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The Madness Continues

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This weekend's NCAA Division I Women's Basketball Championship event in Dayton, Ohio, is part of a three-week flurry of basketball-related events University and local officials hope pump more than $7.5 million into the local economy.

The city and the University will receive national visibility and an economic boost by hosting the NCAA Division I Men's Basketball Championship, the NCAA Division I Women's Basketball Championship Road to the Final Four® and two basketball Hall-of-Fame greats, Kareem Abdul-Jabbar and Bill Walton.

"This really is a chance to open the curtain to the area, show our assets and highlight the pride we have in our region," said Jim Leftwich, president and CEO of the Dayton Development Coalition. "And we've found once people come here and see that, they generally want to come back."

The University and city are welcoming fans of Ohio State, Tennessee, Notre Dame and Oklahoma to town for the NCAA Division I women's basketball regional.

Tennessee will square off with Ohio State at noon Saturday. The matchup between Notre Dame and Oklahoma will follow. The winners will face each other for a trip to the Final Four at 7 p.m. Monday at time to be announced. ESPN will televise each game of the Dayton regional.

For women's Dayton regional tickets, visit the related link. All-session tickets include the regional semifinals and final and cost $37 and $22. Tickets for only the semifinals or the final are $21 and $14.

"We'll have University of Dayton Arena ready for all of the events, and we are going to put our best foot forward," said Tim Wabler, University of Dayton vice president and director of athletics. "We will reward all of the basketball fans and participants with a quality experience."

Media around the nation raved about that experience last week during the inaugural NCAA men's basketball First Four.

Sports Illustrated's Stewart Mandel wrote: "The hoops-crazed city has a long history with the NCAA (UD Arena this week will break the record for men's NCAA tourney games hosted, currently at 83) and is going all out to treat the First Four like a regular tourney experience."

David Scott of the Charlotte Observer wrote: "Dayton loves its college basketball. The Dayton Flyers often fill Dayton Arena for their Atlantic 10 games, and the building has long been a favorite of the NCAA for what used to be tournament play-in games and now its four first-round games. The arena, which was built in 1969, has a retro feel to it that works nicely with the tournament."

One fan who took in the First Four games was Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, whom the University hosted for his Ohio premiere of the documentary On the Shoulders of Giants: The Story of the Greatest Basketball Team You Never Heard Of.

Abdul-Jabbar, no stranger to historic moments in college hoops, also witnessed another one with the first First Four game at the arena.

"This is a historic moment," said Daniel J. Curran, president of the University of Dayton. "With the inaugural game of the First Four, the University of Dayton Arena has now hosted more games than any other venue in NCAA men's basketball tournament history. More than one million fans have attended tournament games in our arena. We promise an outstanding experience for teams, fans and media."

Closing out the month, Walton will deliver a keynote address on leadership and achievement at the University's R.I.S.E. XI Global Investment Forum at 5:30 p.m. Thursday, March 31, at the University of Dayton Arena.
"Bill Walton embodies so much of what we hope to inspire in the students and professionals who attend the conference," said Matthew Shank, dean of the School of Business Administration. "He has a zest for life, a passion for excellence and a commitment to giving back to society."

Now in its 11th year, the R.I.S.E. forum has brought thousands of finance professionals, students and faculty to Dayton, boosting the coffers of area hotels and restaurants.

For R.I.S.E. XI ticket information visit the related link or call 937-229-1444.

In addition to the basketball stars of yesterday and today, the University of Dayton made room for the basketball stars of tomorrow in March. Several high school teams began tournament runs at the arena at the beginning of the month.

For more information, contact Shawn Robinson, associate director of media relations, at 937-229-3391 or srobinson@udayton.edu.