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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 6, 2017

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MAYOR EMANUEL AND NCAA OPEN FROZEN FOUR HOCKEY CHAMPIONSHIP SERIES

Series Will Determine NCAA Men's National Champion; Bring a Sellout Crowd to the United Center

Mayor Rahm Emanuel today joined the NCAA and the Chicago Blackhawks to announce the start of the 2017 NCAA Men's Frozen Four hockey championship series. Action starts tonight and concludes with a national championship game Saturday night.

"From the Blackhawks at the United Center to the boys and girls participating in youth leagues across the city, Chicago is a hockey town," Mayor Emanuel said. "But this tournament will do more than find the next NCAA national champion – it will help inspire the next generation of hockey champions in neighborhoods throughout Chicago and beyond."

The first puck drops tonight when Harvard and Minnesota Duluth face off at 5:30 p.m. tonight at the United Center, followed by Denver and Notre Dame at 8:30 p.m. The victors of each semifinal will then compete for the national title on Saturday, April 8 at 7:00 p.m.

"The Frozen Four brings together some of the best teams and fans from all of college sports and Chicago is the perfect city to host it," Kristin Fasbender, NCAA Director of Championships said. "We look forward to dropping the puck on this first-class event."

"The United Center is proud to host these talented student athletes, and the great schools and fans they represent," said Rocky Wirtz, Chairman of the Chicago Blackhawks and Co-Chairman of the Executive Committee of Chicago's United Center. "This is an exciting time for hockey in Chicago. As we continue to expand and enhance the United Center campus, we do so to make events like this a better experience for the teams, the athletes and of course, the fans."

In addition to the games on Thursday and Saturday there will be several events and a free Frozen Fest for fans. Open to the public (free admission, no tickets required) and held before puck drop on Saturday, Frozen Fest will be the place to be for all hockey fans young and old. The festival-within-a-festival will be packed with red carpet team arrivals, pep rallies, live music, giveaways, games, local food, special appearances and more. Frozen Fest will be outside the United Center in Lot C, near gates two and three off of Madison Avenue.

There will also be a number of autograph sessions and other events related to the Frozen Four. Click [here](#) for a full schedule of events.

“We’re proud to host Chicago’s first ever NCAA Men’s Frozen Four,” Kara Bachman, Executive Director of the Chicago Sports Commission said. “Due to our great partnership with the NCAA, the United Center, Chicago Blackhawks and the University of Notre Dame, we’re confident that the student-athletes, their families, fans and alumni will have an unforgettable experience. Chicago loves hockey, and we look forward to working with the NCAA to bring the Frozen Four back to the United Center.”

In two months the national hockey stage will return to Chicago when the Blackhawks host the 2017 NHL Draft. The draft will be held over two days – Friday, June 23, and Saturday, June 24, 2017. NHL club executives, scouts and coaches will be present on the NHL Draft floor while more than 15,000 fans and hundreds of print, television and radio media are expected to attend. *The national hockey stage could return sooner, depending on the Stanley Cup Playoffs.

Under Mayor Emanuel Chicago has attracted national sports events at an unprecedented pace. The city hosted the NFL draft for the last two years and the America’s Cup World Series in 2016. The MLS All-Star game will be hosted in Chicago later this year and in 2018 UIC will host the NCAA men’s gymnastics championship.

Additionally, the Chicago Cubs are World Series Champions.

Events like the Frozen Four have helped drive Chicago’s tourism industry to record levels every year since 2010. In 2016 Chicago set an all-time tourism record with 54.1 million visitors to the city, up 2.9 percent from the previous high-mark set in 2015. Last year Chicago's tourism industry supported \$15 billion in direct tourism spending and an estimated 145,137 jobs - an increase of more than 20,000 new jobs since Mayor Emanuel took office.

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