

NEWS RELEASE

Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau



NCAA Division I Basketball Heads to Rockford for 2021 Postseason Women's National Invitational Tournament

RACVB Partners with Triple Crown Sports to Bring Women's Division I College Postseason Play to UW Health Sports Factory for First Time

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 25, 2021

Rockford, IL – In a joint announcement with Triple Crown Sports and various regional partners, the Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau (RACVB) is thrilled to announce that the UW Health Sports Factory in downtown Rockford has been selected as one of four regional sites for the 2021 Postseason Women's National Invitational Tournament (WNIT). The 2021 Postseason WNIT will feature a field of 32 NCAA Division I women's basketball teams, including eight that will travel to the Forest City next month—marking the first time ever that postseason Division I women's basketball tournament play will be held in Rockford. Tournament play will occur in Rockford from March 19-22.

During a competitive bid process, RACVB worked closely with the Rockford Park District, BMO Harris Bank Center, Embassy Suites by Hilton Rockford Riverfront, Radisson Hotel & Conference Center, Northern Illinois University Huskies Athletics and the Winnebago County Health Department (WCHD) to present a comprehensive and creative championship solution.

"The community of Rockford and their Convention and Visitors Bureau staff immediately stood out to us through the process of selecting our WNIT sites," said **Renee Carlson, executive director of the WNIT**. "The partnership within the community and their pursuit to bring women's college basketball games to their area sold us."

Rockford is joined by Fort Worth, TX, Charlotte, NC, and Memphis, TN as this year's regional host destinations. The field of teams for the 2021 Postseason WNIT will be announced the evening of March 15, after the brackets for the NCAA Tournament are released.

"We're grateful to Triple Crown Sports for this historic opportunity. While it's been a challenging year for so many of our tourism and hospitality partners, our visitors and our residents, this announcement is a win for the Rockford region and a sign of more good news to come," said **John Groh, RACVB president/CEO**. "We're fortunate to have so many great partners that help us compete for and win tourism business, and that often begins at Rockford Park District facilities like the UW Health Sports Factory. Thank you so much to our Park District colleagues, and to all of our bid partners—it's going to be an exciting month of March!"

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Round 1 WNIT play begins March 19, followed by Round 2 on March 20 and Round 3 on March 22. Teams that lose in Round 1 will move to the consolation bracket, with games also being played on March 20 and 22. All game times are to be determined. The four regional champions will advance to one site (location to be announced) for the semifinals and championship game.

“The fact that UW Health Sports Factory is one of four locations throughout the country picked to host a national collegiate women’s basketball tournament speaks volumes to the reputation we have built. Our community should be very proud that within five years of opening this facility we have built such a great reputation in the hard court industry. This tournament is focused on the accomplishments of high-level female athletes which is going to have a big impact on our youth and teens and give them the motivation and vision of what they can achieve,” said **Danielle Potter, Rockford Park District operations director**.

Alongside the Park District and RACVB, Triple Crown Sports is partnering with the Winnebago County Health Department (WCHD) in adhering to local health and safety protocols. As part of its operations plan, WNIT event staff will facilitate COVID-19 testing for all teams and staff throughout the Tournament and will determine any options regarding credentialed spectators in conjunction with WCHD.

All games will be streamed through FloSports, with details to be announced soon. For more information about the 2021 Postseason WNIT, visit www.womensnit.com and follow @WomensNIT on Twitter.

About Triple Crown Sports

Based in Fort Collins, CO, Triple Crown Sports has been producing events in youth athletics and the college ranks for more than 38 years. TCS runs the preseason and postseason WNIT basketball events, powers the “WNIT” model of the NIVC (volleyball) postseason event, and produces the men’s and women’s Cancun Challenge tournaments in November, which have been recognized by *Sports Illustrated* as a top-5 destination tournament for D-I basketball programs.

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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