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“NIKE NEW ENGLAND WINTERFEST VOLLEYBALL” AT CT CONVENTION CENTER TO BRING OVER 22,000 VISITORS TO HARTFORD AREA OVER THREE WEEKENDS Kicks Off This Saturday, January 7th

HARTFORD, CONN., January 5, 2023 – Six thousand five hundred (6,500) youth volleyball players on 590 teams from across the Northeast are coming to the Connecticut Convention Center at 100 Columbus Blvd. in Hartford, Conn. this month to compete in the “2023 Nike New England Winterfest Volleyball Tournament”. More than 22,000 visitors are expected over **three consecutive weekends**, including the young athletes and thousands of family members, friends, tournament officials, college coaches, fans and spectators.

During the tournament’s **first weekend this Saturday, January 7 and Sunday, January 8**, organizers will welcome over 1,200 athletes (117 teams of 10 to 12 players), in two age group divisions for girls age 16, and in seven age divisions for boys ages 14-18.

At the **largest of the three weekends on the three-day Martin Luther King Jr. Day weekend, from Saturday, January 14 through Monday, January 16**, over 2,500 female athletes (238 teams), ages 16-18, will compete in Open/USA/America/Club competition.

On the final weekend, **Saturday, January 21 and Sunday, January 22**, organizers will welcome slightly over 2,500 female athletes (235 teams of 10 to 12 players), ages 12-18, in 11 age group divisions for girls.

“Two years ago, we expanded the tournament this year to three weekends, and we still are waitlisting teams,” explains Roxann Link, Junior Commissioner of the New England Region Volleyball Association, Inc. (NERVA). “It is an exciting spectator event where families come to cheer on their volleyball-playing daughters and sons. Since the Northeast has one of the largest concentrations of Collegiate Division II and Division III schools in the nation, with lots of NAIA schools here as well, we expect many college recruiting coordinators to come and scout the athletes,” adds Link. “Players will compete on 28 courts in the exhibit halls of the Connecticut Convention Center with 12 matches per court most days, each lasting approximately one hour.”

“This annual tournament is a great economic boost for the Greater Hartford region,” explains Robert Murdock, President of the Connecticut Convention & Sports Bureau (CTMEETINGS), the state’s official meetings and sports event sales and marketing organization. “The dynamic event is expected to generate approximately \$6.84 Million in revenue over its three weekends as visitors stay in over 30 area hotels, dine in local restaurants, shop in the region, and enjoy nearby attractions.” Murdock reports an estimated 2,240 jobs in the region’s hospitality industry will be supported by this event, and over \$462,000 in Connecticut taxes will be generated.

“The New England Winterfest tournament was the original Convention Center volleyball event in the Northeast,” adds Dave Peixoto, NERVA Commissioner. “Since its establishment in 2010 at the Connecticut Convention Center, it has almost tripled in size now operating on three weekends. The City of Hartford and its surrounding towns really make our Winterfest players and fans feel welcome. Restaurants extend their hours and customize their menus, the Downtown *dash* shuttle bus adds hours of operation, and everyone is terrific about accommodating our group. This season we welcome our new sponsor NIKE to Winterfest.”

“For the twelfth year, the Connecticut Convention Center welcomes the New England Regional Volleyball Association for its Winterfest tournament in Downtown Hartford,” says Michael Costelli, General Manager of the Connecticut Convention Center. “We look forward to the incredible energy the thousands of NERVA athletes, coaches, and spectators bring to Hartford. We are proud to have been the host venue for Winterfest and are excited for the years to come.”

Schedule of Weekend #1 Tournament:

- **Friday, Jan 6:** 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. **Springfield College Men’s Team will run a demonstration of drills and team scrimmage** (Free to the public)
- **Saturday, Jan. 7:** 7:45 a.m. **Opening Serve and National Anthem**
- **Saturday, Jan. 7:** 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. **Tournament Play**
- **Sunday, Jan.8:** 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. **Tournament Play & Championships**

Schedule of Weekend #2 Tournament – Martin Luther King, Jr. Weekend:

- **Friday, Jan. 14:** 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. **College Showcase – 200 athletes will participate in practice drills and scrimmage.** More than 50 college coaches are expected on-site to watch and evaluate the players’ skills on an individual basis. As part of that event, **at 7:00 p.m., parents of volleyball players will attend a Recruiting Seminar** where a panel of Division II and III college coaches will tell them what they need to know about college recruitment including calendars, NCAA terms and related topics. Free program is open to all parents of volleyball players – whether their child is in the tournament or not.
No reservations are needed.
- **Saturday, Jan. 15:** 7:45 a.m. **Opening Serve and National Anthem**
- **Saturday, Jan. 15 AND Sunday, Jan. 16:** 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. **Tournament Play**
- **Monday, Jan. 16:** 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. **Tournament Championships**

Schedule of Weekend #3 Tournament:

- **Saturday, Jan. 21:** 7:45 a.m. **Opening Serve and National Anthem**
- **Saturday, Jan. 21:** 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. **Tournament Play**
- **Sunday, Jan. 22:** 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. **Tournament Play & Championships**

SPECTATOR REGISTRATION INFORMATION AND COSTS:

The tournament utilizes *Scan & Go Assigned Admission via QR Code on electronic devices.*

All Admission passes **must be purchased on-line** at www.SportWrench.com (select the event weekend).

Admission is for one individual ONLY; No shared passes**

Children ages 10 and under admitted for free.

Children MUST be accompanied by a ticketed adult upon exit and entry of venue(s)

Athletes gain admission with their Jerseys or Bag Tags.

Admission information for Spectators can be found at

<https://jvctournaments.com/WinterfestWavesandSchedules>

About the New England Region Volleyball Association (NERVA): *The New England Region is one of 40 Regions in the United States that aid in the governing of the sport of volleyball. Regional Volleyball Associations (RVAs) are member organizations of USA Volleyball (USAV). The RVAs serve as the grassroots function for the USAV and individually and collectively serve as a catalyst for USAV functions.*

Each Region is independently operated and is led by a Regional Commission. **For more information about the 2023 NIKE Winterfest New England Volleyball Tournament, visit <https://jvctournaments.com/NewEnglandWinterfest>**

Working in partnership with the state's businesses, institutions, nonprofit organizations, and their surrounding communities, the **Connecticut Convention & Sports Bureau (CTMEETINGS)** markets all of the state – convention and meeting venues, hotels and attractions, and sporting venues – as a premier destination for international, national, regional and statewide conferences, conventions and major sports events. **For more information about the Connecticut Convention & Sports Bureau, visit CTMEETINGS.org or call 860-728-6789.**

The **Connecticut Convention Center** in Hartford is the state's premier meeting venue and the largest full-service convention facility between New York and Boston. Overlooking the Connecticut River, it features 140,000 square feet of exhibition space, a 40,000-square-foot ballroom and 25,000 square feet of meeting space, as well as ample sheltered parking. The venue is professionally managed for the State of Connecticut by Waterford Venue Services, an affiliate of Waterford Hotel Group. **For information, visit CTConventions.com or call 860-249-6000.**

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