



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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MARCH MADNESS COMES TO MIAMI

MIAMI TO HOST 2009 NCAA DIVISION I BASKETBALL FIRST AND SECOND ROUNDS

MIAMI – The National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) announced today that Miami has been selected to serve as one of the host sites for the first and second round of the 2009 NCAA Division I Men’s Basketball Tournament. The Miami-Dade Sports Commission (MDSC), Florida International University, the University of Miami, the AmericanAirlines Arena, and the Greater Miami Convention & Visitors Bureau (GMCVB) collaborated on the bid to bring March Madness back to Miami for the first time since 1994.

The event will be held at the AmericanAirlines Arena on March 19 and 21 (Thursday and Saturday) or March 20 and 22 (Friday and Sunday), 2009. Eight teams, out of the field of 65, will play a total of six games over the two days, with two teams advancing to the “Sweet 16”.

March 2009 will be only the second time that Miami has hosted the NCAA Tournament, with the Regional Finals in 1994 at the Miami Arena being the first. “We are honored that Miami has been selected to host the first and second Rounds of the 2009 NCAA Division I Men’s Basketball Championship,” states Mike Sophia, Executive Director of the MDSC. “Our community has a proud sports tradition, great partners and facilities, and a commitment to continue to welcome these kinds of events to Miami-Dade County.”

The event also marks the strong collaborative effort between Florida International University and the University of Miami. Florida International University is the host school for these rounds of the Championship with support provided from the University of Miami. “This is something that we have put great effort into for the past five years. I am glad to see that our efforts have come to fruition. I think that something like this not only raises the profile of FIU as an athletic department and a basketball program, but it is also has a tremendous economic impact for Miami-Dade County,” Rick Mello, FIU Athletic Director

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and MDSC Board Member. “This is a marquee event for South Florida and we are very proud to be a part of that. The four of us have worked very hard together to make this happen. It is truly rewarding to have four major entities in South Florida come together in a joint effort that is going to bring “March Madness” to South Florida,” added Mello.

“Together with our friends at FIU and the Miami-Dade Sports Commission, we are very pleased to announce that the NCAA has awarded to South Florida the first and second round games of the 2009 Men’s Basketball Tournament. All of us at the University of Miami very much enjoyed hosting the East Regional in 1994 and are excited to bring back NCAA post-season play to the area,” added Paul Dee, University of Miami Athletic Director.

The event will kick-off March Madness and take place at the AmericanAirlines Arena, located in the heart of Miami. “AmericanAirlines Arena and the HEAT Group are pleased to be selected by the NCAA to be a site for the first and second rounds of the prestigious Men’s NCAA Division I Basketball Tournament. We look forward to working with our local partners Miami-Dade Sports Commission, FIU and UM in hosting this exciting event here in Miami,” states Mike Walker, Executive Vice President, HEAT Group Enterprises and AmericanAirlines Arena.

“We are delighted to have the NCAA Division I Men’s Basketball Tournament return to Miami,” said William D. Talbert, III, GMCVB President & CEO. “The economic impact and media coverage of the tournament is among the top among U.S. sporting events. The efforts of all the local partners will be rewarded during March Madness 2009 when Miami becomes the focus of sports fans from around the world.”

The Miami-Dade Sports Commission was created by the Miami-Dade County Board of County Commissioners in 2003, and opened for business in April of 2004. The Sports Commission promotes youth and amateur sports in Miami-Dade County, and works to secure sports events that will generate economic impact for the community. MDSC has proudly secured events such as the 2005 & 2006 FHSAA Football Finals, the 2006 Florida Sunshine State Games, and created events such as the Miami-Dade Senior Games.

For information on NCAA Basketball, please contact Dr. Jeanne Boyd, Director - NCAA Men's Basketball Championship, (317) 917-6550.

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