

NEWS RELEASE

Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau



USA Ultimate to Bring Prestigious 2016 National Championships to Rockford

*Games to be broadcast live on ESPN3/WatchESPN,
available in more than 83 million households nationwide*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 2, 2015

Rockford, IL – Coming off of the heels of hosting the successful 2015 Ultimate Division III College Championships this past May at Sportscore Two, the Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau is pleased to announce that Rockford will host the 2016 USA Ultimate National Championships, a four-day tournament to be held Sept. 29 - Oct. 2, 2016.

USA Ultimate, the national governing body for the sport of ultimate in the United States, announced that the RACVB will join forces with Ultimate Chicago, organizer of nationally recognized tournaments such as Chicago Heavyweights and Sandblast, to prepare for the event. The championships began in 1980, but this will be the first Midwest venue for the games. Most recently, the championships were held in Frisco, Texas (2013-15), and Sarasota, Florida (2000-2012). Rockford's bid, prepared and submitted by RACVB, edged out proposals from San Diego, California, and other destinations from throughout the country.

As part of a partnership with ESPN and USA Ultimate, matches played at Sportscore Two will be broadcast live on ESPN3 and the WatchESPN app, which brings 24/7 live programming via smart phones, tablets, Xbox One, Apple TV, Google Chromecast, Amazon Fire TV and Roku. According to ESPN, the combined broadcast of **ESPN3/WatchESPN will reach more than 83 million households** across the country. The agreement allows for highlights from the event to be featured on **ESPN's SportsCenter**, as well.

The event features 48 teams (16 men's, 16 women's and 16 mixed) narrowed from a field of more than 700 teams that compete in USA Ultimate sanctioned tournaments throughout the year and includes the Triple Crown Tour (along with the U.S. Open and Pro Flight Finale) which represents the **highest and most prestigious level of competitive Ultimate in North America**. More than 1,300 athletes are expected to play in the championships.

"We are thrilled by the opportunity to bring the USA Ultimate Championships to our community and to showcase the great facilities at Sportscore Two. Winning an event of this caliber is a testament to the hard work by the RACVB, Rockford Park District and many regional partners to make Sportscore Two and the Rockford region one of the best sports destinations in the country," said John Groh, Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau CEO/president.

The economic impact of the event to the region is expected to be more than \$200,000 and more than 1,500 hotel room nights are anticipated to be filled by visiting players, coaches and fans.

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During the championships, **18 fields are expected to be used at the Sportscore Two complex including the five new synthetic turf fields currently under construction and expected to be complete by spring 2016.** Wedgbury Stadium, which seats 2,000 spectators and received a synthetic turf upgrade earlier this year, will host the final matches.

"This is a dynamic event to help launch the inaugural season for the five new synthetic turf fields at Sportscore Two," Groh said. "USA Ultimate will love playing on these fields, and it will be a great way to showcase to a national audience our region's commitment to improving our already heralded facilities."

The Chicago and northern Illinois area boasts competitive elite-level teams, including perennial national qualifiers Chicago Machine and Chicago Nemesis, currently ranked fourth and 21st in the nation in the men's and women's divisions respectively.

"Ultimate Chicago is ecstatic to be part of the 2016 National Championships," commented Gail Reich, the organization's treasurer. "We are a long-standing non-profit that provides many leagues throughout the year for both youth and adults alike. Our ultimate community will be excited to both watch and support this fantastic, high-caliber event and cheer on our local teams. We're thrilled that fans and players of all ages and ability are within a short drive of Rockford, making these championships very accessible. We are looking forward to working with the Rockford Area CVB to make this event a success."

About the sport of ultimate

Ultimate is a flying disc sport that combines elements of football and soccer as teams score points by passing the disc and scoring in the opposing team's end zone. Officiating is normally done by the players through a code of conduct that preserves the spirit of the game. Players are not allowed to take steps while holding the disc. Interceptions, incomplete passes and passes out of bounds result in a turnover.

-- www.wikipedia.org

About USA Ultimate

USA Ultimate serves as the national governing body for the sport of ultimate in the United States. USA Ultimate is a non-profit organization headquartered in Boulder, Colo., and focuses foremost on the needs of its athletes while improving access to the sport and enhancing members' overall experience. Founded in 1979 as the Ultimate Players Association, USA Ultimate is one of the first flying disc sport organizations in the world and is also the largest with more than 45,000 members. The Sporting Goods Manufacturers Association (SGMA) recently named ultimate the fastest-growing team sport in the nation. Internationally, USA Ultimate is a member of the World Flying Disc Federation (WFDF), which is an affiliate of the General Association of International Sport Federations (GAISF) and the International World Games Association (IWGA). USA Ultimate annually fields U.S. National Teams to compete at international events, including the World Games, which operates under the patronage of the International Olympic Committee (IOC).

-- www.usaultimate.org.

The mission of the RACVB is to drive quality of life and economic growth for our citizens through tourism marketing and destination development. www.gorockford.com

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FOR MORE INFORMATION:

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