

# PRESS RELEASE



March 30–April 1, 2018

## Columbus Becomes First NCAA Women's Final Four Host City to be Awarded "Evergreen" Sustainability Certification by the Council for Responsible Sport

**COLUMBUS (May 14, 2018)** - After incorporating sustainability impact areas into the 2018 NCAA Women's Final Four, the Columbus Local Organizing Committee (CLOC) was awarded the "Evergreen" sustainability certification, the highest level given by the Council for Responsible Sport ([councilforresponsiblesport.org](http://councilforresponsiblesport.org)). Columbus now becomes the first NCAA Women's Final Four host city to ever be certified by the organization.

Earlier today, to symbolize the legacy impact of hosting the Women's Final Four and achieving the "Evergreen" sustainability certification, the NCAA, The Ohio State University Department of Athletics, the Greater Columbus Sports Commission, Nationwide Arena, Columbus Recreation and Parks, SWACO and various Columbus officials joined together to plant a Sugar Maple tree in McFerson Commons in the Arena District.



For the NCAA Women's Final Four sustainability program, the CLOC planned a wide range of activities and actions designed to engage residents, businesses, and visitors to help make a more sustainable Ohio. The Responsible Sport Certification includes five categories that the host city must consider. Columbus pursued 55 of 61 total credits; achieving all 55 credits sought. Highlights from the CLOC's on-site evaluation are as follows:

### 1) Planning & Communications (11/11 points)

The CLOC had a clear, thought-out sustainability plan, created a sustainability page on the official event website and partnered with The Ohio State University to increase capacity for project coordination.

### 2) Procurement (6/9 credits)

The CLOC had collaborative discussion with event partners and identified and purchased promotional gift items from local and women-owned businesses.

### 3) Resource Management (25/28 credits)

The CLOC hosted a successful sports gear drive that resulted in the donation of **300 pounds of lightly used sporting equipment**, recycled over **100 pallets for dismantling and reuse or compost**, donated **1,900 pounds of leftover food and beverages**, calculated and restored a total water footprint of **270,416 gallons of water** at Nationwide Arena, calculated and offset a carbon footprint for event operations of **17 metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent** used to power Nationwide Arena and encouraged active transit by creating and sharing a walking guide of the Arena District to over **8,000 event guests**.

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**4) Access & Equity (7/7 credits)**

The CLOC hosted 'Beyond the Baseline', a series of professional and educational sessions to empower women leaders, engaged **200 local youth in NCAA Youth Clinic programming** to teach healthy training and lifestyle skills and got **2,500 local kids and their families moving with the NCAA Women's Final Four Bounce** in the Arena District.

**5) Community Legacy (6/6 credits)**

The CLOC contracted a third party to perform a robust assessment of the local economic impact resulting from the Women's Final Four, collaborated with the City of Columbus Recreation and Parks and SWACO to **plant over 100 trees**, engaged volunteers and educated the public and conducted a "Dream Court" restoration at Beatty Park with Lieberman Charities.

**CONTACTS:**

**Bruce Wimbish** | Greater Columbus Sports Commission | 614-221-6178 | [bwimbish@columbusports.org](mailto:bwimbish@columbusports.org)