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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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## **COLLEGE SEARCH KICKOFF RETURNS TO MUSCATINE**

*Thousands expected to visit Muscatine over course of four-day tournament*

**MUSCATINE, Iowa** - The 23rd annual College Search Kickoff (CSK) Tournament will begin in just under two weeks at the Muscatine Soccer Complex. The girls' tournament will run Thursday and Friday (July 26-27) with the boys' tournament taking place on Saturday and Sunday (July 28-29).

The tournament will bring 72 teams (28 male and 44 female) to Muscatine consisting of over 1,000 players. Teams consist of sophomore, junior and senior high school players looking to continue playing soccer at the collegiate level.

It is not just the players who will be in town, however, as over 150 college coaches looking to scout players for NCAA Division I, II, and III programs along with representatives from NAIA, NJCAA, and Independent schools will be in attendance. Aside from coaches, many colleges will send representatives to attend the CSK College Fair. The fair, which runs parallel to the tournament, is an opportunity for players and parents to learn more about the different colleges and soccer programs represented at the tournament.

The CSK is designed to be a highly competitive tournament with teams painstakingly researched by the Muscatine Parks and Recreation Department in order to create the best possible matchups. This is intended to benefit both players and coaches in the scouting process.



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Teams will be arriving from nine different states including Iowa, Minnesota, Michigan, Wisconsin, North Dakota, South Dakota, Missouri, Nebraska, and Illinois.

## **A Muscatine Tradition**

The CSK began when Ramona Barber identified a lack of opportunity for competitive soccer players in Iowa and the surrounding states to continue playing at the collegiate level. Until the CSK's creation, players looking to showcase their skills for collegiate programs had nowhere to do so in the Midwest and thus were less likely to be able to pursue their goals without significant travel and cost.

After gaining approval from the Iowa State Soccer Association (ISA), Barber soon identified Muscatine as the best location for the event saying that "the location and quality of the Muscatine Soccer fields made them the ideal venue to hold the event".

The first tournament was held in the summer of 1996 and Muscatine has continued to host the CSK every year since.

Recently, Barber has begun the process of turning over ownership of the event to the City of Muscatine. As such, this will be the first year that the Muscatine Parks and Recreation will be running the tournament completely. The previous director of the event stepped down from the position.

Muscatine Parks and Recreation Director Richard Klimes has taken charge of the event. Klimes has been involved in the CSK since its inception.

"The opportunity to continue the College Search Kickoff in Muscatine is incredible. The city staff and soccer community will continue to make the event the best it can be", Klimes said.

Approximately, 29,056 players from 1,816 teams have participated in the event since it began in 1996.



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## **Economic Stimulus**

With the large influx of players, coaches, and families arriving in town, local businesses, such as hotels and restaurants, will receive a strong boost to business over the course of the four-day event.

In total, city officials anticipate about 4,000 people to be arriving.

All leftover funds from the event are to be used to benefit the Muscatine community, however, the main purpose of the event remains as an opportunity for Midwestern players to showcase their skills and pursue a college career.

## **Looking Forward**

Muscatine is proud to continue hosting the College Search Kickoff. The benefits to thousands of young players and the community has been a highlight of the Muscatine Soccer Complex for 23 years.

The City of Muscatine would like to extend a thank you to Ramona Barber and her family for entrusting Muscatine to continue her efforts in making the College Search Kickoff one of the premier soccer events in Iowa and the Midwest.

If you would like to learn more about the College Search Kickoff, you can visit their website at the following link: <https://www.collegesearchkickoff.com/home>.

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