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Erie to Host 2018 NCATA National Championships

ERIE, Pa. - The National Collegiate Acrobatics & Tumbling Association (NCATA) has awarded hosting rights for its 2018 national championships scheduled for April 26-28 to Gannon University, the Erie Sports Commission and the city of Erie. The organizations made the announcement Tuesday afternoon.

“We are excited to partner with Gannon University and the Erie Sports Commission to host the 2018 NCATA National Championships,” said NCATA Executive Director Janell Cook. “Lisa Goddard McGuirk and her staff are well positioned to host a special event for our student-athletes and fans. The great staff at the Erie Sports Commission and the community of Erie have been so supportive and enthusiastic. We really look forward to bringing our championship to their city.”

The NCATA National Championships will be contested in the East for only the third time ever and first time since Fairmont State (W.Va.) University served as the host in 2015. The national championship event includes a single-elimination format with eight qualifying teams via at-large bids. The Elite Eight kicks off Thursday, April 26 with four quarterfinal meets at the Hammermill Center. The national semifinals are scheduled for Friday, April 27. Championship Saturday (April 28) will include the individual event championships in the morning and team national championship meet in the evening.

“I am ecstatic that the NCATA has chosen to bring its national championship to Erie, Pennsylvania in



2018,” said Erie Sports Commission Executive Director Ron Sertz. “This event is perfect for Erie. Several hundred student-athletes will travel to our city for an extended trip, exposing a brand-new audience to all our region offers. It will bring national attention to our region and the stellar acrobatics and tumbling program that Gannon has built. Hosting this event is a major win for the Erie Sports Commission, Gannon University and our entire region.”

The University of Oregon hosted the inaugural NCATA National Championships in 2011. Other past hosts included Baylor University (2012 and 2016), Quinnipiac University (2013), Azusa Pacific University (2014 and 2017) and Fairmont State University (2015). Baylor will be defending its crown after winning the last three national championships. All three titles came via victories over Oregon. The Ducks won the first five NCATA national championships, before the Bears captured the last three.

“We are honored to have been selected to host the NCATA National Championships,” said Gannon Director of Athletics Lisa Goddard McGuirk. “Our host group led by Gannon University and the Erie Sports Commission wanted an opportunity to really showcase and support this rapidly-growing intercollegiate sport. I know the City of Erie and surrounding region will truly enjoy watching these extremely talented student-athletes compete for the national titles that will be at stake.”

Gannon will be hosting a national championship for the second time in the span of four years after hosting the 2014 NCAA Division II Women’s Basketball Elite Eight at the Erie Insurance Arena. The Golden Knights have also hosted numerous NCAA regionals for women’s basketball, men’s basketball, wrestling, women’s volleyball, women’s soccer and men’s soccer. Additionally, the University has been the host site for countless conference championships and the Collegiate Water Polo Association (CWPA) Division II Championships.

The Erie Sports Commission has been a major piece of successful hosting bids for the NCAA Division I Women’s Hockey Frozen Four, NCAA Division II Women’s Basketball Elite Eight, B.A.S.S. Masters Mid-Atlantic Divisional, state bowling championships, state junior wrestling championships and much more. As a result, the commission has been named a finalist for the National Association of Sports Commissions (NASC) Sports Commission of the Year award serving a population under 400,000 four consecutive years. It was previously named the National Sports Commission of the Year in the mid- to small-market category by the NASC in both 2014 and 2016.

A member of the NCATA and the NCAA Division II, Gannon sponsors 20 varsity sports with over 580 student-athletes. Sixteen of the school’s 20 programs competed in the postseason last year with eight advancing to the national postseason.

Academically, the entire student-athlete population produced a combined 3.26 grade point average during the 2017 spring semester. Over 70 percent of the students playing sports at Gannon achieved a 3.0 GPA or better. The 11 women’s intercollegiate teams produced a combined 3.39 GPA. In fact, all 11 teams achieved a team GPA of 3.03 or better. The men’s intercollegiate teams produced a combined 3.15 GPA. Within the community, Gannon student-athletes performed over 6,000 hours of volunteer work during the 2016-17 academic year.

First-year Gannon acrobatics and tumbling head coach Jacquie Eshleman will attempt to qualify the Lady Knights for the national championships after spending the previous four seasons at Alderson Broaddus



(W.Va.) University. Gannon has qualified for the NCATA National Championship three times during the program's four-year history.

Information relating to tickets, schedules and much more for the 2018 NCATA National Championships will be released at a later date. Please continue to stay up-to-date with the latest information at www.gannonsports.com and via Gannon's social media outlets on Facebook (@gannonsports), Twitter (@GUKnights) and Instagram (gannongoldenknight).

Erie Sports Commission is a proud member of PA Sports.

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