

TBT

THE BASKETBALL TOURNAMENT

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Lexington to Host The Basketball Tournament (TBT) Regional for 2024

*Eric Bledsoe to headline Kentucky alumni team La Familia
as TBT brings regional to Rupp Arena for first time*

LEXINGTON, KY (February 14, 2024) – The Basketball Tournament (TBT), the 64-team, \$1 million winner-take-all event, announced today that the city of Lexington and Rupp Arena will host a TBT regional in 2024. The regional will be headlined by Kentucky alumni team La Familia, whose roster will feature former Wildcats guard and 11-year NBA veteran Eric Bledsoe.

Lexington Regional games will be played at Rupp Arena from July 19-24.

“I’m very excited to be returning to Lexington this summer, and to have the opportunity to represent the University of Kentucky again while playing for La Familia,” said Eric Bledsoe. “My time at the University of Kentucky was incredibly special, and I can’t wait to see the support from Wildcats nation this summer.”

“Kentucky fans are some of the best in the country and their potential alumni team is electrifying,” said TBT founder and CEO Jon Mugar. “Eric’s commitment is sure to draw out the best of the best. We can’t wait to see this team at Rupp Arena this summer!”

“We are very excited for Lexington to be named as a host site for this summer’s tournament and welcome back our UK Men’s Basketball alumni to play at home again in Rupp Arena,” said Rupp Arena director of booking Trevor Chesler.

La Familia is organized by general manager Twany Beckham, who played at Kentucky from 2011-13. The Kentucky alumni team will be joined in the regional by seven other teams hoping to emerge one step closer to TBT’s \$1M grand prize.

Bledsoe, La Familia's first player commitment, starred at Kentucky during the 2009-10 season, helping the Wildcats win an SEC regular season and tournament championship, as well as an Elite Eight appearance in the NCAA Tournament. Bledsoe was selected 18th overall in the 2010 NBA Draft, and spent 12 seasons in the NBA with the Los Angeles Clippers, Phoenix Suns, Milwaukee Bucks, and New Orleans Pelicans. The 34-year-old is currently in his second season with the Shanghai Sharks of the Chinese Basketball Association.

Additional roster and coaching announcements will be made over the coming months via La Familia's social media pages, @LaFamiliaTBT.

Since TBT began in 2014, it has awarded more than \$13M in prize money, and has been viewed in more than 180 countries around the world. Alumni teams have won TBT's championship in four of the past five summers, with teams representing Ohio State, Marquette, Syracuse, and the University of Buffalo taking home the \$1M prize between 2019-2022. TBT is also the home of the Elam Ending, the alternate ending to games where teams play to a target score. The Elam Ending was adopted and featured by the NBA for its All-Star Games from 2020-23, and is now being used in G League games as part of their overtime format.

Tickets for the 2024 Lexington Regional will go on sale at a later date. To be the first to secure tickets for the event, fans can sign up for TBT's waitlist at thetournament.com/tbt/tickets.

For more information on this year's TBT or La Familia, visit TheTournament.com.

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About The Basketball Tournament

The home of the Elam Ending®, The Basketball Tournament has grown from a unique idea among friends to one of the most exciting and engaging events on the summer sports calendar, with national exposure, social media buzz and regional championships across the country - culminating in a winner-take-all \$1 million game. Every year it attracts some of the best players in the world. For more information on TBT's tenth season, visit www.thetournament.com

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About Central Bank Center

Located in Lexington, Kentucky, the Lexington Center Corporation (LCC) is a not-for-profit 501c3 corporate agency of the Lexington Fayette Urban County Government. It was established in 1974 to manage and maintain Rupp Arena at Central Bank Center, the Central Bank Center (formerly Lexington Convention Center), Triangle Park, and the Lexington Opera House. One of the nation's most storied entertainment destinations, Central Bank Center venues collectively welcome an average of 1.3 million patrons annually.

Since 1976, **Rupp Arena at Central Bank Center** has served as the home court of the University of Kentucky men's basketball team, regularly leading the national attendance average. Rupp Arena has hosted legendary artists such as Justin Timberlake, Paul McCartney, Garth Brooks, Chris Stapleton, and many more. Since 2018, Oak View Group and Live

Nation Arenas have provided booking services to Rupp Arena. During the last 18 months, Rupp Arena has broken all previous audience attendance and revenue records in its storied 43-year history.

The Lexington Opera House, built in 1886 and listed on the National Register of Historic Places, is one of the premier performing arts centers in the region. Since its opening, the Opera House has played host to such famous stage performers as W.C. Fields, The Marx Brothers, Al Jolson, Julie Harris, Steve Martin, Brian Wilson, and Graham Nash. It has undergone two major renovations and remains a cultural destination in downtown Lexington.

The Central Bank Center holds over 200 meetings, trade shows, and special events annually. It just completed a transformative \$310 million expansion, featuring a dramatic, light-filled architectural design that offers over 200,000 SF of flexible meeting and event space.

OVG360, a division of Oak View Group, is a full-service venue management and hospitality company that helps client-partners reimagine the sports, live entertainment, and convention industries for the betterment of the venue, employees, artists, athletes, and surrounding communities. With a portfolio of more than 240 client-partners spanning arenas, stadiums, convention centers, performing arts centers, cultural institutions, and state fairs around the globe, OVG360 provides a set of services, resources and expertise designed to elevate every aspect of business that matters to venue operators. Service-oriented and driven by social responsibility, OVG360 helps facilities drive value through excellence and innovation in food services, booking and content development, sustainable operations, public health and public safety and more.