

# NEWS RELEASE

Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau



## RACVB, RAVE and ITTF North America Announce First-Ever Olympic Trials in Rockford

*2019 North American Olympic Table Tennis Trials Slated for Oct. 5*

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**May 3, 2018**

**Rockford, IL** – With paddle in hand, Rockford Mayor Tom McNamara joined other table tennis enthusiasts from the Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau (RACVB), Rockford Area Venues and Entertainment Authority (RAVE) and the International Table Tennis Federation (ITTF) to announce the **first-ever Olympic trials** to be held in Rockford. The 2019 ITTF North American Olympic Table Tennis Trials are slated for **Saturday, October 5, 2019** at 3 p.m. at the BMO Harris Bank Center in downtown Rockford.

The **2019 North American Olympic Table Tennis Trials** will feature men's and women's teams representing **Team USA** and **Team Canada**. Teams consist of three players (one reserve per team) and will play best three of five matches. **The winners will qualify for the 2020 Summer Olympics in Tokyo.**

"All eyes will be on Rockford in October as we host this incredible international event," said RACVB President/CEO John Groh. "We will get to watch the best table tennis players from Canada and the United States compete for the opportunity to represent North America at the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games. It's very exciting for Rockford and for sports enthusiasts that the Road to Tokyo will go through Rockford."

This marks the first time since 2012 (Cary, NC) that the North American Table Tennis Trials have been held in the U.S. The 2016 Trials were produced outside of Toronto in Markham, Ontario, Canada.

While Groh anticipates an increase in visitors to the region that weekend, the RACVB hopes the event will also build community engagement and pride throughout the city of Rockford, thus providing the city the ability to host other major international sporting events in the future.

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“This event puts Rockford on the international map as a destination for sports,” said Craig Thomas, the chairman of the board of directors for RAVE, the organization that manages three of Rockford’s downtown entertainment venues including host facility BMO Harris Bank Center. “We know we have world-class facilities, and this is a chance to show them off to a worldwide audience.”

“We are excited and fortunate for the opportunity to partner with the city of Rockford,” said ITTF North America Regional Director Tony Kiesenhofer. “Rockford’s world-class facilities will provide the backdrop for our event, and the teams at the RACVB and BMO Harris Bank Center understand our vision of the Trials and are working hard to leave a legacy for table tennis in the city.”

With this historic Rockford sports event, ITTF North America is offering expansive local partnership opportunities. In addition, RACVB will, at a later date, announce a full slate of community awareness programs and events that will lead up to October 5.

**Tickets for the 2019 North American Olympic Table Tennis Trials** may be purchased through BMO Harris Bank Center and Ticketmaster beginning Tuesday, May 28. Ticket prices range from \$25 to \$35.

For more information, visit **RockfordOlympicTrials.com**.

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**Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau 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](http://gorockford.com).

The **Rockford Area Venues & Entertainment Authority Board (RAVE)** was formed in 2010 to oversee the management of Rockford entertainment organizations and venues including the city-owned IceHogs hockey team, Davis Park, Coronado Theatre and BMO Harris Bank Center.

The **International Table Tennis Federation** is the governing body for all national table tennis associations. The role of the ITTF includes overseeing rules and regulations and seeking technological improvement for the sport of table tennis. The ITTF is responsible for the organization of numerous international competitions, including the World Table Tennis Championships that has continued since 1926.

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