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COVID-19 IMPACT: HOOPLANDIA WILL MOVE BASKETBALL TOURNEY AND FESTIVAL TO 2021

***But, New Series of Smaller Events This Year
Will Engage Community and Build Momentum Toward Next Year***

West Springfield: Organizers of Hooplandia, the planned 3-on-3 basketball tournament and festival scheduled for this June at The Big E Fairgrounds and to be presented by Eastern States Exposition and Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame, announced today that the event will be cancelled for 2020, given the sweeping impacts of COVID-19.

At the same time, the organizers reaffirmed their commitment to the event in 2021, and in creating a legacy celebration for the Springfield region and the birthplace of basketball, outlined a series of smaller events in 2020 to engage the community and build momentum toward next year.

The newly-scheduled dates for Hooplandia in 2021 are June 25-27, with games at the Big E Fairgrounds and Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame. Boys and Girls Clubs in Western Massachusetts and Connecticut will remain as the lead philanthropic recipient of the event, which was slated to host 2,500 teams and 10,000 players.

“We are heartbroken that the road to Hooplandia has been closed to us in 2020, but we are fully-committed and excited about bringing this to life in 2021,” explained Eugene J. Cassidy, President and CEO of Eastern States Exposition. “There has been a tremendous outpouring of support from businesses, community partners and organizations and basketball fans from throughout the Northeast and, we are grateful for validating this vision and being a part of it. While we cannot properly structure and execute the event this year because of these extraordinary circumstances, we are already working on our plans for next year.”

Added John Doleva, President and CEO of Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame, “From the beginning, the intent has been to build a legacy event that will last and grow for decades, celebrating basketball and its culture in this region and beyond. Like everyone, we look forward to normalcy and our great traditions and want Hooplandia to be one of those. The passion for Hooplandia and the sport has been awe-inspiring to me and, I know this event will be of championship caliber in 2021.”

To help build a bridge to the 2021 Hooplandia, a number of smaller events are being planned, with details forthcoming. Those include:

Hooplandia at Hall of Fame Enshrinement

A series of 3-on-3 courts and games will be curated for outdoor play in the parking lot of the Hall during Springfield Celebration Day on Sunday, August 30, as part of Enshrinement Weekend activities. The festival environment will feature food, music and entertainment.

Hooplandia World Slam Dunk Championship at The Big E Fair

High-flying entertainment comes to The Big E (September 18-October 4), with a spectacle of slam dunk artists from around the world, competing for the title of Hooplandia World Slam Dunk Champ. Date to be announced.

Hooplandia Showcase Games on The Court of Dreams at Naismith Memorial Hall of Fame

During the winter of 2020-2021, a series of high-profile 3-on-3 games will be scheduled for competition on the legendary hardwood. Details to be announced.

All teams that have registered and paid for the event will be issued full refunds. Teams of players at Age 8 and under were slated for free registration in 2020, honoring the lives of Kobe and Gianna Bryant – Bryant wore #8 during a portion of his Los Angeles Lakers career in the NBA. The free Under-8 registration will be extended to the 2021 event.

Hooplandia's Instagram account (@hooplandia) and website (www.hooplandia.com) will provide ongoing information and plans of the event and its transition.

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