

From: Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau and Rockford Park District
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United States Wheelchair Rugby Association National Championship Returns to Rockford

Athletes competing in one of the fastest growing wheelchair sports in the world will soon be on the road to Rockford. The United States Wheelchair Rugby Association (USWRA) National Championship returns to Rockford and will take place at the UW Health Sports Factory from April 1, 2022 through April 3, 2022.

Opening ceremonies start off the event Friday, April 1, 2022 at 8:50 a.m. with the first game beginning at 9 a.m. Games continue throughout the weekend with the last game played at 12:30 p.m. Sunday, April 3, 2022. Awards will follow afterwards featuring the athletes and tournament directors.

The United States Wheelchair Rugby Association National Championship is the largest co-ed wheelchair rugby tournament in the United States and consists of 41 games taking place over three days. The best 16 teams (160 athletes) in the country will come to Rockford to compete and determine who will be crowned National Champion. Marengo, IL-based Oscar Mike Foundation will not only host the tournament, but will also compete, and is the only sanctioned wheelchair rugby team comprised of military veterans that competes in the USWRA. "Our partnership has led to our facility being the host site for the National Tournament for a second time, again bringing athletes from all around the country to our facility. This is a high energy sport that is amazing to watch," said Derek Papich, UW Health Sports Factory program supervisor. The tournaments hosted will be open to the public to attend. There is no cost to spectate.

The USWRA is a nonprofit which provides oversight, development, and administration to the sport of wheelchair rugby across the United States. Since 1988 the USWRA has been promoting and supporting wheelchair rugby to provide competitive athletic opportunities to eligible people with disabilities and to empower people to reach their full potential in all areas of life. The USWRA features over 40 teams with more than 500 athletes across the country.



“These athletes have excelled in the tough sport of rugby to get to these finals. Their passion, athleticism, drive and excellence are apparent as they compete,” said Lindsay Arellano, vice president of sales and servicing at the Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau. The tournament will drive economic growth in our region by drawing in an estimated economic impact of \$265,000 for the weekend.

Additional information about the tournament can be found at www.uswra.org.

Oscar Mike utilizes 100% of any donation to the Oscar Mike Foundation 501(c)(3) Public Non-Profit and proceeds from Oscar Mike Apparel Sales will provide support to injured Veterans looking for an opportunity to stay active. By focusing on the arena of adaptive sports, the Oscar Mike Foundation assists in offering an outlet for an ongoing competitive lifestyle to thousands of American Veterans who have sacrificed for the defense of our country. www.oscarmike.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

The **Rockford Park District** improves the quality of life for citizens by providing a vibrant park system that increases property values, stimulates economic development, decreases juvenile crime, and improves our communities' health. The Rockford Park District also protects the environment, employs thousands of area kids for the first time, and brings the community together to enjoy life. www.rockfordparkdistrict.org

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