

NEWS RELEASE

Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau



Puma Cup Kicks Off Two Mega Tournament Weekends in the Rockford Region

Largest tournament brings in \$1.89 million of economic impact to the region

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 2, 2018

ROCKFORD, IL — The Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau (RACVB) welcomes the Rockford Raptors Soccer Club's Puma Cup to the Rockford region for a 19th year. The **Puma Champions Cup College Showcase** will take place **Friday, Saturday and Sunday, April 6-8**. The **Puma Champions Cup** will take place **Friday, Saturday and Sunday, April 13-15**. The multi-weekend tournaments will be played at **Mercyhealth Sportscore One, Mercyhealth Sportscore Two, Indoor Sports Center and Wedgbury Stadium**.

The Puma Champions Cup College Showcase includes **299 teams representing U12-U19 year old athletes** in boys and girls divisions. The high level of competition attracts approximately 86 college coaches to scout and recruit players. The Puma Champions Cup is a competition for **552 teams representing mid to lower level boys' and girls' teams in the U8-U19 age range**. These combined tournaments include teams traveling from Illinois, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Indiana, Missouri, Iowa, Michigan and Canada. The combined Puma Cup tournament weekends make it the largest soccer tournament held in the Rockford region with an **estimated 30,000 attendees** expected to have an **economic impact of \$1.89 million**.

"We are extremely proud and excited to host this event and seeing it grow in size and scope every year is something that we are very grateful for. We want to thank all of our partners that make this event possible and all of the participating teams," said Frank Mateus, Rockford Raptors FC executive director and co-founder. "We would also like to thank our Raptors families for their continued support and hard work as well as the Rockford Park District and the RACVB. We would not be able to host an amazing event without those two organizations working behind the scenes to support this event. A lot of credit also goes out to Rockford area businesses and the community for making these outside teams feel so welcomed and excited about coming back year after year."

There will also be seven National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Division 1 games during the Puma Champions Cup College Showcase at Mercyhealth Sportscore Two:

- Saturday, April 7
 - 1:00 p.m.
 - Southern Illinois University Edwardsville (SIUE) vs. Marquette University Men's (Stadium Field 219)
 - Northern Illinois University (NIU) vs. Valparaiso University Women's (Indoor Field 3)

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- 3:00 p.m.
 - University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee (UWM) vs. Illinois State University (ISU) Women's (Indoor Field 3)
 - Northern Illinois University (NIU) vs. Eastern Illinois University (EIU) Men's (Stadium Field 219)
- 5:00 p.m.
 - Northwestern University (NWU) vs. University of Illinois Chicago (UIC) Men's
- 7:30 p.m.
 - Loyola University Chicago vs. DePaul University Men's

There will be one National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Men's Game during the Puma Champions Cup:

- Saturday, April 4
 - 4:00 p.m.
 - Loyola University vs. UW-Madison University

"Puma Cup is the largest soccer tournament held in the Rockford region and one that I love to attend each year. There are players traveling here from across the Midwest and even Canada to compete and it's always full of action-packed excitement during both tournament weekends," said Lindsay Arellano, RACVB director of sales and servicing. "Speaking of excitement, it's always great to see this directly impact our community as they patronize our local businesses and sell out several area hotels and motels. A true win all the way around for the Rockford region."

Additional information related to the tournament can be found at www.rockfordraptors.org. Admission is free for spectators.

Rockford Raptors FC is a Puma Premier Soccer Club located in Rockford, Illinois. This club was established in 1994 as one professional team in the former USISL (now called USL, a second division league below MLS) with the help of Dr. Wedgbury. The sole purpose was to create quality soccer training opportunities for Rockford's youth. It is also responsible for providing \$70,000 in scholarships and financial aid for players and provides recreational leagues for more than 2,000 kids annually.

RACVB exists to drive quality of life and economic growth for the citizens of Rockford and Winnebago County through tourism marketing and destination development. gorockford.com

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