

Region Welcomes Amateur Sports Tournaments

Each spring RACVB gears up for the “busy season” of welcoming amateur sports tournaments to the region.

The Rockford Region has long been known as a leader in the amateur sports market. Tournaments and championships at Sportscore One and Two generate more than \$15 million for our local economy each year and produce nearly \$2 million in tax revenue for local municipalities.

Amateur sports mean big business. That’s why it’s important to properly welcome these groups and their attendees.

Building Lasting Relationships

Recently RACVB announced preparations for the Illinois Kids Wrestling Federation state championships which take place March 9 – 10 at the BMO Harris Bank Center. The tournament brings more than 1,500 athletes, coaches and fans to the Rockford Region, generating more than \$350,000 each year for area businesses.

This is the 10th consecutive year the Rockford Region will host this event; and they’ll be back through 2014. Also, the Illinois High School Association Girls State Bowling Tournament returned to the Rockford Region for the 20th time February 10-11.

Soccer’s Puma Champion Cup, hosted by the Rockford Raptors, will return for the tenth year this April. Rockford began hosting the event in 2003 when it was known as the Spring Fling.

Service is Key

So what makes Rockford special? Why do events like IKWF, IHSA and PUMA Cup return each year?

According to event organizers, one big reason is the commitment to service put forth by RACVB, its hospitality partners and the entire community.

“IKWF chooses to return to Rockford because we are continually impressed by the partnerships and relationships developed with RACVB and BMO Harris Bank Center. Our organization has worked with many venues over the past few decades and Rockford is at the top. Our athletes and fans are welcomed with open arms by the hotels, restaurants and the rest of the community,” said IKWF event organizer Gene Lee.

Everyone Has a Role

Organizations including RACVB, the RAVE Authority, and area hoteliers play an official role hosting and coordinating events. Others play an informal and important part by welcoming visitors to their businesses and establishments and letting groups know how important they are to our region.

What takes an event from great to exceptional is not the competition itself; it’s what happens off the turf and away from the mats that makes the difference.

It’s the hotel clerk that takes a moment to suggest a favorite local restaurant, or the cleaning staff that stops to ask about the big game. It’s the wait staff that keeps up a genuine smile while tackling a large order, or the person at the next gas pump willing to provide helpful directions. It’s the sign in the retail shop’s front window or on the marquee extending a warm welcome to our visitors.

You can help welcome visitors by ensuring your frontline staff is prepared for this year's tournament season. Here are a few steps you can take to be ready to welcome visitors with up-to-the-minute information on what to see/do in the region: familiarize yourself with our website, gorockford.com, download the GoRockford iPhone or Droid app or sign up for our weekly "What's Happening" email by emailing jjacobs@gockford.com.