

UPDATE: [Birmingham was awarded the 2021 World Games on January 22, 2015.](#)



“You know, [baseball isn’t an Olympic sport for 2020.](#)”

I smirked as I said this during a chance encounter with David Brewer, executive director of [the Friends of Rickwood Field](#), as we stood looking out at home plate in [America’s oldest ballpark](#) late Monday morning.

He laughed and said, “You know, you’re right,” as he returned to the never ending list of to-dos associated with his job, leaving me to think. I often find myself there in the historic structure on the city’s west side sitting in the general admission seats (or the first base dugout) in order to escape and think. This time, I tried to calm my mind to tackle some brainstorming but ended up dreaming big dreams. ([It’s a bad habit of mine.](#)) I thought of what it would be like to sit in the stands at Rickwood Field and [Regions Field](#) surrounded by others from around the world in 2021. It would take [the International Baseball Federation](#) successfully campaigning [the International World Games Association](#) to be added as a sport or a request of the city’s organizing committee, but there’s a chance...

No, I’m not insane. Word of [the city’s intention to submit a bid to host the 11th World Games in 2021](#) spread like wildfire on Sunday morning. People were still taking a breath from [hearing of its bid to host the 2016 Democratic National Convention on Friday](#). These are noticeably bold moves in the midst of evidence of the city’s long-sought renaissance finally taking shape. I brought up during a quick exchange via Twitter that the potential resulting benefits and impact sound similar to [those previously floated by a certain former mayor](#). The response: “Same thinking, but more realistic.” Hindsight is always 20/20 though and I’ve got a feeling historians will look at both situations as examples of the city taking a risk.



That said, this current proposal is a little easier to swallow for folks and easier to celebrate if successful (especially since it would be during Birmingham’s 150th birthday, but I digress). While [the World Games](#) started as a way to focus more on the athletes and less on keeping score among nations, they have come to be as significant in meaning to the host city as a successful Olympic bid without nearly the same level of expense.

Why? Here it is, courtesy of [the bid packet](#):

In fact, the Rules of The World Games stipulate that the games must be staged at existing venues, or at venues that have been planned and built regardless of the bid for TWG.

This means that while the multi-purpose facility (a.k.a. the Dome) is probably going to happen, it's not affecting this bid one way or the other. That can be also read as *it doesn't necessarily mean facilities can't be renovated or modernized in order to accommodate events*. This suddenly makes things like seeing a City Council agenda item for a feasibility study of Legion Field earlier this year more understandable (especially when coupled with [the mayor's comments during this year's State of the City address](#)).

This is a city that needs an excuse to light a fire under itself to get something accomplished. It also needs reassurances from outsiders. This would seem to accomplish both while, [as said elsewhere previously](#), leaving the city in a better place if the bid proves unsuccessful.

The DNC bid was due last Friday, June 6 (and some have already written about its potential for success, including [this piece on June 9 by Cliff Sims at Yellowhammer News](#) and [this one published on June 8 by Chuck Dean of al.com/Alabama Media Group](#)). The World Games bid is due on July 31. Once it's arrived in Colorado, the hard part begins. We have to keep dreaming big dreams and acting on them.

After watching this recap video from the 2013 World Games in Cali, Colombia (or [photos like this one from its closing ceremonies](#)), I'm thinking it shouldn't be too hard to do.

BTW - it should be noted that [American football was chosen as one of the invitational sports for the 2017 World Games in Wroclaw, Poland](#). Just saying...

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