



CONVENTION &
SPORTS BUREAU



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**“MIZUNO NEW ENGLAND WINTERFEST” VOLLEYBALL TOURNAMENT
TO BRING NEARLY 10,000 VISITORS TO GREATER HARTFORD THIS WEEKEND**

Free Admission for Spectators at All Times

HARTFORD, CONN. – January 15, 2015 – More than 2,000 female volleyball players from across the Northeast will travel to Connecticut’s Capital Region later this week when the New England Region Volleyball Association (NERVA) hosts the “2015 Mizuno New England Winterfest Volleyball Tournament” at the Connecticut Convention Center in Hartford. The event will be held this Friday, January 16 through Monday, January 19, 2015.

Tournament organizers, the Connecticut Convention & Sports Bureau (CTCSB), and the Connecticut Convention Bureau are looking forward to welcoming close to 10,000 visitors over the long weekend. Approximately 2,000 players, 250 coaches, 100 officials and volunteer tournament staff, and thousands of family members and fans are expected. On Friday evening will be a College Showcase to showcase athletes for college coaches and recruiters, as well as a College Recruiting Seminar for parents of volleyball players. Three days of tournament play begin on Saturday morning at 8 a.m., preceded at 7:45 a.m. with a ceremonial first serve by Hartford Mayor Pedro E. Segarra.

“The Mizuno New England Winterfest is designed to showcase female volleyball players – ages 12 to 18 – to college coaches and recruiters from throughout the Northeast,” explains Tournament Chair Alex Temkin. “The Northeast has one of the largest concentrations of Collegiate Division II and Division III schools in the country, and there are many Division I schools here as well.” There will be 25 courts with 12 matches per court every day, each lasting no more than one hour, adds Temkin, “Having more than 800 matches in a single location encourages college recruitment decision-makers to come and scout as many players as possible.”

Temkin notes that volleyball teams’ interest in registration for Winterfest was so great this year – 25 percent more than in 2014 – that organizers established a smaller, independent volleyball tournament called the “Husky Sweet 16” to accommodate the additional athletes. That competition will be held simultaneously on the six volleyball courts of the new Husky Volleyball Den, Connecticut’s largest indoor volleyball training center and practice facility. Husky Volleyball Den opened in 2014 at 30 Baker Hollow Road in nearby Windsor, Conn.

“We are excited to welcome back this successful tournament, one that is projected to generate over \$3.3 million in revenue for the Greater Hartford region during the long Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday weekend,” explains H. Scott Phelps, Interim President of the Connecticut Convention & Sports Bureau (CTCSB). The CTCSB is the State’s official meetings and sports event sales and marketing organization. “Our office provides a variety of support services for the organizers and we manage the tournament’s hotel reservation process, utilizing close to 4,500 overnight rooms at 29 hotels in the Capital Region.” Phelps reports an estimated 885 jobs in the hospitality industry will be supported by this tournament, and \$270,500 in Connecticut Sales Tax will be generated.

“Downtown Hartford is a great location for our sports event and the city and region really make our players and fans feel welcome,” adds Tournament Chair Temkin. “Restaurants extend their hours and customize the menus, the *dash* shuttle bus that circulates Downtown adds hours of operation, and everyone does their best to accommodate our group.”

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“It has been a great pleasure for our staff to watch this tournament grow over the last six years,” says Michael Costelli, General Manager of the Connecticut Convention Center. “The event brings a tremendous energy to the Center and we’re very excited to provide a terrific weekend for the athletes, coaches and spectators.” The New England Region Volleyball Association has committed to holding the event at the venue through at least 2017.

On **Friday evening, January 16 at 7 p.m.**, a **College Showcase** will be held where 250 athletes will participate in practice drills and scrimmage. More than 75 college coaches and recruiters will be on-site to watch and evaluate the players’ skills on an individual basis.

On **Friday evening, January 16 at 7:30 p.m.**, **parents of volleyball players are invited to a Recruiting Seminar** where a panel of Division I, II and III college coaches will tell them what they need to know about college recruitment including calendars, NCAA terms and related topics. This free program is open to all parents of volleyball players – whether or not their child is participating in this tournament. No advance reservations are needed.

On **Saturday morning, January 17 at 7:45 a.m.**, **the tournament will open with a brief ceremony and opening serve by Hartford Mayor Pedro E. Segarra.** The tournament will begin promptly at 8 a.m.

Spectator admission is free and no advance tickets are required to the New England Region Volleyball Association’s “Mizuno Winterfest” at the Connecticut Convention Center in Hartford.

Tournament schedule:

- **Friday, Jan. 16:** College Showcase, 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. – Drills & Scrimmages
- **Saturday, Jan. 17:** Opening Ceremony 7:35 a.m. to 7:45 a.m.
- **Saturday, Jan. 17:** Tournament 8 a.m. to 9 p.m.
- **Sunday, Jan. 18:** Tournament 8 a.m. to 9 p.m.
- **Monday, Jan. 19:** Tournament 8 a.m. to 3 p.m.

About the New England Region Volleyball Association (NERVA) and the Mizuno New England Winterfest Volleyball Tournament: *The New England Region is one of many 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 Mizuno New England Winterfest Volleyball Tournament, visit www.newwinterfest.com.*

The **Connecticut Convention & Visitors Bureau (CTCSB)** works in partnership with the state’s businesses, institutions, nonprofit organizations, and surrounding communities to market all of Connecticut – 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. The public-private partnership is funded by dues from members and by the Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD) and Connecticut Office of Tourism. The **Connecticut Sports Advisory Board**, a division of the CTCSB, focuses its efforts on attracting and serving international, national and regional sporting events. For more information about the Connecticut Convention & Sports Bureau, visit www.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 beautiful 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 more information, please visit CTConventions.com.

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