

Lake Tahoe loses winter X Games bid

By Jason Blevins, Denver Post

X Games owner ESPN and the Aspen Skiing Co. announced Wednesday a deal that would keep the winter carnival of now-Olympic athleticism at Aspen's Buttermilk ski area for another five years. The X Games launches its 13th year in Aspen this week. By 2019, the Roaring Fork Valley will have hosted the iconic contest for 18 years.

"It's amazing how X Games has seemingly become part of Aspen/Snowmass' identity over the years," said Aspen Skiing Co.'s John Rigney, who spent countless hours negotiating renewal contracts with ESPN in 2004, 2007, 2009, 2012 and 2013, in a statement released Wednesday. "There's a rich cultural history here and we're fortunate to host many world-class events, but I can't think of a single event that resonates so well with kids and young adults as X Games does – and that's a win for our resort, and more importantly the sports we love. Our community is proud to collaborate with ESPN and we look forward to five more great years together."

Aspen beat out several other bidders to host the snowy bacchanal. Park City in Utah initially expressed interest but wanted the event to reschedule to April. Two Lake Tahoe ski areas in California – Squaw Valley and Heavenly – submitted a joint bid that would have separated X Games events into two venues across the lake. Whistler in British Columbia pondered hosting, but local officials demurred at the idea of flipping, racing snowmobiles, a lucrative staple of the X Games. Quebec City in Canada also submitted a bid.

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