

To tweet this release: <http://es.pn/Pqk8FZ>

[Photo Gallery](#)

September 19, 2012

ESPN Announces Armed Forces Classic Men's Basketball Games on Military Bases Overseas

Connecticut Faces Michigan State in Inaugural Game at Ramstein Air Base this November



ESPN announced the creation of the Armed Forces Classic, a series of Division I college men's basketball games to be played on military bases overseas. Ramstein Air Base in Germany is the inaugural location, with the University of Connecticut and Michigan State University playing in a C-5 transport airplane hangar on the base.

The game will be televised Friday, Nov. 9, with coverage beginning at 5:30 p.m. ET on ESPN. The event is part of ESPN's Veteran's Week initiative honoring the men and women who are serving and who have served in the United States military, both at home and abroad.

While in Germany, Connecticut and Michigan State players and coaches will be visiting servicemen and women at Landstuhl Regional Medical Center. They will also conduct a basketball clinic for children at Ramstein Air Base.

In the first regular-season college game ever played in Europe, three-time NCAA champion Connecticut will feature three German players on its roster. Freshman Leon Tolksdorf (Berlin) joins fellow Germans Niels Giffey (Berlin) and Enosch Wolf (Goettingen).

"We at the University of Connecticut are honored and humbled to be asked to participate in such a terrific event as the first Armed Forces Classic," said Connecticut head coach Kevin Ollie. "Being able to travel overseas and play for the brave men and women in our military to whom we owe so much is an unbelievable opportunity for our basketball program and we are extremely thankful to ESPN for including us. The fact that the game will be played at Ramstein Air Base in Germany makes it more exciting for our team, since our roster includes three young men who are German citizens, but all our student-athletes are looking forward to this once-in-a-lifetime experience."

Michigan State is coming off its 14th consecutive NCAA Championship appearance, including winning the 2000 national title. Head coach Tom Izzo participated in Operation Hardwood in 2005 and 2006, traveling to Kuwait to coach teams of American service members.

"This is another amazing opportunity for Spartan basketball and Michigan State University," said Izzo. "I'm thankful that ESPN reached out to us to be a part of this great event. Being a part in the first college basketball game to be played on a military base overseas is truly an honor. Playing in the Carrier Classic on the USS Carl Vinson last season provided memories that will last a lifetime, as the historic event was so much more than just a basketball game. The opportunity to honor the great men and women of the US Armed Forces was a humbling experience, as we felt that we got so much more in return than we gave. To now have the opportunity to take our game overseas to servicemen and women serving to protect us is an awesome experience. I'm reminded of my trips to the US bases in Kuwait, and what a life-changing experience that was for me. Everyone associated with the Michigan State basketball program is excited for this unique opportunity."

"We are excited to host the inaugural Armed Forces Classic at Ramstein Air Base and it's an honor to have these championship athletes compete here overseas," said Brig. Gen. C.K. Hyde, 86th Airlift Wing Commander. "Like a champion sports team, maintaining peak capability allows our Airmen to build and keep our competitive edge sharp."

Future teams and game sites will be announced at a later date.

For more information on the Armed Forces Classic, visit the official web site at <http://www.armedforcesclassic.com> or follow them on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).