

Lagos State has announced its readiness to host no fewer than 14,000 young athletes expected to converge on the state for the inaugural National Intermediate Games, tagged “Eko 2026,” scheduled to hold from October 1 to 15, 2026.

The event was created for athletes aged 15 to 18 as a bridge between teenage competitions and the senior-level National Sports Festival. All 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory are expected to compete across 31 sporting events in 28 disciplines.

Speaking at a media parley in Lagos on Tuesday, the state’s Commissioner for Information and Strategy, Gbenga Omotoso, said Lagos remains committed to leading sports development nationally and would deliver an excellent first edition of the Games.

Omotoso, who also chairs the Eko 2026 Media Committee, said the initiative was designed to close the gap between young talents and professional athletes by identifying and nurturing future stars.

He said various subcommittees had been established to coordinate key areas of the Games, including security, transportation and athletes’ welfare. According to him, Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu’s recent inspection of some of the sporting facilities earmarked for the competition was part of efforts to ensure a hitch-free event.

Dr. Sam Egube, chairman of the Eko 2026 Local Organising Committee and Deputy Chief of Staff to the governor, described the Games as a platform for national unity, talent discovery and youth development.

He said the competition would help identify athletes capable of progressing to the National Sports Festival, continental events and eventually the global stage, adding that Lagos was drawing on its experience hosting major international sporting events to deliver a world-class competition.

He also pointed to the expected economic benefits, including opportunities for small businesses and exposure for visitors to Lagos’s culture and tourist attractions.

The University of Lagos has been earmarked as the Games Village and will accommodate the expected 14,000 young athletes. Other venues for the Games include Teslim Balogun Stadium, Rowe Park, Mobolaji Johnson Arena, Yaba College of Technology Sports Centre, Tafawa Balewa Cricket Oval, Lagos Lawn Tennis Club,

Elegbata Sports Centre and the University of Lagos Sports Centre.

Commissioner for Youth and Social Development Mobolaji Ogunlende said preparations were progressing quickly, noting that only 37 days remained before the Games at the time of the briefing. She assured athletes, officials and visitors of a safe experience and urged the media to report accurately and help reassure participants of the state's readiness.

Also speaking, the Director-General of the Lagos State Sports Commission, Lekan Fatodu, described Lagos as a "serial trailblazer," saying the state would draw on its wealth of experience in hosting major sporting events to deliver a successful competition. He added that safeguards put in place with the National Sports Commission would make it difficult for age cheats to participate in the Games.