

2018 Paradise Jam Returns to USVI, Teams Announced

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Director of Media: Jim Crawford (jim@basketballtravelers.com)

ST. THOMAS, U.S. Virgin Islands – The 2018 U.S. Virgin Islands Paradise Jam will return to the U.S. Virgin Islands, tournament directors announced Wednesday, after the 2017 edition of the annual event was relocated to the mainland United States due to hurricane damage last September. The 19th annual event will be held at the University of the Virgin Islands Sports and Fitness Center on St. Thomas, Nov. 16-24, 2018, and play host to 16 Division-I men's and women's basketball teams.

The men's Paradise Jam begins Friday, Nov. 16 and continues through Monday, Nov. 19. The tournament field includes Eastern Kentucky, Kansas State, Kennesaw State, Missouri, Northern Iowa, Old Dominion, Oregon State, and Penn. Old Dominion returns to the tournament for a fourth time, after claiming the tournament title in 2010. Eastern Kentucky, Kansas State, and Northern Iowa also return to St. Thomas after previously participating in the tournament.

The women's Paradise Jam tips off on Thanksgiving Day, Nov. 22 and conclude Saturday, Nov. 24. The field features Kentucky, North Carolina, Ole Miss, Purdue, South Florida, St. John's, UCLA, and UConn. The women's field features five teams that earned bids to the 2017 NCAA Tournament, including Final Four participant, UConn, and Sweet 16 representative, UCLA. The 2018 Paradise Jam field features four teams returning to the territory for their third Paradise Jam, including Kentucky, Purdue, South Florida, and UConn.

"We're very excited to be returning to the beautiful island of St. Thomas," tournament director Jennifer Ashby said. "The teams we've brought in for the 2018 tournament are incredibly talented and showcase some of the best athletes in college basketball. We look forward to welcoming them to the U.S. Virgin Islands and hope that our return to the islands can be a part of the rebuilding and healing process for the community."

Ashby, along with fellow tournament directors, visited the U.S. Virgin Islands in January, approximately four months after two Category 5 hurricanes caused severe damage to the islands in a two-week span. During their visit, tournament directors evaluated damage to the University of the Virgin Islands Sports and Fitness Center, as well as the Paradise Jam hardwood court. The venue suffered minor damage, which has all been repaired. Additionally, a Praters Flooring representative determined the court will meet the standards of NCAA competition after being sanded and resurfaced later this spring.

Game times and matchups for the 2018 U.S. Virgin Islands Paradise Jam will be announced later this spring, following the conclusion of the 2017-18 basketball season. All 24 games of the men's and women's Paradise Jam will stream live on FloHoops at www.FloHoops.com. To access the live event coverage and replays of the tournament, users must sign up to become FloPRO subscribers on FloHoops.com.

Tournament directors are in the process of evaluating the feasibility of offering official fan travel packages for the 2018 Paradise Jam. More information will be made available in the future. For more information about the U.S. Virgin Islands Paradise Jam, visit www.paradisejam.com.

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