



NEWS

PALM BEACH COUNTY SPORTS COMMISSION

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WORLD'S LARGEST FIELD HOCKEY TOURNAMENT IS COMING TO PALM BEACH COUNTY

Palm Beach County, FL – Palm Beach County will be home to one of the largest amateur sporting events in the world. USA Field Hockey (USAFH) will partner with the Palm Beach County Sports Commission to host the 2012 and 2013 National Hockey Festival at the International Polo Club in Wellington. The Festival takes place over Thanksgiving weekend. USA Field Hockey invites 230 teams and nearly 4,000 athletes from around the United States, Canada, Europe, and the Caribbean to compete in this one of a kind event. The participating teams will contend for titles in men's and women's divisions, including women's age group (Under 16 and Under 19), boy's age group (Under 16), and women's open and mixed (adult). This event is expected to be the largest amateur sporting event hosted by the Palm Beach County Sports Commission, since its inception in 1985.

USA Field Hockey's return to Palm Beach County is a landmark occasion for the local sports scene. Palm Beach County has hosted a version of the National Hockey Festival seven (7) previous times with their last appearance taking place in 2005. Seven years later, USA Field Hockey will return with an event that has significantly grown in player participation as well as the economic benefits that it brings to a community.

For most families, Thanksgiving is about rituals, stuffed turkeys, and football. However, the tradition is slightly different for field hockey enthusiasts. In 2012 and 2013, approximately 4,000 athletes and over 8,000 total participants will forego pumpkins and pilgrims for a four-day hockey showcase celebration in Palm Beach County. Fierce competition took place for the rights to host this event; however, the Palm Beach County Sports Commission presented the most compelling bid, promising to deliver an incredible experience for all in attendance, at a world class facility. "USA Field Hockey is really looking forward to returning to Palm Beach County in 2012 and 2013, in a new venue," says Steve Locke, Executive Director of USA Field Hockey. "The high level of professionalism from the staff in Palm Beach County will ensure a premier event. The National Hockey Festival is an epic event, as it is the largest of its kind in the world. We look forward to planning a first class event with our friends in Palm Beach County."

The International Polo Club is a remarkable sports complex that maintains over 200 acres of land, consisting of eight (8) polo fields. The venue was a key ingredient in Palm Beach County's successful bid. USA Field Hockey will layout six (6) field hockey competition fields onto one (1) polo field. A total of 30 field hockey fields will be set up to accommodate participating teams. The partnership with the International Polo Club provides a competitive advantage for Palm Beach County in regards to pursuing and hosting major national and international sporting events. "This is exciting news for the business community in Palm Beach and Wellington" says John Wash, International Polo Club's President of Club Operations. "International Polo Club is proud to be able to participate and showcase our community and property and are looking forward to hosting this event".

Very few communities have the privilege and ability to host an event such as the National Hockey Festival. In 2011, the National Hockey Festival will take place in Phoenix, Arizona for the second consecutive year. During the last Festival in 2010, Phoenix reported that \$9.2 million of direct visitor spending was generated in addition to 12,466 hotel room nights, a number that makes a significant impact for hotel occupancy levels and bed tax revenues. "Palm Beach County is thrilled to host the National Hockey Festival in 2012 and 2013," says George Linley, Executive Director of the Palm Beach County Sports Commission. "Palm Beach County is an outstanding sports destination and we are excited to be a part of one of the largest and most prestigious amateur sporting events in the world. The International Polo Club is a world class facility that is capable of hosting an array of international and national events."

The National Hockey Festival origins date back to 1922. The event features future Olympians and some of the most talented field hockey athletes in the world. The prestige and reputation of the National Hockey Festival creates a long wait list of teams wishing to participate. Today, nearly 19,000 athletes, coaches, officials and fans comprise the membership of USA

Field Hockey. Considering these numbers and the quality of field hockey events, USA Field Hockey continues to be one of the most successful National Governing Bodies in the United States. The 2012 and 2013 National Hockey Festival will surely be paramount events that have the ability to go down as the largest and most remembered sports activities in Palm Beach County history.

The USAFH National Hockey Festival will provide a major economic boost to the Palm Beach County economy. Below summarizes the economic impact that occurred during the previous National Hockey Festival, highlighting why this sporting event is a momentous occasion for Palm Beach County and the local business community:

- 8,000 visitors from across the United States, Canada, Europe, and the Caribbean will travel to Palm Beach County during Thanksgiving weekend of 2012 & 2013
- 5 day average length of stay for field hockey visitors
- \$9.20 million of director visitor spending
- 12,466 hotel room nights
- 37 hotel properties were impacted
- 4,116 Thanksgiving dinners served by participating hotels
- Over 4,000 car rental days tracked
- 3,311 airline flights into host community tracked

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For more information on the National Hockey Festival, visit www.usafieldhockey.com

About Palm Beach County Sports Commission

The Palm Beach County Sports Commission is a private, not-for-profit organization contracted by Palm Beach County to promote and market the county as a sports and sports tourism destination. The Commission brings sporting events and activities to the county, enhances economic impact, stimulates bed tax revenues (primarily in the off-season) and maximizes utilization of county facilities. The Commission offers a full range of event service support, corporate partnerships, sponsorships and a local membership program that supports its goals. Local, regional, national and international marketing efforts are ongoing by the Commission with sports organizations and event owners. The Commission also produces sports-related programs for the residents of Palm Beach County including the Palm Beach County Sports Hall of Fame, the Lou Groza Collegiate Place-Kicker Award and the Kids Fitness Festival of the Palm Beaches and awards. For more information on the Palm Beach County Sports Commission go to www.palmbeachsports.com.

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