



JCC Maccabi Games 2026 Information Packet



Hi!

We are thrilled that you are interested in learning more about the JCC Maccabi Games, and possibly participating with the 2026 Team San Diego!

As the largest Jewish Youth event in the world, the JCC Maccabi Games create an experience that you will remember for a lifetime. Our teens, coaches, and families form meaningful relationships that transcend the week of JCC Maccabi and the boundaries of geography. JCC Maccabi teens have gone on to compete in the World Maccabiah Games®, the Pan American Maccabi Games®, professional sports, and even the Olympics. The community of alumni includes familiar names like Olympic swimmers Lenny Krayzelburg and Jason Lezak, Survivor's Ethan Zohn, actor Jason Segal, and American Idol's Brett Lowenstern.

Get ready to feel the spirit of JCC Maccabi when representing your community, getting to know your roommates and teammates, meeting new friends, participating in community service, compete on an international stage, and party at a one-of-a-kind social event each night.

You will receive a SWAG bag with your uniform and delegation gear that you will wear throughout the week and when we march together into the opening ceremony. Picture yourself walking into a stadium in front of thousands of spectators and looking around knowing all the other teens participating are also Jewish. You will make new friends from across the globe as you trade your gear for kangaroos, sombreros and British Union Jack attire.

Whether you bring home the best swag, a gold medal, or new lifelong friendships there is no doubt that you will have the time of your life at the 2026 JCC Maccabi Games.

This year there are two incredible opportunities! The JCC Maccabi Games and Access in Toronto August 2-7, 2026, AND The JCC Maccabi Games in Kansas City August 2-7, 2026.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact the Team San Diego Delegation Head Sebastian Mayer (sebastianm@lfjcc.org / 858-362-1328)
Check us out on social media @jccmaccabisd.

We can't wait to have you as part of Team San Diego!

- Sebastian Mayer

Frequently Asked Questions

1. What are The JCC Maccabi Games®?

The JCC Maccabi Games are an international athletic competition for Jewish teenagers run much like the Olympics. Athletes can compete against Jewish teens from all over the United States as well as delegations from Israel, Great Britain, Mexico, Canada, and more. The Games are played with a focus on “rachmanus” or sportsmanship with the intent to foster long-lasting friendships, memories and connection to Judaism and Israel. This unique event is not only about being a part of the Jewish people; it comes with a mission– to make the world a better place and to make ourselves better people. We express these values or midot to help us remember the greater mission of the Games and Judaism. We emphasize Tikkun Olam (repairing the world), Kavod (respect), Rina (joy), Ga’ava (pride), Lev Tov (big hearted), and Amiut Yehudit (Jewish peoplehood). The Games also promote community involvement, and teamwork. The Games are one of the largest Jewish teen events in the world; each summer over 3,000 Jewish teens participate. Over 100,000 teens have benefited from the JCC Maccabi Games since 1982. At this Jewish Olympic style event, each athlete participates in one of fifteen sports, social events, and an opportunity to give back to the community during this week-long experience, creating memories that will last a lifetime.

2. Where/When are the Games this year?

Kansas City, KS August 2-7, 2026	Toronto, Canada August 2-7, 2026
• Ages 13-17 • Sports Offered: baseball, basketball, dance, flag football, girls volleyball, soccer, tennis, swimming, star reporter • Highlights include: ○ Olympic-style sport competitions, including opening and closing ceremonies, and a tribute to the Munich 11 ○ Home hospitality with local Jewish host families or hotel accommodations with your delegation ○ JCC Cares community service projects ○ Hangtime programming with Israeli schlichim ○ Evening social events	• Ages 13-17 • Sport Offered: <u>SOFTBALL ONLY</u> • Highlights include: ○ Olympic-style sport competitions, including opening and closing ceremonies, and a tribute to the Munich 11 ○ Home hospitality with local Jewish host families or hotel accommodations with your delegation ○ JCC Cares community service projects ○ Hangtime programming with Israeli schlichim ○ Evening social events • JCC Maccabi Access is for athletes with cognitive and developmental disabilities who will be competing in their own tournament parallel to the Games athletes.

*Sports are subject to change

3. Who is eligible to participate in the JCC Maccabi Games?

- a. Jewish teens between the ages of 13-17 (Must be 13 on August 2, 2026 and 17 on August 7, 2026) are welcome to compete at the Games.
- b. **All athletes must be Jewish**, which is defined as follows: One of the athlete's parents is Jewish and the athlete is being raised Jewish or is a Jew by choice and is being raised Jewish. In the spirit of the Games, if the parent or child does not believe that they are Jewish on a year-round basis, then the child should not participate in JCC Maccabi. In the athlete online registration, there is a declaration that contains the eligibility requirements; both the athlete and his/her parent(s) must sign this declaration.
- c. All athletes must have current medical insurance and up to date on all age-appropriate vaccines as per CDC guidelines.

4. What sports are offered?

- **Kansas City** Sports include: Baseball, Basketball, Dance, Flag football, Girls volleyball, Soccer, Tennis, Swimming, Star reporter
- **Toronto** Sports include: Softball

• What is the athletic competition like?

The competitive level of the participants will vary. There are teens that are elite athletes and then those that are there for the experience, the level of play is very diverse. Some of the sports will have different divisions based on skill levels. Throughout the week, players can expect to play at least four games/matches before tournament play begins on Wednesday. Gold, silver and bronze medals are awarded to the top three winners. Although it is competitive the JCC Maccabi Games emphasize the Rachmanus Rule, which is good sportsmanship and fair play. The experience is about more than just sports. It focuses on an all-around experience including friends, community service, social and educational activities.

5. What is a delegation?

Teens from across North America participate in JCC Maccabi representing their 'local' delegation. Typically, this is the delegation represent their home city/local JCC for example Team Atlanta, Team Philadelphia, Team Toronto etc.

6. What is a mixed team?

A mixed team is comprised of athletes from multiple delegations. This is common and happens when a delegation does not have enough athletes to field a full team. Where our delegation is unable to field a full team, athletes will be combined in a mix team with one or more other delegations' players. Being on a mixed team can be a great experience and foster lasting friendships with Jewish teens around the world!

7. How does community service play a role in JCC Maccabi?

Community Service is a key component to the JCC Maccabi Games experience. Each set of Games includes a JCC Cares project where athletes step away from competition and

workshops for a part of their day and work to improve the local community, through activities like planting a community garden, bowling with adults with special needs, or doing art projects one-on-one with children from underserved communities.

8. How will my child get to and from the Games?

Parents will be responsible for bringing athletes to the designated airport where delegation staff will be there to check teens in and accompany the group to the Games.

9. What is the fee for the JCC Maccabi Games?

The all-inclusive fee for both locations is \$2600 per teen.

10. What does the fee include?

JCC Maccabi is an all-inclusive experience. Program fees include Games registration fees, transportation to and from the host community and during the Games, uniform, Team San Diego gear, adult supervision and coaches, practices, meals, social events/team activities, and all other accommodations throughout the program.

11. Are there scholarships available?

We strongly encourage you to reach out to your local Federation, Jewish Community Foundation, and synagogue to enquire about local funding opportunities.

Limited scholarships are available locally for families in need of financial assistance. All funding is need-based and you can apply through a confidential process.

To apply please email [**sebastianm@lfjcc.org**](mailto:sebastianm@lfjcc.org)

12. What does registration entail?

Registration includes submitting the completed registration, personal contact info, a \$500 **non-refundable** deposit paid upon signing up, and agreement to the non-refundable remainder of the payment to the Lawrence Family Jewish Community Center. Additional registration steps are required at later dates including medical forms, and online registration, roommate requests etc. Your delegation head will supply detailed information as next steps are required.

13. Are there adult chaperones at JCC Maccabi?

Of course! There is a mandatory ratio of 1:8 adults to teens. We have a delegation head, coaches, and chaperones. Every athlete is assigned to a coach/chaperone whether they are on a team sport, individual sport, or a mixed team with a coach from another delegation. Head coaches are all over 21 and have passed extensive background checks.

14. Where will my teen stay?

In **Kansas City and Toronto**, the week of JCC Maccabi (Sunday-Friday), all teens will stay with a host family. Host families are Jewish homes that are part of their greater JCC communities. Host families are background checked, screened, and required to attend a mandatory

orientation. Vaccines will be required for all members of a host family who will be age eligible to receive it. The home hospitality experience is an important part of the Games experience. We are very gracious to these host families as they serve as interim parents for the week transporting the teens to and from JCC Maccabi, provide breakfast, laundry, and give your teen an unforgettable home hospitality experience. Many teens will stay in touch with host families for years to come! Teens can request specific homes that meet their needs such as dietary restrictions and pet allergies.

Teens can request a specific roommate. Participants may not arrange their own housing unless approved and discussed by their Delegation Head.

15. Can you tell me about security at JCC Maccabi?

Security is taken very seriously at the JCC Maccabi Games. Background checks are utilized for all adults involved and all participants, spectators, coaches, host families, volunteers, etc. are required to wear a credential to access any JCC Maccabi facility. The host community also works closely with local, state, and federal law enforcement to ensure a safe and enjoyable experience for all.

16. Our family keeps kosher and is observant- will my teen's needs be met at JCC Maccabi?

Yes, all food served at the JCC Maccabi Games is kosher and all activities will conclude prior to Shabbat. Delegations will return home on Friday with plenty of time before Shabbat.

17. Can I use my son or daughter's school or camp medical form for JCC Maccabi?

No. Maccabi Central will only accept the JCC Maccabi Medical Form.

18. What happens if there is a medical emergency?

In the case of a medical emergency, the Delegation Head will act as the participant's guardian and will communicate with the parents to get any treatment necessary. Information such as the parent/guardian's birth date and social security number is sometimes necessary to utilize insurance.

19. Can parents be spectators at the JCC Maccabi Games?

Yes! Parents, family members, and friends are welcome to attend the Games as spectators. A spectator pass gives access to the opening ceremony and sport events. No one will be admitted to a Games site who is not wearing an approved credential. To register as a spectator, you will use the same website as when registering your teen. Please note registration and fee deadlines, be aware of early bird prices.

While we encourage families to consider attending to support their teens, the athletes have programs and activities going on for the entirety of their time at the Games and thus only see visitor's courtside at sporting events. At no point during the week can spectators or parents remove the teens from the program or take them off-site for any reason.

20. How can I sign up to be part of (your delegations name) at the JCC Maccabi Games 2026?

Registration is open NOW! Please contact your Delegation Head, Sebastian, to secure your spot on Team San Diego!

(sebastianm@lfjcc.org / 858-362-1328)