

Fairfield, North Carolina, UCLA, USF to Play in Inaugural WBCA Challenge at Michelob ULTRA Arena in Las Vegas November 13 & 15

ATLANTA (September 2, 2025) — 2025 NCAA March Madness tournament teams Fairfield, North Carolina, South Florida and UCLA will play in the inaugural WBCA Challenge in Las Vegas, the Women's Basketball Coaches Association announced today. The college women's basketball event will be played Thursday, Nov. 13, 2025 and Saturday, Nov. 15, 2025, at **Michelob ULTRA Arena at Mandalay Bay Resort and Casino**.

The four-team WBCA Challenge is the WBCA's second venture in the competitive event space. It follows in the footsteps of the WBCA Showcase, which began in 2024 at Walt Disney World Resort in Florida.

"The WBCA is proud to announce the WBCA Challenge! This exciting new college women's basketball event will be held at Michelob ULTRA Arena which is home to the two-time WNBA world champion Las Vegas Aces," said WBCA Executive Director Danielle Donehew.

"The four participating teams in the inaugural event — Fairfield, North Carolina, UCLA and USF — will offer fans four outstanding games over two days and will further contribute to our sport's growing popularity.

"The Aces have an exciting home arena and fan support. We look forward to the college teams enjoying a special professional game experience."

Here is the schedule of games:

Thursday, Nov. 13

- Fairfield vs. South Florida, 6 p.m. EST/3 p.m. PST
- North Carolina vs. UCLA, 9 p.m. EST/6 p.m. PST

Saturday, Nov. 15

- Fairfield vs. North Carolina, 6 p.m. EST/3 p.m. PST
- South Florida vs. UCLA, 9 p.m. EST/6 p.m. PST

Travis Lunn, Mandalay Bay's President & COO, said, "Hosting the WBCA Challenge at Michelob ULTRA Arena is a tremendous opportunity for Mandalay Bay. This premier women's basketball event will showcase an incredible level of talent and we're proud to provide these student-athletes a world-class stage on which to compete."

Fairfield (28-5 in 2024-25) is coming off back-to-back Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference championships and NCAA Tournament appearances for the first time in school history. Head coach Carly Thibault-DuDonis (three seasons, 74-22) returns three starters including All-MAAC First-Team honoree and MAAC Championship MVP Meghan Andersen (6-1, junior, road runner) who led the Stags in scoring with 14.8 points per game.

North Carolina (29-8 in 2024-25) advanced to the Sweet 16 round in the 2025 NCAA Tournament before falling to ACC-foe Duke. The Tar Heels finished tied for fourth place in the ACC standings (13-5). North Carolina also reached the ACC Tournament semifinals. Head coach Courtney Banghart (6 seasons, 125-64) returns 10 players from last year's Sweet 16 run, including Lanie Grant (5-9, sophomore, guard) who was named to the ACC All-Freshman team last season and Reniya Kelly (5-7, junior, guard) who was a 2025 All-ACC Second Team selection.

South Florida (23-11 in 2024-25) won its second American Athletic Conference championship and made its 10th NCAA Tournament appearance in program history last season. Head coach Jose Fernandez (25 seasons, 485-317) returns seven players for the Bulls' 2025-26 campaign, including Carla Brito (5-11, senior, forward), an AAC All-Conference Second Team selection and the 2025 AAC Tournament's Most Outstanding Player, and L'or Mputu (6-2, graduate, forward) who was named the 2025 AAC Most Improved Player.

UCLA (34-3 in 2024-25) is following its most successful season in program history. The Bruins won the Big Ten championship in their first year in the league, earned the overall No. 1 seed in the 2025 NCAA Tournament, and advanced to the NCAA



Women's Final Four before falling to eventual national champion Connecticut in the national semifinals. Head coach Cori Close (14 seasons, 321-143) returns star player, Lauren Betts (6-7, senior, center), who last season was named the Lisa Leslie Center of the Year by the Naismith Basketball Hall of Fame and the WBCA, the WBCA Defensive Player of the Year, and a WBCA Coaches' All-American.

Tickets to the inaugural WBCA Challenge will go on sale Tuesday, Sept. 9 at 10 a.m.

Broadcast information will be announced at a later date.

About the Women's Basketball Coaches Association

The Women's Basketball Coaches Association is the professional association for coaches of women's and girls' basketball at all levels of competition. Founded in 1981, the WBCA offers educational resources that coaches need to help make themselves better leaders, teachers and mentors to their players; provides opportunities for coaches to connect with peers in the profession; serves as the unifying voice of coaches to those organizations that control the game; and celebrates those coaches, players and other individuals who excel each year and contribute to the advancement of the sport.

Visit WBCA.org for more details about the association.

About Michelob ULTRA Arena

The Michelob ULTRA Arena is a multi-purpose arena home to World Championship Boxing, premier concerts and special events. With seating for as many as 12,000, the venue, which was recently renovated in 2018, offers excellent sightlines and state-of-the-art lighting and sound. The entertainment venue is home to WNBA team, the Las Vegas Aces, the city's first professional basketball team. Prominent events have included concerts such as Justin Timberlake, KISS, Taylor Swift, Kenny Chesney, Alicia Keys, Rihanna, Christina Aguilera, Katy Perry, John Mayer, Metallica, Ozzy Osbourne, Alejandro Fernandez and David Foster & Friends. World championship boxing events have featured fighters including Oscar De La Hoya, Manny Pacquiao, Floyd Mayweather, Shane Mosley and Bernard Hopkins. The Michelob ULTRA Arena also has been home to multiple Ultimate Fighting Championship (UFC) events, the annual Barrett-Jackson Las Vegas Auction and the Latin Billboard Music Awards.

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