



CONVENTION & SPORTS BUREAU



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“MIZUNO NEW ENGLAND WINTERFEST” VOLLEYBALL TOURNAMENT IN HARTFORD AND “HUSKY SWEET 16” VOLLEYBALL TOURNAMENT IN WINDSOR TO BRING OVER 10,000 VISITORS TO CONNECTICUT THIS WEEKEND

HARTFORD, CONN., January 14, 2016 – Close to 2,500 female athletes (ages 12 to 18) from across the Northeast will travel to Connecticut’s Capital Region this weekend for two volleyball tournaments. More than 10,000 people are expected to attend – including the players, their families and friends, tournament officials, college players, fans and spectators.

The New England Region Volleyball Association (NERVA) will host the **“2016 Mizuno New England Winterfest Volleyball Tournament”** in the **Connecticut Convention Center at 100 Columbus Blvd. in Hartford** from **Friday, January 15 through Monday, January 18**. Three days of play will officially begin with a **brief ceremony on Saturday, and a 7:45 a.m. ceremonial first serve by Hartford Mayor Luke A. Bronin**. Games will take place from **Saturday through Monday** and feature 2,100 Athletes on 209 teams, and 25 courts with 12 matches per court every day each lasting no more than one hour.

On Saturday, January 16 and Sunday, January 17, a smaller, independent tournament called the **“Husky Sweet 16”** will take place in **The Den at 30 Baker Hollow Road (off Day Hill Rd.) in Windsor, Conn**. The tournament was created in 2015 by Connecticut’s Husky Volleyball club to accommodate the overflow of athletes from the Winterfest Tournament. This year, the successful Husky Sweet 16 is filled to capacity as well. The **Husky Sweet 16’s** 30 teams, with a total of over 300 athletes (ages 15 and 16), will utilize all six courts at The Den in Windsor. The facility opened in 2014 and is Connecticut’s largest indoor volleyball training center and practice facility.

“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.” Having almost 900 matches in a single location encourages college recruitment decision-makers to come and scout as many players as possible.”

“This will be a terrific weekend for the volleyball athletes and spectators alike, with both tournaments projected to generate over \$3.9 million in combined revenue for the Greater Hartford region during the Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday weekend,” says H. Scott Phelps, President of the Connecticut Convention & Sports Bureau (CTCSB), 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 a combined total of 5,000 room nights at 31 hotels from Bradley International Airport in Windsor Locks down to Cromwell.” Phelps reports an estimated 1,092 jobs in the hospitality industry will be supported by this tournament, and \$312,764 in Connecticut Sales Tax will be generated.

“Downtown Hartford is a great location for the Winterfest event and the city and region really make our players and fans feel welcome,” adds Winterfest’s 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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“With thousands of visitors staying in Hartford and in many nearby suburbs, there will be plenty of entertaining things to do when players are not competing,” notes Pat Ryan, Sweet 16 Tournament Chair and Director of Connecticut’s Husky Volleyball club. “We look forward to welcoming many of them back and showing them everything Greater Hartford has to offer.”

“Winterfest brings an incredible energy to the Connecticut Convention Center and the city of Hartford and we are very excited to host the athletes, coaches and spectators,” says Michael Costelli, General Manager of the Connecticut Convention Center. We have watched this tournament grow over the last six years, and also welcomed a separate tournament last spring. We look forward to being part of this event for the next several years.” The New England Region Volleyball Association has committed to holding the event at the Center through at least 2018.”

On **Friday evening, January 15 at 7 p.m.**, a **College Showcase will be held at Winterfest in the Connecticut Convention Center** 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. As part of that event, **at 7:15 p.m. next door at the Marriott Hartford Downtown, 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.

Winterfest tournament schedule at the Connecticut Convention Center, 100 Columbus Blvd., Hartford:

- **Friday, Jan. 15:** College Showcase, 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. – Drills & Scrimmages
- **Saturday, Jan. 16:** Opening Ceremony 7:45 a.m.
- **Saturday, Jan. 16:** Tournament 8 a.m. to 9 p.m.
- **Sunday, Jan. 17:** Tournament 8 a.m. to 9 p.m.
- **Monday, Jan. 18:** Tournament 8 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Spectator admission at the door is \$10 per day or \$25 for admission to all three days; Free under age 10.

Husky Sweet 16 tournament schedule at The Den at 30 Baker Hollow Rd., Windsor:

- **Saturday, Jan. 16:** Tournament 8 a.m. to 9 p.m.
- **Sunday, Jan. 17:** Tournament 8 a.m. to 9 p.m.

Spectator admission is free.

About the New England Region Volleyball Association (NERVA): *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 about the Mizuno New England Winterfest Volleyball Tournament, visit www.newwinterfest.com. For more about the Husky Sweet 16 Tournament, visit www.huskyvolleyball.com*

The **Connecticut Convention & Sports 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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