Rockford Region to Host Two Major Youth Sports Tournaments in Action-Packed Weekend

*Wrestling and volleyball tournaments collectively*

*generate an estimated economic impact of $1.7 million*

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## March 6, 2024

## ROCKFORD, IL — The Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau (RACVB) celebrates a 22-year partnership with the Illinois Kids Wrestling Federation (IKWF) as the tournament kicks off this weekend at the BMO Harris Bank Center. The 2024 ROCKIN’ ROCKFORD AAU GRAND PRIX volleyball tournament is taking place at the UW Health Sports Factory in downtown Rockford and Mercyhealth Sportscore Two. Collectively, participants, coaches and fans who travel for the tournaments this weekend will impact the region to an estimated value of $1.7 million during their stays.

“On behalf of the RACVB, we’d like to welcome both IKWF and AAU volleyball participants and visitors to the Rockford region this weekend. We are grateful to the many partners who have diligently worked with our team to accommodate events of this caliber in our community,” said Lindsay Arellano, RACVB vice president of sales and service. “Sports tourism is a driving force that enhances our local economy, fosters community engagement, and reinforces our region as a premier sports destination. It will be a winning weekend for all involved and we want to especially congratulate all participants for exceling in their own sports journeys. We wish you all the best.”

“We are excited to welcome these athletes to the facility and provide an outstanding experience,” said Louis Mateus, General Manager of Mercyhealth Sportscore Complexes. “The Indoor Sports Center at Mercyhealth Sportscore Two is a versatile venue, and a perfect location for additional volleyball courts.”

“We are always thrilled when we can utilize multiple Park District facilities to host such a large tournament and introduce many new faces to UW Health Sports Factory and all that we can do under one roof,” said Milton Phillips, UW Health Sports Factory Supervisor.

**SPORTS TOURNAMENT WEEKEND LINE-UP**

**Illinois Kids Wrestling Federation (IKWF) 2024 Novice and Senior State Tournament**

**Date:** **Friday, March 8 – Saturday, March 9, 2024** (weigh-ins begin Thursday, March 7)

**Location:** BMO Center located at 300 Elm Street, Rockford, IL

**Attendance:** Approximately **1,400 top wrestlers** in Illinois, boys and girls, **ages 10-14** will participate this year with approximately **8,000 total visitors**. Trophies will be awarded to the top five teams in Boys Novice/Senior and Girls Novice/Senior divisions.

**Admission:** The competition is open to the public and tickets are available for purchase. **All-Session Passes are $35/adults** and **$15/children (5-12 years old)** and **Single Session Passes** are **$10/adults** and **$5/children (5-12 years old)**. All **children under 5** **years old** can spectate for **free**.

**Economic Impact:** **$1,355,211**

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**Traffic and Parking Advisory:** All downtown businesses and commuters are advised that traffic will be heavy Thursday afternoon, March 7 and the morning of Friday, March 8. RACVB is collaborating with the City of Rockford and the BMO Center to help direct traffic and minimize delays for both commuters and visitors. Parking will also be impacted by the tournament. All city lots and on-street parking will operate according to the posted time restrictions and daily rates (parking fees may apply to some lots and decks).

**More information:** Thank you to the Illinois Kids Wrestling Federation for partnering and hosting this event in the Rockford region. Competition details can be found at: <https://www.ikwf.org/state-tournament-information/>**.**

**Other:** For safety reasons, all guests are subject to search upon entering the BMO Center. In the event that prohibited items are revealed during the search, the guest will be permitted to dispose of the item or return it to their vehicle. BMO reserves the right to confiscate any prohibited items and/or escort the guest from the building. The BMO Center will not safeguard any personal belongings or items.

**Amateur Athletic Union (AAU) Rockin’ Rockford Grand Prix Volleyball Tournament**

**Date:** **Saturday, March 9 – Sunday, March 10, 2024**

**Location:** UW Health Sports Factory located at 305 South Madison Street, Rockford, IL and Mercyhealth Sportscore Two at 8800 E Riverside Blvd, Loves Park, IL

**Attendance:** There are expected to be **5,400 people in attendance (players, coaches, spectators)** for this Super Regional event with **272 teams**; **male and female players in 10U-18U divisions**. Attendees are traveling to the Rockford region from various parts of Illinois, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Iowa, Missouri, Indiana, Michigan. Winning teams will earn free entry to AAU Nationals.

**Economic Impact:** **$434,565**

**Admission:** The public is encouraged to watch the games and tickets are **$25 for two-day admission**.

**More Information:** Thank you to sponsors/hosts with Progressive Volleyball Events and Balance Volleyball Club for partnering and hosting this event in the Rockford region. Additional tournament details can be found at: <https://find.aausports.org/EventView/ArtMID/1108/ArticleID/90252>.

***About RACVB:*** *RACVB is responsible for promoting the Rockford region as an attractive travel destination and enhancing its public image as a dynamic place to live and work. Through the impact of travel, RACVB strengthens the economic position of the region and provides opportunities for people in our communities.* [*www.gorockford.com*](http://www.gorockford.com)

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