Written by Justin Barker
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The National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA) has announced a contract extension with co-hosts Sioux City, Iowa, and the Sioux City Sports Commission for the NAIA Division II Women's Basketball National Championship. The two-year extension will have Sioux City host the event through the 2014 NAIA National Championship at the Tyson Events Center/Gateway Arena.

"The NAIA is very excited to continue its partnership with Sioux City and the Sioux City Sports Commission as hosts of the NAIA Division II Women's Basketball National Championship," said Jim Carr, NAIA President and CEO. "We look forward to many more wonderful experiences and the Sioux City community needs to be commended on their teamwork and efforts. They organize a terrific Championship for all student-athletes, coaches and fans."

Sioux City has hosted the NAIA Division II Women's Basketball National Championship since 1998 and the 2012 event will mark the 15th anniversary. The 1998-2003 events were held in the Sioux City Auditorium. Since 2004, the NAIA National Championship has been held in the Tyson Events Center/Gateway Arena.

"We are very honored to be able to extend our relationship with the NAIA through the 2014 tournament," said Tom Padgett, Sioux City Mayor Pro-Tem. "As we prepare for the 15th year in Sioux City in March, we continue to see the excitement and buzz this tournament brings each year." "The relationships this tournament has built are phenomenal. Our sponsors and fans think the world of the NAIA and we look forward to continuing the strong tradition we have established here in Sioux City."

"The Great Plains Athletic Conference is honored to have this tournament in our footprint and to showcase Sioux City to the entire country," said GPAC Commissioner Corey Westra.

The 21st Annual State Farm-NAIA Division II Women's Basketball National Championship will be contested from March 7-13, 2012. The 32-team field is comprised of automatic qualifiers from NAIA affiliated conferences and association of independents, plus at-large selections, which will be determined using the final Top 25 rating. Eight games will be played on each of the first three days, with the quarterfinals set for March 10, the semifinals on March 12 and the NAIA National Championship final on March 13 at 9 p.m. CST, televised live on CBS Sports Network.

Sioux City has also hosted the NAIA Volleyball National Championship since 2008 and is under contract through the 2012 event. Other NAIA Championship events that Sioux City has previously hosted include: the NAIA Women's Golf National Championships, the NAIA Baseball World Series and the NAIA Wrestling National Championships.

In the 20-year history of the sport, there have been 11 national team champions. Northwestern (Iowa) won its second-straight National Championship in 2011. The first NAIA Division II Women's Basketball National Championship occurred in 1992 in Monmouth, Ore., and former member Northern State (S.D.) won the inaugural event. Currently, 130 varsity programs sponsor Division II women's basketball in the NAIA