

Minto US OPEN Pickleball Championships Returning to Naples, Florida

Second Annual Event Promises Sell-Out Field of Athletes, Extended Schedule, Star Athletes and More

NAPLES, FLORIDA, USA, March 28, 2017 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The Minto US OPEN Pickleball Championships, a world-class, international competition, return to East Naples Community Park in

Naples, Florida, from April 23-April 30, 2017. This tournament, the biggest in the sport's history, comes into its second year ready to break last year's records – with plenty of room to spare.



Those who have not yet experienced pickleball, one of the fastest-growing sports in the U.S., with more than 2.5 million players, according to the Sports & Fitness Industry Association, will want to attend the upcoming event.

“

Not only do we have more athletes entered than last year – we have a waiting list of over 200 people because we sold out – but the tournament itself has been extended from five to seven days.”

Terri Graham, founder, Minto US OPEN Pickleball Championships

The inaugural 2016 Minto US OPEN Pickleball Championships, exceeded organizers' expectations, with more than 800 athletes coming from 39 states and seven countries. This year's event, with a sell-out field of 1,200 athletes, is already drawing from more countries and more states.

“We are really excited about this year's Minto US OPEN Pickleball Championships,” stated Terri Graham, the event's founder. “Not only do we have more athletes entered than last year – we had a waiting list of over 200 people who didn't

make it in to register before we sold out – but the tournament itself has been extended from five to seven days.”

The competition will include singles, doubles and mixed doubles play in a variety of skill and age groups. Some of the highlights of this year's competition include the following:

- A wide variety of ages represented: The youngest player is 12 and the oldest is 90
- Star athletes appearing: In addition to last year's champions who will be defending their titles, this year's event includes players such as racquetball legend Ruben Gonzalez, playing in men's doubles with partner Bruce Bagwell of Maine.
- A chance to see why pickleball is the fastest-growing sport in America: the sport, played on a court with a solid paddle, uses skills from tennis, badminton and ping-pong. Although it has gained a tremendous following among all age groups, its strongest growth area is players age 50 and up who are moving to the sport from tennis, since pickleball offers the chance to use similar skills on a smaller

court, with less wear and tear on joints.

- National television: The event will be covered by CBS Sports Network

In addition to the title sponsor, Minto Communities, Graham said this year there are more than 30 sponsors for the event, including Gamma Sports, California Sports Surfaces-DecoTurf, Paddletek, Head Sports, Pickleball-X, Headsweats and Dura Pickleballs.

East Naples Community Park, the site of the event, has 48 pickleball courts surrounding the Zing Zang Championship Court, where high-visibility matches will be played. All courts were recently upgraded and host the highest level of play.

The 2016 event, in addition to hosting between 10,000 and 12,000 spectators (more are expected this year), brought a \$2.5 million economic boost to the Naples area, according to the Collier County Visitor's Bureau. It also was named a winner in Sports Destination Management Magazine's annual awards program, Champions of Economic Impact in Sports Tourism.

Background Information:

Minto US OPEN Pickleball Championships : The Minto US OPEN Pickleball Championships is organized by [Spirit Promotions, LLC](#), a company formed by Terri Graham, president, and Chris Evon, executive director, in 2015. Spirit Promotions also consults with tennis clubs and park districts on increasing revenue dollars by adding pickleball courts and effective programming to their business model. In addition, Spirit Promotions produces programs for pickleball instruction, including skill clinics, lesson packages and multi-day destination camps.

Information on the Minto US OPEN Pickleball Championships is available on the event's website, usopenpickleballchampionship.com, where visitors can also sign up for e-mail updates about the tournament. For sponsor or other information, e-mail Terri Graham at terri@usopenpickleballchampionship.com.

Sponsors: The Minto US OPEN Pickleball Championships is a success in part because of the generosity and support of its sponsors. These include the following:

- Minto Communities: Minto Communities returns as the title sponsor of the event. The company offers new homes on the Isles of Collier, many of which are adjacent to the East Naples Community Park. Minto Homes also has four private pickleball courts for residents' use.

- Sponsors with Official Products of the Minto US OPEN Pickleball Championships:

Official Ball: Pickleball Inc.'s Dura Pickleball

Official Paddle: Paddletek

Official grip: GAMMA

Official Court Surface: Decoturf

Official Headgear: Headsweats

Official Footwear: HEAD

- Tier I Sponsors: Naples, Marco Island, Everglades Convention & Visitors Bureau (Florida's Paradise Coast); ZingZang; Paddletek; GAMMA Pickleball; Onix; Pickleball Central; Franklin

- Tier II Sponsors: California Sports Surfaces; Mor-Sports Group

- Tier III Sponsor: ProLite

- Tier IV Sponsor: Hyland's Leg Cramps

- Tier V Sponsors: Geneva Advisors; Engage Pickleball; Headsweats; Protek; Selkirk Sport; USA Shade & Fabric Structures

- Tier VI Sponsors: Pickle Pro; Pickleball Crazy; HEAD; iDink Wear; preppyplayer.com; PB&J Pickleball & Jewelry; Real Time Pain Relief; NICI Law Firm

- Honorable Partners: Council of Collier County; Pickleball Magazine; Pickleball Channel; Kinexis Sports & Rehab; IPTPA (International Pickleball Teaching Professional Association) PT

(PickleballTournaments.com); Kitch Pickleball

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