



December 16, 2020

Triangle Sports Commission Holidays 2020 Newsletter



We're wishing all our fellow sports fans and supporters Happy Holidays – or at least as happy as possible these days. With the medical experts recommending a stay-at-home Christmas, we're providing you with our fan-friendly news update for some leisure reading on your favorite subject – sports!

While the pandemic has given the sports events industry its bleakest year in history in 2020, not all the news is doom and gloom. Here are some positive happenings that hopefully will lift your spirits just in time for the holidays, the vaccine, and a better 2021!

The Triangle: America's Number One Collegiate Championship City

On October 14, 2020, when the NCAA announced over 450 NCAA championships for 2021 through 2026, **the Triangle, with 26 NCAA Championships during that period, vaulted to the number one-ranked collegiate sports championship city in the United States.** In second place with 15 championships is Salem, Virginia, followed by Indianapolis, home of the NCAA, in third place with 13.



The Triangle's lead could have been even greater if the NCAA had not pulled its 27th championship, the NCAA Men's Basketball Tournament Regional Championships, from the PNC Arena in March of 2021 with a goal of staging the entire NCAA Men's Basketball Championships (all 64 teams) in a "Covid Bubble" in Indianapolis next year.

The Triangle's leadership position came about thanks to the collaborative work between and among Campbell University, Duke University, NC State University, the University of Mt. Olive, the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill, the Durham Sports Commission, the Greater Raleigh Sports Alliance, and the Town of Cary. Click [here](#) for a complete list of the Triangle's 26 NCAA Championships between 2021-2026.

WakeMed Soccer Park Becomes the Country's Top Collegiate Championship Venue

The NCAA's October award of championships also ended up positioning **WakeMed Soccer Park in Cary as the United States' leading venue for NCAA championships from 2021-2026 during which time the Cary venue will host 10 NCAA championships.**

WakeMed will host 8 Division I NCAA Soccer Championships (also known as College Cup), 4 Men's and 4 Women's; and 2 NCAA Division I Women's Lacrosse Championships. Postponed Men's and Women's Soccer Championships from 2020 will make for a highly unusual 2021 where in May, WakeMed will host both the NCAA D-1 Women's College Cup and NCAA Men's College Cup – in a back-to-back format which has never been done before – followed by the previously scheduled 2021 NCAA Men's Soccer Championships in December: a total of 3 NCAA D-1 Soccer Championships in one year, another first!



WakeMed Soccer Park - A Success Story 32 Years in the Making!

While it may appear to some that WakeMed's position atop the world of collegiate sports championship venues is a bit of overnight success, that achievement was actually decades in the making. The idea for the venue came from the visit of **Hill Carrow**, CEO of the Triangle Sports Commission, to Seoul, Korea, in 1988 for that year's Summer Olympic Games. Seoul had developed two major sports complexes, with multiple sports venues in each, to serve as the primary locations for hosting Games sport competitions. Carrow brought back the idea for a Triangle-based sports complex, and together with the resources and leadership of **Jim Goodmon** and **Capitol Broadcasting Company**, the concept for Triangle Central Park, a multi-venue sports complex, was born. While due to a variety of factors Triangle Central Park did not come to pass, the \$10 million in Wake County interlocal funds commitments, which Goodmon and Carrow had secured for the project, were eventually used for the construction of the soccer stadium contained in the original plan. With an assist from then Cary Mayor, Koka Booth, the stadium concept moved to its current location in Cary where present-day WakeMed Soccer Park is the highly-successful end result.



State Games Make Their Return to the Triangle in 2021

Under the leadership of North Carolina Amateur Sports long-time Executive Director, **Chuck Hobgood**, the State Games of North Carolina, our state's largest Olympic-style, multi-sport event, returns to the Triangle in June of 2021. The Games take place annually and typically include 13,000 or more athletes. Having been in the Triad and Charlotte



for the last several years, the State Games return to their roots, as North Carolina Amateur Sports is located in Durham, and the Games were first established in the Triangle with the launch of the inaugural State Games in 1986. Those Games only had a little over 3,000 athletes, so you can see the State Games of North Carolina have grown to be quite popular and successful over the years. TSC CEO **Hill Carrow** was the founder of the State Games and served as its first Executive Director. “It’s been a joy to see what Chuck and his team have done to grow the Games and expand them across the State,” Hill said. “He’s executed on a great vision that has had major positive impacts on the participants and the host communities.”

New 2020 Facilities

While the pandemic wiped out all TSC events from March through December, the Virus Crisis did not stop sports construction projects. **The Wake Competition Center (WCC) finished its long-awaited first phase with the opening of its largest facility to date, the WCC Ice Center.** The Ice Center, the new permanent practice home of the **Carolina Hurricanes** NHL Team, is a 115,000 square foot venue featuring twin ice rinks. The Ice Center becomes the first of the 7 ice facilities in the Triangle to boast significant seating capacity, with seating at the number one rink for 1,200 and 500 on the number two rink. The seating area is heated, too, making for a comfortable and enjoyable fan experience.



Developed and operated by **Jeff Ammons** and Ammons Building Corporation, the WCC is a 30-acre sports campus in Morrisville on McCrimmon Parkway that also features a Volleyball Center, home of **Triangle Volleyball**, with 8 indoor courts and 3 sand outdoor courts; Gymnastic Center, home of **Superior Gymnastics**; Raleigh Orthopaedic Rehab & Training Center; two international-size lighted turf soccer fields; as well as the Athletic Lab (sports performance); and the Accelerator School (education and sports training for middle and high school students). The first phase of the WCC has been so successful, that Ammons Development Corporation has purchased another 15 acres adjacent to the WCC and already has additional sports & entertainment enterprises committed to locate there.

The **Triangle Sports Commission** was heavily involved in the development of the WCC, having convinced Ammons Building Corporation to move the project from a proposed site with challenging access in Cary to its present-day very accessible and highly visible site in Morrisville. In addition, the TSC was an instrumental part of securing a \$3 million Wake County interlocal funds grant for the project, ensuring the financial viability of the \$20 million Wake Competition Center campus.

Big News on Future Facilities to End the Year!

Though 2020 has very much been a downer of a year, we are ending the year on a high note: **late last night the Raleigh City Council granted the major rezoning**

request critical to the launch of the development of **Downtown South**, the \$2 billion, 145-acre multi-use development located at South Saunders Street and I-40 in Raleigh. Downtown South is led by **John Kane**, developer of North Hills, and **Steve Malik**, owner of our two local men's and women's pro soccer franchises, the North Carolina Football Club (NCFC) and the NC Courage. The development team also includes **LeVelle Moton**, the highly successful and motivational coach of the NC Central University Men's Basketball Team.



Importantly, Downtown South is slated to feature a 25,000-seat multipurpose stadium for sports, entertainment, convocations, and special events. The stadium will be a significant new venue with the size, capacity, and capabilities that do not currently exist in our already extensive Triangle facilities offerings. Thank you to the **Raleigh City Council** and the Development Team for their vision for our community, and congratulations on the successful project rezoning approval, as Downtown South will be a big win for our city, county, and region.

Happy Holidays!

As we put 2020 behind us, we wish you and yours the very best for the holidays, and we look forward to what we hope will be a much more promising future – in 2021 and beyond!



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