

NEWS RELEASE

Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau



Memorial Day Weekend to Feature Multi Sports Festival at UW Health Sports Factory

American Cornhole Organization Tournament and America's Team Table Tennis Championships to be held; public invited to participate

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 8, 2017

ROCKFORD, IL – The multi-use capabilities of the UW Health Sports Factory will be on full display Memorial Day weekend, May 26-28, during the USA Table Tennis 2017 America's Team Championships and the American Cornhole Organization's (ACO) Rockford Tournament.

The concept of establishing a multi-sport festival in Rockford has been in the works for a few years, and was sparked locally by Ed Hogshead, the America's Team Table Tennis tournament director. Backed by his experience working the Arnold Sports Festival USA, Hogshead partnered with Nick Povalitis, RACVB's sports destination and sales manager, to facilitate this year's launch.

"As we explored how to enhance the table tennis experience for the community, we thought it'd be great to activate the outside perimeter of the UW Health Sports Factory," Povalitis said. "That's when we called our friend Frank Geers, CEO of American Cornhole, to lend a hand by solidifying our region's first ACO tournament. Frank's entry helped us to branch out alongside table tennis, so it's a win-win-win!"

"We've been looking into expanding into the Rockford market for a few years now, and the ACO was delighted to hear of this sports festival opportunity and the commitment by GoRockford. And cornhole—perhaps known better as bags in Rockford—is a Midwestern staple and a great fit for this community!" said Geers. "We're excited to cross promote with such an established event like America's Team Table Tennis Championships. Our goal is that this is just the beginning of a long-term ACO presence in Rockford."

This event will be the first time that an ACO tournament will be hosted in Rockford. Play will take place on Friday and Saturday, May 26-27, for both singles and doubles divisions with cash payouts to the top teams. Advance registration and information is available at <http://americancornhole.com/event-tickets/>.

"Rockford is primed and ready to host a fun sports festival featuring non-traditional sports," said Hogshead. "For 2017, table tennis and cornhole are the two sports that will draw players from around the world. We plan on adding more exciting sports each succeeding year. It is our goal to put Rockford on the map as the place to be for the best in non-traditional sports events as well as traditional competitions. Many sports struggle with getting the recognition they deserve. But not anymore - Rockford is here to help."

-MORE-

Table tennis and Rockford have gone hand in hand for years, dating back to the 1930s with organized clubs and competitions active up until World War II. The Rockford Table Tennis Club then restarted in 1969 with the help of Bob Pappich and the Rockford Park District. And popularity grew when two of the largest tournaments in the United States were held at Rock Valley College in 1973 and 1974.

"Rockford is a table tennis town," said Hogshead.

Athletes age 8 to 80-years-old and born in more than 20 countries will compete in a three-person team format during the Table Tennis Championships with \$6,000 in prize money. Winners will receive custom-made medals provided by Recognition Pros of Rockford (www.recognitionpros.com)

America's Team Table Tennis Championships

Location: UW Health Sports Factory

Date: Friday-Sunday, May 26-28

Friday – Free Community Night from 6 – 9 p.m. – the community is invited to try out the tables before the championship matches begin on Saturday.

Saturday – Doors open at 8 a.m., match play from 9 a.m. – 8 p.m.

Sunday – Doors open at 8 a.m., match play from 9 a.m. – 5 p.m. (Team Finals start at 2 p.m.)

ACO Rockford Cornhole Tournament

Location: UW Health Sports Factory, Lower Level Parking Lot (South End)

Date: Friday-Saturday, May 26-27

Friday -- gates open at 5 p.m. for Walk-Up Tournament; \$20 per team

Saturday -- Tournament gates open at 9:30 a.m., Tournament One begins at 10:30 a.m.; Tournament Two begins at 3 p.m. \$25 per team entry online (\$40 per team at the door; \$200 first place prize, \$140 second, \$80 third, \$60 fourth) <http://americancornhole.com/event-tickets/>

The mission of the RACVB is to drive quality of life and economic growth for our citizens through tourism marketing and destination development. www.gorockford.com

#

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Josh Albrecht, RACVB Director of Marketing, 815.489.1655, jalbrecht@gorockford.com