



## 50th INTERNATIONAL SMALL FRY TOURNAMENT

**Ozzie Mazzetta Challenge Round:** Small Fry changed its format in 2006, adding a Monday Challenge round to qualify the final eight teams for the International field. Therefore, 24 teams now travel to Orlando with an opportunity to win the International crown.

### The 2018 International field includes:

- Nine former International champions: Avalon Runners; Bayamon ABB, PR; Bucaplaa, PR; Chicago Heights, IL; Highwood, IL; Homewood, IL; Kenosha, WI; Ponce Constancia PR; Solo Pirates.
- Teams from Puerto Rico, Virgin Islands and 4 states: Florida, Illinois, New Jersey, Wisconsin.
- A “Moe Reed” Friendship Tournament and Rookie Tournament in 2018 expands the overall field of teams in Orlando to 32.
- Eleven returnees from 2017 Final 16: Kenosha, Robert Taylor, Chicago Heights, Bucaplaa, Marquette Best, Southern Ponce, Chi-Town NBN, Prodigy Elite, Ponce Constancia, St. Thomas, VI, Avalon Runners.
- Four first-time qualifiers: Bayamon ABB B, Kissimmee All-Stars, Rising Stars, Vega Baja.
- Three of last year’s Final Four: Kenosha, Robert Taylor, Chicago Heights.

- Bucaplaa’s 2012 title-game win over Chicago Heights made it eight titles in nine years, the most impressive title string in history. On two other occasions, teams have won at least three straight crowns, including Liga Interclub (1976-79) and the Highwood Heat (1997-99). After winning seven titles from 1991-2000, the Midwest had been shut out for 16 years prior to the Kenosha title in 2017.

- Four teams from Puerto Rico have claimed multiple titles, including Liga Interclub (five), Fraigcomar (two), Ponce (four) and Bucaplaa (1986, 2004-2009, 2011-2012).

- Prior to the Highwood Heat’s three-peat in 1997-99, six different states/territories had won International crowns in six years. Starting with 1992 in New Orleans, the title was won by New Jersey (Newark, 1992), Puerto Rico (Fraigcomar, 1993), Wisconsin (Racine, 1994), Indiana (Gary, 1995), Chicago (Runners, 1996) and Illinois (Highwood, 1997).

- Twenty-three different teams have won International tournaments, as Bucaplaa became the 11th multiple winner in

2004. Other multiple winners include Racine (1972, 1981, 1987, 1994); Highwood (1997-99), the New York Harlem Satellites (1970, 1971, 1974); Liga Interclub of St. Juan (1973, 1976-79); Chicago Heights, Ill. (1980, 1991); Ponce, Puerto Rico (1984, 1990, 2010, 2015); Fraigcomar (1989, 1993), Puerto Rico (1989, 1993), Homewood (1985, 2000) and W Pullman Runners (1988, 1996).

- Three straight Bucaplaa-Fraigcomar title-game matchups (2006-08) was a first. Two different regions had met in five straight International title games prior to 2006, and the last two years broke a string of two straight same-region finals. However, before 2001 the International title had been decided within the same geographical region in nine of 10 years. The streak included: 1991— Chicago Heights over Highwood Small Fry; 1992— Newark over Riverside, N.Y.; 1993— Fraigcomar over Torrimar; 1995— Gary, Ind. over Highwood Small Fry; 1996— Chicago West Pullman Runners over Highwood Small Fry; 1997— Highwood Small Fry over Chicago Marquette Best. 1998— Highwood Small Fry over Chicago Heights. 1999— Highwood Small Fry over Chicago Washington Jaguars. 2000— Homewood over Chicago Washington Jaguars.

- Bucaplaa is the eighth team to play in at least four title games with 10, joining former co-leaders Racine and Highwood (seven each), Liga Interclub, Fraigcomar, Harlem Satellites, Chicago Heights (five each), Homewood and Kenosha.

- Ponce (4-0) is one of eight teams to be perfect in title games, including Liga Club (5-0), Aibonito (1-0), Arecibo (1-0), And One (1-0), WC Outlawz (1-0), Solo Pirates (1-0) and Bayamon ABB (1-0).

- The Midwest or Chicago has been represented in the title game 29 of the last 39 years.

- Puerto Rican teams have a 24-9 record in championship games.

- The 49 previous champions have represented five different regions: Carribean (25), Midwest (13), East (5), Chicago (5) and West (1).

- Small Fry’s famous alumni include Tyler Ulis, Phoenix Suns (Chicago Heights), Nick Van Exel, Portland Blazers (Kenosha), Charley Scott, Boston Celtics (New York), Craig Hodges, Chicago Bulls World Champs (Chicago Heights); Mike Tomczak, Chicago Bears (Homewood); Butch Lee, Marquette 1977 National Champs (New York); Veltra Dawson, Villanova 1985 National Champs (Highwood); Will Bynum, Georgia Tech 2004 NCAA Runner Up (Chicago); and Donovan McNabb, Minnesota Vikings (Homewood). Sweet 16 NCAA qualifiers the last five years included Highwood alum Chris Wroblewski (Cornell), Homewood alum D.J. Cooper (Ohio) and Ulis (Kentucky).

### CONSECUTIVE INTERNATIONALS:

14— Marquette Best.

8— Robert Taylor.

7— Chicago Heights.

6— Ponce Constancia.

5— Chi-Town NBN.

4— Bucaplaa.

3— Kenosha, Prodigy Elite.

2— Avalon Runners, Southern Ponce, St. Thomas, VI.

## A LOOK AT INTERNATIONAL QUALIFIERS (23)

### CHICAGO (6)

**Marquette Best:** A visitor to the Final Four on nine occasions, the Windy City squad returns for the 22<sup>nd</sup> time overall as the Windy City Qualifier champ. Marquette captured a second place in 1997 with a 48-41 title-game loss to the Highwood Heat, was second in 2010 with a 41-37 setback against Ponce and fell to the Solo Pirates in the 2014 title contest, 47-35.

**Avalon Runners:** A returnee to the field for the 25<sup>th</sup> time, the Runners captured crowns in 1988 with a 71-70 decision over Caguas Prebac and a 66-54 victory over Highwood in 1996.

**Chi-Town NBN:** Making its ninth overall appearance, the Windy City entry turned in all-time best third place finishes in 2011 and 2014, while winning the consolation crown in 2015 and 2017.

**Prodigy Elite:** Making its fourth appearance, the Elite captured fifth place in 2016 for its best showing, and was consolation runner-up last year.

**Robert Taylor:** The Panthers own 11 berths overall, including a 57-45 loss to Bucaplaa A in the 2011 title game, a 49-47 setback to Bayamon ABB in the 2016 title tilt and a 45-43 championship-game loss to Kenosha last year.

**Solo Pirates:** Making their eighth appearance overall, the Pirates won their first title in 2014 with a 47-35 victory over the Marquette Best.

### EAST (1)

**Network Stars (NJ):** An eight-time qualifier, the East Coast representative made its first title-game appearance in 2013 with a 42-35 setback to the Windy City Outlawz.

### MIDWEST (5)

**Chicago Heights, Ill.:** A five-time host of the International Tourney, the Green Streaks captured the 1980 title at home with a 51-46 victory over rival Homewood, then added the 1991 title at Newark with a 42-36 win over Highwood Small Fry. The Midwest Qualifier champs finished second in 1975, 1998, 2009 and 2012. Chicago Heights made three Final Fours in the 1990s and added a third-place finish last year.

**Kenosha, Wis.:** A qualifier for the 15<sup>th</sup> time in 21 years, Kenosha captured its first title in 2017 with a 45-43 decision over Robert Taylor. The Wisconsin club had been 0-3 in title games, falling to Liga Club in 1978 and 1979 and dropping a decision to Canovanas in 1983. Has advanced to the Final Four nine times since 1980.

**Homewood:** The Vikings have qualified in 20 of the last 23 years, including two title-game appearances in Orlando. Homewood won the 1985 International title in Racine (51-38 over Highwood) and the 2000 crown in Orlando (44-38 over Chicago Jaguars). The Red and White has also finished second twice and made 10 Final Fours since 1980.

**Highwood Heat:** Making its 22<sup>nd</sup> appearance in 26 years, Highwood won the its first International crown in 1997 in

Tampa with a 48-41 decision over Marquette Best, then followed it up with a 58-35 title-game victory over Chicago Heights in 1998 in New Orleans and a 60-50 title-contest decision over the Washington Jaguars in 1999. The Heat has captured the runner-up spot at International four times— at Racine in 1985, Newark in 1991 and 1996, and Tampa in 1995. The Heat is making its 44<sup>th</sup> International appearance.

**Tri-City:** A visitor to the field for the 11<sup>th</sup> time, the Ballers turned in a best finish of eighth in 2012.

### PUERTO RICO (7)

**Bayamon ABB A:** A 13-time qualifier and the Island Qualifier champion, ABB captured its first crown in its lone Final Four appearance with a 49-47 victory over Robert Taylor in 2016.

**Bayamon ABB B:** Seeking to make a splash in its initial bid to play in the Final 16.

**Bucaplaa:** Following up a 56-49 championship game loss to St. Rocco in 2003, Bucaplaa became the first team to win six straight titles with a 45-42 comeback victory over Homewood in 2004, a 49-33 win over the Rainbow Jaguars in 2005, three straight title-game wins over Fraigcomar (48-26 in 2006, 45-36 in 2007 and 77-62 in 2008) and 42-41 over Chicago Heights in 2009. The Pumas were back on top in 2011 with a 57-45 title-game win over Robert Taylor for their eighth crown and added a ninth with a 57-45 decision over Chicago Heights in 2012. It was Bucaplaa's 10<sup>th</sup> title-game appearance, as it defeated Racine, 52-40, for the 1986 championship. A 25-time qualifier, Bucaplaa has made 13 Final Fours.

**Caguas Libac:** A longtime Small Fry participant, Libac will try to top its 2014 eighth-place finish in its first visit to the Sweet 16.

**Ponce Constancia:** A visitor to the field for the 17<sup>th</sup> time, Constancia captured the 2010 crown with a 41-37 decision over Marquette Best and won its second championship in 2015 with a 42-39 decision over crosstown rival Ponce Lomas. Ponce has also won titles in 1984 and 1990.

**Southern Ponce:** From a basketball-rich area of the island, Southern Ponce earned seventh in its debut in 2017.

**Vega Baja:** The first-year entry is hoping to make an immediate impact in the field.

### VIRGIN ISLANDS (2)

**St. Croix:** Traveling to Orlando for the fifth time, St. Croix took 16<sup>th</sup> place in the Big Show in 2016.

**St. Thomas, Virgin Islands:** Now a seventh-year entry after Small Fry branched out to a new Carribean area for the first time in 2012, St. Thomas captured the 2013 consolation crown in its first International Tourney appearance and improved to 7<sup>th</sup> place in 2015.

### SOUTH (1)

**Kissimmee All-Stars:** Small Fry now boasts a "hometown entry" in the field after the local squad won the Moe Reed Friendship Tournament in 2016.

**Florida Rising Stars:** Another local squad making its first appearance will try to please the hometown crown.