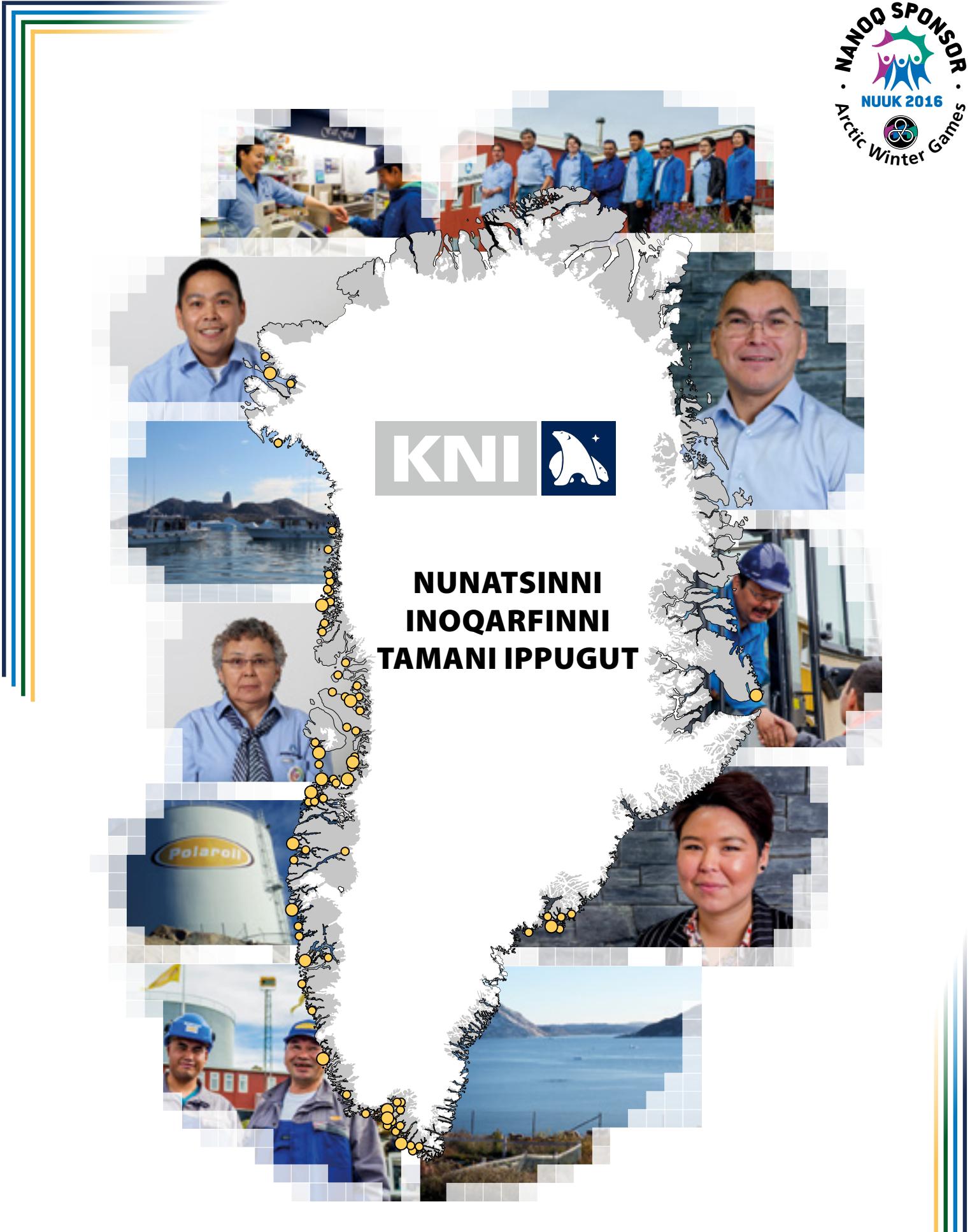
"Sports have come to mean a lot more to me since my daughter began taking an interest in them. But going to AWG is more than me going to cheer on my daughter, it's about helping our country. It's not every day that AWG comes to town, and everyone is looking forward to attending," she says.

Even though the coming week is going to be a busy one, Johansen says she expects it will be a lot of fun.

"AWG is important for me. I always help out at games, and during AWG I'll be there to encourage all the participants, not just my daughter," Johansen says.



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The unofficial event

People huddling in a circle around a table or on the floor is usually a sign that they are engaged in pin-trading, the AWG's unofficial event

By Martine Lind Krebs
ulunews@awg2016

Pin-trading has often been referred to as the 21st sport of Arctic Winter Games. (With only fifteen sports at AWG2016 this year pin trading maybe can be renamed to the sixteenth.)

According to a publication from the Alaska State Museum exhibit on AWG, pin trading was not originally a major part of AWG. Prior to AWG 1976, only two pins had been produced: a small ulu pin released by the AWG International Committee and a 1974 Anchorage Host Society pin. However, in 1976 the AWGIC decided to start making pins for every AWG to encourage interaction between participants.

In the following years the numbers of pins produced grew. During AWG 1984, 28 were available, including a pin for each of the sports. Since then, there have been about 80 official pins for each AWG. The total number of pins can be twice as high, however.

All contingents, except Team Sapmi, usually produce pins. The sponsors, as well as CBC News, the host society, the contingents and the Arctic Winter Games

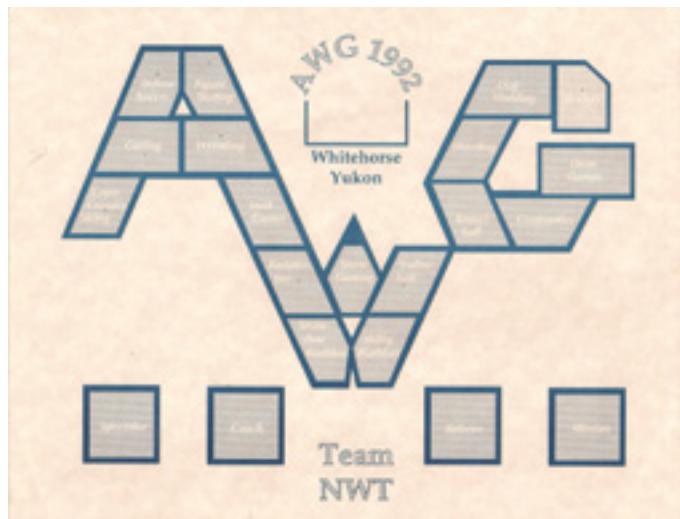
International Committee also release pins.

Some pins are more popular than others, either because of their design or because they are rare. Among the most popular are the first golden ulu from AWGIC, the CBC's gold inukshuk from 1978, the gold Alaska map from 1978 and the individual sports pins from Team NWT in 1992.

Sometimes the pins can be assembled to form a design. Also known as puzzle pins, in the past, these have included a 1992 set of 17 sports pins that form the letters A-W-G. Other examples of pins that add up to a pattern are the Team Alaska's totem pole from 2012, and the AWG2014 raven.

The organizers of AWG2016 will release 11 give-away pins during the Games. The Greenland contingent is selling 25 sport and contingent pins, while the main sponsors will release a set of pins that form a polar bear.

"Pins play a major part in AWG. It's like an extra sport. Participants use it as a way to meet across cultures, countries and sports," said Arina Kleist, an AWG 2016 employee.



Some of the most popular AWG pins of all time: a gold ulu from 1972, the CBC gold inukshuk from 1978, the gold Alaska map from 1978 and NWT's 17-pin set that combines to form the letters A-W-G

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George Smith is retired director of the Alaska State Library, Archives and Museums



Photo: Private

My children for a pin

For George Smith, collecting pins is something more than a hobby. His collection includes almost every AWG pin ever made. In duplicate

By Martine Lind Krebs
ulunews@awg2016

George Smith first became aware of AWG pins when he was a member of the Team Alaska delegation in 1992.

"I saw all these kids and adults trading pins, and I found that very interesting. On the last two days I started collecting myself," Smith recalls.

Smith, a retired director of the Alaska State Library, Archives and Museums, was a member of the Team Alaska delegation from 1992 to 1996, and he served on the board of directors from 1996 to 2005. He has since retired and moved away from Alaska, but his pin-collecting goes on.

At one point as part of his job, he came across some boxes with documents and items from the first Arctic Winter Games, in 1970. He offered to archive them for the Alaska State Museum. The items things like uniforms, posters and pins, and he decided it would be worthwhile to expand the collection.

Smith contacted people who had participated in the first games and found that people were eager to help. Pins, flags and uniforms all started streaming in, and Smith decided to donate his own collection of pins.

Today he has collected about 1,700 different AWG pins for the collection. To make the story even more incredible he has done this twice, gathering one set for display, one to keep in storage. The first set of the collection is three pins away from completion and the second set lacks 10.

"I think I know all the pins of the Arctic Winter Games," he says.

Smith has also collected every AWG poster ever made. In 2006 he curated the first Arctic Winter Games exhibition for the Alaska State Museum. The exhibition was on display during AWG 2008, 2010 and 2014. It has already been incorporated into the cultural program of AWG 2018 in South Slave, NWT, but sadly is not on display this year.

Though retired, Smith attends all the Arctic Winter Games with his wife. Keeping the collection complete has become easier now since the individual AWG committees and contingents always save two copies of all their pins for him.

"Now I can just spend my time playing around with the kids, giving them pins," he says.

All contingents, except Sapmi, release pins for each AWG. Yamal started four games ago.

"Their pins are very small but really nice," Smith says. He is also a great fan of the Greenland pins.

"They are the nicest in terms of design. There was one, all in gold, picturing a person in parka. That was so beautiful," he says.

Each AWG has a couple of pins that people really like and try their best to get a hold of. Some of the older pins have become very popular throughout the years. Among the most coveted, according to Smith, is a pin in the shape of Alaska from 1978 and the first pin issued by the AWG International Committee in 1972.

"These are the ones you will sell your children to get," he laughs.

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The taste of Kangerlussuaq

Ulu News asked some of the stranded passengers to review the field rations they were given during their involuntary layover in Kangerlussuaq

By Winnie Filemonsen
ulunews@awg2016

What was for dinner?

Normally, the rations supplied to the athletes stranded in Kangerlussuaq the past few days are given to Danish soldiers. With over 3,000 calories in each meal, a ration is designed to keep a soldier going for a full day.

Typical contents include:

Freeze-dried breakfast (oatmeal with berries, or the like)
Freeze-dried dinner (chili con carne, pasta in spicy sauce or the like)
4 pieces of rye bread
Packet of cocoa
2 packets of drink mix
Can of tuna
Package liver pâté
2 packets of ketchup
3 alcohol swabs
3 packets of sugar
Packet of fruit porridge
Packet of cheese spread
2 packets of jam
Packet of crackers
2 packs of nutmix
3 packs of chewing gum
3 teabags
3 packs of coffee
3 packets of salt
3 packets of pepper
2 nut bars
2 toothpicks
Eating utensils
Toothbrush

The meals were provided by the Danish military's Arctic Command to the AWG2016 in the event of emergencies, like the stormy weather we've experienced for the last couple of days.



Avery Bramadat – Yukon

We had some army food, dried food. It was interesting. I really liked the Asian chicken and rice, I don't know exactly what it was called, but I only ate that.

Lily Whyman – Alaska

I kind of threw most of that stuff away, because there was like canned tuna and canned chicken, and then there was like these mashed potatoes it was beef, and I was like, "No. I'm sorry I can't do it." It smelled bad. I don't really have any favorite food in that box, but maybe raisins.



Tasha Leigh – Yukon

It was pretty good, it was different you just added water, they're pretty good. I liked how it was really easy to make and accessible, but some of the weird flavors aren't good.

