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GAME ON!



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PALM BEACH COUNTY TO SHOWCASE THE USA WATER SKI NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS

Palm Beach County will be the epicenter for the sport of waterskiing this summer. USA Water Ski will bring its National Championships to the lakes in Okeetchee Park on August 13-17, 2013. The USA National Water Ski Championships, which is the nation's largest water ski celebration, is a traditional three- event competition (slalom, tricks, and jumping). Over 700 adult participants and 200 youth participants will travel from across the country to compete in this prestigious event. The Nationals consist of both men and women divisions with 24 age groups, featuring competitors that range from 6 years of age and under to over 80 years. USA Water Ski will host its premier event for the 71st time and for the second consecutive year in Palm Beach County.



The Palm Beach County Sports Commission is supporting the Ski Club of the Palm Beaches and its efforts to host the USA Water Ski National Championships. As the national governing body for its sport, USA Water Ski is comprised of more than 600 member clubs throughout the nation. The Ski Club of the Palm Beaches is one of the most active and productive clubs in the country. The Ski Club of the Palm Beaches partners with Palm Beach County Parks and Recreation to maintain the skiing facilities at

Okeetchee Park. This dedication has played a vital role in Palm Beach County becoming a premier destination for competitive water skiers. USA Water Ski has brought the Nationals to Palm Beach County 4 out of the last 8 years (2005, 2008, 2009, and 2012). In addition to the National Championships, Palm Beach County has also hosted five Southern Regional Water Ski Championships, two Florida State Water Ski Championships and the 1989 Water Ski World Championships – in addition to a handful of professional cash-prize tournaments and hundreds of other amateur water ski tournaments.

The American Water Ski Association, one of nine sport discipline organizations of USA Water Ski, approved the bid to bring the Nationals to Palm Beach County for 2012 and 2013 with great enthusiasm. "It is always exciting to watch the best water ski athletes in the nation compete at a world class facility such as Okeetchee Park," said Gene Davis, president of the American Water Ski Association. "The Ski Club of The Palm Beaches always provides a great venue and atmosphere for the competitors and their families."

Advancement to the Water Ski National Championship is primarily earned through placement on the national rankings list.

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USA WATERSKI (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)



Athletes can also qualify for the Nationals by placing in the top-five at Regionals or by placing in the top-five at the previous year's Nationals. The first National Championship

was held in 1939 at Jones Beach in Long Island, New York. Except for three years during World War II (1942-1944), the Nationals have been held every year since 1939.

Okeehetee Park, a 900- acre county park in central Palm Beach County, is widely recognized for its dynamic waterskiing facility. Its

waters have been a haven for both professional and amateur skiers for over twenty-five years. There are five freshwater ski lakes custom-designed for competition waterskiing, one of which is even lighted for night-time use. Four of the five lakes

feature slalom courses, while one lake provides a jump ramp and is dedicated to jumping and wakeboarding. The lakes at Okeehetee are a virtual breeding ground for competitive water skiers. Dozens of regional, national, and even world champions and record holders train or have trained at Okeehetee on a permanent or intermittent basis.



In addition to the thrills and excitement that will be generated by this extreme sport, the USA National Water Ski Championships will bring tremendous economic benefits to the local community. The event is expecting to generate over 1,500

hotel room nights and \$1 million in economic impact during the month of August, a traditionally slow month for tourism. The event solidifies Palm Beach County's position as an elite sports destination.

For more information on the USA National Water Ski Championships, visit www.usawaterski.org. For more information on the Ski Club of The Palm Beaches, visit www.okeeski.com.

OVER 5,000 YOUTH EXPECTED TO ATTEND THE KIDS FITNESS FESTIVAL OF THE PALM BEACHES

The Palm Beach County Sports Commission will host the 19th annual Kids Fitness Festival of the Palm Beaches, presented by the Ronald McDonald House Charities of South Florida, at the Palm Beach County



Convention Center on Wednesday, July 17 and Thursday, July 18. Over 5,000 of south Florida's youth, from the ages of 5 to 13, have registered to participate in the only multi-sport event to take place in Palm Beach County on an annual basis. The Kids Fitness Festival of the Palm Beaches strives to introduce and promote both mainstream sports, such as football, soccer, golf, baseball and basketball and non-traditional sports that are not commonly found in the general school system, such as badminton, fencing and boxing. The event markets and showcases many of the sport assets located in Palm Beach County.

The Palm Beach County Sports Commission partners with a variety of sports organizations, sports associations, national governing bodies, sports clubs, sports facilities, professional sports franchises and constituents of the sports community to produce the one of a kind festival. Over 50 different organizations will offer introductory sports clinics that teach the necessary basic functions and fundamentals of their sport. The event will feature noticeable organizations, such as the Miami Marlins, Miami Dolphins, Roger Dean Stadium, the United States Tennis Association, International Polo Club, American Youth Soccer Organization, USA Badminton, USA Judo, USA Powerlifting, and the Florida Rugby Union. In addition to the sports clinics, the Festival will also offer a midway of interactive games, and a number of exhibitors promoting nutrition and healthy lifestyles. The 2013 Festival will return to the Palm Beach County Convention Center for the fourth consecutive year.

Since 2003, the event has exposed over 40,000 youth to the world of sports. These numbers could not be reached without the efforts of the Ronald McDonald House Charities of South Florida. "Encouraging kids to lead active, balanced lives is an important mission – and a commitment that



RMHC and McDonald's share with parents and the Palm Beach Sports Commission," said Ricky Wade, RMHC board member and McDonald's owner operator. Other supporting sponsors include Prime Time Palm Beach County, Duffy's, Roger Dean Stadium, ESPN 106.3 FM, and Joe DiMaggio Children's Hospital.

SOFTBALL MAKES A BIG IMPACT IN PALM BEACH COUNTY



Softball means big business for Palm Beach County this summer. Softball diamonds across the County were filled with action while hotels and restaurants were packed with athletes and their families. More than 250 teams and

4,000 athletes played softball in multiple venues. Softball generated over \$1 million of direct visitor spending and thousands of hotel room nights for the local community. Organizations such as the United States Specialty Sports Association (USSSA) and Florida Half Century Softball hosted impressive statewide and national tournaments.

The Palm Beach County Sports Commission partnered with the Florida Half Century Amateur Softball Association to host the Florida Half Century Summer Classic on June 22-23, 2013. This is a 50 or older men's slow pitch softball tournament, which utilized 9 softball fields over 3 venues (Seminole Palms Park in Royal Palm Beach, Okeehetee Park in West Palm Beach, and John Prince Park in Lake Worth). Over 60 teams from across Florida competed in 5 skill brackets. After a 10 year absence from Palm Beach County, Florida Half Century Softball made Palm Beach County its home for the second consecutive year.



which is sanctioned by USSSA. This girl's fastpitch tournament took place at the Lake Catherine Sportsplex in Palm Beach Gardens from June 21-23. Over 90 teams, consisting of age groups stretching from 8 & under to 18 & under, participated. Lake Catherine Sportsplex entails one of the premier girls' softball complexes in Palm Beach County and has been home to numerous national softball tournaments, including collegiate national championship events. The Swamp Classic is one of the longest standing softball tournaments in Florida with more than 30 years of history.

The Palm Beach Gardens Youth Athletic Association presented its annual Swamp Classic,

The USSSA Florida Fastpitch Softball State "B" Championships will take place in Palm Beach County on July 5-7 for the third consecutive year. Considered to be one of the most prestigious and coveted softball tournaments in

Florida, the event is expected to draw more than 100 teams and 1,600 athletes from across the state. Teams will be crowned a state champion in a variety of age groups ranging from 8 & under to 18 & under. The USSSA State "B" Fastpitch Softball Championships is one of the largest softball events in the United States. USSSA will utilize 15 softball diamonds at three different venues, which include Okeehetee Park, John Prince Park, and Seminole Palms Park. USSSA is comprised of 700 registered teams in the state, the most of any softball organization.



The Palm Beach County Sports Commission has developed strong relationships within the softball community, allowing Palm Beach County to successfully host a diversified portfolio of softball tournaments. Softball is experiencing one of the fastest growing participation levels for sports in the United States. Palm Beach County Sports Commission President, Guy Quattlebaum, stated, "Softball tournaments provide a significant surge of economic benefits for their host community. Girls' fastpitch softball travel teams bring a far greater number of family members per athlete than other sporting events, offering greater visitor spending per team. Guy Quattlebaum, also noted, "Hosting a senior softball tournament, such as Florida Half Century, is an incredible opportunity for Palm Beach County. The participating teams for Florida Half Century consist of adult recreational athletes that are a point in their personal and financial lives where they may look at Palm Beach County as a potential area for future real-estate purchases or business investment."



DELRAY BEACH TO HOST MAJOR AMATEUR TENNIS TOURNAMENT



The Palm Beach County Sports Commission is supporting Player's International Management, Inc. and their efforts to host the United States Tennis Association (USTA) Boys 16's & 18's National Clay Court Championships. This tournament will take place from July 14-21, 2013 at the Delray Beach Tennis Center. The draw consist of 192 participants per age groups (384 total), which are the highest ranked plays in the United States competing in singles and doubles competition.

This year will represent the 7th consecutive year that this prestigious event has taken place in Delray Beach, after relocating from Washington D.C. The event will include a College Expo, attracting more than 100 NCAA collegiate coaches.

The Expo provides a great opportunity for collegiate tennis programs to recruit some of the most talented high school players in the nation. More than \$1 million in economic impact and over 1,000 hotel rooms nights will be created from the influx of tennis players and coaches that will be visiting Palm Beach County in July.

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