

America's Top Female Athletes to Compete in Multi-Sport Festival at ESPN Wide World of Sports Complex at Disney

ESPN RISE Girls Showcase to include national championships and elite-level events in basketball, gymnastics, softball, taekwondo and volleyball; inaugural three-week event to draw nearly 15,000 nationally-ranked and recreational female athletes to Walt Disney World

LAKE BUENA VISTA, Fla. (April 29, 2011) — The inaugural [ESPN RISE Girls Showcase](#) will take place in June at [ESPN Wide World of Sports Complex](#) at Walt Disney World, bringing together one of the biggest collections of elite female youth athletes in the country.

The three-week sports festival celebrating female sports will involve nearly 15,000 elite and recreational female athletes competing in basketball, gymnastics (artistic and rhythmic), softball, taekwondo and volleyball June 2-22.

“ESPN RISE is proud to expand its commitment to high school girls through the inaugural ESPN RISE Girls Showcase,” said Laura Gentile, vice president, espnW and ESPN RISE digital and publishing. “The educational and leadership opportunities are just as important to the student-athletes as the competition.”

Among the events taking place will be national championships such as the AAU Jr. National Girls Volleyball Championships, USA Gymnastics Open Championships, U.S. Rhythmic Classic, Junior Olympic Rhythmic Gymnastics Optional Championships and Invitational, and the USA Taekwondo Women's Invitational Cup. Other elite-level events will include the AAU Elite Eight 9th Grade Basketball Showcase, the USA Softball National Qualifier, the USA Taekwondo Women's National Tournament Qualifier, and the USA Basketball U19 World Championship Team Trials, in addition to several recreation-level competitions.

‘Disney and ESPN RISE value and support female athletes at every level and this event will give these talented young athletes a great opportunity to showcase their skills on a national stage.’

—Gail Brown, senior sports event manager for Disney Sports

The showcase will also include leadership and education components involving current female athletes as well as marquee former athletes and coaches such as former UCLA softball head coach Sue Enquist, whose teams have won 11 national titles.

“To bring together this many female athletes at an event featuring the nation's best in a variety of sports will

be a unique and inspiring experience for these young girls,” said Gail Brown, senior sports event manager for Disney Sports. “Disney and ESPN RISE value and support female athletes at every level and this event will give these talented young athletes a great opportunity to showcase their skills on a national stage.”

Portions of the ESPN RISE Girls Showcase will be shown online at ESPN3.com, including the AAU Jr. National Girls Volleyball Championship, the AAU Elite Eight 9th Grade Basketball Showcase Championship, the USA Gymnastics Open Championships, the USA Basketball U19 National Team game against Brazil and the USA Taekwondo Women’s National Qualifier. Complete coverage of the event can be found at <http://espnrise.com/girl>.

The creation of the ESPN RISE Girls Showcase comes on the heels of the instantly successful [ESPN RISE Games](#) at ESPN Wide World of Sports Complex. The annual ESPN RISE Games made its debut in 2009 and features some of the leading high school athletes and teams in the nation competing in baseball, football, basketball, lacrosse and softball in a two-week-long sports festival style event. This year’s event, July 13-27, is expected to draw more than 13,000 athletes from around the country.

The ESPN RISE Girls Showcase adds to the growing list of elite-level national youth sports events taking place at ESPN Wide World of Sports Complex, which is widely recognized as the leading multi-sports venue in the nation. This event further cements the sports complex as the preeminent sports destination for female youth athletes, who make up a little more than half of the nearly 300,000 athletes who compete and train annually at the sports complex.

ESPN RISE Girls Showcase Event Details

AAU Elite Eight 9th Grade Girls Basketball Showcase

The AAU Elite Eight 9th Grade Girls Basketball Showcase is an invite-only event for the nation’s top 9th Grade AAU Basketball teams. **June 2-5, 2011**

38th AAU Jr. National Girl’s Volleyball Championship

The Jr. AAU Volleyball Championships event features more than 1,100 teams and 12,000 athletes ages 10-18. **June 14-22, 2011**

USA Basketball

USA Basketball U19 World Championship Team training camp **June 2-4, 2011** USA Basketball U19 National Team vs. Brazil U19 National Team **June 5, 2011**

USA Softball

USA/ASA Girl’s Fast Pitch National Qualifier

The USA Softball event features more than 60 teams and 600 athletes. Competition takes place between U10, U12, U14, U16 and U18 players from across the country. **June 3-5, 2011**

USA Taekwondo

USA Taekwondo Women’s Invitational Cup

The USAT Women’s Invitational Cup showcases the world’s top female martial arts athletes competing in four Olympic weight categories. **June 5, 2011**

USA Taekwondo Women’s National Qualifier

The USAT Women’s National Qualifier gives female martial arts athletes, ages six years old and above, an opportunity to qualify for the USAT National Championships. **June 3-5, 2011**

USA Gymnastics

USA Gymnastics Open Championships

More than 1,000 female competitors ages 6-14 will compete for both individual and team titles during this four-day event, which includes competition for both Women's Artistic and Rhythmic gymnastics. The championship level competitions will be shown live on ESPN3.com. **June 2-5, 2011**

U.S. Rhythmic Classic

The top rhythmic gymnasts from the United States and around the world will compete in the two-day event that features the all-around and individual events for both juniors and seniors and senior group. The field is expected to include athletes from more than 10 countries. **June 11-12**

The Junior Olympic Rhythmic Gymnastics Optional Championships and Invitational

The Junior Olympic Rhythmic Gymnastics Optional Championships showcases the country's best Level 7-9 gymnasts, and the Level 10 Invitational provides a similar opportunity for that level's top competitors. Approximately 300 rhythmic gymnasts are expected to compete. **June 8-12**

Leadership Clinic hosted by Sue Enquist

Sue Enquist, a legend in the sport of softball is scheduled to run a clinic that teaches girls valuable lessons such as life skills, nutrition, leadership principals, and what it takes to excel at the next level. **June 3, 2011**