

# NEWARK POST

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## Handballs OK in this game

Team handball championships coming to Newark

By JOE BACKER and CHRISTINE NEFF

Newark residents may not be too familiar with the sport of team handball - a mix of basketball and soccer that's played more often in Europe and North Africa than here in the United States.

But this weekend, residents have the chance to watch some of the best teams the sport has to offer at the 2007 U.S. Team Handball Open National Championships, taking place Friday, April 6 through Sunday, April 8, at the University of Delaware.

The U.S. Olympic Committee selected UD's Newark campus to host the national event. The Delaware Economic Development Office put forth the successful bid, in partnership with UD's Sports Management program and Hotel Conference Services and the Greater Wilmington Convention & Visitors Bureau.

Tim DeSchraver, associate professor in UD's sport management program, said the university is thrilled to be taking part in the unique event. "This is a great opportunity to showcase the university and its facilities. And we hope it will draw more attention to the sport in this area," he said.

DeSchraver says 23 teams and about 350 athletes will visit Newark over the Easter weekend to participate. "These are club teams from all over the country. We have teams coming in from New York, New Jersey, Washington D.C., and as far away as California," he said.

The athletes will participate in three divisions, the Men's Elite, Men's Open and the Women's Open. Players vary in age, from 20 to about 40.

The competition takes place at the Delaware Field House and at the Carpenter Sports Building. Championship matches will be held Sunday afternoon at the Field House location.

The event promises, not only fine athletes and exciting games, but a boost to the local economy, as well. Tim Morgan, director of the Delaware Tourism Office, said the event is expected to bring \$350,000 in gross domestic product to



Delaware.

It's part of the office's efforts to expand sports and gaming in the state and attract other sporting events to Delaware, which, according to Morgan, offers prime facilities and a convenient, mid-Atlantic location.

"This event is of great stature because it's an international sport," said Morgan. "Anytime you get an event with an international flavor, it opens up a region to (future) economic development."

Team handball is very popular in Europe and North Africa and is played in more than 180 countries. "Team Handball is like a combination of soccer and basketball, and is played on a court with six players and a goalie, with two 30-minute halves. They play with an inflated ball that's bigger than a softball, but smaller than a volleyball," said DeSchraver.

Morgan said he was first exposed to the sport a number of years ago and has seen it played at the Olympic-level in two Olympics events. "I think it's real exciting. I encourage people to come out and take a look at it," he said.

If you're going...

What: 2007 U.S. Open Team Handball National Championship

Where: Teams will be playing at the University of Delaware Fieldhouse along Route 896 and at the Carpenter Sports Building near Old College in Newark.

When: On Friday, April 6, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., and 5 p.m. to 9 p.m. at the UD Fieldhouse; and from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., and 5 p.m. to 8 p.m., at the Carpenter Sports Building, gym 2.

On Saturday, April 7, from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. at the UD Fieldhouse; and from 9 a.m. to noon at the Carpenter Sports Building, gym 2.

Don't miss: The semi-finals and championship games at the UD Fieldhouse being played from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m., on Sunday, April 8.

All games are free and open to the public.

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