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## **NCAA IS IN TALKS TO MOVE ENTIRE MARCH MADNESS TOURNAMENT TO INDIANAPOLIS**

**NCAA implements “bubble” protocols necessary for a COVID-19 safe event**

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**INDIANAPOLIS, Indiana** -- Today, the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) announced the relocation of its annual March Madness men’s basketball tournament to one single host city due to potential COVID-19 concerns around the event. Currently, the NCAA is in talks with the city of Indianapolis, Indiana about possibly hosting the entire tournament. This comes on the back of the Final Four portion of the tournament being slated to take place at Indianapolis' Lucas Oil Stadium from April 3rd through April 5th.

Indianapolis has hosted eight previous Final Four sections of the March Madness tournament. Located in the Midwest, it serves as a central location for the whole country with limited travel necessary for any and all teams that qualify for the tournament. The decision will be made concrete in the coming weeks when talks with the city of Indianapolis and the State of Indiana are finalized. The NCAA recognizes that student-athlete safety is at the utmost importance for any decision that follows regarding changes to the tournament format, location, and COVID-19 protocols.

All television rights to the tournament will remain in the hands of Turner Sports and CBS Sports as games will air on their several networks, CBS, TNT, TBS, and TruTV. Any sponsorship rights to the tournament will stay in place while the transition takes place to a single host city.

Traditionally, the March Madness tournament takes place over the course of the last three weeks of March and the beginning of April in 13 different tournament sites. This timeline will stay in place for the time being with the only adjustment coming to the travel needed for teams between the rounds of the tournament. Prior to the pandemic, March Madness was going to include

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announced host cities such as, Detroit, Memphis, Dallas, and Wichita. These cities will be open again to bid to host future tournaments, but for 2021, they are out of luck.

The NCAA has chosen to announce the decision to shift the March Madness tournament to one city based on the proven success that the “bubble” tournament system has had in the recent months. Both major professional basketball organizations in the United States, the NBA and WNBA, implemented a “bubble” for the league to continue to take place and finish under new COVID-19 protocols by local and state governments. The March Madness tournament is the largest collegiate championship event in the NCAA and this decision is crucial to the success of the 2021 organization of the event. A bubble will limit interactions between student-athletes and the potential for a COVID-19 outbreak among the qualified programs.

With the NCAA already in talks with the city of Indianapolis for the rights to host the entire tournament, potential venues for the event have been addressed. Several arenas in the metro Indianapolis area with ability to be used in March Madness include Bankers Life FieldHouse, home of the Indiana Pacers, and Indiana Farmers Coliseum, home of the IUPUI Jaguars. With all 67 games of the March Madness tournament potentially coming to Indianapolis, any and all basketball arenas will be needed to host a tournament in an organized manner.