

NEWS RELEASE

Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau



USA Ultimate Brings Prestigious 2016 Nationals to Rockford Region This Week

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

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 27, 2016

Rockford, IL – Alongside the ultimate community and various regional partners, the Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau is excited to welcome the 2016 USA Ultimate National Championships. The four-day event is USA Ultimate's premier tournament and will be held at Mercyhealth Sportscore Two in Loves Park, Thursday-Sunday, September 29-October 2, 2016. The event features more than 1,200 athletes, 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's Triple Crown Tour, a series of sanctioned tournaments throughout the summer which represents the **highest and most prestigious level of competitive ultimate in North America**. Please refer to the separate game times and schedule for additional information.

USA Ultimate, the national governing body for the sport of ultimate in the United States, joins forces with RACVB and Ultimate Chicago for the event. The championships began in 1979, 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 around the country.

As part of a partnership with ESPN and USA Ultimate, matches from the semifinal and final rounds of competition at Mercyhealth 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. Also on Sunday at 2:58 p.m., Chicagoland Skydiving Center will do a celebratory jump before the last championship game at Wedgbury Stadium.

"We are thrilled by the opportunity to bring the USA Ultimate Championships to our community and to showcase the great facilities at Mercyhealth Sportscore Two. Winning an event of this caliber is a testament to the hard work of 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 president/CEO.

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.

Free Kids Clinics offered by Girls' Ultimate Movement (GUM)

USA Ultimate is partnering with Ultimate Chicago to host a free Girls' Ultimate Movement (GUM) clinic for girls ages 7-18 on Saturday, October 1 from 2:30 – 4 p.m. at Mercyhealth Sportscore Two (8800 E. Riverside

-MORE-

Blvd., Loves Park, IL 61111) as part of the 2016 USA Ultimate National Championships. All levels of experience are welcome and this event is free to attend and each participant receives a free disc. Join in the movement and learn to play ultimate today! To register visit <http://play.usultimate.org/events/Girls-Ultimate-Movement-Clinic-2016-Club-Nationals/>. Any questions about the USA Ultimate National Championships GUM clinic, please contact local organizer Sam Sadlier, soc_il@usultimate.org.

Chicago and the Midwest boast many competitive elite-level teams and will be represented at the 2016 National Championship by Chicago Machine and Madison Club in the men's division, Madison NOISE in the mixed division and Madison Heist in the women's division. Machine reached the semifinals at last year's championships and enters this year's event seeded fifth overall. Teams from Ohio, Minnesota, Michigan and Kansas will also represent the Midwest in Rockford next week.

"Ultimate Chicago is ecstatic to be part of the 2016 National Championships," said Gail Reich, tournament director of the 2016 Championships. "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 done by the players themselves through Spirit of the Game, a code of conduct that emphasizes and preserves sportsmanship, integrity and respect for opponents. 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 is the national governing body for the sport of ultimate in the United States and a proud member of the United States Olympic Committee (USOC). Headquartered in Colorado Springs, Colo., USA Ultimate is the largest flying disc organization in the world with more than 53,000 members. USA Ultimate administers the full spectrum of ultimate in the United States for all ages and abilities, including youth, high school, college, elite and masters divisions, as well as the Triple Crown Tour – ultimate's premier elite competitive league for men's, women's and mixed gender divisions. USA Ultimate is a member of the IOC-recognized World Flying Disc Federation and also selects, trains and supports U.S. National Teams for international events. Governed by a core principle called Spirit of the Game™, ultimate remains proud of its historical and continuing practice of being a self-officiated sport – even at the highest levels of competition – which places a unique emphasis on sportsmanship, respect for one's opponent, conflict resolution, self-confidence, communication and integrity. Recently cited as one of the fastest-growing team sports in America by the Sports and Fitness Industry Association (SFIA) with more than 7 million players worldwide, ultimate was invented in 1968 by students at Columbia High School in Maplewood, N.J. 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*

###

FOR MORE INFORMATION: Josh Albrecht, RACVB Director of Marketing & Public Affairs: 815.489.1655 or jalbrecht@gorockford.com