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# NEWS RELEASE

F O R I M M E D I A T E R E L E A S E

## **COA Unveils Plans for Fall Championships Festival; Fresno to host inaugural event**

**Sacramento, CA** . . . The California Community College Commission on Athletics (COA) has announced the creation of a Fall Championships Festival event, set to debut in November 2005. The Fresno Sports Council and the City of Fresno have been awarded the right to host the inaugural event.

Over 1,500 student athletes will compete in twelve state championship events over nine days of competition in November and December 2005, and March 2006. The festival will kick-off with the COA Women's Golf Championship on November 14. Women's and men's water polo and women's and men's cross country will crown champions November 18-19. The primary weekend of festival championships will be December 8 – 11, when the state's top women's volleyball, wrestling, football, women's soccer and men's soccer teams contend for a COA championship in Fresno. The COA women's and men's basketball championships will be held at Fresno's Selland Arena, March 9-12, 2006. The festival will feature several auxiliary events designed to enhance the experience of participating student-athletes, including opening ceremony banquets and an "Adopt-A-Team" K-12 program.

"The COA is delighted with the selection of Fresno as host of this inaugural championships festival," said Dr. Joanne Fortunato, COA Commissioner. "It is going to be a wonderful experience for community college student athletes and we are tremendously excited about working with the region to enhance the quality of experience of COA student athletes at our state championships."

The COA championships festival concept evolved from the efforts of the COA Management Council Subcommittee on Championship Site Selection. The committee, comprised of COA staff, COA management council representatives and COA sport coach's association representatives, was charged with the task of developing standards and procedures for the COA's championship site selection process.

Mindful of the successful site selection process in the sport of football, where the COA, in cooperation with the football coaches association, gathers bids from local event attraction agencies to host the COA football championship, the site selection subcommittee embraced the concept to bundle all fall championships together into one dynamic and marketable asset. With the cooperation of all COA fall sport coaches associations, the subcommittee moved to collect bids on a 2005 COA Fall Championships Festival late last year.

The subcommittee established strict criteria to rank all bids including, but not limited to, location, quality of venues, community support and financial incentive. The COA received interest in the festival concept from regions throughout California before selecting Fresno.

The COA Management Council Subcommittee on Championship Site Selection chose Fresno because:

- The venues and facilities proposed by the Fresno Sports Council meet or exceed the standards established by the committee, and are easily accessible from a centralized 'festival headquarters'.
- Fresno is conveniently located between Northern and Southern California.
- Fresno has a rich history of California community college support, and in recent years has hosted the COA Basketball Championships, COA Cross Country Championships, COA Baseball Championships, COA Tennis Championships, COA Football Championship, COA Fastpitch Softball Championship, as well as numerous COA regional post-conference events.
- Clear linkages exist between Fresno City College and area K-12 schools, a particularly important piece with the proposed 'Adopt-A-Team' program that will be part of the inaugural festival.
- The Fresno Sports Council and the City of Fresno offer tremendous resources to enhance the festival experience for the student-athlete, including centralized housing support and marketing support.

Tentative 2005 COA Fall Championships Festival Schedule\*:

<b>Date</b>	<b>Sport</b>	<b>Venue</b>
November 13, 2005	Women's Golf Welcome Banquet/Opening Ceremonies	TBD
November 14-15, 2005	Women's Golf	Riverside Golf Course
November 17, 2005	Water Polo & Cross Country Banquet/Opening Ceremonies	Valdez Hall
November 18-19, 2005	Men's & Women's Water Polo	Sunnyside High School
November 19, 2005	Men's & Women's Cross Country	Woodward Park
December 8, 2005	Women's Volleyball, Wrestling, Football, and Soccer Banquet/Opening Ceremonies	Valdez Hall
December 8-10, 2005	Wrestling	Fresno City College
December 9-11, 2005	Women's Volleyball	Selland Arena
December 10-11, 2005	Men's & Women's Soccer	Fresno Pacific
December 10, 2005	Football	Grizzlies Stadium
March 2006 (Date TBD)	Men's and Women's Basketball Banquet/Opening Ceremonies	Valdez Hall
March 9-12, 2006	Men's & Women's Basketball	Selland Arena

\* All dates, times and venues subject to change. To view the latest news, information and updates of the COA Fall Championships Festival, as well as all 23 COA sanctioned sports, visit [www.coasports.org](http://www.coasports.org).

**COA**