



News Release

For immediate release

May 9, 2025

Regina to Host 2026 National Aboriginal Hockey Championships at Co-operators Centre

Regina, Saskatchewan – Regina Exhibition Association Limited (REAL) is thrilled to announce that the Co-operators Centre will be the host venue for the **2026 National Aboriginal Hockey Championships (NAHC)**, a premier national event that showcases the best young Indigenous hockey talent from across Canada from May 2-9, 2026.

Organized by the Aboriginal Sport Circle (ASC), the NAHC has been a cornerstone of Indigenous sport development since its inception in 2002. The week-long tournament features 16 elite teams (8 male and 8 female) made up of Bantam and Midget-aged Indigenous athletes. Sanctioned by Hockey Canada, the NAHC typically delivers an average economic impact of more than \$1 million per category to its host communities.

This is a tremendous opportunity for our province to showcase our commitment to Indigenous sport," **said 3rd Vice Chief Fabian Head**. "The NAHC not only celebrates athletic excellence but also creates a space where Indigenous youth can connect with their culture, build lasting relationships, and develop skills that extend far beyond the rink. We are honoured to host the 2026 event and look forward to welcoming athletes, coaches, and families from across Canada to Saskatchewan."

Saskatchewan's selection as host underscores the province's dedication to supporting Indigenous sport and answering the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action related to sports and reconciliation.

Chief Shelley Bear from Ochapowace Nation emphasized the importance of supporting Indigenous athletes through events like the NAHC. "Ochapowace is the 2026 host nation and hosting NAHC gives us a chance to showcase our commitment to Indigenous youth development through sport," said Chief Bear. "Sports and recreation are vital tools for building confidence, leadership, and resilience in our young people. When we provide these

opportunities, we're not just developing better athletes – we're developing stronger communities and future leaders who carry their cultural pride with them in everything they do."

Regina Mayor, Chad Bachynski is thrilled to welcome this tournament to the Queen City and back to Saskatchewan for the first time since 2012.

"Hosting the 2026 National Aboriginal Hockey Championships is a tremendous honour for Regina," says Mayor Bachynski. "This tournament not only showcases the incredible talent of young Indigenous athletes from across Canada but also strengthens the bonds between communities through the spirit of sport. We proudly welcome all participants, families and fans to our city and look forward to an unforgettable championship."

Since its completion in 2009, the Co-operators Centre has hosted several large-scale national and international tournaments, showcasing the facility to a global audience.

"The Regina Exhibition Association is thrilled to partner in bringing the 2026 NAHC to Saskatchewan," said **Trent Fraser, Interim President & CEO of the Regina Exhibition Association, Limited (REAL)**. "The Co-operators Centre is purpose-built for events of this caliber and not only showcases our province's sporting facilities but also create significant economic benefits for our communities. They provide a platform to celebrate the incredible talent of Indigenous athletes. We look forward to working with all partners to deliver an unforgettable experience and are proud to be co-hosting with Ochapowace First Nation."

The NAHC tournament will bring athletes, staff, fans, and families from across the nation to visit Regina for the week-long event.

"The Regina Hotel Association is proud to support the 2026 National Aboriginal Hockey Championships and help welcome this outstanding celebration of sport and culture to our city. Regina is a hockey community through and through, and we're honoured to play a role in hosting an event that not only showcases elite Indigenous athletes but also strengthens cultural connections and community pride across Canada," said **Sandra Jackle, President & CEO of the Regina Hotel Association**.

More details about the event, including schedule and ticketing information, will be released closer to the date.

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For more information:

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About REAL

Owned by the City of Regina and situated in the heart of Regina, Regina Exhibition Association Limited (REAL) is the largest interconnected event complex in Canada. It is the home of the

REAL District and is the centre of sport and rec, business, entertainment, and agriculture for the community. REAL is a not-for-profit corporation that operates the 100-acre property. The REAL District hosts most of Regina's major events, including Canada's Farm Show presented by Viterra, Queen City Ex presented by SaskTel, and Canadian Western Agribition. It is also home to the Saskatchewan Roughriders, Regina Pats, Regina Soccer Association, many minor and recreational sports, concerts, trade shows, and conventions. Visit realdistrict.ca