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Paradise Jam Returns to Virgin Islands After 1-Year Hiatus. Here's What to Expect.

Sports / **Published On November 19, 2021 06:09 AM /**

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After the cancelation's of last year's Paradise Jam in the USVI due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the Virgin Islands yearly Division 1 Basketball spectacle will return to the UVI Sports and Fitness Center on Friday afternoon and Virgin Islands basketball fans — vaccinated and unvaccinated — will be able to attend.

The action will begin on Friday when Colorado State takes on Bradley at 2:00 p.m. This game will be followed by Brown vs. Creighton at 4:15 p.m. , Northeastern vs. Duquesne at 6:45 p.m. and Southern Illinois vs. Colorado at 9 p.m for a full day of college basketball.

The four losers of the opening-day game will play on Saturday at 4:15 p.m. and 6:45 p.m., while the four winners will play in the semifinals on Sunday at 6:30 and 9 p.m. All eight teams will

return to action on Monday with games at 2 p.m, 4:15 p.m. 6:45 p.m. and 9 p.m.

Daily Tickets will be available at the door and cost \$15 for residents, \$10 for military and seniors, \$5 for Students (UVI, high school, middle school... etc.) and the event will be free for children under 5.

According to the protocol agreement with Paradise Jam organizers, the Department of Tourism, the Department of Health and the Office of the Governor, vaccinated persons will need to show proof of vaccination and photo ID to enter, while unvaccinated persons can attend as long as they provide a negative Covid-19 test taken within two days of the day that they attend.

Vaccinated persons and children under five will not be required to provide a negative Covid test to attend the games.

The Department of Health will be providing complimentary BinaxNow antigen testing at the UVI game site every day during the men's tournament this weekend and women's tournament next weekend.

Persons who test outside the arena must remain outside of the arena for 15-20 minutes as they await the result of their test.

Attendance will be limited to 1,300.

When the Men's tournament field was announced earlier this year, Paradise Jam Executive Director Nels Hawkinson said in a press release, "The hurricanes in 2017 and Covid-19 last year have presented us a ton of challenges, but the U.S.V.I. is where this tournament belongs and we can't wait to be back home with a men's field as strong as this one."

Colorado and Creighton have both won the Paradise Jam Tournament in the past, and they are hoping to become the only two-time winners of the Men's competition. Both teams made an appearance in last year's NCAA Tournament.

Creighton started this season a perfect 3-0 with early season victories over Arkansas-Pine Bluff, Kennesaw State and Nebraska.

Freshman guard Ryan Nembhard leads the team in scoring with 16 points per game while senior guard Alex O'Connell is the team's second highest scorer with 15.3 points per game this year.

The team's third leading scorer, senior forward Ryan Hawkins, is averaging a double-double with 12.3 points and 10.3 rebounds per game this season.

Last season Creighton made it to the Sweet 16 of the NCAA tournament for the first time since 1974 before losing to eventual NCAA tournament runner-up Gonzaga.

Colorado also comes into Paradise Jam with an unblemished 3-0 record after recording wins against Montana State, New Mexico and Maine.

Their leading scorer this season is sophomore guard Keeshawn Barthelemy who is averaging 21 points per game this season. Sophomore Jabari Walker is averaging 15 points per game and is second on the team in scoring so far this year.

Last year they defeated Georgetown in the first round of the NCAA Tournament before losing to Florida State in the Round of 32.

Colorado State has won their first three games of the season against Oral Roberts, Arkansas Pine Bluff and Peru State.

Colorado State is top 10 in two national categories as a team this season. They are averaging 96 points per game which is the fifth highest scoring average in the country and are eighth in the country in blocks per game with eight per contest.

Colorado State is an experienced team that will be returning all five of their starters including their two leading scorers from last season, forward David Roddy and guard Isaiah Stevens. Roddy averaged 15.9 points per game while Stevens averaged 15.3 points per game last year.

Both of them are averaging 17.3 points per game so far this season and are tied as the team's leading scorer.

Last year Colorado State finished third in their conference, the Mountain West, with a 20-8 record before placing third in the 2021 National Invitation Tournament.

Brown has won three of their four games this season with their lone loss coming against No.18 North Carolina in a game that they were leading at halftime. The team beat Salve Regina, Central Connecticut and Johnson & Wales this year.

Freshman guard Kino Lilly Jr. is the team's leading scorer with 13.3 points per game. Junior guard Paxson Wojcik and freshman forward Nana Owusu are the team's next highest offensive contributors with 11.8 points per game each.

Brown is a member of the Ivy League, whose members did not participate in basketball last year due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Northeastern lost their first two games of the season to Colgate and Georgia State before beating Boston University.

Redshirt junior forward Chris Doherty is the team's leading scorer with 14.7 points per game and sophomore guard Jahmyl Telfort is second on the team with 12.3 points per game.

Last year the team finished with a 10-9 record.

Duquesne finished with an even record of 9-9 last season and started this season with a win against Rider before the team dropped their next two games to Hofstra and Weber State.

Sophomore forward Kevin Easley Jr. leads the team so far this season with 13.3 points per game and Amir Spears and Jackie Johnson III are averaging 11 points per game this year. Both Spears and Johnson are freshman guards.

Southern Illinois have split their two games this season as they defeated Austin Peay after losing to Little Rock.

Junior guard Lance Jones is averaging 21 points per game, junior forward Marcus Domask is averaging 14 points per game and junior guard Steven Verplancken is averaging 12.5 points per game for Southern Illinois.

They will look to improve on last season in which they finished the year with 12 wins and 14 losses.

The Bradley Braves lost their first two games of the season to South Dakota State and Howard before defeating Missouri S&T and will enter Paradise Jam with a 1-2 record.

The team's top two scorers so far this season are junior guard Terry Roberts, who is averaging 13.7 points and senior forward Ja'Shon Henry, who is averaging 13.5 points per game.

Sophomore forward Rienk Mast from the Netherlands is averaging a double double with 11.3 points and 11.7 rebounds per game this year.

Last year the team went 12-16.

The women's edition of the Paradise Jam will take place from Nov. 25-27 at the UVI Sports and Fitness Center.

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