

Iowa Conference bids for NCAA baseball

Written by Jim Ecker

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The Iowa Conference has submitted a bid to host the NCAA Division III national baseball tournament at Veterans Memorial Stadium in Cedar Rapids in 2015, 2016 and 2017.

The D3 World Series would be held during the Memorial Day Weekend each year (Friday through Tuesday) and would involve eight teams from around the country.

The tournament has been held in Appleton, Wis., for the last 14 years. Chuck Yrigoyen, the Iowa Conference commissioner, thinks Appleton plans to submit a bid to keep the tournament and he expects many other cities to bid as well.

"We'll have lots of competition," he said Tuesday. "I've heard through the grapevine that there are probably 15 to 20 cities that have bid on the Division III College World Series. It will be fairly stiff competition."

The Iowa Conference, which has its headquarters in Cedar Rapids, has worked on the bid with the Cedar Rapids Kernels, the Cedar Rapids Convention & Visitors Bureau, the City of Cedar Rapids and the mayor's office.

"It's been a team effort the last six weeks," said Yrigoyen.

Yrigoyen said the NCAA will announce the site for the 2015, 2016 and 2017 tournaments in December.

Yrigoyen thinks hosting the World Series would be good for the league.

"It elevates the conference to be able to say that you're sponsoring an NCAA championship,"

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he remarked. "It also shows that you're giving back something to the Association (the NCAA).

"We've love to think that one of our teams could get in it, and then we'd have a little bit of a home-field advantage. That is a possibility."

Buena Vista reached the World Series in 2011. The other conference schools are Coe, Simpson, Central, Wartburg, Dubuque, Loras and Luther.

Yrigoyen said all eight conference schools would help stage the event, but said Coe College would be involved the most due to its location in Cedar Rapids.

The DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel & Convention Complex in downtown Cedar Rapids would be the headquarters for the event for team housing and related events.

The Iowa Conference, Coe and Cornell (then an Iowa Conference member) hosted the NCAA Division III wrestling tournament at the U.S. Cellular Center in downtown Cedar Rapids in 2008, 2009 and 2010. The national meet was held at the Cedar Rapids Ice Arena last March.

Yrigoyen said the Iowa Conference came close to winning its bid for hosting the national baseball tournament in Cedar Rapids about 12 years ago. He's hopeful of winning the bid this time.

"I know we'd run a good event and hopefully we'd get some interest in the community," he said.