

# The Big Hoopla Welcomes Teams & Fans Back to Dayton for the 2024 NCAA First Four

*The Big Hoopla is ready to take the ball and make the 2024 First Four a slam dunk*

DAYTON, OH, UNITED STATES, March 15, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- With the field for the 2024 NCAA Division I Men's Basketball Championship officially set on Selection Sunday, March 17, qualifying teams, officials, and basketball fans from around the globe are turning their attention once again to Dayton, Ohio, site of the First Four. [The Big Hoopla](#) is ready to take the ball and make the 2024 First Four a slam dunk.



The Big Hoopla, a volunteer-led nonprofit formed in 2012, organizes, supports, and promotes events surrounding the First Four basketball games held in Dayton, "The Epicenter of College Basketball."

The 2024 festivities begin in earnest Sunday, March 17, with the Hoopla 4 Miler, a four-mile run near UD Arena. In celebration of St. Patrick's Day, green beer will be available at the finish line for all participants over 21. The run is followed by the Hoopla STEM Challenge, Championed by Wright State University, a FREE interactive event for K-8 students that merges basketball and STEM education into a fun day of hands-on activities and demonstrations. STEM Challenge attendees will also have the opportunity to take part in a hot shot contest, and 12 winners will shoot baskets at UD Arena on Tuesday, March 19 in front of the First Four crowd.

The Big Hoopla has welcomed many special guests to Dayton over the last 10 years, including then-President Obama and General CQ Brown of the United States Air Force. In 2024, The Big Hoopla is thrilled to welcome Second Lt. Madison Marsh, winner of Miss America 2024.

"We welcome and thank Second Lt. and reigning Miss America Madison Marsh for taking the

time to speak with STEM students, airmen and guardians during her visit to Dayton as we celebrate Hoopla and the NCAA men's First Four," said Founder of Hoopla and JobsOhio President and CEO J.P. Nauseef. "As the only active-duty military officer to ever serve as Miss America, we are grateful she will highlight Ohio's efforts to be the most military-friendly state as well as the critical role STEM education plays to support Ohio's growth in semiconductor production, aerospace and aviation, advanced manufacturing, healthcare and more."

The Big Hoopla's mission is also dedicated to supporting and honoring the Dayton region's large military community. Through the Hoopla Ticket Program, the organization has donated over 127,000 tickets to local military service members and students since 2012, giving them the unforgettable experience of attending First Four games and other community events.

"Wright-Patterson Air Force Base is a huge part of our community," said Terry Slaybaugh, Volunteer Chair of the Big Hoopla Local Organizing Committee (LOC). "When the Big Hoopla was founded, it was clear that honoring our local heroes was an important part of our mission, and why the Dayton region is clearly 'The Most Supportive Military Community.'"

The Big Hoopla also announced Brittnee Lydy of the Dayton Regional STEM School as the 2024 Hoopla STEM Teacher of the Year. The honor, which includes an educational grant, is given annually to an outstanding local STEM teacher.

The 2024 First Four marks the 22nd time that March Madness has tipped off at UD Arena in Dayton. The historic basketball venue is well-acquainted with the NCAA tournament as UD Arena has hosted more than 125 NCAA tournament games, far more than any other venue in the world. Given this distinction, UD Arena has been dubbed "America's #1 Host Site."

"When you consider what we have in Dayton—UD Arena, a truly world-class facility, our incredible community partners, intensely passionate college basketball fans, and the institutional knowledge within the LOC volunteer members—it's no surprise we see the continued organic success of the start of the NCAA Tournament each year," said Sarah Spees, Volunteer Director of the LOC. "As we like to say, #TheRoadStartsHere."

Hoopla Events for Sunday, March 17, 2024

Hoopla 4-Miler

Location: University of Dayton Flyers Softball Fields, 1801 S. Edwin C. Moses Blvd.

Time: Race starts at 9:00 a.m.

No media RSVP needed.

Hoopla STEM Challenge

Location: Dayton Convention Center, 22 E. Fifth St., 1st floor

Time: Registration opens at 11:00 a.m., Opening Ceremony 12:00 p.m.

Notes: Opening ceremony will feature USAF and NASA speakers.

Please note: The Convention Center parking garage will be open.

Media MUST sign-in at the Registration Desk, 1st floor.

For more information, visit The Big Hoopla website: <https://daytonhoopla.com/>

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