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Contact info: Dave Oloffson 309-622-6588 or dave.oloffson.iayf@statefarm.com

2008 State Farm Holiday Classic to feature tomorrow's top basketball stars

Bloomington, IL – The 30th annual version of the State Farm Holiday Classic will feature some of the most highly recruited basketball talent from throughout Illinois and the nation. The 2008 tournament tips off December 26, 27, 29 & 30, and marks the tenth consecutive year with State Farm Insurance® as the title sponsor.

Big Ten basketball fans are sure to get a taste of their future in the event's Class 3A-4A boys' field. Two seniors headline the field in Sterling senior and University of Illinois recruit Joseph Bertrand and Lake Forest' Matt Vogrich who will be attending the University of Michigan next season. This competitive field will also feature three of the state's top sophomores in Chicago De La Salle's Mike Shaw and Dre' Henley, and Rock Island's Chasson Randle. Shaw and Randle recently attended the U of I's largest outdoor basketball practice.

In the other boys' bracket, the Class 1A-2A field will witness a very competitive balance of some of the state's best teams and players. Bloomington Central Catholic, lead by the #15 ranked sophomore in the state Hayden Hoerdemann, will defend it's back-to-back tournament titles against a field of perennial contenders featuring their own top talent, including Peoria Christian lead by senior Billy Molinari, Macon Meridian lead by senior Dakota Getz, El Paso-Gridley by sophomore Codey Funk, and Chillicothe IVC by sophomore Alex Koch.

"This is a chance to see some of the top high school talent in Illinois before they move on to play Division I college basketball in the near future," said Classic vice-president Dave Oloffson. "We are working hard to make both of our boys' fields as competitive and exciting as possible, and I think fans will notice the results over the next few seasons."

Once again the girls' portion of the State Farm Holiday Classic will be one of the toughest among tournaments throughout the Midwest. The most recent addition to the Class 3A-4A field will be out-of-state entrant Birmingham Ramsey from Alabama, featuring Kaneisha Horn who ESPN ranks as the #2 junior in the United States. Ramsey will go against perennial state powers in Peoria Richwoods, Galesburg, Chicago John Hope, Morton, Park Ridge Maine South, Springfield Sacred Heart-Griffin, and four much improved Bloomington-Normal intercity schools.

The Class 1A-2A field will be loaded again from top to bottom, as nine of the 16 teams won at least a Regional championship last season. State runner-up Rochester will lead the field filled with state powers like Bloomington Central Catholic, Sterling Newman, Kankakee Bishop Mac, Brimfield, Pana, Champaign St. Thomas More, Tolono Unity, Camp Point Central/Augusta Southeastern, and others.

"We really pride ourselves on offering the most competitive girls' basketball tournament around and both of this year's fields are no exception," Oloffson said. "The experience of playing against state-tournament level teams on the floor of Redbird Arena creates a late-February, early-March atmosphere that our coaches, players and fans love!"

All games will be played at Illinois Wesleyan University's Shirk Center, Illinois State University's Redbird Arena, Normal Community High School, Normal West High School and Bloomington Central Catholic High School. All teams are guaranteed 4 games over the 4-day event.

For more tournament information and a complete list of the 64-team field, visit the official Web site at www.theclassic.org. All-tournament passes may be purchased through the State Farm Employees Activities Association or through a participating team.

2008 Boys Class 1A-2A Field

1. Addison Driscoll
2. Bloomington Central Catholic
3. CPCI
4. Chillicothe IVC
5. Downs Tri-Valley
6. El Paso-Gridley
7. Hartsburg-Emden
8. Macon Meridian
9. Minonk Fieldcrest
10. Peoria Christian
11. Roanoke-Benson
12. Rochester
13. St. Joseph-Ogden
14. Sherrard
15. Stanford Olympia
16. Taylor Ridge Rockridge

2008 Girls Class 1A-2A Field

1. Bloomington Central Catholic
2. Brimfield
3. Camp Pt. Central/Augusta SE
4. Champaign St. Thomas-More
5. Kankakee Bishop Mac
6. Monmouth-Roseville
7. Orion
8. Pana
9. Rochester
10. St. Joseph-Ogden
11. Spring Valley Hall
12. Stanford Olympia
13. Sterling Newman
14. Taylor Ridge Rockridge
15. Tolono Unity
16. Williamsville

2008 Boys Class 3A-4A Field

1. Chicago De La Salle
2. Galesburg
3. Grayslake Central
4. Kankakee Bishop Mac
5. Lake Forest
6. Normal Community
7. Normal U-High
8. Peoria Notre Dame
9. Quincy Notre Dame
10. Rock Falls
11. Rock Island
12. Rock Island Alleman
13. Rockton-Hononegah
14. South Holland Thornwood
15. Springfield
16. Sterling

2008 Girls Class 3A-4A Field

1. Birmingham Ramsey (AL)
2. Bloomington
3. Chicago John Hope
4. Galesburg
5. Joliet Township
6. Morton
7. Naperville Neuqua Valley
8. Normal Community
9. Normal West
10. Normal U-High
11. Park Ridge Maine South
12. Peoria Notre Dame
13. Peoria Richwoods
14. Rock Island
15. Rock Island Alleman
16. Springfield Sacred Heart-Griffin