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First Four Returns to Dayton



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The NCAA Division I Men's Basketball Committee announced Monday the First Four will be played at the University of Dayton Arena in 2012 and 2013.

The University of Dayton served as the host for the inaugural First Four March 15-16. The games drew more than 10,000 fans each night to the University of Dayton Arena, and a national viewing audience of more than five million people. Virginia Commonwealth emerged from the 2011 First Four to reach the 2011 Final Four.

"This is fantastic news, and a genuine representation of how important the support of the region is to the Basketball Committee," University of Dayton Vice President and Director of Athletics Tim Wabler said. "As excited as we were last year when we were awarded the very first First Four, I am more excited by the fact that we have it in 2012 and 2013.

"This gives us a real opportunity to cement the First Four in Dayton for years to come. The Division I Baseball Championship is going on right now, and it's our goal to make Dayton as synonymous with the First Four as Omaha is with the College World Series. I'm confident the collaborative effort and hard work by our First Four Local Organizing Committee, our hotel partners, and our staff will be first-rate, but the feedback from the teams about how welcoming the city was and the electric atmosphere in the Arena made it clear that our fans and the support of the community will be as critical in keeping the First Four in Dayton as it was in bringing it back."

The format for the four first-round games will remain the same; the 2012 First Four features two games being played Tuesday, March 13, and the other two taking place Wednesday, March 14.

Each night's action will pit two No. 16 seeds battling for the right to play a second-round game against a top-seeded team. Those games will be followed by contests featuring two of the last four at-large teams selected to the field.

Turner Broadcasting's truTV will broadcast all four games.

CBS will announce the entire 68-team field at 6 p.m. EST on Selection Sunday, March 11.

"Dayton has hosted 87 tournament games over the last 41 years, including the start of each championship since 2001, and the feedback from participating schools, the community's enthusiasm and the commitment demonstrated by the University of Dayton staff make Dayton an ideal host for the First Four," said Gene Smith, director of athletics at The Ohio State University and chair of the Division I Men's Basketball Committee.

"Last year, the committee explored several options when determining how the First Four should look and where it would be played. We decided Dayton would be best to host the inaugural event and now we believe we should start the championship in Dayton through the championship's 75th anniversary in 2013. We'll continue to evaluate the First Four and explore how we can work with our hosts in Dayton to make it even better."

The University of Dayton Arena is the most-used tournament venue in NCAA men's Division I basketball tournament history. To date, University of Dayton Arena has hosted 87 NCAA men's tournament games, four more than the original home of the NCAA tournament, Kansas City's Municipal Auditorium. University of Dayton Arena has hosted NCAA tournament events in 25 of the 42 years since opening its doors for the 1969-70 season.

Tickets to the 2012 First Four, as well as the other preliminary round sites for the 2012 championship, will be available in October.

For more information, contact Doug Hauschild at 937-229-4390.