

Dayton Announced as Host Site of NCAA First Four® Through 2028

Dayton, Ohio will remain "The Epicenter of College Basketball"

DAYTON, OH, UNITED STATES, October 4, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- UD Arena will remain "The Epicenter of College Basketball," hosting the First Four through 2028, the NCAA Division I Men's Basketball Committee announced Wednesday, October 2, 2024.

The official announcement extends an impressive streak for the Gem City: every Opening Round and First Four game since 2001, aside from the COVID-impacted 2021 tournament, has been played at UD Arena in Dayton.



"The NCAA has tipped off the men's tournament in Dayton since 2001 for a reason," said Terry Slaybaugh, Volunteer Chair of [the Big Hoopla](#) Local Organizing Committee (LOC). "The way this city, region, businesses, organizations, and fans come together to support the First Four is

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Terry Slaybaugh, Volunteer Chair of the Big Hoopla LOC

something special. From record-breaking crowds and a first-rate tournament experience to amazing community events and giving back to our military service members, the Dayton region steps up and delivers like no other."

UD Arena has hosted 137 NCAA men's Division I basketball tournament games—more than any other venue in the nation—helping it earn the nickname "America's #1 Host Site." With First Four hosting extended to 2028, that

number will climb beyond 150 games.

In addition to capacity crowds, the First Four has drawn many high-profile guests to UD Arena,

including then-President Obama and General CQ Brown of the United States Air Force. Most recently, Second Lt. Madison Marsh, winner of Miss America 2024, attended the First Four.

During her time in Dayton, Second Lt. Marsh visited with students, service people, and basketball fans at a number of high-profile events in the region, including the Women's History Month Brunch at the National Museum of the US Air Force, the Dayton Region STEM School, and The Big Hoopla STEM Challenge hot shot competition final.

Part of the First Four experience in Dayton includes a number of events organized by The Big Hoopla, a volunteer-led nonprofit formed in 2012 to support and showcase the tournament, as well as elevate Dayton as a hosting site.

These events include the Hoopla 4 Miler, a four-mile run near UD Arena, and 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, as well as many other community engagements.

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 and its partners have 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. To learn more about The Big Hoopla, visit <https://daytonhoopla.com/>.

"This news proves what we've known for a long time: Dayton is a basketball town," said Slaybaugh. "We have the most passionate college basketball fans in the world, and we're excited to continue proving it for years to come."

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