

## Continental Tire Las Vegas Classic Brings High-Quality NCAA Hoops to Orleans Arena Dec. 22-23

**LAS VEGAS**—The Continental Tire Las Vegas Classic, an annual action-packed NCAA basketball tournament, will return to [Orleans Arena](#) on Dec. 22-23, bringing teams from **University of Nevada, Reno**, **University of San Francisco**, **Duquesne University**, and **University of Southern Illinois, Carbondale**.

The **University of Nevada, Reno** men's basketball team is coming off a great 2016-17 season as the first school in history to capture the Mountain West regular season and tournament titles. The Mountain West tournament title earned Nevada its first appearance in the NCAA Tournament in a decade. The team finished the season 28-7 overall and went 14-4 in conference play. The Wolf Pack returns two junior starters in forward Jordan Caroline and guard Lindsey Drew. Caroline was the Mountain West Tournament MVP and earned the second-team All-Mountain West honors. He averaged 15 points and 9.2 rebounds per game. Senior Elijah Foster along with sophomores Josh Hall and Charlie Tooley are also back this season.

**Duquesne University**, a charter member of the Atlantic 10 Conference, is in its first season under Keith Dambrot, who was introduced as the program's 17<sup>th</sup> head coach in late March of 2017. Dambrot, whose father Sid played for three Top 10 (AP) Duquesne teams in the early 1950's, spent the past 13 seasons at Akron, where he led the Zips to a 305-139 record (23.5 wins per season), including 10 postseason appearances. At the time of Dambrot's departure, University of Akron, Duke University, Gonzaga University and Kansas University were the only schools to post 21 or more wins in each of the past 12 seasons. The Dukes return a pair of starters in sophomore guard Mike Lewis II and junior guard Tarin Smith. Lewis, who was a member of the 2017 A-10 All-Rookie Team, led the Dukes with 14.1 points per game scoring average last season. Lewis was also the fourth freshman in school history to lead the team in scoring and was also the top-scoring freshman in the A-10. Smith, a second-year Nebraska transfer, led the Dukes in assists (99) and steals (34) last season.

The **University of Southern Illinois** men's basketball team returns three starters from last year's team that finished 17-16 and tied for third place in the Missouri Valley Conference with a 9-9 league mark. Armon Fletcher, Thik Bol and Sean Lloyd are the top returning scorers. Five more lettermen return, including guard Tyler Smithpeters who started two years ago, but missed all but one game last year due to injury. Transfers Marcus Bartley, Eric McGill and Kavion Phippen are expected to provide an immediate impact on the playing rotation. Head coach Barry Hinson enters his sixth season at the helm of Southern Illinois with a 79-83 overall record, including a 39-51 record in Missouri Valley Conference games. Having coached 14 years in the Missouri Valley Conference, he is the winningest active coach with 248 overall wins and 134 Missouri Valley Conference victories.

After helping the program to its third 20-win season in the last 30 years, a seasoned - but youthful - squad returns to the hilltop for the second installation in the Kyle Smith era. Charles Minlend and Jordan Ratinho, who combined to make 41 starts during the year, occupied two of the five spots on last year's West Coast Conference All-Freshmen team. Minlend's 329 points on the year ranked seventh all-time among **University of San Francisco** (USF) freshmen and third among first-year players in the league. Ratinho led the team in minutes played, underscoring Smith's confidence in USF's underclassmen. Last season's perimeter shooting was one for the Dons' record books, with 299 three-pointers made. Lone senior Chase Foster (.400) along with Ratinho (.423) and Minlend (.370) each swished 50 or more attempts from distance in the year. Juniors Matt McCarthy and Nate Renfro led the squad in rebounds per game, and Renfro and Mladen Djordjevic paced USF's assist efforts.

Each team will play four games - the first two at campus sites and the final two at the Orleans Arena.

The first game of the tournament begins at noon on both days. Two-day ticket packages are available from \$50 plus taxes and fees, and can be purchased by calling Ticketmaster at 800-745-3000; online at [www.orleansarena.com](#); or in-person at the gift shops inside The Orleans, Suncoast, Gold Coast and Sam's Town. Tickets may also be purchased the day of the game (depending on availability) at the venue box office.

### **About Orleans Arena**

The [Orleans Arena](#), a [Boyd Gaming](#) facility located just west of the Las Vegas Strip, is one of the nation's leading multi-purpose sports and entertainment facilities and the 2014 recipient of the Venue Excellence Award from the International Association of Venue Managers. In addition, the Orleans Arena is one of only a handful of arenas in the United States to achieve LEED Gold Certification and is part of the largest company in Nevada to achieve SHARP Certification for commitments to safe venue operations. According to *Venues Today* magazine, the Orleans Arena, which hosts more than 200 events each year, consistently ranks in the Top 10 for ticket sales in the United States and internationally among venues of similar size. These events include nationally

touring concerts, NCAA basketball conference tournaments, family shows, motorsports and other unique events. For more information, call 702-365-7469 or visit [www.OrleansArena.com](http://www.OrleansArena.com). Stay connected to the Orleans Arena on [Facebook](#) and on [Twitter](#) (@orleansarena). The Orleans Arena is a property of Boyd Gaming. Headquartered in Las Vegas, Boyd Gaming is a leading diversified owner and operator of 24 gaming entertainment properties located in Nevada, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Louisiana and Mississippi. Additional news and information on Boyd Gaming can be found at [www.boydgaming.com](http://www.boydgaming.com). Boyd Gaming and Orleans Arena press releases are available at [boydgaming.mediaroom.com](http://boydgaming.mediaroom.com).

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